



Agenda Item #: 2

Project Title: 4716 Sheboygan Avenue - Major Amendment to an Existing Planned Development (PD) for a New Hotel in Madison Yards at Hill Farms in Urban Design District (UDD) 6. (District 11)

Legistar File ID #: 59852

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Christian Harper, Wendy Von Below, Marsha Rummel, and Rafeeq Asad

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of October 18, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a major amendment to an existing Planned Development (PD) located at 4716 Sheboygan Avenue. Registered and speaking in support was Ethan Skeels. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Kyle Strigenz, and Kevin Yeska.

An overview shows the south and north entry points, with an entry off Sheboygan connecting to the north lobby along Hill Farms Place. The landscape plan has been further developed and an architectural element has been added between the parking area and Sheboygan frontage. The loading area berth has been reduced, and integral screening is planned for all the rooftop elements. There is more contrast between the fiber cement board and brick; the textural change to burnished block tonally complements the metal panel, and is used at the ground plane for durability; masonry material at the corners anchor the building, and an accent wood look is proposed for the aluminum louvers. The parapets are extended up through the dark building material to create a substantial amount of screening for the roof. The marquee element reaches out to the curb edge to greet hotel guests. Gardener Street is considered the secondary street with the BRT stop and will mirror the future residential building planned for across the street. The guest courtyard has lawn games, fire pits, etc. A screen wall is proposed to anchor the corner, and to create a lit backdrop for the robust landscape planned for the corner. In the service zone, by increasing the bay they established a more substantial landscape buffer between the loading bay and the building. The retaining wall creates an architectural edge to the corner and screens the employee parking, which has been reduced to 12 from the original 24; that is needed for the off-set daytime parking within the development. Guest parking is in the Block 1 parking structure to the east.

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

- Could you please speak to materials for the screen wall?
 - It will be built out of burnished block that matches the building, polished and filled, the base course will match for a nice contrast during the day, and potentially lit at night.
- Those two materials are the same as on the building itself?
 - Yes, that's correct.
- What is the wall height?
 - Six-feet at the top of the retainage. Six in the middle and 7 ½ at the corner. We would not want to go any taller than that, and would be open to taking it down further.
- Where does the screening wall datum align with a building datum?
 - It does not align with the roof, it's below the canopy at this intermediate mullion line.
- Could you speak to what caliper of trees you're intending to plant on some of those important edges – at the screening wall and between the loading area and the public lawn.

- Deciduous trees have a caliper of 2 ½ inch, some are 1 inch caliper. We are looking for immediate establishment that is also reflective of what has been planted at Madison Yards to this point.
- Could you please point out the locations of the wall packs?
 - They are a vertical individual unit within each room that gets its outside air and ventilation from louvers located on each side of the window. The actual vent for the mechanical unit will be behind the wall. It's meant to feel and look like part of the window system.
- The staff memo mentioned the wall packs. Wall packs are not allowed on street facing façades. Is there a way you can provide more clarity as to how those are integrated?
 - We have to recess it within the wall, waterproof it and put the window system in front. The mullion will frame the entire opening, infilled with glazing, light and the louver. It will be the same color aluminum louver as the window frame and mullion.
- Because this is in the TOD, even though you screened the parking, how does that fit into what is allowed?
 - One thing that would be allowed is, if we pulled the building back along Hill Farms Place, the parking where it is; we don't feel that is a good urban design for the development. We rotated the parking, cut it in half, and provided the architectural element between the street and the building as a way of providing that architectural façade. That's what we were able to do with that. If we were able to pull the building back we'd have to add two floors to the building, which would change the construction type and economics. We didn't feel the solution was appropriate for the rest of the site.
- (Secretary) The TOD overlay says vehicle use areas like parking lots and garages, driveways, and loading areas are not allowed to be located between the primary street and the building frontage. Because the building is setback and oriented towards Hill Farms Place, that creates the current situation. This is a major alteration to a PD; they can ask for a modification to that TOD Overlay requirement, provided the UDC and Plan Commission can find that the standards for the PD are met. Our purview is UDD 6, with guidelines that generally speak to the location of parking facilities, they want those located at the side or rear of buildings. All four sides of this are bound by some sort of right-of-way; for the design in front of us tonight, the question is can we find this consistent with our guidelines relative to location of parking, designing with sensitivity to context, and the Urban Design District guidelines. Requirements shall be met, and guidelines shall be adhered to as closely as possible.
- It looks like from the floor plan that the front door might be the other street. How did Sheboygan get determined as the primary entrance?
 - (Secretary) Sheboygan is a higher street classification. Gardner was secondary. Their desire is to orient towards the open space. There is a secondary entrance oriented toward Sheboygan is designed similarly to the main entry of the building and is accessed the same way. The Zoning Administrator has determined that this could also be considered a primary entrance as well.
- Keeping on the zoning classifications, is this the right size for the parking lot? Can you help me understand what the parking for this use, but the whole general parking in the new development area, how that works together?
 - It does work together. As part of the GDP there is a detailed parking study and shared use study for the entire site. There have been tweaks along the way. The adjacent structure is about 600 parking stalls, with 500 additional stalls for Whole Foods and Block 2 residential. There is a shared parking agreement for guests, which is primarily in the evening.
 - We need the surface parking for employees. They don't have any extra daytime parking because of the office and residential. There's no extra parking with the Whole Foods and residential portion of the development.
- The TOD came after the GDP?
 - Yes.
- We have to find appropriateness of the site plan with UDD 6, appropriateness of the screening and landscaping. The Plan Commission is looking for an advisory recommendation if an exception to the overlay should be granted specifically for this development. We also need to make appropriateness findings for building design, wall packs, the lighting, the landscaping/screening and the materials.
- Our concern with the fiber cement panel, so often we see that flush with windows. I don't see any detailed information on how that will be handled.

