

126 Langdon Steering Committee Report to the Plan Commission 3 February 2020

A neighborhood steering committee met 2 Dec, 16 Dec and 9 Jan to discuss issues surrounding Core Space's proposed development at 126 Langdon St. The committee is concerned that the proposal does not conform to the zoning for the location. There are features of the proposal that the committee feels are inappropriate for the historically collegiate neighborhood very closely associated with UW-Madison campus. The steering committee recognizes that the Plan Commission is empowered to define the design of the proposed development for 126 Langdon. We would like the commissioners to consider the following.

Building Design

The steering committee is very concerned about the mass of the proposed building and its commercial appearance. The size of the front elevation is out of scale with respect to adjacent buildings and appears to be more appropriate for a location for a mixed-use development. There is little in the design that brings out the residential character found in Kennedy Manor or in the new Evans Scholar building.

Furthermore, the committee felt that the proposed building design should reflect the dignity and integrity of the neighborhood. Superior architectural design encourages respect and civility, thus mitigating many of the concerns for bad behavior. Because we are evaluating what appears to be a commercial design with no effort to integrate into a residential space, the committee feels that the design does not meet the standard of compatibility with surrounding buildings in order to qualify for the bonus 2 stories.

In MGO 28.071(3)(c)(1) concerning façade articulation: The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals, through techniques including but not limited to the following: a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade. b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials. d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals. e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

A design with much deeper articulation and less vertical height on the front elevation would address the committee's concerns about the aesthetics of the design. The Plan Commission's review of this design is important for maintaining the architectural harmony of this historic neighborhood. Because of the lack of strong articulation, the steering committee did not feel that the building design met the City's criteria for a bonus 2 stories.

Another example of this proposal's lack of integration is demonstrated just across from the proposed 9-story northwest elevation at 130 Langdon, the 3-story Pi Beta Phi chapter house, a contributing building in the National Register Historic District on the lake. The Commission must evaluate whether the bonus 2 stories resulting in a contemporary 9 story building should be directly next to a traditional 3-story historic building.

In MGO 28.183(6)14 concerning allowing excess height, all the following conditions must be present:

a. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.

- The steering committee has concerns with the proposed 9 stories directly next to a 3-story building that contributes to the National Historic District.
- Also the Downtown Plan (p. 36) “Objective 3.3: Provide a flexible framework for building scale that encourages innovation and growth while reflecting the existing or planned (if recommended for change) character of the area in which a site is located and considers the larger Downtown context.”. Since the area is not recommended for change, the steering committee does not see the need for a building that is so far outside the neighborhood’s context.
- Again in the Downtown Plan (p. 122) Appendix C: “These two small areas within the Langdon District are portions of large, deep blocks that slope downward towards Lake Mendota. Both areas are in a National Registered Historic District and include identified contributing buildings, and any new development should enhance that character...” The steering committee strongly feels that the proposed development does not contribute to the character of the neighborhood.
- Appendix C of the Downtown Plan: “Where additional stories are available, it is not intended that they be earned merely by complying with standards and criteria that would be required and expected in any case, such as underlying zoning regulations, good design, or sensitivity to the adjacent historic landmark. The intent is not simply to allow a taller building, and additional stories should not be considered “by right” heights. Rather, additional stories are to be used as a tool to encourage and reward buildings of truly exceptional design that respond to the specific context of their location and accomplish specific objectives defined for the area.” The steering committee feels that the proposed building is not of “truly exceptional design” and the proposed development does not deserve the bonus 2 stories.

MGO 28.183(6)14b: The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories. The steering committee feels that the proposed development’s quality would be in no way compromised with a maximum 5-story or even 3-story building on Langdon St. In fact, a building at the shorter heights could easily be of higher quality just because it would integrate better in the National Historic District.

MGO 28.183(6)14c: The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the projects and create a pleasing visual relationship with them. Although the development is not adjacent to the landmark Suhr House across the street at 121 Langdon, it is clearly within the immediate area and setting of the proposal. The steering committee is very concerned about the massing of the proposed development and its visual relationship with the Suhr House and the adjacent contributing buildings in the National Historic District. The proposal does not create a pleasing visual relationship with them.

Another important feature of the proposal’s design is the apparent inadequate space for commercial and residents’ deliveries including food, merchandise and rideshare vehicles. There is already insufficient parking on Langdon St and the developer is responsible for accommodating the load and parking needs of its residents. Adjacent neighbors are concerned that delivery and rideshare vehicles will park on neighboring property and occupy the fire lanes on the east and west sides of the building. These fire lanes also provide pedestrian access to neighboring buildings, so keeping 126 Langdon’s delivery vehicles on their property will enhance neighborhood safety.

