



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 430, 432, 444 State Street

**Application Type:** New Development in the Downtown Core District – Initial/Final Approval is Requested

**Legistar File ID #** [69486](#)

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC | Joe McCormick, JD McCormick Properties

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking Initial/Final approval for the development of a 5-story mixed-use building containing approximately 23-26 dwelling units and ground floor commercial space.

### Project Schedule:

- The Landmarks Commission reviewed a Demolition Permit request for 430-444 State Street on January 31, 2022, and made a recommendation to the Plan Commission that the buildings have historic value.
- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on February 9, 2022.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on July 11, 2022.
- The Common Council is scheduled to review the proposed CSM on July 19, 2022.

**Approval Standards:** The project is located within the Downtown Core. Pursuant to Section 28.074 (c): All new buildings and additions greater than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet or that have more than four (4) stories shall obtain conditional use approval. If formally submitted for review, the Urban Design Commission (“UDC”) would be an **advisory body** on this development request. As a new development in the Downtown Core Zoning District, the UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#), if applicable, and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission.

**Downtown Plan Guidelines and Recommendations:** The [Downtown Plan](#) (the “Plan”) includes the project site within the State Street Subarea that recognizes that while there are opportunities for some larger scale redevelopment within the State Street Subarea, the Plan recommends that heights along the State Street frontage be maintained at 2-4 stories. Generally, the Plan includes recommendations that speak to buildings being designed to maintain the predominant smaller-scale rhythms of the street frontage, reserving ground floor spaces for retail sales and services uses, and encouraging the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of sound older buildings that contribute to the districts character.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC provide feedback and findings on the design considerations noted below based on the aforementioned standards and guidelines for development in the Downtown Core.

The UDC last saw this item as an Informational Presentation on February 9, 2022, and provided feedback on a variety of design-related considerations, including those related to:

- Maintaining consistency with the surrounding context in terms of the rhythm, scale and proportions
- Building height, mass and scale,
- Exterior materials, and
- Sensitivity to the park.

As noted above, the UDC is an advisory body on this request. Staff recommends the Commission's findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission be framed as a motion based on the applicable review criteria, including the Downtown Design Guidelines and the Zoning Code. Additionally, while the UDC utilizes the Initial/Final Approval framework in certain situations, as an advisory recommendation, staff believes it would be procedurally preferable to provide a singular motion with the Commission's findings and recommendations.

For the Commission's reference and consideration, staff has identified the following design considerations:

- **Building Mass and Scale:** As noted in the Downtown Plan and DC zoning district requirements, there is a four-story height limitation along State Street frontage and a six story height limitation 30 feet back from the State Street right-of-way line. As proposed, taller redevelopment is generally consistent with adopted plans and the building appears to be consistent with the building height limitations. Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building mass and scale, specifically as it relates to the surrounding context, height and stepbacks, tower element, and the proposed loft space as they relate to and contribute to the overall building's architectural design and mass.
- **Building Design:** The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines speak to building facades being oriented toward public spaces, including guidelines that encourage active uses and entries being located at the street level, maintaining sensitivity to context and rhythm by incorporating similar façade modulation, vertical and horizontal articulation patterns, and pedestrian scale design details, etc. into the overall building design. In addition, the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines speak to incorporating enhanced design of "Terminal Views and Highly-Visible Corners." Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the following building design considerations:
  - Consider the overall façade composition, which is organized in pattern that staff believes "reads" wider than the smaller/narrower storefront rhythm that is more commonly found in surrounding blocks.
  - The proportions and patterns of voids and solids within the façade, especially along the ground level,
  - Applying exterior materials in a manner that accentuates or further delineates pedestrian scale details and building articulation,
  - Design of building corners or end walls, including those directly abutting Lisa Link Peace Park and the east elevation. Consideration should be given to designing these elevations for the current condition, which is adjacent to a building that is significantly smaller in height and that will be visible from the street, and
  - The proposed floor plans. As noted on the floor plans, there is a lower level commercial space that shares an entrance with the residential portion of the building. Consideration should be given the separation of these entrances, which may lead to exterior building changes in articulation and rhythm. Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the proposed shared building entrances and how delineating those spaces more may translate to potential exterior building changes.

Lastly, for the Commission's consideration, attached is a letter from the City of Madison Parks Division noting their concerns regarding the proposed development and potential impacts to Lisa Link Peace Park, including those associated with construction phasing and staging, the relationship of the proposed building to the park. While the development team is actively working with City staff to resolve these issues, the timing of the resolution or resulting impacts to design is unknown.

## Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

Staff refers the Commission to their comments from the February 9, 2022, Informational Presentation:

- A brick building...I struggle with this one and the two similarly colored masonry materials that are not complimenting each other. Again there is one that comes only to the ground that works okay, I don't know if the other one is needed. This building is missing something. I struggle with the very close fake balconies, it's too much in such a little space. Not every building needs to look historic, but this one isn't giving what it's intended to give.
- It's hard to let go of the thought of small commercial spaces that might be diverse and might be owned by not large teams of people. On that first level, my mind doesn't even get past one commercial space displacing several, and if the one doesn't succeed that's a big empty space. Very conflicted about that.
- Our role is to review the building design and not the ownership structure or who is leasing. The building is not historic by any official designation, and the Plan Commission will be responsible for granting the demolition of those projects. We need to focus on the building materials, expression of details, color and also the context of State Street, which is probably one of the most sensitive areas in town.
- Were there any thoughts with the design to encourage or promote a certain business owner in that first floor?
  - The desired user is a restaurant that would have a two-story dining room area with additional outdoor space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level.
- Any appetite at all for planning for smaller footprint occupancies? I ask because that change could be fundamental to the design.
  - It will need to be flexible in some regards, we're just representing what we feel would be an ideal user for this location.
- I'm not particularly fond of the design, I do question the impact and the precedent that this project may set in terms of breaking up the rhythm of State Street, the height in context with the other buildings around it. I appreciate the rendering quality and the presentation, but I do worry about precedent setting given the location and context.
- It's two of these balconies per studio?
  - Yes.
- That's overkill. It's way too much going on in a very small space. Reexamine your number of punched openings and the size of them.
- I love State Street and I share the conflict because there is a scale. There's a definite scale to State Street, places like The Hub look like they're on steroids, it's too big and the openings are huge. It's a new building and that's what to expect, but I think the rhythm as you go down State Street, the precedent is alarming that we could end up with a canyon of five- and six-story buildings on either side of State Street. The scale feels too large for that location. We don't have any influence on the owner deciding to tear down those buildings if he has a right to do so, but the scale of what replaces it should be in keeping with what is remaining.
- I would echo a lot of the same things. The staff report states the building does not meet the 4-story height limitation along State Street. What does that mean to this project?
- This presentation packet has removed the tower element and they are now within the 4-story height limitation along State Street.
- On the topic of scale, having worked on Lisa Link Park, how a lot of design and planting and topography builds up against those existing buildings, there would be significant alteration to the design and quality of the park space, or some significant coordination to recreate or retain those conditions along those existing building edges. In general I'm frustrated, just because they don't have a historic status doesn't mean they're not historic. I still think that is significant to the urban design of the project and the space. Those buildings are contributing to an urban design quality we would lose with this project. Being

careful of the scale against the park, as well as State Street is important to me. Agree the balcony repetitions are too much.

- I was impressed with the building design as a first pass when I saw it, particularly after the tower element was removed. We have a lot of boring brick buildings, but brick and masonry are appropriate on State Street, particularly if it was something unusual like a white brick vs. brown we see everywhere. It's got some nice corners, a stately infill piece in the middle, it's busy with all those French balconies, but that could be modulated with thinner pilasters and columns within the units. The restaurant location is shown as an open dining area, the design team is still working on this, but eyes on the park and activity on State Street has a lot going for it. A lot of thought went into the planning of State Street and saying four stories is an appropriate height. There's some potential for more activity and vibrancy on this block.
- In terms of successful infill on State Street I look to the 100 Block, what appears to be series of smaller scale facades, but the interior is one continuous floor plate. It kept the scale and rhythm of the street. I struggle with the long horizontals, the width of this building. Think about the American Bank project on the Square. I don't like the Juliette balconies.
- Something to think about, if those corner pieces are making you think it looks like one long building, maybe it could be those two strong corner elements and the middle section broken up into two. I hope we're not suggesting replicating a historic look. A new contemporary expression using the existing pattern of development along State Street as an inspiration is the way to go.
- I don't mind the white brick, but not white brick plus white CMU. Historic structures have their place, but not everything old needs to be saved. I can see replacing things with modern interpretations of, or something that is appropriate. As far as the uses and tenants, that's not our purview. I do like the treatment of the railing at the top. There's potential here but there's too much going on.