

MEETING MINUTES

URBANA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

DATE: April 13, 2017

APPROVED

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

PLACE: Urbana City Building – City Council Chambers
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Kunkel, Nancy Ouedraogo, Jeffery Poss, Kim Smith, Maryalice Wu

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dannie Otto

STAFF PRESENT: Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Anel, Administrative Assistant II; Justin Swinford, Civil Engineer I

OTHERS PRESENT: Josh Daly, Andrew Fell, Jo Kibbee, Mary Pat McGuire, Alice Novak, Mario Vailati Riboni, Dennis Roberts, Ruth Ross, Steve Ross, Adam Rusch, Chris Saunders, Lisa Treul, Jacob Unzicker, Karl Weingartner

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Poss called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

The minutes from the January 12, 2017 Design Review Board meeting and from the January 12, 2017 Joint Review Board meeting of the Design Review Board and the MOR Development Review Board were presented for approval. Mr. Kunkel moved to approve both sets of minutes as presented. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. Both sets of minutes were then approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- Revised Exhibit C – Site Plans and Architectural Renderings – Updated April 13, 2017
- Email from Deborah Katz-Downie
- Email from Sarah McEvoy and Huseyin Sehitoglu
- Email from Mary Pat McGuire
- Email from Pierre Moulin
- Email from Peggy Patton

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case No. 2017-LBDRB-01 – A request by Chris Saunders, Vision Housing, LLC, for design review of a residential development at 802, 804, and 806 South Lincoln Avenue and 809 West Nevada Street.

CHAIRPERSON OPENS THE PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Poss opened this item on the agenda. Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager, announced the case and noted the communications received for the proposed development, which are listed under Communications above.

STAFF PRESENTS SUMMARY OF THE CASE

Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented the staff report. He began by summarizing the changes that were made and submitted in the updated Site Plan and Architectural Renderings and by describing the proposed development. He stated the Design Review Board's responsibility for review of the proposed application. He reviewed the intent of the Lincoln-Busey Design Guidelines as they pertain to Zone 1 along Lincoln Avenue (higher intensity area) and Zone 2 along Busey Avenue (lower intensity area). He reviewed how the proposed development met those guidelines with regards to the following: 1) Façade Zone, 2) Massing & Scale, 3) Building Orientation, 4) Patterns & Rhythms, 5) Roof Lines, 6) Windows & Door Openings, 7) Outdoor Living Space, 8) Materials, 9) Landscaping, 10) Parking Areas and 11) Sustainability. He noted that no single guideline is mandatory, so a project does not have to meet every guideline perfectly.

Mr. Ricci noted a correction to the height to width ratio in the memo regarding massing and scale. The height to width ratio on Lincoln Avenue is 1:4 overall and 1:3/4 when viewed as individual buildings and on Nevada Street, it is 1:2.5 overall.

He read the options of the Design Review Board. He presented City staff's recommendation for approval with the following two conditions:

1. Construction of the proposed building and parking area shall be in general compliance with the updated Site Plan, elevations and architectural renderings dated April 13, 2017. Any significant deviation from these plans and renderings shall require consideration by the Design Review Board.
2. A landscape plan shall be submitted providing a list of number and general location of trees, shrubs, and other plants, subject to approval of the Zoning Administrator. This landscape plan shall include the methods for tree protection during construction for the northwest corner pin oak, determined in consultation with the City Arborist.

Chair Poss asked if the Board members had any questions for City staff.

Ms. Smith asked if there was a historical approach to analyze the height to width ratio based on the articulation. Mr. Ricci stated that it was the decision of the board. He explained that the purpose of the articulation is to break up a large mass. The other option is providing multiple buildings with voids in between, which would not be feasible for a development such as this one being proposed.

Ms. Wu asked to retain the ability to ask questions later in the hearing.

With no further questions, Chair Poss opened the hearing for public input. He reviewed the procedure for public hearings.

