

# URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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TO: **Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee**

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting

DATE: 21 October 2015

FINAL

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The Urban Design Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, October 21 at 9:00am at City Hall. The following members were in attendance at the meeting:

Steve Kulinski  
Marie McKenney Tavernini  
Roger Waud  
Bruce Machanic, co-chair  
Daniel Straub, co-chair.

The following Staff, representatives for the Applicants, and citizen representatives were also in attendance:

Dirk Geratz	P&Z
Michael Swidrak	P&Z
Cathy Puskar	Attorney, WCLW
Amy Friedlander	Attorney, WCLW
John Rust	Architect, Rust Orling
Scott Fleming	Architect, Rust Orling
Andrea Spruch	Engineer, RC Fields

## **INTRODUCTION**

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00am as a special meeting of UDAC. The purpose of the meeting was to review the revisions to the concept design for the Old Colony Inn project.

## **OLD BUSINESS: PROJECT PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**

- **1101 North Washington Street (The Old Colony Inn site).** This project proposes the renovation and expansion of the existing two-story hotel into a larger hotel with a restaurant on the existing building footprint. The project includes a partial demolition and re-skinning of the building exterior, the addition of several floors to the existing building footprint resulting in an increase in available hotel rooms and a proposed new restaurant, a renovated surface parking and service layout, and improved landscape design features. The project is bounded by townhomes to the east and northeast (Canal Way and Pitt Street Station) and to the south (Liberty Row), office buildings to the north, and the George Washington Parkway to the west. It is being submitted as a DSUP with several modifications, and has received BAR review and work-study comments. The Applicant has also reached out to the community to conduct a number of the meetings in order to receive their input and concerns, and has previously met with UDAC on September 9 for an introductory presentation of the project.

The following is a summary of the committee's comments from the September meeting:

The committee indicated its concern with the height, mass and scale of the proposed addition, the encroachments into Transitional Zone Setback, the need for a restaurant at this location, the apparent shortage of additional parking required by the additional rooms and restaurant and the resulting significant impact this project will have on the availability of parking in the neighborhood, and the general less than ideal site planning and design for the project. Since this project will be revised to accommodate various comments by the BAR, the community and the Staff, the Applicant was asked to return for a presentation of the updated concept design plan in the future.

The Applicant indicated that they are re-studying the mass and scale of the building along with the site planning aspects of the projects in order to make it more compatible with the community while also being economically viable. The following is a summary of the revisions have been made to date:

- Modification to the Front Elevation to emphasize the center mass/entry portico area, and to reflect BAR other comments and recommendations;
- Modification to the Rear Elevation to be more compatible with the adjacent properties;
- Modification to the Side Elevations to reflect the other proposed changes;

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- Reduction of the proposed height and configuration of the Rear Elevation, and elimination or reduction of any encroachment into the Transitional Zone Setback;
- Reduction in the number of proposed hotel rooms from 111 (or 104) to 95;
- Reconfiguration of the proposed parking in the alley to maintain a 26 foot drive aisle; and
- Reconfiguration of the rear entry area to add a walkway to the building and to improve the proposed landscape planting design for this area.

This presentation was directed at explaining the current status of the revisions to the proposed design concept for the project and to explain the revised schedule for project review. The following is a current summary of the planning items associated with this project:

Project Description	Address: 1101 North Washington Lot Area: 0.98 acres	
	<b>Existing / Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Zoning	CD (Commercial Downtown)	CD (Commercial Downtown)
Use	Hotel (49 rooms)	Hotel (95 rooms)
	Restaurant - n.a.	Restaurant (40 seat)
FAR	0.64 (1.50 maximum)	1.29 +/- (1.36)
Parking - hotel	69 (1.41 /room)	67 (0.70 /room)
- restaurant	n.a.	8 (0.4 ratio)
Setbacks	n.a.	n.a.
Building Height	30 to 35 feet	50 feet
Open Space	n.a.	6,541 sf (15.2%)