The proposed design has a 2-lane driveway that will also be used for refuse and recycling pick-up. The committee strongly encourages the Plan Commission to require the developer to provide a separate horseshoe-shaped front driveway with obvious entrance and exit. This will mitigate the pressure of the delivery and rideshare vehicles and will enhance the residential appearance of the proposed development.

Because of the concerns with the proposed design, the steering committee proposes the following possible conditions of approval:

- The applicant shall submit for review a commercial delivery and rideshare management plan. This will include all delivery vehicles for food, merchandise, rideshare vehicles (Lyft, cabs), etc. Parking of delivery vehicles must be accommodated on site, must not be on the properties of adjacent/nearby properties, must not block fire lanes, and must not be considered illegal parking by the City. The building management and/or security must assure compliance with this condition and should face a fine if neighboring properties submit documentation of violations. This plan will include how building management and/or security will enforce compliance with the use of the commercial delivery space. The applicant shall submit for review a commercial delivery plan. There must be a time-limited, off-street loading zone that can temporarily accommodate enough vehicles for the number of residents in the development. This shall include vehicular turning movements, estimated size of delivery vehicles and on-site location of a loading zone of appropriate size (generally 10' x 35'). Per MGO Section 10.08, drive aisles are required to be a minimum of 20 feet wide.
- An exterior lighting plan will be submitted for review by Planning staff and MPD, UW-Madison Police. The exterior lighting will enhance pedestrian safety on all elevations of the building.
- The applicant shall submit for review a waste removal plan. This shall include vehicular turning movements.
- The developer is encouraged to plant additional canopy trees in front to complement street trees on Langdon St.
- No utility or HVAC pedestals or penetrations, including HVAC wall packs for units, and gas meters or electric meters for buildings/ units shall be permitted without specific approval by the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission.
- The 88-residential-unit project proposes to provide 20 off-street auto parking. A condition of approval shall be that no residential parking permits shall be issued for 126 Langdon St. In addition, the applicant shall inform all tenants of this requirement in their apartment leases. In addition, the applicant shall submit for 126 Langdon St a copy of the lease noting the above condition with the final plans for this project.
- Noise from the ventilation of the underground parking shall not impact adjacent neighbors.

Rooftop Pool and Outdoor Sound System

The proposed design has a rooftop deck with a pool and outdoor amplified sound which will be

open year-round. Other student-oriented developments have had unfortunate problems with this type of feature, and the steering committee is very concerned about the noise and deleterious behavior it can encourage.

The deck must be recessed from the side of the building by at least 15' on all sides to prevent any issues with objects "falling" off the roof. Not having a line of sight with adjacent buildings and ground below will greatly deter bad behavior.

The steering committee feels strongly that there should be no pool and sound system on the rooftop. Recent student housing developments that include luxury amenities have created problems for the police reflected in the increased number of calls for service from these apartment buildings.

The steering committee would like to suggest the following possible conditions of approval.

- No rooftop pool shall be allowed.
- No outdoor amplified sound (from ambient music, televisions, etc.) or live performance shall be allowed in outdoor common areas.
- Deck is recessed at least 15' from the edge of the building.
- No balconies.

If a rooftop pool is not removed from the proposed design:

- The pool will be open from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm Sunday through Thursday and 9:00 am to 11:00 pm Friday and Saturday.

Management

The steering committee recognizes that the proposed development is designed for students just moving out of the freshman dorms and will hence have a population heavily weighted with younger undergrads. Good management will be required to maintain order and livability in the neighborhood. Because the maintenance of order within the proposed development is so important to the neighborhood, the steering committee requests that the Plan Commission adopt the following possible conditions of approval:

- The applicant will submit a detailed management plan for the property that should be approved by (1) Planning staff and (2) the district alder. The plan should also be reviewed by the neighborhood steering committee. The days and hours of operation when building management staff will be on-site, numbers of building management staff present at every hour and every day of the week will be included.
- Management staff or professional security will be on site during the hours when the pool is open.
- The guest policy for the building, including policies for overnight stays and use of building amenities (pools, fitness facility, etc.) will be submitted to and approved by (1) planning staff and (2) the district alder and reviewed by the neighborhood steering committee.
- A policy on subletting apartments must be submitted to and approved by (1) planning staff and (2) the district alder. This policy must not allow subletting without full

knowledge of management and should include eviction provisions and fines payable by the leaseholder should the policy be violated.

