



CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 5/12/2021

To: Mayor and Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission Members

From: City Development Department, Division of Planning and Redevelopment

Division Manager: Matt Sadowski – (262) 636-9152 matthew.sadowski@cityofracine.org

Case Manager: Jeff Hintz

Location: 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue

Applicant: Cardinal Capital Management, Inc.

Property Owner: CCM Porters LLC

Request: Consideration of a conditional use permit to build and operate a mixed use development at 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue, for property located in a B-4 Central Business Zone District as required in Section 114-508 of the Municipal Code.

This property falls within the Downtown Design Review area, and as such, a design review of the structure exterior is also included in the report as part of this project.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: The application seeks to construct a seven (7) story mixed use building with basement. The basement, first floor, and second floor contain 245 parking spaces; the first floor parking is concealed by two commercial spaces at street level. The upper five (5) floors are proposed to contain 141 market rate dwelling units consisting of studio and one, two, and three bedroom units. The overall building area is 247,891 square feet on the 1.02-acre site. The building features a rooftop green area, dog run, and open space on the third floor, flanked by the building's upper floors 3-7 to the north and east, and is open to the south and west. The request seeks an exception to the zoning ordinance regarding signage - approximately 800 square feet of signage requested where 400 square feet is allowed.

The Zoning Ordinance classifies this proposed new building for a mixed use development as permissible in the B-4 Central Business Zone District upon the issuance of a conditional use permit (114-508).



Birdseye view of the property (north is up), indicated in red (image from City Pictometry).



Proposed building renderings, submitted by applicant. Please view floorplans and other building details in the attachments section of the agenda, under “Applicant Submittal” for full details on the buildout and project specifications.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parcel Numbers: [00340001](#) (301 6th) and [00340002](#) (608 Wisconsin)

Property Size: 1.02 acres

Comprehensive Plan Map Designation: Mixed Use – Commercial Emphasis

Consistency with Adopted Plans:

The [Racine Comprehensive Plan](#) states that:

- The plan should encourage the redevelopment of older areas and commercial areas.
- Maintain and develop a land use pattern that strengthens the character and livability of the City's downtown core, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.
- Promote redevelopment and infill in areas with existing infrastructure and services, enhancing existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas.
- Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities.
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Corridor or Special Design District?: Downtown Area Design Review District

Historic?: Historic Sixth Street Business District

Current Zoning District: B-4 Central Business

Purpose of Zone District: The B4 central business district is intended to accommodate those retail and office uses which are characteristic of the major shopping streets of the downtown area of the city, and discourage uses which detract from, or are incompatible with, pedestrian and shopping oriented traffic.

Proposed Zoning: No change proposed

Existing Land Use: Vacant lot, was once a furniture store.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	B-4 Central Business	Mixed use buildings
East	B-4 Central Business	Mixed use buildings
South	B-4 Central Business	County Courthouse and administration
West	B-4 Central Business	Religious institution and mixed use buildings

Operations: The application seeks to construct a seven (7) story mixed use building with basement. The basement, first floor, and second floor contain 245 parking spaces; the first floor parking is concealed by two commercial spaces at street level. The upper five (5) floors are proposed to contain 141 market rate dwelling units consisting of studio and one, two, and three bedroom units. The

overall building area is 247,891 square feet on the 1.02-acre site. The building features a rooftop green area, dog run, and open space on the third floor, flanked by the building's upper floors 3-7 to the north and east, and is open to the south and west. The building is proposed to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified.

ZONING ANALYSIS:

Development Standards:

Density ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 5 [Bulk Regulations](#) & 8 [Lots](#)):

Standard	Required	Provided
Lot Area	No minimum	1.02 acres (44,376 square feet)
Lot Frontage	30 feet	735 feet
Floor Area Ratio	8.0 maximum	5.6

Setbacks ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#)):

Yard	Required	Provided
Front	0 feet	0 feet
Side (west)	0 feet	0 feet
Side (east)	0 feet	0 feet
Rear (south)	0 feet	0 feet

Building design standards (114-Secs. [735.5](#) & [736](#)): The building on the parcel complies with the requirements of 114.735.5.b.1, which requires masonry (windows and doors do not count into this) products from grade to eight feet in height.