The following planning, urban design and architectural design items were discussed:

- a member of the committee explained their relationship with the Applicant and indicated that there is no conflict of interest;
- it appears that there are three main planning and design concerns with the project:
  - a) the proposed building height;
  - b) the parking requirements; and
  - c) the need for a proposed restaurant.
- **Building Height.** Comments were made that the community feels that the major issue with this project is with the proposed height, and that any proposed building needs to be a maximum of three stories (for all elevations) in order to be compatible with the existing adjacent townhomes. This comment was challenged by several members of the committee who recently had completed a site visit to the area and reflected on all of the adjacent properties along with the potential impact of the project on the George Washington Parkway historical corridor viewshed. Comments were offered that the proposed building massing and architectural design solutions are being carefully evaluated by the Applicant for all of the proposed elevations, and that the current proposed concept for the western elevation that faces the GW Parkway (adding the hyphen elements to reinforce the portico entry and retaining the end wings) is commendable subject to any further refinements recommended by the BAR. Other comments were offered that a three story building along GW Parkway would be underwhelming and that the current proposed design respects what should be there. Comments were also offered that the Applicant has done an admirable job of adjusting the design of the proposed building to the unique context of the rear elevation and setting, and that the overall project would be good for the neighborhood. Finally, comments were offered that the site planning and design adjustments on the alley side of the proposed building are much improved and will encourage more pedestrian and neighborhood compatibility. In conclusion, at least two members of the committee feel very strongly that the building should not be restricted to an overall height of a three story building.

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- **Parking.** The Applicant indicated that they are working with staff on using the currently approved parking standards, investigating the viability of the standards for the restaurant, and conducting various traffic studies to verify parking needs, parking availability and traffic intersection capacity. Based upon the current studies, it appears that the project can meet the parking needs except for The peak hour times on weekend evenings. The Applicant also indicated that they are investigating the possibility of using a valet service for employees to another site on Slater's Lane in order to meet the overall parking requirements for the project. Comments were offered that parking may be the most serious planning issue for this project - it does not appear that it can meet its requirements and may restrict the overall size of a building that this site can accommodate. The committee indicated that the Applicant should be prepared to make a very good presentation of how the project proposes to meet the parking requirement, and to work with Staff on crafting potential parking conditions that can be re-visited and re-evaluated in the future to ensure that this project does not impose any undue burdens on the neighborhood.
- **Proposed Restaurant.** Comments were made that the community feels that the restaurant should be eliminated and the space should be used for hotel rooms that were deleted from the earlier design concepts. In response, the Applicant explained that they would like to include a small, quality restaurant that not only caters to hotel patrons but also becomes an attractive destination location for neighbors and local neighborhood office workers to patronize. The parking issue with respect to the restaurant is noted above. Other comments were directed at the desirability of locating any potential restaurant with a street/pedestrian façade instead of a location that is hidden within the hotel. Comments were also offered that this could be a very attractive addition to this section of OTN and that the concept is in keeping with the committee's goals of encouraging mixed use projects that also promote walkability. Of course, the hours of operation may need careful crafting in order to be compatible with adjacent neighborhood concerns. The committee encouraged the Applicant to continue to refine the concept while also working with Staff to clarify any potential conditions that may be needed, and/or may be necessary.

In summary, the committee recognized that this project presents a unique opportunity to improve a major entry to the city and a site within OTN, but that it has not received community endorsement to date. The committee also recognized that compromises and trade-offs may be necessary to make the project acceptable and a realistic "win-win" project for all the parties involved: the Applicant, the adjacent neighborhood/community, and the overall OTN community. The Applicant was encouraged to continue to meet with Staff and the community to solicit their comments and to return to the committee either before, or after, the next scheduled BAR hearing to present the revised concept design.

- **Other.** No new additional business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:15am.

Please notify the author of any additions, deletions or mistakes in this report.

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