

## AGENDA # 9

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** June 25, 2014

**TITLE:** 202 East Washington Avenue -  
Redevelopment of the "Pahl Tire" Site  
for a 10-Story, 146-150 Room  
"Courtyard by Marriott Hotel" in UDD  
No. 4. 2nd Ald. Dist.

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** June 25, 2014

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Lauren Cnare, Tom DeChant and Richard Slayton.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of June 25, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for the redevelopment of the "Pahl Tire" site located at 202 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Jonathan Bogatay, Josh Wilcox and A.J. Robitschek, representing North Central Group. The project had started out as a "Courtyard by Marriott," and has now changed to "AC Hotel." They currently have 60 stalls reserved in Capitol North, in addition to that the overflow parking would either go to the Brayton Street lot or additional stalls at Capitol North, and 38 stalls internal to the building. The valet system will be run 24/7 by a firm that is familiar with urban hotels. A large valet stand canopy would hang over the sidewalk. The building footprint has remained relatively the same, with the core, elevators and stairwells remaining the same. The primary entrance off of Webster Street has remained, and a 12-foot automated door will be installed rather than the previously shown vestibule. The entrance to the parking ramp and loading will remain the same. Deliveries would be scheduled from between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to minimize the effects on traffic flow. A café has been added near the check-in counter, an egress/ingress door has been added to the 2-story glass wall that will access East Washington Avenue during business hours. Landscaping buffer elements has been added as well as some seating to activate that area. The shared access agreement between the Rouse development and this project had a 9-foot that went back to some short-term parking in the rear yard. That has evolved to a 6-foot sidewalk, and through working with the Lamp House group it's a chance for tours. That will continue to evolve as they work with those teams. Landscaping and buffer elements have been added through there. The generator will be housed in this location, and a full height masonry wall with a louvered trellis system will be over the top for noise control. From building face to the edge of the curb they are currently at 9'6" with a 3-foot depressed area where the façade has been pushed in. In addition to that there is a 10'4" drop-off zone and they will utilize decorative concrete and curb elements to help identify that area as a hotel function area while maintaining the pedestrian connectivity through the sidewalk. The lower level will contain business functions such as employee break room and laundry room. The second floor has a 2-story space in the corner with a large curtain wall element in vision glass with an art platform on the back of the fitness room. In addition more light and glazing has been added along the café and exercise room. The meeting room has been added to the project overlooking the canopy that continues out over the

sidewalk. The porte cochere has been eliminated. They are looking to do a green roof that should include some native grasses for movement and height. The air handling equipment and condensers will be housed on the lower roof level with a full height parapet all the way around it and louvers to control the noise. Typical levels are a mix of kings and double queens, with some studios in the corners that continue all the way up through levels 3-8. The 9<sup>th</sup> floor starts changing with everything further to the west remaining the same as levels 2-8 but the corner contains an enhanced suite with its own kitchen/sleeping/living areas. Adjacent to that is a flex meeting room with a nano-wall which would have access to an outer terrace. This also provides a stepback at level 8. Up to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor is the food and beverage area where they will have breakfast, bar, lounge and soft seating. This is the crown jewel of the design with the views towards the city. It will be open to the public in a clean and modern design. The vast majority of rooftop mechanicals associated with cooking will be housed in a depressed ceiling. The overall form and function of what was previously presented as a “Courtyard” has been tweaked to make use of the “AC” room layout and create a more modern design in a more unique look. The base became a 2-story base at about 32-feet, the two-story curtain wall system in the corner carries into the second level and creates consistency with the elements. Down the East Washington corridor they have added some windows to articulate that façade further, at the same time there is enough mass there with the stone that they can still ground the façade and it’s not completely transparent through that area. Coming around the corner there is a large overhang with canopy looking into the lobby and the horizontal elements continue through and wrap around the corner into the alleyway. The middle part of the building is the transition zone where stone and brick will be used to refine the bases. In meeting with Lamp House group members, they were encouraged to provide some level of balconies to enjoy the views of the Lamp House, but they did not feel it was appropriate to go all the way up the building and stop after 3 levels. This brings them more in line with the Rouse development so they can transition to the 10-story height. Overall the key times for shadows impacting the Lamp House would be from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Kevin Firchow, Planning Division shared staffs’ concerns about the project, which include the fulcrum, and the project exceeding 6-stories after the recommendation of the Lamp House Committee only six months ago on the new residential lot. It’s a very high bar to exceed the building height and when the Zoning Code was being adopted flexibility was written into the code that if you want bonus stories the preferred route is a Planned Development. However, there are four standards, three of which apply to this project, to consider: whether the excess height is compatible with the existing plan recommendations in the Downtown Plan and the character of the surrounding area; excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building that cannot be achieved without the additional stories; and the scale, massing and design of new buildings compliments and positively contributes to the setting of any landmark building within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them. The City has not had a proposal using these standards yet. For the other bonus stories, the intent is simply not to allow a taller building and additional stories should not be considered by allowable heights by right in the Zoning Code. It is a relatively high bar to meet and staff is concerned about the project’s ability at this point to meet that. From a site planning standpoint one of staff’s concerns is the sidewalk width. It is anticipated that this sidewalk will have more than the usual pedestrian activity and potentially suitcases and other obstructions. Intuitively this would be an area where you’d want to have at least 3-feet of additional sidewalk. It’s a concern that we have 8-foot wide that tapers to 5-feet. More specific architectural concerns include the approach up to East Washington Avenue and the lack of articulation on that wall, and the location and appearance of the walpaks.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I think the first floor is much improved. Overall the building seems a lot heavier than what I remember before and it’s going to be such a big thing, it’s almost like it’s competing with the Capitol. I generally like the way the top of it kind of fulcrums off, but the heaviness of it more so than what it used to be, I have a problem with that.

