



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 139 W Wilson Street
Application Type: New Residential Building in UMX Zoning
Legistar File ID # [70108](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: John Seamon, SEA Design

Project Description: The applicant is providing an Informational Presentation for the proposed demolition of an existing multi-family building and construction of a 16-story, 335-unit building. The proposal includes no on-site resident parking, though the applicant is considering alternatives such as a vehicle-share program or other off-site accommodations.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission (UDC) will be an **advisory** body on this request. Section [28.076\(b\)](#) includes the related design review requirements which state that: *"All new buildings that are greater than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet or that have more than four stories shall obtain Conditional Use approval. In addition, the UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#) and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission."*

Related Zoning Information: The property is zoned Urban Mixed-Use (UMX). The Planning Division understands that the proposed development is considered a conditional use under the Zoning Code. In addition, the Capital View Preservation Limit will also apply to the proposed development. As noted in the zoning code, the maximum ground story height is 18 feet, minimum 12 feet, and the maximum story height for upper stories is 14 feet.

The UMX zone district also outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX zone district are included as an attachment to this report, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area. As such development on the project site is subject to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. As noted in the Downtown Plan, the maximum recommended height is up to the Capital View Preservation Limit.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff recommends consideration be given to the following:

- **Building Height.** As noted above, the Capital View Preservation Limits will apply to the project site. Based on the information provided, the proposed building **does not** appear to meet those limitations. Overall building height is measured from grade to the top of the parapet wall, which is in excess of the maximum height. Provided the data is correctly represented, the maximum permitted height that would be permitted is shown as the roof line on the plans.

Limited projections and elevator overruns above this height limit are only allowable with Conditional Use approval and staff has urged the applicant to explore solutions that eliminate or minimize such projections. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building height, and the rooftop mechanical in excess of the Capital View Preservation Limit.

- **Building Entry Orientation and Ground Level Activation.** As noted on the floor and site plans, the main building entry is recessed and there are limited window openings located along the street. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the building's relationship to the street, including creating more visual interest and architectural detail, as well as locating active use areas within the building along the street front.
- **Building Design and Composition.** The overall proposed building design is relatively simple in nature with minimal articulation and façade modulation. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building composition as it relates to the design guidelines, including those that speak to mass and scale, proportions and articulation (vertical/horizontal), size and rhythm of windows, positive termination at the top of the building, etc.
- **Longviews.** Due to the prominence of this site from Lake Monona and John Nolen Drive, consideration should be given to the composition of the highly visible rear façade as part of the overall cityscape.
- **Wall Packs.** As noted on the elevations, wall pack units are proposed on all elevations. It has been the current practice to not locate wall packs on street facing facades, though they have been approved in some situations when found to be well integrated into the façade's design. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the integration of the wall packs with the overall building design and materials.
- **Materials.** The building material palette consists of a metal panel system. The current panels are intended to have a changing appearance that would vary with light conditions. Staff notes the building material standards per the UMX zone district, footnote E, which states that: "*Metal panels shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge, non-reflective metal.*" As proposed, the use of metal as a single building material **does not** appear to meet this requirement. Ultimately a palette of materials will need to be explored by the development team to comply with the Zoning Code. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback on possible alternate materials.
- **Open Spaces.** While an at-grade open space is shown on the site plan, as well as inside the building on multiple floors, consideration should be given to the integration and accessibility of the various open spaces from within the building and in creating fluidity between outdoor and indoor spaces.

In addition, staff notes the proposed at-grade open space is located on the north side of the building, significantly below the adjacent development. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the on-site orientation and successful planting of the space.

**ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE**

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.
3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.

4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

Table 28E-1: Building Materials in Downtown and Urban Districts.

Building Materials	Trim/Accent Material	Top of Building	Middle of Building	Base/Bottom of Building	Standards (see footnotes)
Brick (Face/Veneer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Wood/Wood Composite	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Concrete Panels (Tilt-up or Precast)	✓	✓	✓	✓	C
EIFS/Synthetic Stucco	✓	✓			D
Stone/Stone Veneer	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Metal Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	E
Hand-Laid Stucco	✓	✓			D
Reflective Glass/Spandrel	✓				F
Glass (Transparent)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than thirty-three percent (33%) of any building.

B - Wood and fiber cement panels shall not be used on the ground story except between the sidewalk and the bottom of storefront windows or as an accent material.

C - Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials.

D - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used on building facades facing State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

E - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge, non-reflective metal

F - Shall be used in limited quantities as an accent material.

(g) Equipment and Service Area Screening.

1. Outdoor loading areas or mechanical equipment are not permitted in the front yard. When visible from an abutting public street or walkway, they shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall, or screen of plant material.
2. No doors or openings providing access to parking or loading facilities shall about the Capitol Square, State Street or King Street.
3. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.

(h) Screening of Rooftop Equipment.

1. All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible.
2. The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. (Am. by ORD-15-00104, 10-15-15)