

# PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

April 5, 2017



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 210 S. Pinckney St. [Block 88] and 215 S. Pinckney St. [Block 105]

**Application Type:** Initial / Final Approval is Requested

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The applicant is before the Urban Design Commission (UDC) for initial/final approval. An earlier version of this request was first before the UDC for an informational presentation on January 25, 2017.

## Background Information

On Block 88, the applicant proposes to construct a mixed-use building with approximately 8,000 sq. ft. of retail, a bike center, 148 apartments and 560-stall Parking Utility garage, with projections into Capitol View Limit. On Block 105, the applicant proposes to demolish the Government East parking garage to construct a mixed-use development with 250-room hotel (west tower), 204 apartments (east tower), and 1,150 sq. ft of retail, with projections into Capitol View Limit.

## Approval Standards

This request has been submitted as a Zoning Map Amendment to the Planned Development (PD) Zoning District. This request is subject to the approval standards of MGO §28.098. The UDC is required to review the General Development Plan and Specific Implementation Plans and make a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Subsections 28.098(1) and (2) and the other requirements of this Subchapter. Please see the attachment for information on these standards.

The applicant's materials discuss the consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines. The Planning Division believes consistency with these guidelines is an important consideration as these represent desirable components of Downtown buildings. However, staff notes that as the project is being developed in the PD Zoning District, the UDC is not required to make specific findings in regards to the guidelines. The Zoning Administrator has also determined that the Plan Commission will need to review the projections into the Capitol View Preservation area as a conditional use under the standards of 28.083(6).

## Summary of Design Considerations for the UDC

The Planning Division recommends the UDC provide feedback on the following design-related topics as part of their recommendation:

- **Comments of the Landmarks Commission & Street Level Character.** The applicant made an informational presentation to the Landmarks Commission on March 20, 2017. The Landmarks Commission found that the proposed development is not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmarks. Their comments also specifically requested that the UDC comment on the appropriateness of the street level character including the color, proportion, height, and number of stories of the mass at the street level. Staff notes that the composition of the Block 105 façade near the landmark Fess Hotel (Great Dane Building) has been revised from what was presented to UDC in January, with the limestone component now reflecting a one-story mass. The Planning Division believes that the taller two-story mass/ limestone component as previously presented in earlier concepts was more compatible with the adjacent landmark building and the multi-story character of surrounding Downtown buildings.

- **Garage and Loading Entries.** Another significant design alteration was the relocation of the hotel parking entrance from Doty to Wilson Streets on Block 105. While this positively impacts the Doty Street side of the building, it results in a wider 40-foot opening on Wilson Street. The project team is scheduled to meet with staff prior to UDC and Planning Division staff recommends that this and other similar openings on both blocks be minimized to the extent possible.
- **Building Details.** The Planning Division recommends UDC provide feedback related to the following:
  - Provide detail on how glass components of the building “meet” the ground.
  - Entry Canopy Features
  - Material and Glass Samples. During their review of the material and glass samples, staff request the UDC review the characteristics of glass (style, color, tint, spandrel, etc.) and how they work together to implement the proposed plans.
- **Lake Views.** The Downtown Plan’s Views and Vistas map includes Pinckney Street as a view to Lake Mendota and the Plan seeks to “preserve” or “not further erode” this and similar views. The Urban Design Commission should comment on this view and consider not only the placement of buildings, but street trees, amenities/furniture, and other amenities. Staff notes the packets include several perspectives of this view, though none are at street level.
- **Right-of-Way.** Changes in the right-of-way are ultimately approved by the Common Council after review by the Board of Public Works. The UDC can provide advisory comments to those bodies and Engineering staff that will be completing the design. Planning Division staff note the following:
  - The City Engineer recommends the applicant install/provide additional accommodations to support tree health over the parking structure, such as silva cells, raised planters or approved equal as required by the City Engineer.
  - The City Engineer recommends the applicant install “Bassett-style” pedestrian lighting along E Doty St, S Pinckney St & E Wilson St as required by City Engineer. (This is the “acorn” pedestrian light found elsewhere in Downtown.)
  - Within the wide proposed setbacks, the Planning Division believes that there should be a clearly identifiable, public mainline sidewalk. Planning Division recommends that the public sidewalk component be plain concrete with a regular square scoring pattern to appear as an extension of the City’s public sidewalk network. Other treatments outside of the mainline walk are not objectionable. The Planning Division’s preference is that the mainline sidewalk component is straight and aligns with the sidewalks and crosswalks on adjoining blocks and not curve around planters or other special features unique to this development.
- **Fountain.** The Planning Division requests further details on what will happen to the fountain during Winter months.

**ATTACHMENT**  
**PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards**

**28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.**

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

**28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project**

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
  - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
  - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.

- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.
- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.