PETITIONER OUTLINES REQUEST AND PRESENTS EVIDENCE

Josh Daly and Jacob Unzicker, President and Vice-President (respectively) of Mode 3 Architecture, approached the Design Review Board to speak on behalf of the petitioner, Vision Housing, LLC. They added a few more details to City staff's report, specifically the constraints of the requirements for the height and floor area ratio (FAR) of the proposed building. They mentioned that they tried to break up the volume of the proposed building with deep recesses and different earth tone colored bricks and limestone. Having larger setbacks requirements along Lincoln Avenue also helped to make it appear to be smaller individual buildings rather than one large building. They talked about the materials they planned to use and about the ornate cornice on the roof.

Mr. Unzicker stated that the doors to the outside balconies would be along the side and would not be visible from the street. The purpose of the balconies is to capture some space for the tenants with apartments that face the street. The balconies would be more like covered porches and set back really far to give that separation between the two sides.

There would be a lot of green space. The existing structures on the properties have 30.1% green space and the proposed development would have 29.9%. He presented ratios of green space for

other properties in the nearby area. He added that there would be an outdoor community space in the middle of the front façade along Lincoln Avenue for people to congregate and enjoy the outdoor space. They plan to preserve the large Oak tree on the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Nevada Street.

With regards to landscaping, they have begun preparing a Landscape Plan. It will be prepared in conformance of the City's specifications for proper types of trees and spacing, etc.

Mr. Daly stated that there would be shadow lines between each volume of the building. So, it will appear to be three or four buildings. They showed pictures of other buildings in the world with the same design techniques as they planned to use in the proposed development.

Mr. Unzicker talked about the east side of the proposed development. The parking area would be screened with a wood fence along with some tall vegetation. They decided to use a fiber cement material with a horizontal lap pattern along the east side or back of the building. Mr. Daly added that there would be parking under the backside of the building, so the purpose to use the fiber cement material would be to lighten the weight of the building over these parking spaces.

Mr. Kunkel asked if the north and south ends of the east side would be in brick and limestone. Mr. Unzicker answered yes. The fiber cement material would only be used where parking would be located under the building.

Ms. Wu wondered about the dimension of the recesses. Mr. Unzicker explained that the recessed areas on the ends would be about 6 feet and the one in the middle where the community space would be located would be about 12 feet. The recessed area above the vehicular entrance along Nevada Street would be about 20 feet.

Ms. Wu asked about brick pillars on the front façade. Mr. Unzicker replied that it would be to give some interest to the front façade. It would be another focal element to help break up the massing of the front façade.

Ms. Smith questioned how high the cornices would extend above the roof. Mr. Unzicker replied that the cornices would be 4 feet tall from the roof deck. The condensing units would be located on the roof and would be 30 inches tall and would not be visible from the street.

Ms. Smith asked if they had considered continuing the cornices around the back of the proposed building. Mr. Unzicker noted that they would still provide a cap on the roof on the east side; however, it would not be quite as elaborate.

Mr. Poss noticed that on the south end of the east side, there was no cornice shown on the plans. Mr. Unzicker explained that it would be lap siding. Mr. Poss asked if they would consider extending the brick siding to the south end of the east side to make the design more consistent.

Mr. Poss wondered if the railings between the piers were balconies or just decorative. Mr. Unzicker replied that they are just decorative. Mr. Poss suggested rather than building piers to have the limestone go up to the window sills on the second floor.

Mr. Poss inquired if the cornice would be constructed from limestone. Mr. Unzicker explained that the cornice would be fabricated from either fiber cement material or be a faux stone that would be fabricated from a high density foam with a stucco coating. Mr. Poss recommended that they be cautious with what materials they use. They do not need so much depth to create the effect they are after. They should let the sun and the shadow create the effect for them.