Off-street parking and loading requirements (114- [Article XI](#)) : Parking is not required in the B-4 Central Business District Zone per Sec. 114-1187 of the Municipal Code. The project will be providing parking 245 off-street spaces to accommodate usage. If parking were required, 212 spaces would be required for the residential units and retail space is estimated to require 72 spaces. The final amount for retail would depend on configuration, this is a best guess. The site plan indicates 245 total spaces. The balance of the spaces is accounted for by public ramps, street parking and general turnover of customers.

Two loading spaces of 12x30x15 (height) feet are required for this building and are indicated in the revised plans. These loading spaces in the right-of-way do require separate approval; this situation is fairly commonplace in the downtown area, and mimic the historical development patterns.

Landscaping, screening and yard requirements ([114- Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#) & 7 [Fences and Walls](#)): The building occupies the entire property and as such, the landscaping is all within the public right-of-way and will be reviewed and approved by the City Forester for compatibility and suitability.

Sign Regulations (114-[Article X](#)): Signage is not a part of this request and would be reviewed by the PHDC as this property falls within the Downtown Design Review Area. The applicant has requested 800 square feet of signage, whereas 400 would be allowed on the two parcels.

Outdoor lighting, signs ([114-Sec. 742](#)): The submitted plans include the installation of new exterior lighting. A lighting plan with details on fixtures and illumination will need to be submitted for review and approval.

Rubbish and trash storage ([114-Article V](#) & [114-740](#)): A trash enclosure is depicted on the site plan within the building in several locations. This complies with development standards.

Engineering, Utilities and Access:

Access ([114-1151](#)): Vehicular access to the site is provided from a driveway off Wisconsin Avenue for retail space parking and off of College Avenue for residential parking.

Surface drainage ([114-739](#) & Consult Engineering Dept.): Drainage will need to be addressed separately via the Public Works Commissioner due to the building occupying the entire site.

Sewage disposal and water supply ([114-821](#) & Consult Engineering and S/W Utility): All utilities are available for this site and the applicant proposal is not expected to impact the ability to serve this area. There will be some charges from the water utility depending on the option(s) selected for water to the building.

Exceptions to ordinance: Signage area is technically an exception, however given the scale of this project the installed signage will not look out of the ordinary from any other development. Most lots in the downtown are 40-60 feet wide and could have 80-120 square feet of signage. This parcel occupies nearly the entire block and has 735 feet of frontage; the request for 800 square feet of signage is well within what would be found on a traditionally subdivided block with historical development patterns.

Additional Planning and Zoning Comments: This will be the first new building in downtown in several years, the last building of a similar scale is at 555 Main Street and was built in 2001. While not occupying the entire block, this project comes fairly close and nicely accommodates and respects for the historic religious institution which occupies 625 College Avenue.

REQUIRED FINDINGS OF FACT:

CONDITIONAL USE FINDINGS (Sec. 114-154. – Standards.)

No Conditional Use shall be recommended by the Plan Commission unless it is found that:

- 1) The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to, or endanger, the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare.**

Staff Comments: With the recommended conditions at the end of this report, the establishment of the Conditional Use is not expected to be detrimental public safety and general welfare. Having activity and a presence in this building will be better for the area than if the building were to remain vacant or unused. This use is expected to bring customers of other businesses to the area and serve as an amenity to the area. The amenities for the residential units are unique to this type of development in the general area and could also lend themselves to additional visitors and future residents to the downtown.

- 2) The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.**

Staff Comments: This conditional use is not anticipated to be injurious to other properties in the general area, assuming the recommended conditions are adopted with this request. The recommended conditions ensure this property will not impair property values or the enjoyment of adjacent properties. The mixed use development offers new quality retail space which will serve as an amenity to those who are living on the upper floors or anyone in the downtown area. The proposed use and operational logistics of the facility are anticipated to be an amenity to the area and not a detriment.

- 3) The establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.**

Staff Comments: The establishment of this proposed mixed use building facility is not expected to impede development patterns in the area through the reuse of and addition thereto of this existing building. The proposed conditions with this request help to ensure that development in the area remains consistent and orderly, while accommodating for new land uses. The area is at the heart of the community and higher building densities (floor area ratio), more foot traffic and generally speaking, extended hours of business. This type of facility will fit in with the mix of land uses and be a compliment to the general area. Development and continued usage of adjacent properties will not be hindered or negatively impacted by this development.

4) Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

Staff Comments: The use of this site and construction of a building is not expected to impact the provision of utilities for the property or general area. The utilities are present and able to be connected to, the street network is available and access points are away from intersections.

5) Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designated as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

Staff Comments: The off-street parking accommodates the demand this building will generate based on ordinance standards. Access points are mid-block and follow best practices for the safety of pedestrians and motorists given their locations. Based on the proposed layout, it is unlikely as a result of this development, that there will be traffic congestion on streets in the area due to the ample parking and separation of resident and retail parking areas in the garage.

6) The proposed conditional use is not contrary to the objectives of the current land use plan for the city.

Staff Comments: The plan for this area calls for the development of the site as mixed use commercial emphasis. The proposed development fits within this vision and is mixing commercial uses on the site. The downtown area is generally envisioned the same way within the land use plan for the City and when considering the entire downtown area, it does function as a mixed use area with commercial emphasis. This proposal is expected to fit in with the general area and also fulfill goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

7) The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified pursuant to the recommendations of the plan commission.

Staff Comments: With the recommended conditions, it is expected that this development will operate in accordance with the applicable regulations for this zone district. The exception for signage square footage allotment is technically an exception, but if this lot were subdivided into many smaller lots, the same amount of signage would be present. So, this is technically an exception due to ownership of a substantial land area in the downtown, but practically speaking, the signage would look similar to other block faces in terms of overall size.

DOWNTOWN AREA DESIGN GUIDELINES – EVALUATION CRITERIA SEC. 114-829

The following design guidelines evaluation criteria shall be used to determine if a proposed activity fulfills the objectives of this division:

- 1) Traffic circulation. All vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems shall provide adequate and reasonably safe access through the downtown, and should promote a pedestrian friendly environment.**

Staff Comments: The building has clearly defined pedestrian entrances/exits and is anticipated to serve as a destination type development for the downtown. While off-street parking is not required for developments in the downtown, the development provides parking at nearly the amount which the zoning ordinance requires. The additional demand can be met by on street parking and general turnover of customers to the retail establishments on the first floor.

- 2) Environmental design. All projects shall incorporate sustainable environmental design, processes and practices when possible or practical.**

Staff Comments: This proposed development has gone above and beyond the normal call to incorporate sustainable development practices. The use of a green roof and through the LEED certification process, it will be demonstrated that this project is a leader amongst current mixed use developments in the area and a model for others to follow when building new in the downtown area.

- 3) Site layout and building arrangement.**

Staff Comments: the building fits the scope and scale of the area and most importantly, the block it is being constructed on. The building is respectful of the historic religious building it is adjacent to and does not dominate the surrounding façades. The open air treatment on the roof deck gives the church room to breathe and be appreciated, while transitioning to a higher mass and elevation along 6th Street and Wisconsin Avenue. The massing and scale of the building compliment the site and are appropriate for meaningful infill development on this block face.

- 4) Project design. All projects shall be designed with attention and sensitivity to the historical, architectural, and physical context in which they are, or are to be located. Special attention should be paid to the sidewalk level of buildings through the creation of pedestrian orientated details.**

Staff Comments: The site is oriented towards the scale of the pedestrian and is geared towards those users on the sidewalk as opposed to those driving past in cars. The development accommodates for all modes of travel and hides cars away from sight lines, but does not give the impression of a parking garage, despite having space for 245 cars. The sidewalk level clearly defines where pedestrians need to go to enter and these spaces are separated from automobile entrances/exits.

- 5) Parking and loading layout. Proposed parking and truck loading facilities shall be designed, located and screened to minimize adverse visual impact on adjacent properties.**

Staff Comments: the parking is concealed from view and loading zoned for residential uses will likely occur within the building, with the commercial tenants utilizing street loading zones. This is very typical for buildings both new and old; expecting modern sized trucks to fit inside the building for loading and unloading would compromise the overall flow and feel of the building. Given loading and unloading for the commercial uses is limited and temporary in duration, street loading adjacent to the building would not be out of the ordinary.

- 6) Landscaping. Landscaping design should enhance the overall appearance of the downtown area, create a logical transition to adjacent development, screen incompatible structures and uses, and minimize the visual impact of parking facilities on adjacent sites and roadways. Plant materials shall be selected so as to withstand the city's climate and the microclimate on the property.**

Staff Comments: In an urban, historical setting landscaping was done in the right-of-way and not on private property. This contextual clue about the age of development is being carried forward with this site plan as all landscaping is within the public realm. It would be incompatible in this setting, to have landscaping provided on the private lot as it would be out of context with the surrounding development patterns. That being said, the proposed landscaping is appropriate for the scale of the development and context of the area and the treatment of the rooftop deck on the 3rd floor is greenery the residents will be able to enjoy in what would otherwise have been a rooftop of mechanical units and rain water runoff.

