

MINUTES
URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Date: January 25, 2012

Location: St. Etienne - Armory

Members present: David Abler, Scott Allen, Brian Clark, Todd Garner, John Hearn, Marlon Mormann, Tim Rypma, and Greg Wattier

Members absent: Aaron Todd

Staff present: Rita Conner, Terrance Vorbrich and Glory Parks – OED; Roger Brown – Legal; Mike Ludwig and Phil Delafield – Community Development

Guests: Ravi Patel – Hawkeye Hotel, LLC; William Lillis - Lillis, O'Malley, Olson, Manning, Pose and Van Dyke, L.L.P., Russ Bitterman – Shiffler & Associates Architects; Mike Macri – Ferguson Commercial Real Estate Services

A. Call to Order: meeting called to order at 3:32 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes from December 20, 2011

Motion to approve by Rypma. Motion carried.

C. Review and Recommendation on Proposed Design and Financial Assistance for Waterfront Lodging, L.L.C. (2nd and Water Street)

Terry Vorbrich walked through recent actions taken on the project. At the January 17, 2012 UDRB reviewed and recommended the financial assistance and the conceptual design of the hotels and requested additional review of the redesign of parking garage and all materials. The Plan and Zoning Commission approved the site plan as proposed on January 19, 2012. Those recommendations went to City Council on January 23, 2012 resulting in approval of the development agreement including the financial assistance package as well as the conceptual design of the project. Review of the revised parking structure design and the exterior building materials was referred back to the Urban Design Review Board.

Rita Conner gave an overview stating that staff and Board comments regarding the original parking structure included concerns that the design was not compatible with the rest of the site or the adjacent properties. The neighbors provided input that led the developer to revise the design and it is now more in line with area architecture and will be an element that successfully integrates into the site and the neighborhood. The change of location of the extended stay hotel offers those guests the similar river views, access, and amenities as those staying at the Hampton Inn. The recommendations of the public, UDRB, P&Z, and City staff has added to the density and staff feels that a successful urban design has been achieved.

Russ Bitterman of Shiffler & Associates Architects gave an overview of elevations of the buildings. The Hampton Inn and the extended stay hotel are the same designs as they have been with the exception of the use of thin brick. The parking garage material will be the same two shades of brick as the hotels with metal mesh sections for ventilation purposes. Spandrel glass will be used in the stair towers.

Mr. Bitterman explained the process for the thin brick panel application including the use of cement board (gypsum board), sheathing, and metal studs on the Hampton Inn. The extended stay hotel would have the same thin brick panel application process with an additional layer of rigid insulation to help with the acoustics and insulate the exterior wall due to the train traffic. Examples of the use of thin brick in the downtown and East Village areas were shown for reference.

Ravi Patel, Waterfront Lodging developer, stated Hawkeye Hotels has never used full brick on any new construction project. There can be problems with water seeping through the back; once the water seeps through there can be problems with mildew and mold. The intensity of the application can be the difference between thin brick and thick brick, if done correctly Mr. Patel believes thin brick can be better than thick brick. The developer is looking at the building being here 100 years in the future. A conservative estimate to use thick brick instead of thin brick could be \$500,000.00 and may go up to \$900,000.00. Mr. Patel was given an estimate of \$400,000.00 for full brick on only the Hampton Inn.

Mike Ludwig, Planning Administrator, stated the Downtown Riverfront guideline does not have a minimum requirement for percentage of brick. The new city wide tax abatement guidelines do have a minimum percentage requirement but it is not currently available in the downtown area so TIF will be utilized in the downtown district. Mr. Patel stated that when they began planning the project the guidelines required 75% which all three buildings meet. The guidelines do not specify brick size and tax abatement guidelines state durable material. The Court Avenue District guidelines have been revised and now apply specifically to Court Avenue, so this project is not bound by them.

A number of downtown TIF projects including Allied have used thin brick. Permanence and durability depend as much on the application as material to be successful.

Mr. Bitterman showed an example of the clear Low E glass that will be used. The window treatments will be a three part system that will include black out draperies.

Lighting on the parking garage will be short cutoff fixtures on the outside pointing in. The entrance and exit signage will be on the interior courtyard area. There will only be minor signing on other sides of the parking garage. The parapet of the parking structure has been raised five feet to stop headlights from shining into neighboring residential units.