PROPONENTS PRESENT EVIDENCE

Adam Rusch approached the Design Review Board to speak in favor of the proposed development. He believed it would be an improvement over the existing structures. The stone and brick façade would be a nice face to Lincoln Avenue and would be compatible with the neighborhood. He recalled that during the recent election how all of the running candidates talked about Urbana being open for business. They all stated that they want to attract development and making improvements to attract more people. The proposed development is a proposal with private money of someone wanting to make Urbana a better place. He encouraged the Design Review Board to approve the proposed development with the City staff's recommendations along with some design critique.

OPPONENTS PRESENT EVIDENCE AND ASK QUESTIONS

Mary Pat McGuire approached the Design Review Board to express some concerns about the proposed development. She stated that the nearby residents have not had much time to review the material or to meet with the architects or the applicant. She felt it would have been beneficial to be able to exchange some concerns and to prioritize some things that they felt would be important to keep the proposed development in quality with the surrounding neighborhood.

She highlighted some of the comments she expressed in her letter submitted and handed out as part of the written communications. These comments pertained to Comparable in Zone 1, Building Massing and Scale, Materials of the Building, Imperviousness, Tree Planting and Vegetation, Tree Preservation and Building Setbacks. She requested that the Design Review Board make no decision at this meeting.

Pierre Moulin approached the Design Review Board to express his concerns. He concurred with what Ms. McGuire said. He felt that the proposed development was a good start to making the development compatible with the neighborhood, but it still had a long way to go. He expressed similar concerns with the proposed materials and greenery. He did not see the proposed development plans preserving the existing greenery. Therefore, they need much improvement in the landscaping plan.

With regards to the length of the proposed building, he commented that it would be a gigantic "L". It was not in the style of the entire neighborhood.

The property owner and architects' goal was to pack as many tenants in as the space provides. However, he expressed concern for an increase in noise. The proposed development would triple

the density of residents on the subject properties. This would increase the amount of water usage, and he did not see the existing sewer system being addressed.

In conclusion, he did not feel that the Design Review Board could make a decision at this time.

Steve Ross approached the Design Review Board to voice his concerns about the quality of the materials that was being proposed on the east side of the proposed development. The Lincoln-Busey Design Guidelines discouraged the use of fiber-cement material. He would like to see brick material used and felt it could be done in a way that would not affect the engineering quality of the building. He stated that he appreciated the property owner's efforts to reduce the size of the proposed building.

Chair Poss clarified the interpretation of the use of fiber-cement. The Design Guidelines state that *"the use of wood or fiber cement was encouraged as an alternative to vinyl siding"*.

Lisa Treul approached the Design Review Board to speak in opposition of the proposed development. While there are many concerns about development in the West Urbana Neighborhood area (WUNA), the residents welcome it. She encouraged developers reach out to the neighbors before bringing forth development projects to the City. She asked that the Board to continue the case to allow the neighbors an opportunity to discuss the issues about the quality of the construction materials, issues with drainage, and issues with noise, traffic and safety. Also, she believed it would allow the architects more time to reconsider the idea of having one and two-bedroom apartments rather than three and four-bedrooms. The bottom line is to have the developers and the neighbors in the area coming together to work out the remaining issues.

Chair Poss inquired about the sewer capacity. Justin Swinford, from Public Works, addressed the storm sewer and sanitary sewer capacity. Public Works will review the site plans for storm sewer and drainage for the proposed project when they are submitted.

With regards to the Berns, Clancy and Associates report that had previously been mentioned, the report references the 1981 Greely & Hanson report on the sanitary sewer system that was done for the City of Urbana. The report outlines some concerns with the Coler Avenue sanitary sewer for both the capacity and the condition of the sewer system. In 1991, an additional sewer was built down Coler Avenue to address any capacity issues. Since that time, the pre-existing system has been improved with cured in place lining annually. Therefore, the issues that are mentioned in the report do not reflect the existing condition of the sanitary sewer system. Public Works believed that the capacity would be there for the proposed development. In addition, the City has requirements for drainage for new developments and any additional impervious area would need to be accounted for.