- 7) Signage. Signs should be minimal in number and size. Placement of signs shall not unduly obscure or interfere with sight lines to other properties. Signs should be architecturally compatible and contribute to the historic character of the area through the incorporation of tasteful presentations utilizing appropriate logos, symbols, graphics and/or text. Free-standing signs should incorporate architectural features or materials of the buildings or facilities they are intended to promote. Signs shall comply with all zoning requirements.**

Staff Comments: Signage will be reviewed at a future date and will be reviewed using the standards of this criterion and the design guidelines pertaining to signage.

- 8) Site illumination. Site illumination shall be designed, located and installed so as to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent streets and properties, provide security, and enhance the overall quality of the development.**

Staff Comments: The proposed lighting fixtures do not appear to dominate the environment and will have a minimal impact on adjacent properties. A final plan with details is needed to confirm this against the standards of the ordinance however.

- 9) Historic preservation. Preservation of unique historic or architectural landmarks is encouraged. Development designs that do not detract from desirable architectural resources on surrounding sites are also encouraged.**

Staff Comments: The project is within a historic district, but it would be contrary to preservation standards and guidelines to falsely recreate history. The proposed building is respectful of massing and bulk of historical buildings in the area, but would not be confused for a historical building. It fits in its place within the downtown, but would not be accused of trying to create a historic setting or place.

- 10) Modifications to criteria. The above criteria may be modified by provisions of the flex development overlay, a planned development conditional use permit, or by administrative discretion as may be afforded by this chapter.**

Staff Comments: No modifications to criteria are required for this development, it complies with all applicable development and design standards for the zone district, and design review district.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN COMMISSION

1. Approve the request as submitted; or
2. Approve the request with conditions deemed necessary to mitigate any adverse impacts that could arise from the project; or
3. Deny the request; or
4. Defer the request to obtain more specific information about the request.
5. Defer with a continuance of the public hearing to a date certain.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT IN THIS REPORT, THAT THE REQUEST FROM CCM PORTER'S LLC, SEEKING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO BUILD AND OPERATE A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AT 301 6TH STREET AND 608 WISCONSIN AVENUE BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- a) That the plans presented to the Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission on May 12, 2021 be approved subject to the conditions contained herein.
- b) That all license requirements from the State of Wisconsin and City of Racine be obtained, complied with, and kept current at all times.
- c) That all of the following occur prior to occupancy, unless otherwise noted:
 - 1. Signage be approved by the City of Racine PHDC prior to installation on the site.
 - 2. All comments from the City Joint Plan Review team be addressed prior to the permitting and/or final occupancy of the proposed improvements.
- d) That if, prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit, required site improvements listed in “c” above have not been or cannot be completed, a financial surety shall be provided to the City. The surety shall be in a format as approved by the City Attorney’s office, and subject to all stipulations as identified for financial sureties in the City of Racine. The dollar amount shall be determined at the time of application based upon estimates provided by the applicants for any incomplete work, and shall be valid for no less than one (1) year from the date of issuance. The surety format and content is subject to review and approval by the City Attorney.
- e) That the following items shall apply to exterior signage:
an exception from the requirement of Sec. 114-1080(1) be granted, allowing for 800 square feet of signage instead of 400 square feet of signage.
- f) That single signs be no larger than 100 square feet in total size and that no building street frontage have more than 300 square feet of signage in total. Any retail establishment shall be required to have a projecting sign.
- g) That a uniform signage package be submitted for review and approval by the PHDC.
- h) That all codes and ordinances are complied with and required permits acquired.
- i) That no minor changes be made from the conditions of this permit without approval of the Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission, and no major changes be made from the conditions of this permit without the approval of the Common Council.
- j) That this conditional use permit is subject to Planning, Heritage, and Design Commission review for compliance with the listed conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Property owner notification map indicating the subject property;
- 2) Aerial Photo indicating the subject property;
- 3) Zoning Map indicating the subject property;
- 4) Land Use Map from Comprehensive Plan, indicating the subject property;
- 5) Site photos of the property and general area; and
- 6) Submittal documents (view in legistar).



