



CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 10/27/2021

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

From: City Development Department, Division of Planning and Redevelopment

Division Manager: Jeff Hintz – (262) 636-9473 – jeff.hintz@cityofracine.org

Case Manager: Jeff Hintz

Location: 233 Lake Avenue

Applicant: Breakwater Racine, LLC

Property Owner: Racine Community Development Authority (CDA)

Request: Consideration of a plans for design review as required by Sec. 114-826(a)(1) for the construction of a multiple dwelling unit building at 233 Lake Avenue as requested by Breakwater Racine, LLC.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: The applicant seeks to construct a six story building with 202 dwelling units on the property. The land has been held by the CDA and was once home to a coal gasification plant for decades before it was torn down. The site was once highly contaminated but has been remediated and has systems in place which need to remain in place which monitor and keep environmental contaminants contained. Due to the uniqueness of the remediation systems, a 30 foot thick monolith encapsulates the pollution and prevents further spread; due to this, the building and ultimately site design, were somewhat dictated by the monolith. An extremely specialized foundation system is being utilized which allows the monolith to be preserved, but at the same time allows for the safe and practical development of the proposed building.

It is also worth noting, this will be substantial investment into the community and especially the downtown area. The last major development of this scale in the general area was in the early 2000's and was located just to the northeast of this site (Gaslight Pointe). This development also establishes a direct connection to the south, connecting 3rd Street with the lakefront pathway. While the building is brand new construction and the design guidelines are generally geared for preservation of existing historical buildings, several important design features of this building ensure it fits in with the area, but at the same time, doesn't seek to falsely create history.

ANALYSIS:

Racine Downtown Design Guidelines
DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

Project and Applicant Name: new construction - 233 Lake Avenue
 Zoning: B-4 Central Business
 Building Use: multiple dwelling units
 Other : _____
 Submission Date: 11/03/2021

DESIGN GUIDELINES

| | | Applies | | Complies | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1). Racine Character | | | | | |
| • Reinforce Racine's Sense of Place | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Integrate the Environment | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Promote Linkages to Racine's Heritage | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Establish and Strengthen Gateways | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Promote Architectural Compatibility | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Preserve Historic Buildings | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Use Architectural Contrast Wisely | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Integrate Art | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2). Pedestrian Emphasis | | | | | |
| • Reinforce and Enhance the Pedestrian System | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Respect Racine's Historic Block Structure | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Define the Pedestrian Environment | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Protect the Pedestrian from the Elements | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Provide Places for Stopping and Viewing | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Create Successful Outdoor Spaces | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Integrate Barrier-free Design | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3). Sustainability | | | | | |
| • Green Architecture | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4). Architecture | | | | | |
| • Residential Doors | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Residential Windows | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Residential Bay Windows | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Balconies | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Retail and Commercial Doors | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Retail Corner Doors | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Retail Windows | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Building Massing | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Security/Privacy | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Roofs | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Wall Materials | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Wall Structure | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5). Lighting | | | | | |
| • Building Lighting | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Landscape Lighting | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Parking Lot Lighting | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6). Signs | | | | | |
| • Wall Signs | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Hanging Signs | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

See attached memo for full comments.

The preceding page is typically included as a separate file, but is included within this report for convenience.

The checklist runs through each element included in the [design guidelines for downtown](#) and includes the staff determination of compliance. A cursory overview will note that nearly all categories of the design guidelines are applicable to this project and that of the applicable items, all of the findings were that the proposed building complies with the design guidelines.

The design guidelines seek to ensure that new construction in the downtown is complimentary, but does not try to recreate or falsely interpret history. The development needs to be of a scale and massing which is complimentary to that of the surrounding area, but should not try to confuse the viewer as to what era the building is from. This is clearly a new building in the 21st Century and those viewing the architecture will certainly note that. At the same time, the setting (site) of this building is on the edge of the downtown. In a different setting, this architecture wouldn't necessarily be encouraged by the design guidelines.

The proposed building definitely fits this site as the surrounding development was all built in this century (Gaslight Pointe condominiums, hotel, parking garage, etc.) and this building is complementary to those developments. One key part of design is to ensure it is the right style for the site in which the building will be placed, and this proposal hits all the right notes. There is vertical articulation present, which is encouraged by the design guidelines; the building's longer walls are well broken up with balconies, differentiation of materials and colors (all things required by the design guidelines).

Overall, this proposed development is anticipated to compliment that of the surrounding area, while not standing out of place in the neighborhood. The general area contains some of the newest development in the City's storied history and this development will help fill in the gap the vacant lot has left on the landscape for the past decade.

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, subject to the consent of the applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE PLANS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AT 233 LAKE AVENUE BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- A. THAT THE PLANS PRESENTED TO THE PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION (PHDC) ON NOVEMBER 17, 2021 BE APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS CONTAINED HEREIN.
- B. THAT ALL APPLICABLE CODES AND ORDINANCES BE COMPLIED WITH AND PERMITS BE OBTAINED.
- C. THAT ALL COMMENTS FROM THE CITY JPRT TEAM BE COMPLIED WITH IN PLANS SUBMITTED FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION.
- D. THAT PERMANENT SIGNAGE PLANS BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT WHEN FINALIZED.
- E. THAT NO MINOR CHANGES BE MADE TO THE CONDITIONS OF THIS APPROVAL WITHOUT THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT, AND NO MAJOR CHANGES BE MADE WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE PHDC.