- The “AC” sign cube on the corner takes away from the nice lines you already have on the building, it also stands out way too much. Could you do something like a thick glass sign that would have the “AC” with lighting showing the characters, without actually having it in a box, something that wouldn’t cut the mass of the building. The light creates the volume rather than the material.
- The walpaks are an issue. They’re regular but they’re not particularly integrated with the design.
- You mentioned a new type of hotel. I know people take their bikes to the airport, I can’t imagine flying to a new town and taking a bicycle, but you may get people that come in and start using bicycles to get here. If there’s a nearby B-Cycle station, great, but still I’d like to encourage you to provide bike parking on the property.
  - It’s integrated into the lower level parking and is valet.
 Let people know, that’s a great marketing piece.
- If you could bring this drop-off curve so that it doesn’t go back in until it aligns, that allows the window to become more with the view of the street.
- The landscaping that takes you back to the Lamp House, think New Orleans and little courtyards. Make sure you have enough space in there and that it’s done properly. And maybe the Lamp House people need to work on the planting plan with you, that becomes a real amenity for you too. People that stay here may want to tour the Lamp House.
- Wherever you can put green roofs in, regardless of whether people can access them, that starts to become that quality that we’re looking for.
- Don’t be afraid to at least look at living walls where they may apply.
- Where you have the outdoor eating is also right where the cars are pulling out from a red light. I don’t necessary understand why people like eating near car fumes.
  - We thought that too. But we were pleasantly surprised when we visited the Star Bar.
 When you do that design just keep that in mind.
  - That’s why we have the landscaping there, just to provide some sort of an enclosure. The idea is really the view to the Square. To have that component associated with the glass corner really activates the area and provides a backdrop as you’re looking down East Washington Avenue.
- Financial feasibility is never a good enough reason for granting bonus stories. I think that you’ve begun to tell a good story about why this is an amenity for the City but this will have a very hard time getting through the Plan Commission and Common Council. Whatever design ideas you pick up, you’re going to have to keep in mind why this is truly unique. The standards we heard from Kevin are telling; they are very difficult standards and the other notion is that this building is going to be here for a long time and there are changes coming all around that particular area, but at the same time you have to protect the Lamp House. I would start to think about how your building might relate to what the Downtown Plan says could or would happen in that area too, because you are number one. I think that’s your biggest challenge.
  - We do have slides that show the adjacent area as built-up but we didn’t include them as part of this presentation.
- For initial and final approval to be awarded and the bonus stories, we’ll be looking for truly exceptional design with integration of a lot of the suggestions made. I wouldn’t discount the importance of eliminating the wall louvers for the a/c units on truly exceptional design. I didn’t see them in some of the designs you showed us from Europe. That to me doesn’t say luxury hotel brand or exceptional design. I also think that the first two stories are really nice, simple and elegant. The cap to the building – maybe there’s a way of more simple elegance, a few less layers, a few less articulations. Simple, elegant, classic design. That would go along with truly integrating the signage including the view looking up East Washington Avenue, the blank façade and high sign.
- When Kevin read the standards for the residential lot and the bonus stories, that’s a tall order that needs to be addressed.

- The building feels heavy, versus a masonry mass where light elements project from it, it's like a light mass with massive elements projecting out. That big heavy corner in front coming down on that glass cube, those are the things that make it feel that way.
- All this heavy masonry is echoing the Capitol rather than echoing a very modern kind of thing the way the first two floors do wonderfully. The proportions of your vertical and horizontal masonry elements are contributing to that. They're fat and wide.

**ACTION:**

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

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall rating for this project is 7.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 202 East Washington Avenue**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	7	-	-	-	6	7	7