Public input

Peter Percival, 100 Water Street, Apt. 301 sent a letter to UDRB yesterday. Mr. Percival added with respect to the cost estimates of thin brick vs. thick brick; a middle range estimate of \$750,000.00 would be 2 ½% which is a small fraction of the entire cost. If this building is intended to last over 100 years that is \$7500.00 per year average cost. Feel he can speak for many of the neighborhood residents; we would prefer full brick, it fits best into the area. It does not seem unreasonable nor a burden in light of the financial assistance of TIF over 23 years and the \$1 million loan. This is a very special piece of ground in Des Moines. The project should use the best materials and the best workmanship and there should not be discussion of compromise on a project intended to last 100 years. If it has to be commercial, it should be the best we can get.

Dr. C. Walter Clark, 100 Market Street, Apt. 312 stated that he has lived in Browncamp for 13 years and moved to help establish downtown presence for residents. Now there is to be built two large hotels. In the past Dr. Clark has taken guests to the rooftop deck to look south to the meeting of the rivers and the north to see the lights of the city. The northern view will now be obstructed. The physical dominance will be accompanied by the increase of traffic, walking will become less pleasant and more hazardous. The Hampton Inn will be a massive, disruptive, and uninvited intruder in the neighborhood. We were hoping the hotel would make a contribution to the neighborhood with some commercial or retail space, small café. There has been no information presented with regard to a serious study of the impact on other downtown hotels. What new guests will the Hampton Inn draw to the downtown neighborhood?

Nancy Stillians, 1604 24th Place, cannot relax about what is happening to the City of Des Moines; this was once one of the most distinguished, well designed cities. It is easy to exceed expectation when expectations are low. There has not been a brilliant building built in Des Moines since the Civic Center. There is a need to get back to some sort of plan to keep the neighborhoods free of all the destructive elements. The riverfront is nearly gone and this used to be one of the most distinguished riverfronts when the city was put together.

Ms. Stillians does not understand the big deal about density. Seems that there could be a benefit of having a hotel on the waterfront in Des Moines where more and more people are coming from all over the world that is a fraction the size. The developer could make this a place that when people come to Des Moines, they would pay a lot more and a very good reputation could be made.

Denise Maze, 100 Market Street, Apt. 419, stated the south elevation of the parking ramp will obliterate the views from her unit. Although the parking structure is half a block away from the unit window it looks like 30 feet. Ms. Maze has repeatedly asked for 3 opening on the southside of the parking garage be solidly closed. There are now two 10 foot high overhead doors for garbage, it would be more appropriate on 2nd Avenue or the north side that is less traveled. For many people this is home and they want to look at something that is pleasant.

Mike Draper, 100 Water Street, Apt. 404, stated there are three main concerns with the hotels and parking garage: real brick is important, underground parking, and move traffic to 2nd Avenue.

This project is only two blocks from the World Food Prize. When they did the stair way to meet LEED certification they went to an abandoned railroad to get the limestone to carve the stairs. This is the kind of cost you have with a project like this. Most buildings on the river are approximately 100 years old. With very little interaction with the neighborhood would like to have most of the traffic moved off of Market and Water Streets.

The residents understand that views are not protected but there are meetings like to determine exactly what the view is. Believes there should be signage restricted so no signage would face the river. There has been no discussion of the signage of the future extended stay hotel.

At the last meeting all that was voted on was the financial package and they wanted everything else to come back. The Des Moines Register reported that UDRB had approved the project and wanted to see a few minor details on the parking garage. The Council in turn was ready to give final approval for a project they had not seen final plans for at the Council meeting on January 23, 2012. The Council can overrule UDRB recommendation on January 27, 2012, but in order to preserve the integrity of the neighbor's request Mr. Draper would like to see this project denied until final plans are provided. Mr. Draper has been surprised by the lack of preparation on some of the items presented.

Joe Mowers, 100 Market Street, Apt. 501, addressed the position of the garbage elements adjacent to the Tone Lofts. Mr. Mowers does not understand why they are not on north side. There is more space on the north side because of the railroad and it is a one way street that may enable greater traffic flow.

Regarding the entrance exiting onto 2nd Avenue: Is there someone from Traffic and Transportation that could address the issue?

Mike Ludwig the site plan was considered and approved by the Plan and Zoning Board on January 19, 2012 without an access on 2nd Avenue. Information received from the traffic engineer, the numbers do not dictate or require an access on 2nd Avenue. The preference was that if there could be some on site direction for cars to use Water Street to MLK for some access would be beneficial but the Water Street - 2nd Avenue intersection was not at a tipping point from a traffic engineering standpoint. T&T will continue to monitor that as development occurs up and down 2nd Avenue.

Paula Feltner, 100 Water Street, Apt. 402, suggested the garbage issues could be solved by putting it in the circle drive.

Andy Laurdisen, resident, stated there are some conflicting arguments. The statement that thin brick is a 100 year material therefore better than brick. Mr. Laurdisen does not believe there is enough evidence presented to make the claim. If that is not true the thin brick is more of an economic cost decision. As a taxpayer I find that offensive, if we are giving free money to someone coming in to build a hotel that free money should not become profit, it should be used to make the project better than it would have been if there was no free money.

Ravi Patel addressed some questions and concerns:

- ✓ The cost budget of the project has been increased by 300% since the beginning so to add another 2% (\$750,000.00) is a lot of money
- ✓ More cost has been added to extended stay hotel since moving it to the riverfront; including additional insulation, glazing, HVAC system, and others
- ✓ Retail and commercial is not in the business model
- ✓ The present owner is someone who does residential and there must be a reason that residential has not gone forward here.
- ✓ The first developer had proposed a proto type Hampton Inn facing the riverfront. The project you see before you now is a very high quality grade building, denser with a 6 story building.
- ✓ The new hotel will create demand because there are more rooms available for people to stay. The increased number of rooms enables the city to host more conventions and other events.
- ✓ As many accommodations as possible have been made to the project in response to the requests of residents

- ✓ The signage will stay within the city's requirements, there will be no request for a variance
- ✓ The team was prepared for the meeting today although there are no colored copies there are full elevations with samples of all materials
- ✓ There has to be garbage somewhere

Mike Macri of Ferguson Commercial Real Estate Services gave a brief history of the property. Mr. Frank Levy, the owner, purchased the ground in 1982 with plans to develop as a residential development. Three attempts were made to develop the project into residential as late as 2008, but deemed to be uneconomically feasible. Mr. Patel came forward after the first hotel developer came forward in late 2008 to early 2009 but did not proceed.

Board questions and comments

- There is a significant difference in applying thin brick on a plywood panel and applying it to a concrete wall with metal stud system. Only thick set should be used on the exterior of the building.
- Is there a building code as to the percentage of brick in the building in the Court Avenue District?
- Has a price comparison been done; thin brick vs. traditional brick?
- Has thin brick been used in other TIF projects?
- What type of light fixtures and/or signage will be used on the parking garage?
- Appreciate the work of the developer and design teams but remaining concerns of include:
 - Access to parking garage
 - Integrity of the thin brick, would like to request that every attempt be made to look like a full masonry wall. Believe the thin brick is not unlike most of the projects surrounding the area that have cement board exteriors, the workmanship is the most important part of the process.
 - Has every attempt been made to make the project appear not unlike other buildings in the area?
- The City has safeguards in place within city codes if any portion of the project fails.
- The developer has worked with residents and the changes have made it a better project. This is a big project – it is here for a long time.
- E5W building thin brick was put only on the concrete panels on the side along Walnut, the façade on 5th Street traditional brick was used for detail. Thin brick makes sense for larger mass walls although for detail preference would be traditional brick.
- Is there a real number for the cost increase for real vs. thin brick?
- This is a long term investment. Would like to commend the developer and the City: The density of the project has been maximized to the fullest. From an urban design standpoint this is the kind of density that is outlined in the guidelines for land use in this area.
- Great strides have been made in the redesign of the parking structure.
- Believe and agree that comments and the involvement of the neighbors have made positive changes in the project.
- Moving the parking garage was a huge moment when everyone got on the same page. Believe the design changes on the parking garage are better and the correct solution.
- Recommendation that trash should be on 2nd Avenue; it works for Browncamp it could work for the hotels also and would be best for residents.
- There is a difference between direct applied cement panel installation and rain screen cement panel. Would recommend the use of the rain screen application.
- Limited EFIS is a good thing
- Complete support of thin brick application on the concrete walls on the garage. Would recommend traditional brick on the hotels – partly for perception (everyone has attached quality to that) it is a better product. Would not vote it down if that did not happen although would encourage the developer to think hard about full brick.
- Handled correctly thin brick could look as if it were full brick depth. If this goes through as thin brick, what's next? Other projects may begin using thin brick and is that an issue.
- There are ways to cut costs on a project – is \$400,000.00 a conservative number?
- If full brick is forced will the quality of the project be any better?
- Government standards show this is a 35 year building.
- Focus attention on the Riverfront side – give the quality there.
- Is it possible to use full brick on the lower floors of the hotels?

A motion by Mormann to approve the project provided that thin brick shall be replaced by full dimension brick on the two hotels but not on the parking garage.

Seconded by Rypma.

An amendment to the motion requested by Hearn to require full brick only on the first floor lower level.

Amendment rejected by Mormann.

A second amendment to the motion requested by Hearn to require traditional brick on street view side of the facades of the two hotels (Vine, Water, and Market Streets) with the interior courtyard to be thin brick.

Amendment accepted by Mormann.

Motion carried 5-3.

D. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.