



Agenda Item #: 6

Project Title: 20, 22, 30 N Carroll Street - Public Building, New Wisconsin History Center in the Downtown Core (DC) District. 4th Alder Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 77005

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Wendy Von Below*, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, and Rafeeq Asad

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

*Von Below recused herself on this item.

Summary

At its meeting of September 20, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new Wisconsin History Center located at 20, 22, 30 N Carroll Street. Registered and speaking in support were Wes Mosman Block, Monteil Crawley, and Ivo Rozendaal. Registered in support and available to answer questions were George Austin, and Robert Barr.

The team shared intentional choices for contrast in materiality, based on input from thousands of people throughout the state over several years. The location is a nexus point for many activities in downtown Madison, while also forming the gateway to what will become Madison's cultural district. As they studied ways to maximize that opportunity, to understand how people will arrive from multiple directions, the concept started to coalesce over engaging the public realm by being bold and dynamic, and to balance with materiality of the building. Weathered zinc and stainless steel were chosen for longevity and for their history of being mined in Wisconsin. The building presents itself differently depending on your point of view. Multiple studies and iterations of the design and materiality were done to be sure the building does not want to be homogenous and feel like more of an office building. A more modernist approach to materiality weakened the structure. More zinc starts to overpower the massing and hinders the gateway to the cultural district. This area is already fairly dark with the existing buildings. But when you marry the two it becomes more interesting and everything starts to come together. This is much more welcoming for the History Center and the downtown area. The building is never stagnant in its presence, it will capture people's attention and intrigue them. The experience begins before you enter the building. The lighting has been adjusted to meet code.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- Did anything change? We gave a lot of suggestions, but if nothing changed it's a little odd for me. What considerations, any comments given or why you didn't apply them, it looks like the exact same project. So that is a little concerning.
 - The comments given last time were based around seeing more zinc and being used in a consistent manner. We are displaying is how we're using them in a consistent and harmonious manner, not something that is homogenous. This design is the most appropriate balance of how we are using the massing and lenticulation of this design to its full ability.
- Let's say that I don't believe it needs to be all zinc, but the comments were intended for you to explore more zinc than metal panel, or brining the zinc down to the pedestrian level. It seems like this is the exact same presentation we saw before.
 - We introduced some additional views to show how the building reads.
- I want you to show me not a different view, but show me how the comments were captured. Or showing information to show that this is not the best application and showing justification for that. If you show us you

studied that, and show us why it didn't work, then we can support your design for this building in Madison as opposed to some of our comments or previous conversations and debates we've had.

- We tried to produce a couple of diagrams in the beginning to show what an all zinc or steel building looks and feels like. We have a very refined and simplified massing with an articulated façade that tells a story. It's a balance to being respectful of its context while being bold where it sits. These quick overlays show that when you push the building to have more material in one direction or another it misses the mark, it loses its character and boldness.
- It's like a facet on the façade and that facet repeats. We've studied that facet angle and detail, which facet do you apply the zinc. Once flipped it's a different material to the other side used consistently dramatically changes the appearance. This is our attempt to try to communicate that. We certainly have studied how reapplying that material facet works, this was what we feel most strongly represents the Society's drive. It certainly has been studied.
- All the openings are also the same color, it's a little less of a study than what was being requested.
 - Even if you cut out those voids, it doesn't make the building feel less monolithic or heavy, that's the irony of it. When you go with a super warm color and texture, the massing still absorbs all of that and becomes heavy.
- I'll push back on that a little bit. This is not a design, it's an overlay of a single color. Nobody is suggesting that the face and the return has to be all zinc, but when you apply a color overlay over every sense of articulation, every angle, every reveal, every return, every mullion and say this is what it will look like as a monolithic figure, of course it will look silly. But that's not what we were looking for. You want your project approved, if I'm trying to get my project approved I'm going to answer every question and try to mitigate all doubt that what I'm presenting is the best thing, we don't know that you've looked at our comments because the presentation is the exact same. I like this project, but that doesn't mean I don't want it to be better. We are just looking to see your work.
 - To me this addresses some of those comments. Part of what we're trying to say is this strong rationale for decisions about the materiality. We have studied many options over the last year, we landed here based on a lot of feedback, this is the level we feel comfortable with and the contrast in the differing materials is essential to the story we're telling. We didn't do as good of a job last time of telling the story and showing that the zinc does come down in some of these angles.
- If I was trying to show you that I looked at that I would zoom in on that.
 - What we are showing that in a procession down the street. You see that in the next slide, it changes perspective.
- When I look at this I see more metal panels than zinc, which is fine.
 - Again we want to pique curiosity, we're not trying to give everything away. When you experience the building at the upper levels and terraces we express it more and your right next to the zinc, at the pedestrian level it's more of a teaser.
- We have to make a finding to approve this project that the designers came back with updated plans to show alternative materials selection is used more consistently. It was about being able to make a finding that there was a design presented to us that uses the zinc more consistently. We have seen things we have not seen before, including the animation and procession down the street. We have seen a little bit more detail of how they're trying to make the building comply with some of the conditions that the Commission put on it last time. Ultimately, we have to make that determination, we can't just go back and say our previous Initial Approval was no good and change it.
- Can you talk about the lighting and clarify what "as currently documented" mean? And why did you land on what you did?
 - We are right where we want to be. The design intent is that the 404 lumen rating puts the appropriate amount of uplight for a soft glow. This is a luminous measurement that is quite accurate. What we like about the 404, the ground floor at the terraces, reaches up the wall. There's an expression of light washing the building. We feel it expresses the lenticulation really well.