Ms. Wu asked about the process with regards to review of the storm sewer and sanitary plans. If the Design Review Board approves the proposed development, but the plans do not meet the requirements of the City, then what happens? Mr. Swinford explained that the Engineering Division of Public Works would review the site plans and would have to sign off that the plans meet the City's requirements before any construction permits would be issued.

Ms. Wu questioned if for some reason the developer would need to redesign the building to meet the requirements for drainage and sanitary systems, then what would happen? Ms. Pearson explained that if the changes substantially altered the design of the building, then the case would need to be reviewed by the Design Review Board again. However, most changes to storm sewer and sanitary systems are handled underground do not necessarily have an effect on the design of the building. Chair Poss added that City staff consults with him on whether changes would be considered major or minor.

Mr. Kunkel wondered what the correct way would be to compare the proposed development in comparison with other properties along Lincoln Avenue and along Nevada Street in Zone 1 (referring to page 14 of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Guidelines. Mr. Ricci stated that three of the properties totaling 80% of the proposed development would be along Lincoln Avenue, and one property totally 20% of the proposed development would be along Nevada Street. City staff felt the proposed development should be reviewed in context with other properties as a property facing Lincoln Avenue and being on a corner lot.

Ms. Smith expressed concern about the massing. She asked if they would be setting a precedent. Ms. Pearson referred to Page 19 regarding Massing & Scale in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Guidelines. She referred to the example in the first bullet under *Encouraged* which reads as such, “*For example, if existing structures have a ratio of 2:1, then a ratio of 1:3 for a new development may not be appropriate*”. She stated this example may help to put context on what might be considered compatible height to width ratio. She noted that the proposed development was not as severe as the example given in the design guidelines. She pointed out that one of the few developments that the Board reviewed was the Nabor House, which was approved to be 90 feet along Iowa Street. Ms. Treul commented saying that it was designed to look like a house and a front door was added to break up the 90 feet.

Ruth Ross approached the Design Review Board to ask a question. She mentioned that her property abuts to the proposed properties on the east side. Referring to Exhibit D of the Application, she wondered why the property line was extended into her backyard. She has a fence on her property line separating her property from the subject parcels. Ms. Pearson stated the Site Plans show the properties in line with one another, but asked that the architects clarify the numbers. Mr. Daly stated that Exhibit D does not really show property lines. The lines represented where the parking lots are. Whereas, Exhibit E shows property lines and that the parcels line up.

PETITIONER REBUTTAL

Mr. Daly addressed some of the concerns that were mentioned by the neighboring residents. With regards to the storm and sanitary sewers, they have checked it out by hiring a civil engineer who will submit a full set of drawings. These drawings will be submitted along with their construction documents to the City to prove how they planned to drain the property. The City will review the documents and approve them or not. This is all part of the Plan Review process for obtaining a construction permit.

There are ways to provide drainage beneath the pavement. They can install large 3 to 4-foot diameter pipes that will collect the water during a big storm event. Then, it will slowly release

the water into the sewer system. This method had been approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and by the City of Urbana.

He mentioned that they have confirmed that the existing sanitary sewer can handle the capacity of the proposed development.

With regards to landscaping, they intend to plant trees in the front parkway. The front setback would be 25 feet from the property line. The point of the presentation was to show the building not a bunch of trees that would block the view of the front façade. They would need to submit a Landscaping Plan to obtain a construction permit as well as the storm water and sanitary plans. There are 15 Ameren power poles on the site. They did ask Ameren if the power lines could be buried and Ameren said no, so they intend to work through this issue and landscape the proposed site appropriately.

Mr. Unzicker address the concerns with massing. The size of the proposed building had been driven by the City's requirements for the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and the height limits for the building. The proposed building would be longer because it could not be taller.

Mr. Daly commented on the number of bedrooms per apartment. One week 1 and 2-bedroom apartments are hot and the next week 3 and 4-bedroom apartments are desired. It changes continuously. They have decided to go with 3 and 4-bedroom apartments so that the tenants could turn one of the bedrooms into a study room or common area if they want.

