

For Urban Design Commission which meets January 28: concerns I sent to the recent Steering Committee meeting I could not attend. The accompanying references are attached. Some questions were answered.

Questions for AC/Pahl Hotel Steering Committee Meeting January 21, 2015

This will be emailed to relevant others

Guest Parking

- What are the options for guest parking?
- Does it remain that all valet parking will be included in the hotel rate?
- Will valet parking still include Capitol North Ramp if necessary? If not will guests be responsible for finding their own? Will unfamiliar drivers be furnished with detailed information about the multiple and confusing ramp entrances and pedestrian exits?
- What is the path of the guest cars from the street to the valet stand?

Drop-off Area (see plans)

- How is the new drop off design different from the old regarding the driving approaches from any direction which still share a bicycle lane? Cars pulling into and out of the area and opening doors into the street still appear to present hazardous situations. The city has suggested city street signs to alert drivers to the bike lane — they will need to be especially visible and emphatic. But in general the often-congested Webster Street traffic is actually not a fixable problem as concerns the hotel even with reduced height and guest capacity.

Building Height

- Why does the new plan show no substantial reduction in building height and cast shadows as required by every advisory or regulating body that has studied and spoken to this critical issue?

If the AC organization intends to have educated collaboration with heritage tourism and the Lamp House it surely recognizes the importance of preserving the historic character of the interior space of the block, the dedicated character of the entire block, and the Lamp House design and functional intentions. These can only be satisfied, and still not optimally, by following the height limitations. If the hotel capitalizes on its good fortune to be an intimate neighbor of a landmark property it can elevate its own stature and shape an even greater vision by respecting the Lamp House with a truly appropriate hotel design.

Thank you,
Anne Stoelting
■ N. Hamilton St. # ■
Madison, WI 53703

January 18, 2015

Subject: Development Proposal for the Pahl Tire Site

From: Bob and Patty Wood, 125 North Hamilton Street, Madison, Wisconsin

The Urban Design and Plan Commissions are faced with a difficult situation in which a decision needs to be based on subjective criteria and thus hopefully welcome neighboring resident input to help resolve.

With apologies for being out of town during upcoming important meetings, here are some considerations regarding each of the four judgement criteria outlined in Section 28 of the Zoning Code:

- a) Compatibility....whether the proposed development is 8 or 10 stories, it will tower above every other building on the block. It will be seen from every angle and from near and far distances and therefore needs to be carefully designed on 4 sides.
The developers show graphics for 3 sides only and have provided only a drawing of the northwest NW elevation. Their drawing of this elevation does little to demonstrate exemplary architecture, rather a drab and institutional look is presented.
- b) The requirement to demonstrate a higher quality to gain approval for added height is again subject to opinion....ours is that the design looks like a dorm-like box with a fancy lid. Does it not mirror the Inn on the Park situation in some way....placing an 'iconic' piece on top of a massive rectangular form that must have been deemed acceptable at the time and has served to punish us all these years?
- c) The case regarding implications for The Lamp House are well presented and fully supportable.
- d) Have the required viewshed studies been provided by the developer (apologies if so)?
".....there are no negative impacts on the view shed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant."
The following amateurish photo (below) is included to demonstrate the need for an illustrative and accurate study to show the impact of what is actually being proposed.

With appreciation and respect for the duties and responsibilities you are undertaking, a decision to require the developers to work within the prescribed height limits will be well supported.



January 25th, 2015

Subject: Development Proposal for the Pahl Tire Site by NCG
From: Bill Gates, 125 N Hamilton St., #1203, Madison WI 53703
To Whom It May Concern:

As in previous memoranda, I offer the following observations as my personal view of the "development proposal for the Pahl Tire site". I have participated as a member of the "Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee" and the steering committee for the above proposal. I have previously served on the steering committee for the adjacent development on Webster known as the "Rouse project."

In the fall the Urban Design Commission accepted (9/17/14) in a split decision the North Central Group's proposal to redevelop as a *Marriott AC Hotel* the Pahl Tire site (corner of East Washington and Webster) and one adjacent property along Webster Street. The Commission chairperson broke a three to three tie. The Planning Commission subsequently recommended against acceptance. NCG withdrew its plan.

In early January NCG began the resubmit process and initiated an aggressive review and acceptance plan that would conclude February 24th at the City Council meeting assuming UDC and Planning Commissions approve. The neighborhood "Steering Committee" met with NCG last Wednesday (1/21/15). I attended the UDC meeting the week before where NCG presented "Informational Details" so I could be somewhat better informed as to how significant the changes that NCG is now submitting really are.

I believe that NCG has acted in good faith and changed the building footprint and configuration of facilities in a manner to keep the hotel functional and operate somewhat more safely. Nonetheless the same concerns remain as expressed before in my memorandum submitted to UDC for 9/17/14.

NCG again asserts the project architecture is "*exceptional*" and having no or insignificant impact on the Lamp House Frank Lloyd Wright site. Citizen concerns that a 10-story structure is inappropriate have not truly been addressed. Neither (at least publicly) has consideration of different step-downs (Nan Fey, 1/21/15 Memorandum to UDC) and height limits of 8-stories (Pahl) and 6-stories (residential building) which would be consistent with the Lamp House Block Plan and are required to be taken into consideration.

It is imperative that the UDC consider the cumulative effects of its decisions. The Rouse site, further along Webster, will have light/shadow impacts on the Lamp House. The NCG AC Hotel will have light/shadow impacts. As yet unknown proposals along the opposing block face of Webster Street will undoubtedly be "*architecturally exceptional*" and thus at maximum height.

The cumulative effect will collectively contravene the Lamp House Block Plan.

TO: Members of the Urban Design Commission and Planning Staff

FROM: Nan Fey

RE: North Central Group's Hotel Project on the Lamp House Block
Legistar #33109 (was #36335 on 1/14/15)

DATE: January 28, 2015

The UDC asked the developer to address two significant issues when it returned to the commission today – the economics of the project and the height of the building. In the materials provided to the public, there appears to be no effort made to explain the economics the developer claims necessitate a 10-story building....and the building has only grown taller, now encroaching on the Capitol Height Limit. This is totally unresponsive to the requests of several commission members, increasingly disrespectful of the plans and expectations of the community for this prominent and sensitive location, and further evidence that this project should be rejected.

This developer continues to ignore the stated goals of our community for the height, massing and character of buildings on this important heritage block that have been clearly stated in adopted plans. The Comp Plan (2006) identified the significance of the Downtown Core, which the Downtown Special Area Plan studied more intensely, offering detailed recommendations in 2012. Most recently, in 2014 the Lamp House Ad Hoc Committee focused on this one block in great detail, making fine-grained recommendations based on reasoning upheld by the Common Council when it adopted the Block Plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan. The history and importance of planning here is readily apparent, and the resulting plans provide clear guidance to both developers and the community about what is expected to occur in this area. The developer is ignoring these statements of community values by asking not only for Planned Development zoning, but adding a request for a conditional use to exceed the Capitol View Height Limit. No matter how beautiful this building may have become in the eyes of some, it doesn't belong on this site.

The developer minimizes the impact of its building's shadows on the Lamp House for 90 minutes or more at the equinoxes, increasing to what would likely be total shadow at the winter solstice. Imagine the impact this might have on the ability of a heritage tourism operator to restore an inviting space on the rooftop of this building from which visitors could enjoy the views year-round. It's potentially a very significant impact, yet there's been no attempt to minimize the shadows of this building or comply with the 6-story height limit required on Webster Street.

There is no standard for policy-makers on the UDC or the Plan Commission to consider the economic feasibility of this project. But even if the developer were willing to discuss its finances, it is simply not the community's responsibility to rescue someone who paid too much for land they should have known could not

be developed at an intensity that could provide the profits they've promised their investors. Almost any new development on this site will increase the tax base for the City – we shouldn't accept a development that claims it can't succeed without special dispensation from adopted plan requirements that it should have been aware of and respected from the beginning.

Finally, I want to comment on the Addendum that Mr. Firchow has provided to last fall's Staff Report that will be going to the Plan Commission on February 9th. In my years as its chair, I read dozens – maybe hundreds – of these staff reports, and when I saw words like “may” and “if” used in the Conclusion I always took special note. These words indicate to me that Planning Staff has serious reservations about the approvability of this project and caution is in order. The Plan Commission, as a quasi-judicial body, has a special responsibility to make sure its decisions are based on standards because it can be taken to court if its decisions are not soundly reasoned on the record. I urge members of the Urban Design Commission to act carefully here, too. While some may see the work of our citizen planning committees as making simple “intellectual choices” in the absence of actual projects, the plans that result from those decisions become statements of community values and take on legal significance once they are adopted by the City's policy makers. We should do our best to adhere to them whenever we can.

Concerns about the height of this building on this site have been expressed from the very beginning, and this developer has done nothing to reduce it. I strongly urge the Urban Design Commission to recommend REJECTION of this project to the Plan Commission.

Nan Fey
444 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703