SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
EVANSTON PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 10, 2017
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Av., Room 2404
7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Robert Bady, Ken Ite, Jamie Morris, Suzi Reinhold, Tim Schmitt, Karl Vogel, and Diane Williams

Members Absent: Elliott Dudnik, Julie Hacker, Sally Riessen Hunt, and Mark Simon

Staff Present: Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner; Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Division Manager; Carlos Ruiz, Senior Planner/Preservation Coordinator, and Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney II

Presiding Member: Diane Williams, Chair

CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

OLD BUSINESS

601 Davis St. (L) - Vermilion Enterprises, LLC, applicant. A Planned Development and Special Uses at 601-611 Davis St. and 1604-1610 Chicago Av. for construction of a 33-story building with ground floor retail, a financial institution with a drive-through facility, and 318 dwelling units above, within a 27,841 square-foot zoning lot that includes the 2-story Evanston landmark building (University Building) at 601 Davis St. The landmark building is to remain. Site Development Allowances are requested for 1) Number of dwelling units (318 where 93 allowed); 2) Floor Area Ratio (approximately 12.25 where 8.0 allowed as a site development allowance); 3) Building height (313-feet, excluding 40’ parking floors, where 220-feet allowed as a site development allowance); 4) Number of parking spaces (176, including 36 compact, where 452 required); 5) A curb cut/driveway on Davis St., where it is not allowed (between building and ROW); 6) 5 total loading berths required (1 commercial, 1 university, 3 residential), 3 total loading berths proposed (1 existing); 7) A ziggurat setback of 29.3’ at 63’ building height along Davis St. where 40’ at 42’ building height is required; 8) A ziggurat setback of 21.6’ at 63’ building height along North property line where 25’ ziggurat setback required above 42’ along north property line (interior side yard); and 9) 6 ADA parking spaces required where 4 are proposed (revision required). In addition, the applicant may seek and the Plan Commission may consider additional Site Development Allowances as may be necessary or desirable for the proposed development.

The Preservation Commission’s makes advisory recommendations to the Plan Commission regarding the planned development application per City Code/Zoning Ordinance Section 6-15-11-4, and the Powers and Duties of the Preservation Ordinance Section 2-8-3(G) 13 & 15, authorizes the Commission to review applications for Planned Developments that affect the exterior of designated landmarks and to make advisory recommendations to the Plan Commission.
Kerry Dickson of Vermilion Development along with Martha Koch, Chris Dillon, Devon Paterson, and Jespor Dalskow presented the application. M. Koch had bought Vermilion Development with her partner Greg DeStefano prior to this project. They issued an RFP in 2014. Ms. Koch owns the University building at 601 Davis St. (an Evanston Landmark) and the vacant lot immediately west. Chase Bank owns the drive through to the west.

Martha Koch said her family owns the University building since 1948 and the building has been maintained since then. They purchased the vacant lot to the west to protect the University building. They interviewed developers for the project and decided to partner with Vermilion Development. The intent with the development is to preserve the University building.

The Plan Development application was submitted in December of 2015 with Chase agreeing to sell their lot to the west. A series of meetings ensued with City staff and Chase. In response to City staff comments Vermilion improved the design of the building. In doing so, Vermilion met with other constituencies including Downtown Evanston, Landmarks Illinois (getting feedback on the design relative to the University building and the surrounding context).

Kerry Dickson said because the underutilized aspect of the site, the vacant lot and the Chase drive through on Davis St. it is a missing tooth along Davis St. The proposed project fills that gap with a significant project. It is close to transportation and the scale of the buildings around it is such that the proposed building fits into that character. Ground floor retail is being added along Davis St.

From the economic stand point, they look at it in terms of real estate, sale and retail taxes that will be paid by the project; estimated to be 1.4 million dollars per year. $560,000 in incremental sales taxes; the creation of 30 to 35 permanent jobs between the retail on Davis St. and the employees that will be in the residential portion of the building. Adding 675 construction jobs while the building is being built, as well as additional residents in downtown Evanston, and how they could contribute to the economy.

The goal of the project is to maintain the University building; that can be done through the creation of the proposed building. The University building is within the boundaries of the development, reason why it is necessary to discuss the relationship of the tower to the University building. By following the façade easement concept (donating the façade and capping the size of that building) and by creating the planned development that represents the residential building as well as the University building next to it, they are locking the size of the University building as a 2-story, 24,000 S.F. building.

Devon Paterson described the proposed development as follows:

- The project sits on Davis St. with Chicago Av. to the east.
- The residential tower has 318 residential units
- A podium with 176 parking spaces
- Other larger buildings are around the site: Park Evanston to the north; the Chase tower to the west; Sherman building to the west; and the Rotary building to the south.
- The design of the podium or the base of the building responds to the smaller scaled buildings across the street.
- The new building provides a setback and backdrop to the University building.
- The architecture of the new building purposely distinguishes the building from the University building. However, there is compatibility of materials and colors as far as the features of the building.
• The University building has an access easement to the project, providing loading to the site.
• The new building provides the following uses: a lobby, two retail spaces, and the drive through for Chase on the center of the site and exiting on the north of site.
• Maintains the character of the street and provides new trees.
• The massing, design, the size of the windows and materials of the podium are compatible with the buildings on the south side of the Davis St.
• The podium provides a backdrop to the University building.
• The University building is 26' high, 2-stories, windows are 6.5 to 7’ tall, and the ground floor storefronts are about 12’ tall. These were the cues for the datum and heights of the new building. The new retail takes its ceiling heights from the high point of the awnings on the University Building.
• The windows on the podium are 6.5’ high, which is compatible with the windows across the street.
• The new building façade is broken into three different articulations: retail, 2nd retail and residential.
• The height of the podium was decreased by 5’ from earlier design.
• The new building material and color contrast the limestone material on the University building. It has two different bricks on the façade; there is a variety of different heights. All will enhance the University building.
• The average height across the street on Davis St. is 58’, which is the height of the podium.
• The material on the tower is glass and metal panels.
• The podium’s east façade is brick with windows as a backdrop to the University Building.
• The podium’s west façade material is brick and windows.
• The tower is setback 32’ from the property line.