OPPONENTS REBUTTAL

Ms. McGuire re-approached the Board. The applicant had been trying to develop the proposed site for about a year, and there has been a lot of pressure on the applicants regarding zoning requirements. Zoning was intended for single parcels not joint parcels, so things have not been fitting together very well. The design guidelines were intended to try to get some compatibility between things that were not naturally scaled to fit together very well. When the guidelines talk about massing and scale, it was meant to try to make a larger development look smaller so it would fit in better with the surrounding properties. With the open space and parking requirements, it makes designing a development such as the proposed building difficult. It is very difficult to work within the building envelope to make the kinds of architectural demands that would make it compatible with its context. Therefore, she was sympathetic to the design challenge of the proposed development.

She expressed concern about City staff's interpretation of how the Board should compare the proposed development to the existing structures nearby. The middle street (Nevada) is more important in terms of context than Busey Avenue and Lincoln Avenue on their own. 90 feet of building would be facing Nevada Street and 150 feet would face Lincoln Avenue. This did not seem like 20% and 80%. Size and scale matters.

The landscape and the performance of the site and the performance of the surfaces are not an afterthought of the design review process. The building footprint and the parking would all be impervious surface. It would not be compatible with the neighborhood to just wash rainwater away. The entire neighborhood was really about the quality of vegetation and the quality of the

ground plane to operate as a thermal regulator for the neighborhood. These concerns are part of the design guidelines. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design of the proposed development and these things were not presented.

Ms. Pearson stated that this step in the public hearing was to hear rebuttal; it was not intended for new evidence to be presented.

Mr. Moulin re-approached the Design Review Board to comment on the 80%-20% comparison. He stated that the 20% would be 90-feet of building facing Nevada Street, which are all single-family homes except the multi-family building on the opposite corner of Nevada Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. This would change the character of the 800 Block of Nevada Street. The proposed development does not conform to the intent of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Guidelines.

PETITIONER SUMMARIZATION

Mr. Unzicker thanked the Design Review Board for listening to their presentation.

Chair Poss closed the public input portion of the hearing. He, then, opened the hearing for Design Review Board discussion and/or motion(s).

PLAN COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND MOTION(S)

Ms. Smith stated that she serves on the Historic Preservation Commission and had voted in favor of designating the Trelease Home as a local historic landmark back in August of 2016. She expressed concern with the size of the proposed building setting a precedent and making it easier for future developments to be constructed even bigger.

She also commented that she would like to see the east side of the proposed building addressed more. Perhaps the developer could use cornices to help screen the air conditioning units up on the roof. Also, if they brought the brick siding around to the south end of the east side, it would break the mass down of the lap siding. She encouraged them to consider using different patterns of windows as well.

Ms. Wu mentioned that she lived at 805 West Nevada Street. She agreed with Ms. Smith's comments. The east side of the proposed building would be facing her backyard. She felt that the materials used on the east side should be reflective of the building structure and character of the neighborhood. Also, the building on the northeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Nevada Street was big. The proposed building would be even larger.

There could be an opportunity to develop the sites. The neighborhood was quite motivated to work with the developer and the architects to come up with something that can work. She felt that a lot of work had been done and was pleased with the proposed plans. Her concerns were how to minimize the scale of the building, how to ensure that it would be a decent looking building from all aspects, and how to ensure the preservation of the tree on the corner.

Ms. Ouedraogo commented that Zone 1 is a higher density residential area. There is a need for new development to be compatible with regards to comparisons along Lincoln Avenue.

However, she shared the same concern with massing and the materials being proposed along the east side. The proposed building would be big, so taking these into consideration would be helpful.

Mr. Kunkel stated that he was less concerned about the use of fiber cement on the east side especially if the brick and stone would be brought around the south end. Elevations can be misleading sometimes because you cannot read the plane difference in an actual structure.