Conditional Use Request - 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue



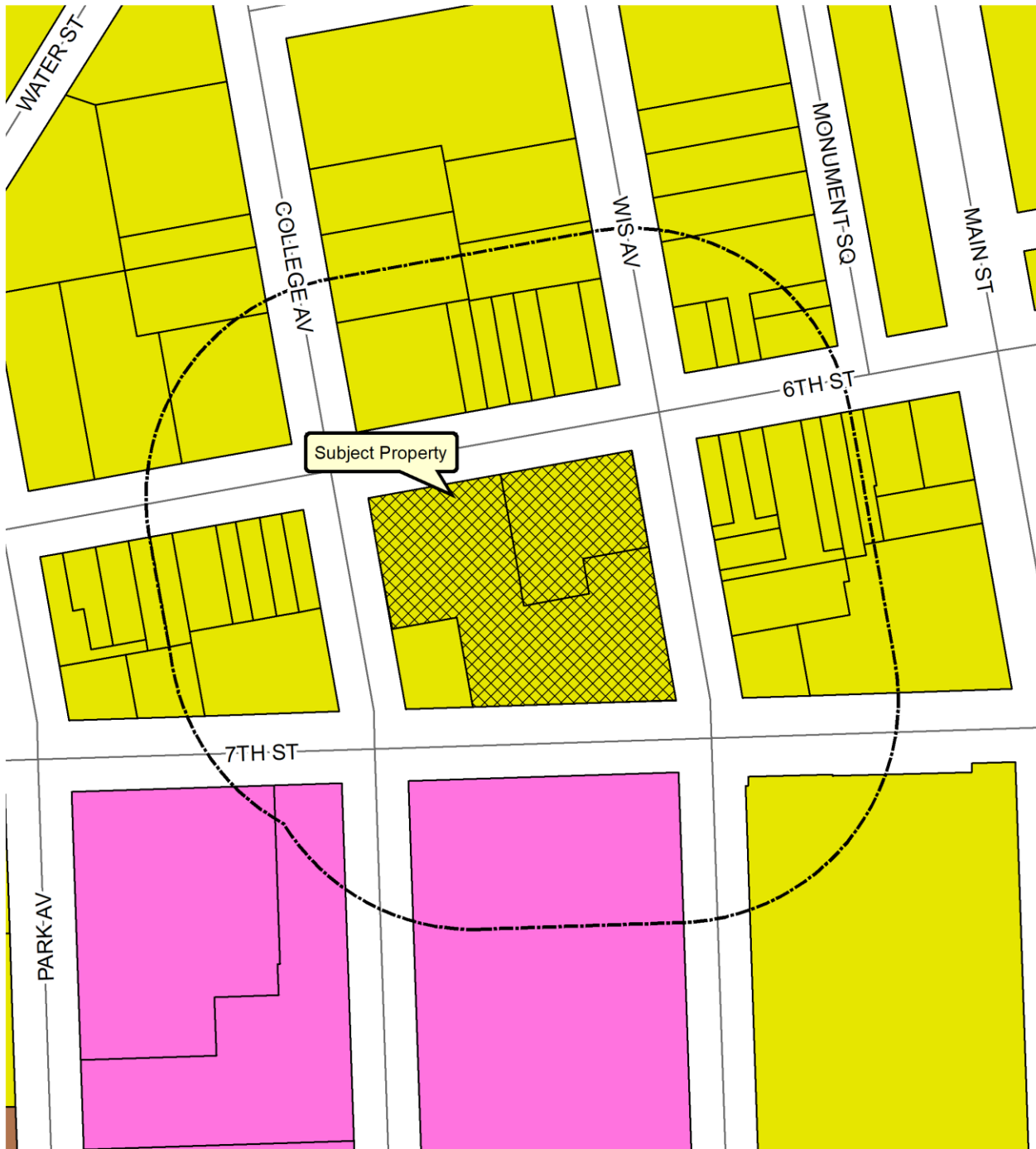


Conditional Use Request - 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue





Conditional Use Request - 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue



Zoning Designation
O/I B-4

Subject Property — Street Centerline
Notification Area Tax Parcel Boundary
0 20 40 80 120 160 Feet
N
W
S
E



Conditional Use Request - 301 6th Street and 608 Wisconsin Avenue



Site Photos



Looking east across property



Looking north across subject property



Looking south across subject property



Looking southwest across property



Looking northwest across property