URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING REPORT September 7, 2022

Agenda Item #: 4

Project Title: 415 N. Lake Street – Planned Development (PD), New Lake Street Public Parking Ramp and Mixed-Use Building. 2nd Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 71257

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper and Juliana Bennett.

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of September 7, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new public parking garage and mixed-use building located at 415 N. Lake Street. Registered and speaking in support were Nate Gundrum, John Chapman and Michael Oates. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Mike Paluga and Claire Lommen.

The City issued an RFP with four priorities: (1) to replace the existing State Street garage with a new parking structure (Lake Street only), (2) to incorporate a bus terminal to serve as a home for the regional bus lines, (3) to enhance the activation of Lake Street and to create a stronger connection between University Avenue and State Street, and (4) to maximize the development potential of this site over and above the City's needs. This public/private partnership will have the City operating the parking and bus terminal, with a private housing component. This has been presented to the Landmarks Commission due to being adjacent to the Church Key building on University Avenue, a designated landmark. Feedback was positive, with the project being in line with the size and scale of other recent projects in the area and not negatively impacting the landmarked property. The student housing vehicles will enter on Hawthorne Court to lower level parking, buses will come off University Avenue down Hawthorne Court to the north and travel through the building. The programming for the terrace space above the student lofts is still being determined, and a rooftop terrace on the northern portion will overlook the lake. Typical units will be wrapped in a C-shape to maximize natural daylight into as many units as possible. Building materials include masonry along the base, metal panel in dark gray and white, an aluminum window system in white with bronzed, with a portion of the east face as a continuous insulation system. The white crown will be continuous white metal panel. The existing connecting bridges will be replaced.

The Commission discussed the following:

- This is a nice looking building and a nice solution to a parking garage. I would like the front façade better without the balconies coming out. Juliet balconies could work, otherwise these detract from the clean lines.
- Is that an amenities green roof in the middle?
    - Those balconies are designed as a half-in and half-out situation. The terrace podium we are continuing to program, but it will be an accessible space.
- The balconies I see as cluttered and will detract from the pedestrian experience on Lake Street.
    - The thought was more eyes on the street and activation on Lake Street. There are not many balconies on the rest of the building.
    - Those units are the larger ones. We can study it both ways.
- Those balconies are only used a limited number of months.

- The building materials do not seem to be cohesive with the rest of the neighborhood. I would like to see the first levels as brick façade rather than masonry, which would coincide with the rest of the area better. It will stick out like a sore thumb.
- Our Downtown Design Guidelines recognizes that we have a lot more access to amenity spaces in the downtown area not otherwise offered in other areas. I understand the terrace is still being programmed, but we are not a pool shortage in this area and it doesn't make sense for a greenspace there; Library Mall is right there. This could be better utilized as additional housing and seems like wasted space now. There was similar feedback at the neighborhood meeting.
- It's not really the scope of UDC, but I am very concerned about the entrance to the garage on Hawthorne Court. This past weekend I saw dozens of students walking there after the game, it is a bad space to have cars zipping through. It's something to plan around with how you're designing that area. I would love to see an actual plan for that rooftop.
- This is an exciting improvement to our city. The treatment, activation and safety of Hawthorne Court and Lake Street is critical. As you look at that north façade, the façade of the parking garage has an impact on that experience through Hawthorne Court, it's a funky space. It's important for you think about both that north edge corner, as well as the Hawthorne frontage, and possibly even also the south corner and how that contributes to a safe activated space.
- I am particularly interested and excited for the activation of Lake Street and a better pedestrian realm. Part of that is the street trees, it is a tough environment for them, and I highly recommend we start to think about Silva cells or some other type of sub-surface zone for root growth so they can actually grow into something substantial. Your proposed trees should start as a substantial size because of how much they are prone to vandalism in this area.
- I like these types of rooftop spaces, having these voids in the architecture. We will need more details.
- I don't see any negative impacts to the landmark building. I appreciate that the mechanical penthouse is kept below the Capital View Height Preservation limit. As a non-architect I'm unsure about the continuous insulation, refinement in general with all the materials, what is appropriate and what feels substantial.
- I have a positive initial response, specifically to the massing, we definitely don't want a huge building with a light well. I like the voids, the generous glazing on the corners. On the balconies, could they be further recessed? They do break-up the smoothness of the façade and a deeper recess might address that. The materiality, the deep strong contrast of black and white in this particular location seems like an odd choice. Have you tested other options? I wonder if that's the right solution. We have to see the backside of this building, we need to see four-sided architecture.
- The buses vs. pedestrians on Hawthorne Court needs to be studied, how those buses are going to maneuver.
- Our submittal packet did have some view of the east side. It was in the overall plan set.
- There are other ways we can design open space into this rather than having so much of it. To maximize housing that is desperately needed in the downtown area vs. the open space.
- Have you done a shadow study?
    - As part of our RFP response we did a sun study to see the impact of the property on adjoining properties.
- I would encourage you to rethink the colors, it has an effect on the pedestrian experience to walk by a dark building, especially in such a lively part of the city.
- If you have trees along the street and a canopy, a pedestrian going past the building will have to go under the canopy, and things drip off canopies. That sidewalk always feels really tight and busy anyway without a canopy coming over it, and you're adding trees.
- The staff report asked us to look at signage. I see the parking iconic "P" and "garage," are you proposing additional signage on that canopy for the building itself? I can see it pretty easily above the commercial windows.
    - We're intending to come back with a CDR at a later date. The intent is to have street level signage to designate the parking entry, bus terminal entry and housing entry.