It may help the massing to have a change in the materials. The uniformity of the line of the stone base may be counterproductive because it reintroduces the uniformity to the building versus the effort to create more modulation of the façade. Also, the uniformity of the windows work contrary to the desire to articulate the massing. There are some fundamental changes that could be made without changing the scale or massing of the proposed development.

Chair Poss commented that the whole intention of a design corridor is to develop sensibly. The architects are making great progress. He learned to appreciate the project to a greater extent when listening to the applicants talk about it. This told him that the images were not communicating some of the best things they were actually proposing.

Density and scale were a mixed thing. They are talking about the Lincoln Avenue Corridor, which is a gateway. It was also a combination of densities. There was a need to consider higher densities in appropriate places. He interpreted the design review and the corridor to increase the density along the corridor in a specialized way and in a sensitive way. Design guidelines are not perfect, but as soon as they would be perfect, a new project would come along that they would no longer fit. It is evolution.

He was not concerned with the scale or the length of the proposed building. In order to make the building appear to not be so big, the architects should not have made the bricks so dark and the renderings should reflect shadow lines. Also, he recommended that the windows be taller in proportion to play the vertical against the horizontal. Although he felt that the coloration or change in tone of the brick color was a nice touch, he believed it could be done in a way to pull the masses apart. In addition, he believed that there needed to be a sensitivity to the neighbors, who have made it clear what their concerns were about...It was not about development, but about discussion. As the Design Review Board, they need to encourage discussion outside the board room as well as inside. Sensitivity toward the landscaping was important in this project to break down the massing of the proposed building. The right landscape can reduce the scale of the pedestrian or neighboring experience. He was not concerned with the proposed development setting a precedent because that was what the Design Review Board was for.

Ms. Wu moved that the Design Review Board continue Case No. 2017-LBDRB-01 to a future date to allow the applicants to revise the plans given the recommendations on ways to improve the design of the proposal and achieve conformity with the Design Review Ordinance. Mr. Kunkel asked if Mr. Daly and Mr. Unzicker could re-approach the Board to ask about their timeframe. Ms. Pearson said yes. Discussion ensued between the applicants, City staff and the Board about the possibility of the motion.

Chair Poss asked the board members which option they felt most comfortable with. Ms. Wu said Option C.

Ms. Ouedraogo felt that Option C would imply that the proposed development did not comply with the guidelines. She did not believe that this was the case. So, she opted towards Option B.

Mr. Kunkel was torn between Option B and Option C. He did not know if the Board could adequately describe the conditions to make Option B viable.

Chair Poss said Option B. He felt that they could articulate the changes necessary.

Ms. Smith chose Option C; however, that would require more time.

Mr. Kunkel inquired about what the conditions would be. Chair Poss replied that approval could be subject to the following conditions:

1. More rigorous Landscape development with sensitivity to under store tree, permeability, shade, and things like that.
2. Investigation of the façade material on the east side.
3. Resubmitted Elevations that look at the window proportions, the fenestration of stone to brick.
4. Screening for the east side.

Ms. Pearson mentioned that they could add that the improvements be reviewed in consultation with the Chairperson. Chair Poss agreed.

Chair Poss stated that the original motion failed due to lack of a second.

Mr. Kunkel moved that the Design Review Board approve the proposed development subject to approval by the Chair that a Site Plan be resubmitted with the following changes:

1. Additional efforts to enhance the façade facing Lincoln Avenue including the reconfiguration and proportions of the windows, the limestone detailing along the base additional opportunities for articulation of that base, the engaged brick pediment details and the development of the site landscaping to work in concert with these items.

Ms. Wu asked for a friendly amendment to add the condition that the City Arborist be consulted in preservation of the tree on the corner. Mr. Kunkel agreed to the amendment. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. Roll call was as follows:

Mr. Kunkel	-	Yes	Ms. Ouedraogo	-	Yes
Mr. Poss	-	Yes	Ms. Smith	-	Yes
Ms. Wu	-	Yes			

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ouedraogo moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kunkel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager