



Project Address: 223-225 W Gilman Street
Application Type: Building Addition in the Urban Mixed Use (UMX) District
UDC is an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [81421](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Hamid Noughani, Assemblage Architects | Mendel Matusof, Rohr Family Chabad at the University of Wisconsin

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the demolition of an existing building to construct a three-story addition to an existing building to accommodate expanded programming and event space, including study areas, offices, library, classrooms and rooftop event space. Underground parking will be provided.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on January 10, 2024.
- The UDC received a second Informational Presentation on April 17, 2024.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission ("UDC") is an **approving body** on this development request. Pursuant to Section 28.076(4)(b):

"All new buildings and additions to buildings with six (6) stories or fewer, as well as all major exterior alterations to any building shall be approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the design standards in the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#)."

Related Zoning Information: The project is zoned Urban Mixed Use (UMX) zoning district. Staff notes that the design-related zoning standards as outlined in MGO 28.071 are not applicable to this project as the floor area of the proposed addition does not exceed 50% of that of the existing building. In addition, the proposed use is considered an "Institutional Building." As such, the "Door and Window Openings" standards also do not apply.

The applicant is advised that changes to the floor area of the proposed addition may change the applicability of the design-related zoning standards, which will be confirmed with the Zoning Administrator as part of their formal review.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area, within the State Street neighborhood. As such, development on the project site is subject to the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#). The Plan recommendations for development in this neighborhood generally speak to maintaining and enhancing the district as a premier designation for a variety of commercial and civic uses, the unique sense of place, the diverse and vibrant mix of uses, encouraging human-scale developments that actively engage the street, and creating pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. As noted in the Downtown Plan, Downtown Height Map, the maximum recommended building height is six stories. As proposed the addition is under the maximum height.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the revised development proposal and provide feedback and make findings regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below.

- **Building Massing and Composition.** Staff notes that the development proposal has been reduced in mass and scale from the previous Informational Presentation which was a full three-story addition. The current proposal reflects a two-story addition. Staff believe that the transition between the existing building and proposed addition, as well as the surrounding uses, has been improved with the reduction of mass and scale. With that, it remains important that the proposed addition visually ties into the existing building composition to create a cohesive and/or complementary architectural expression.

The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to the overall massing and proportions of architectural components (top, middle, base), balancing vertical/horizontal lines and datum, size and rhythm of windows and doors, creating positive termination at the top of the building, etc.

Generally, and in summary, the Commission's Informational Presentation noted that the overall composition looked more unified and contextually appropriate as it related to both the street and adjoining park. The Commission also noted that the datum lines between the new and existing development should be continuous and travel from one side of the building to the other.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback and make findings on the overall building composition, and mass and scale of the proposed addition.

- **Building Materials.** The building material palette, both existing and proposed, appears to be comprised of masonry, wood paneling, sun shading brise soliels, and glass. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to utilizing high quality materials and four-sided architecture, as well as using a palette that is simple. Staff requests that the Commission provides feedback and make findings related to the proposed material palette and composition, especially as it relates to creating a cohesive building design.
- **Landscape.** The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines note that *"...how a site is landscaped can soften hard edges, make a site more inviting, and bring color and interest to a development."* As noted on the landscape plan new plantings are proposed along the W Gilman Street frontage, including evergreen shrubs and grasses.

As noted by the Commission in their Informational Presentation comments, consideration should be given to further incorporating plantings, including raised beds into the site design.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the proposed planting plan.

- **Lighting.** Staff note that the proposed lighting appears to be consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that speak to utilizing full cutoff fixtures and adequate, but not excessive lighting levels. With that however, the applicant is advised that there appear to be discrepancies between the proposed light levels and those required in MGO 29.36, including but not limited to the maximum light levels at the property line.

Please note that Building Inspection Division staff will review lighting for compliance with MGO 29.36, which will be completed administratively as part of the Site Plan Review process.

Summary of UDC Second Informational Presentation Discussion and Questions

As a reference, the Commission's discussion and questions from the April 17, 2024, second Informational Presentation are provided below.

- The Commission noted that the overall composition is better resolved, looks like a unified composition, and is much more in line with what should be placed here in this particular neighborhood. It fits better within the context, at the street level and with the adjoining Lisa Link Peace Park.
- The Commission noted that datum lines seem disjointed; the datum lines should be brought across, and travel from one side to the other. There was discussion about the trees and solar gain on the side facing the park.
- Concern was expressed for the number of stairs accessing the roof and their necessity; this should be confirmed by the code.
- The Commission encouraged further incorporation of plantings, including a raised bed to tie into the existing landscaping/planting.
- Alder Rummel inquired about possible relocation of the 225 W Gilman Street structure.