In response to a question from Commissioner Itle, D. Peterson said that there are no plans for modifications to the University Building.

Public comments:
Dale Bradley said the development looks nice and anything that brings more business and people to Evanston is nothing but an improvement.

Carl Klein asked how much space is there between the podium and the University building and was masonry maintenance of the University building was considered. D. Paterson said there will be a seal right at the top (a piece of metal between the two buildings).

Anne Earle said none of the pictures or drawings show anything taller than a 6-story building, and yet the tower is 33-stories, which is taller than anything around it. K. Dickson said their presentation is focused on the podium and the basement of the building. Because of historic preservation, they are talking about the residential building relative to the University building.

Janet Steidl said the west elevation of the University building has fenestration. Does that have any historical significance or it matters to the Preservation Commission. M. Koch said there are three triple windows; there is a 6’ light well between the edge of the building and the edge of the windows at the offices.

Commission comments/questions:
Commissioner Morris asked about the impact of the new building on the University Building in terms of the freeze and thaw cycle. K. Dickson said there will not be a significant change relative to the roof and the maintenance of the building. Chair Williams asked about the openings on the podium. D. Paterson said on the front façade on Davis St. there are windows above the ground floor for the residential entrance and three of the floors above the ground floor have windows and openings above. On the west elevation there is translucent glass and openings that look like the openings on the south façade. The garage will be naturally ventilated. The entrance to the residential parking is on the north side of the building, with the exit on the alley to the west.

Chair Williams asked about the podium height. D. Paterson said the podium is at 58', it drops down 10' to the brow. The height between levels is 10' floor to floor. Commissioner Schmitt asked about the windows on the podium. D. Paterson said they are using windows of similar scale as the University building as far as the height of windows. The number of windows on the east and west sides is for natural ventilation. Commissioner Reinhold asked about the two brick colors. D. Paterson said they broken the podium’s brick façade into three distinct elevations coupled with the rhythm of the windows, yet is still one building.

Commissioner Itle asked if there is any interaction of mechanical systems between the residential tower and the University building. K. Dickson said there is none. Chair Williams asked about the retail space on the ground level compared to the retail on the University building in terms of height. D. Paterson said it is 3’ to 4’ taller. The proposed ceilings height is 14’. Chair Williams said one of her concerns is the breakup of the façade with the drive through for the Chase ATM and the entrance to the residential. Retail continuity does not seem to be there. K. Dickson said the drive through is a Chase requirement to maintain their presence; it is the key to make the development work. C. Dillion said there is the flexibility to turn in the future the drive through into a retail space.

Carlos Ruiz asked about the light well on the University Building west elevation. D. Paterson said the light well will be maintained. The light well is accessed through a window on the second floor. C. Ruiz noted the random pattern of the windows on the west portion of the podium’s south façade and the middle top section openings (without windows) of the parking garage as not being successful. Chair Williams and Commissioner Itle concurred with C. Ruiz’s comment.

Commissioner Reinhold asked if there were any concerns about the open garage adjacent to the windows in the adjacent light well of the University building. K. Dickson said they may consider ventilating mechanically the second story of the garage. C. Ruiz asked about the public benefits the planned development will offer above and beyond versus the benefits that a as of right development would offer. K. Dickson said they did not have a comparative analysis to show those differences at the moment. Commissioner Morris asked if there is a protection plan for the University building during construction. K. Dickson there would be a protection plan. Chair Williams asked if the protection plan could be provided to the Commission. Mario Treto said the protection plan for the University building could be part of the Commission’s recommendation.

Janet Steidl asked if the access to the ATM could be through the alley to the north. M. Koch said that it is not an alley, it is part of the property and a restaurant uses it. Commissioner Schmitt wanted to have a better understanding of how the parking garage openings will really look at night, particularly on the west elevation, and what kind of lighting will be used. He was concerned with the noise pollution as well.
Chair Williams asked if the Commission needs to do something regarding the Zoning report. Mario Treto said no, he noted that what the Commission is expected to do is provide a positive or neutral or negative recommendation. The discussions at the Preservation Commission are going to inform the Plan Commission, as they make their decision at that point. The Plan Commission will be depending on the historic preservation expertise of the Preservation Commission in the matter.

Commissioner Itle made a motion to provide a positive recommendation to the Plan Commission, with the understanding that there may be items that need further revision, which would be reviewed when there are definitive construction drawings; with the following conditions:

1. Enclosing the space on the 5th floor of the front façade on Davis St.
2. Addressing/dealing with any ventilation impact on the University Building 2nd floor light well.
3. Providing a detailed protection plan for the University Building, including maintenance and protecting the western wall of the University Building at 601 Chicago Avenue, an Evanston landmark.
4. Provide clarification on the arrangements for the support and maintenance of the landmarked University Building; addressing the public benefit from the preservation perspective.
5. Improve the visuals, specifically, lights and translucency from the parking lot from a contextual standpoint.

Commissioner Vogel seconded the motion. The motion passed. Vote: 7 ayes, 0 nays.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Itle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm on Tuesday, October 10, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Bady. The motion passed. Vote: 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos D. Ruiz  
Senior Planner/Preservation Coordinator