- We are wood framed above a concrete podium. This does result in a pretty flat exterior relief to the fiber cement. We haven't detailed the window jambs at this point. There are things we could do with how we attach it, I was thinking about the detailing of the joints within the field. We have a color match extrusion that captures all four sides. We would be looking at getting fasteners as well, that would create a higher look to those fiber cement panels.
- I would suggest incorporating the use of a wide trim piece around the window surrounds to break up that transition and give the illusion of depth and shadow line, if it doesn't exist in reality.
- On the presentation you had a material sheet that did not have the burnished block. This is brick #2 on the elevations, and that matches the screen wall?
 - Correct and it's meant to blend with the metal panel. We do use burnished block as a base material for more durability. Anywhere it goes vertical above that one-foot grade is only used at the dark panel. We do use some as the base course below materials on the street side, underneath the metal panel it is only a base course of 12-inches.
- What will the wall look like from the parking lot side?
 - It will be double sided burnished.
- On the west side of the building; in the black metal panel there is variation there, is something else is going on or is that the PDF?
 - There is not, that is a result of reducing the PDF.
- I think this is your toughest façade.

A motion was made by Von Below, seconded by Klehr, for Referral.

Discussion on the motion:

- We've seen this before, this isn't the first time. Why referral when it looks like, based on the list, a lot of the things have been addressed. It's difficult to have a backside of the building with parking, it's difficult to have a hotel when you can't have blank façades. It seems like an attempt was made. Is referral the answer or are some conditions appropriate?
- Maybe. I made a motion so we could have a conversation. I do find the west façade troubling, that is a lot of blank wall both in the dark metal panel, although texture could make it more promising. I also feel like the parking is better, I appreciate the screen wall. The design of the wall doesn't feel finalized yet, it is resulting from where your parking stalls lay out, it doesn't align with anything in plan of the building, and I'm not sure about the height. I'm okay with the wall packs after hearing the detailing of that. Lighting levels should be addressed. Overall it's a good mix of materials that read really gray.
- With regard to the west elevation, the Commission should know that the two planes of that west elevation are not aligned. This is what we're going to see versus a flat elevation with a lot of blank wall space on it. Referral without initial approval would preclude them from moving on to the Plan Commission. It usually means there are significant problems with the building massing, height, etc.
- The corner screen wall around the parking is too tall, it needs to be at least two-feet lower, or the material has to be different so that you can see through it.
- There's a handful of sun loving prairie type plants on the north side of the building that should be revisited.
- On the west elevation in the northwest corner against the darker burnished block there's a wider landscape space with sea green juniper, those don't get that large, you could pick something more vertical. Otherwise I commend you for taking advantage of the shared use parking agreement, that's great urban design. You're in a tricky spot trying to find some employee parking stalls.
- I am appreciating the comments about materials and the wall datum. The louvers were explained, I agree it's very gray. I feel pretty strongly that this project's front faces not the major street as determined by the Zoning Administrator, but this lovely greenspace. Sheboygan is in some ways arbitrary. When I look at the UDD guidelines, parking areas shall be located to the rear or the side rather than the front. This isn't the front of the

building. I think we need to acknowledge and make a finding that even though it is in the TOD, it's not the front of the building.

- To further your argument, I think the parking on Sheboygan is off to the side of it. There's a significant amount of greenspace where they could have tried to cram in more parking. To have 12 screened stalls incorporated into the loading area I think is a fairly responsible and restrained request for the site.

The motion failed on a roll call vote of (0-5-1-1) with Rummel, Asad, Harper, Bernau, and Klehr voting no; Von Below abstaining; and Goodhart non-voting.

A motion was made by Asad, seconded by Rummel, for Initial Approval with findings and conditions.

Discussion on the motion:

- Does the wording for approving and advisory need to be rolled into this?
- The Plan Commission is looking for a motion on the TOD overlay.
- We all understand the idea of not wanting parking lots to be between the building and major streets, but we can all see this is not that. It's more to the side, they've downsized it and screened it. Nobody has mentioned the large greenspace next to it; how often do you see sweeping lawn in front of a hotel? From an urban design aesthetic this is a nice outcome. There could be some tweaks but to me the parking lot is not on the street.
- Staff recommended we include lighting as part of the formal action.

Action

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** with the following conditions and finding:

- The request return to the UDC for Final Approval.
- The UDC finds that the VTAC units as described/designed are acceptable.
- The UDC finds that the proposed surface parking lot as designed and screened is appropriate.
- The screen wall shall be at lower in height and the materiality needs to be modified to be more open/permeable. The wall shall be designed with materials consistent with the building materials, including burnished block and faux wood fins. The wall location shall align with the building in plan view and datum.
- The sun-loving, prairie style plants on the north side of the building shall be replaced with a more shade tolerant selection.
- On the west elevation, northwest corner, the sea green juniper, should be replaced with something more vertical.
- Tree plantings located at the screen wall and between the loading area and the public lawn shall be at least a 2.5" caliper.
- Provide details on material transitions between the metal panel and fiber cement. Consideration should be given to incorporating treatments that provide more relief between the fiber cement and metal panel, including providing a wide trim piece around the window surround to break-up the transition.
- Lighting shall be revised to be consistent with MGO 29.36.
- Revise the west elevation to corporate design details or material textures that break-up/minimize the blank expanses on the elevation.

The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0).