The Commission discussed the following:

- (Secretary) With regard to lighting, staff believes it is compliant. The only lighting issue is with the site lighting at the front building entry lighting. We will continue to work on the site lighting through the Site Plan Review process. With regard to the other condition related to the building design, these are the conditions that the Plan Commission adopted so we cannot change them. If they need to be changed they have to go back to the Plan Commission.
- I get the comments that noted that it didn't seem like they responded to our concerns. Unfortunately the two people advocating the strongest for looking at different or more applications of the zinc, neither of them are here. There's something nice about showing us your work and why you chose to go the direction you did. I would have preferred to see more choices, but I do give them credit for having the courage of their convictions and deciding that the way they have gone is the best way and trying to articulate that for us. Despite discomfort that some of the concerns of the commissioners' were not addressed in a manner that we would have liked, I guess I feel the same way I did the first go round and it is ready to move on to Final Approval.
- I don't support this project. I think it's the wrong public project for this location. I will be voting no. Looking at it through the Plan Commission, I voted no on the CSM. I would have argued for a different location, I wanted to make that clear for the record.
- The motion should indicate if the conditions of the Plan Commission are met or not and why. Specifically, the condition that spoke to less contrast, more zinc, something about the zinc coming down to the ground. There was information presented to us where the views changed, and as you viewed the building from different perspectives it seemed like there was quite a bit more zinc than what we had seen before. In reality nothing has changed, it's just about how the presentation was made tonight.

A motion was made by Asad for Final Approval. The motion was seconded by Harper.

Discussion on the motion:

- Can you make findings on the motion that note that the conditions have been addressed?
- I can't say that they have met the Plan Commission conditions, I like the project but I don't know that was done.
- If that is the motion, the best way to support that motion would be to say that the new animation as presented showed a building that had substantially more weathered zinc in certain perspectives than the Commission could appreciate at the last presentation.
- I will go with that.
- I want to be sure that we have a pretty steady finding in the motion.
- This is more for the benefit of the applicant. If a condition of approval was that more zinc should be brought down to the pedestrian level, and bringing it down to the pedestrian scale, is that a deal breaker?
- We can make conditions. They ran the risk of not changing anything.
- I think that's the intention of that consideration. This is the part that's not connected to anything else because the glazing breaks it up.
- We really shouldn't be horse trading with these guys.
- Looking at the animation one more time. Nobody hovers around a building like that animation, that's not how you're going to experience the changing of materials.
- Some of the views show more zinc, it definitely looks like the front is more zinc. This is something that the motion could rest on.
- To answer your original question, that one section is part of that lower volume, reversing that material.
- I think the lighting is pretty appropriate.
- We just have to make sure the design as we see it tonight includes those conditions.
- The no votes on Final Approval last time wanted another look at materials and they got it. We never prescribed that it had to change. We say again and again we don't design things, we want certain things considered. My take is that they considered it.

- They had to demonstrate that the conditions adopted by the Plan Commission were met.

Action

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Harper, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** with the findings that the new animation, as presented, showed a building that has substantially more weathered zinc in certain perspectives than what was previously presented, including as viewed from the pedestrian level, and that the architectural lighting is appropriate.

The motion was passed on a vote of (3-1-1) with Asad and Harper voting yes; Rummel voting no; Von Below recused; and Chair Goodhart voting yes to pass the vote.