- I appreciate your comment about eyes on the street for safety. You're surrounded by some pretty drab, cream color buildings so go nuts, go big.
- With regard to the exterior insulation, the Zoning Code in downtown areas only permits EIFS or a synthetic product as trim or top of building, do we even have the authority to approve something other than what's in that table?
- (Secretary) No. When this comes forward for a land use application, Zoning will review for compliance with the Zoning Code, but the UDC does not have the authority to modify the Zoning Code.
- So there could be some issues with that material that is out of our hands. I would say that if EIFS is going to be used in a significant portion that it not mimic the color and design vocabulary of the other materials. Maybe there are appropriate places for some pops of bright color and exciting expressions.
- With regard to the bus terminal and its location off of Lake Street, it will need some identifying element to it so it's not just a portal with buses coming in and out, so people understand that's where you go to get on the bus.
- Make sure you do have really good lighting and adequate pedestrian walkway separate from the drive aisles on Hawthorne Court.
    - One of the benefits of this project will be the necessity to improve Hawthorne Court, and we are working with a number of departments to redefine that court.
- Why does the project need to be rezoned?
- (Firchow) Staff is comfortable with the PD zoning due to various complexities that came out during the RFP process. With large parking facilities, many of the design components don't fit into the UMX guidelines. Another consideration is the height; it does comply with the downtown height map, however some of the floor-to-floor heights might not work within conventional zoning.
- Sometimes zoning considers that roof terrace as another floor, the PD would allow that to happen.
- I'm happy to see the bus component as part of this project, but surprised that the buses will come down Hawthorne Court and echo the concerns about that. It seems a bit daunting, improved or not.
- Is that metal screen material on the north and south sides of the parking garage? There are opportunities for articulation or a graphic design element.
- I have mixed feelings about the balconies. They do not get used and I'm concerned that the appeal of them vs. what they do to the overall design of the façade isn't always a good trade-off, I would reconsider that.
- The amenity areas, it's all in the details, I hope to see something interesting and perhaps out of the ordinary for those spaces, I'd like to see some plant material up there. The very top of the roof, when I see the top floor of a tall building with absolutely nothing on it, I see a wasted opportunity. A lot of cities mandate the top floor has green roof or solar, I would love it if Madison had those kinds of requirements, but projects can also voluntarily look at those options.

Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.