



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 223 S. Pinckney Street
Application Type: Alteration to a Planned Development (PD-GDP-SIP) - "Block 105" Hotel
Initial/Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID # [62784](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Aaron Ebent, Kahler Slater, Inc., Milwaukee, WI

Project Description: The applicant is seeking initial/final approval for alterations proposed for portions of the Judge Doyle Planned Development. These requests pertain only to the hotel development on 223 South Pinckney Street, which one of two buildings approved for "Block 105" of the Judge Doyle development. Compared to the approved design, the proposed modifications remove three-stories and that result in a nine-story hotel with an alternate building façade, height, and footprint design.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on November 4, 2020.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on February 8, 2021.
- The Common Council is scheduled to review this proposal on February 23, 2021.
- As this development is currently adjacent to an approved City landmark (The Fess Hotel - currently "The Great Dane"), an advisory recommendation is required from either the Landmarks Commission or Preservation Planner. On March 20, 2017, the Landmarks Commission recommended that the original development "was not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmark." Staff notes that that glass-clad building was larger than the current proposed structure. Considering the reduction in height and change in materials, the City's Preservation Planner has reviewed this request on behalf of Landmarks Commission. She notes her opinion that revised building could also found not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmark. Further she notes that this redesign addresses the primary concerns that the Landmarks Commission had at the time that they reviewed and approved this project originally. Those concerns were the color (due to the extensive use of glass rather than traditional building materials), proportion, height, and number of stories of the mass at street level.

Project History:

In 2017, the Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission, and Common Council considered various requests related to the Judge Doyle development. This includes Downtown Blocks 88 and 105, centered on South Pinckney Street, between Doty and Wilson Streets. Three similarly designed glass-clad buildings were initially approved.

On Block 105, the subject block, two twelve-story buildings were approved including a 253-room hotel and a 204-unit residential building. Subsequent alterations were approved on this block. This included clarifying that the hotel and residential buildings could be phased separately, consistent with the details approved by the Common Council-approved development agreement with Beitler Real Estate Services. From a design standpoint, modifications to the hotel building's design were approved that removed a level of underground parking and associated garage door along with other minor façade modifications that were reviewed administratively by the UDC Secretary. No alterations are proposed to the adjacent residential building as part of this request.

On Block 88, the Urban Design Commission reviewed alterations to the upper nine stories in 2020. These plans were subsequently approved by the Plan Commission and Common Council and are also available from the City's Legislative Home page under file [57762](#). No alterations are proposed to that site as part of this request.

Approval Standards:

The UDC will be an **advisory body** on this request. This request will be submitted as an alteration to a development in the Planned Development (PD) Zoning District, 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.

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Commission provide feedback based on the applicable approval standards for a **Planned Development**, including Standard (e) that states that the PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses. Staff notes that with the reduction of height, the building is now well beneath the Capitol View Height preservation limit, addressing a concern previously raised by UDC members.

As it relates to these standards, staff recommends that the Commission provide feedback on the ground level activation along Pinckney, Wilson, and Doty Streets. Compared to the plans previously presented for informational purposes, the current plans have reduced the amount of glass on Pinckney Street, though additional glass has been added back compared to what was initially filed in December. Staff also request the UDC provide comment on the revised Pinckney facing façade, which is now articulated in a “checkered” pattern composed of alternating shades of grey metal panels. Finally, Staff request that the UDC provide comment related to the building's relationship to the revised design on the opposite side of Pinckney Street along with its cohesion with the surrounding approvals and “long” views of the development.

Staff refers the Commission to their comments from the November 4, 2020 informational presentation:

Site Circulation comments:

- We'll want to see where cars are dropping off and all of that kind of traffic flow around that front door, especially since it is valet.

Façade Detail comments:

- More hierarchy to distinguish the vertical from horizontal expressions.
- Lighting, a little color, little more detail, but fundamentally looks like all the parts and pieces are there.
- I applaud the curve on the building, that's quite lovely. Right now the façade is working against the curve. You have a methodical rhythm that seems to be competing with the uniqueness of the curve. Could benefit from accentuating the curve and having more detail in there. This looks plain in comparison to what's going on across the street. This is a primo spot in the City and would benefit from more.
- The end caps jump out to me; that big blank façade towards the left, it's crying for something. Make the building look more dynamic by articulating that blank surface. Lighting and projections, all kinds of stuff that could be done.

- I know those are stair towers, maybe the design team could take a playful or random approach to some openings there. The apartment building (across the street) is very layered in its façade, perhaps you can just start to do something either at the base or top to get more three dimensionality on that curve.
- This side of Pinckney needs more of a base, it seems squat. I appreciate you pulled it off the corner but wonder if that area needs to be defined somewhat, it just looks like a wide sidewalk and doesn't feel like part of the building. Some kind of expression of the building coming out to define that seating area. It looks squat to me and it's a little plain, I would like more definition between the base and top, more differentiation as well.
- I find this building too restrained and too corporate. It's undistinguished, it doesn't excite at all. Given what else is going on at Block 89 and everything else with Judge Doyle, it's too restrained. I recall a shared greenspace between the buildings. We need to see both buildings and how that space is resolved.

Context & massing comments:

- I love the curve, keeping that between the two buildings is good.
- Agree on the low podium, it doesn't seem to echo or respect the podium on the other side.
- Happy to see the initial drawings of this dual project, the shapes are still there if maybe not the gleaming futuristic look in the early versions. At least we have these arcs that have maintained from those earlier versions and I think that's really important. It will set this whole block apart from others downtown.
- It would be useful to see what that apartment building looks like and how it relates to this hotel.
- Very exciting design. I wanted to understand the plan for the back of the building. The front of the building is so exciting but the back, there's a big white block modeled, what's the idea with the back, is there more opportunity there to have more expression and maybe move some of the glass in the front, going with other comments about layering, some of that glass can move to the back and balance out a little bit?
- It's going to be in that slot between the two towers from Doty and Wilson. It will be visible but not how you see it on that particular elevation.
- Building sections – you have a 9'4" floor to floor height, which is also contributing to this compactness of the appearance. Especially compared to other buildings in the area it just looks so pressed down. A second use of this building would be really limited with such a low floor to floor height.

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.