- Quarterly meetings will be held that include building management, building owners, nearby neighbors (including house directors at sororities and fraternities and their property owners), the district alder, MPD, and other stakeholders to review and address any security, safety, parking, and behavioral concerns. The building owners and management should organize and host these meetings. Final details of the regular quarterly community meetings, including the scheduling of the meetings at the building, any noticing required prior to a meeting, required meeting attendees, and policies for meeting cancellation shall be approved by the Director of the Planning Division and district alder prior to final plan approval and issuance of building permits for the project.

Security

After working with the former Langdon St police officer for several years, members of the steering committee understand how maintaining good security can avoid many of the issues seen at similar developments like The Hub, The James, The Waterfront and Lucky Apartments. To this end, we propose the following possible conditions of approval.

- The applicant will submit a detailed security plan, to be reviewed by Planning Division staff in coordination with staff from the Madison and UW-Madison Police Departments. The security plan should be approved by (1) Planning staff and (2) the district alder and reviewed by the neighborhood steering committee. The plan should include management of and access to common spaces, including indoor amenities, and outdoor terraces and pools. Hours of operation of all outdoor common spaces should be detailed.
- Professional security staff will sweep the building twice when management and on-site security staff are not present.
- A code of conduct should be distributed to all residents that includes hours of operation of common areas, security staff and management contact information, MPD and/or UW-Madison Police contact information, and all applicable rules, regulations, fines, and consequences of violating noise restrictions whether from apartments or common areas.
- The final security plan shall include a plan for security cameras for all indoor and outdoor common areas to be regularly maintained by building management. Final approval of these documents by the Planning Division and Madison and UW-Madison Police Departments is required prior to issuance of permits for the development. Any changes to the operations or security plans for the building shall require an alteration to the conditional use to be approved by the Director of the Planning Division or the Plan Commission following a recommendation by the district alder and the commanding officer of the UW-Madison Police, Central Police District, or Chief of Police. Security cameras should be operating in all common areas and footage should be accessible to MPD and to UW-Madison Police and management for at least one week.

Move in/Move out

As with the on-campus and large-building off-campus student housing, the proposed development will generate considerable traffic during move-in and move-out. Managing this

traffic will be important to reducing the impact on the neighborhood. The steering committee proposes the following possible condition of approval.

- The applicant should submit to (1) planning staff, (2) the district alder, and (3) the neighborhood steering committee, a move-in/move-out plan, including the details on any furnishings to be provided in each and every unit. This plan shall provide assurances that the usability of public streets surrounding the property will be maintained during move-in/move-out and that neighboring properties' driveways and parking lots will not be impacted. Residents will be notified of the move-in/move-out plan and the plan will be review by Planning staff before permits are issued.

Parking

The proposed development has 20 parking spaces for over 350 residents. The steering committee would like to ensure that the proposed development does not impact the neighborhood's limited street parking. Since 20 on-site spaces are proposed, we expect no RP3 permits will be provided to residents. In addition, the committee proposes the following possible conditions of approval:

- The applicant should submit a parking management plan to (1) planning staff, (2) the district alder, and (3) the neighborhood steering committee, including an example lease with language pertaining to the amount of automobile, bicycle, and moped parking on the site, and any fees involved to lease a parking stall. This information shall be provided to all tenants and shall include notice to all tenants that mopeds may not be stored in areas on the property except for in designated moped stalls.
- The developer is encouraged to exceed city requirements for bicycle parking for residents and guests.

Construction

As in most dense neighborhoods, the steering committee is concerned about the proposed large development project. This site presents difficult constructability issues with the fire lanes and proximity of adjacent buildings. More importantly, neighbors are concerned about construction dust and its mitigation. The committee would like to propose the following possible conditions of approval.

- During construction, access to the Langdon St public right of way, neighboring sites and adjacent driveways will be maintained at all times. Covered sidewalks will be constructed and maintained as soon as possible.
- Neighboring buildings and their foundations will be inspected prior to construction and re-inspected after construction. If any damage is attributable to the construction project, the applicant shall pay for all repair or, in the case of any unrepairable damage, pay for costs associated with relocation.
- A dust mitigation plan will be implemented that will minimize silica dust (a carcinogen) and contain it on site. The developer will be responsible for cleaning dust that may happen to travel off site.
- The developer will provide bi-weekly meetings during construction in order to keep the neighborhood up to date on construction issues.



28.071 - GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR DOWNTOWN AND URBAN DISTRICTS.

Statement of Purpose .

- (a) Recognize and enhance Downtown as the civic and cultural center of the City and region; the seat of...government, and a significant retail, entertainment, and employment center;
- (b) Recognize and enhance the unique characteristics of Downtown neighborhoods;**
- (c) Recognize the architectural heritage and cultural resources of Downtown neighborhoods;**
- (d) Facilitate context-sensitive development;**
- (e) Foster development with high-quality architecture and urban design;**