

Design Commission Working Group

MEETING NOTES

RE: 305 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Date: 8/7/2024

By: Brendan Wittstruck, District 9

To: Sophia Benner, City of Austin Urban Design Division
Jon Salinas, Chair, Design Commission

Att: Brendan Wittstruck, District 9
Sophia Benner, City of Austin Urban Design Division
Victoria Haase, Thrower Design
Tim Roesler, MCM Architects
Alan Cox, ownership group
Bill Franks, ownership group
Jamie Simms, Circle V Landscape Architecture
Chris McComb, AMC Design Group

Notes:

- Project is eligible for 8:1 FAR under Density Bonus; seeking Council approval for greater FAR; Project is a "Home 2" hotel with 170 units at 14 stories and no parking; parking will be through agreement off-site and provided via valet
- Project is dedicating 10' of right-of-way to COA for Great Streets; a single 20' one-way driveway with 15' curb radii is provided from MLK Jr. Blvd; valet cars exit to alley to south of site; two shade trees are provided for Great Streets; no street furnishings are provided

Comments:

- Comm. Wittstruck expressed desire to see curb cut width and radii reduced to increase pedestrian area, noting that no cars will be exiting to MLK Jr. Blvd in current configuration; through discussion, Comm. Wittstruck and staff expressed interest in applicant revisiting design to eliminate curb cut and provide access via pull-in at curb or through alley (PS.1, PS.2).
- Comm. Wittstruck noted that hardscape elements and ground floor building materials could not be verified; recommend pedestrian-friendly treatments (PS.6, PS.13)
- Comm. Wittstruck observed that planting areas for street trees are very small; soil volume could be enlarged by reducing curb radii and/or providing structural soil or modular suspended pavement system beneath sidewalk (PS.8)
- Comm. Wittstruck noted that no fenestration is provided on ground floor; applicant noted that fire riser room is at front of building and building entrance is interior to lot facing the pull-in lane (PS.12)

- Comm. Wittstruck commended inclusion of second-story balcony facing MLK Jr. Blvd, recommended that balcony be extended to wrap east and/or west sides so that it is visible and interactive with pedestrians approaching building from those directions.
- Applicant noted roof-top amenity and pool area; Comm. Wittstruck noted that pool is only for hotel guests and their invited guests and will not be viewed by Commissioners as a public amenity; project provides no ground floor amenities, although second-floor bar restaurant does open to streetscape (AW.2)
- Comm. Wittstruck expressed desire to see more pedestrian protection from the elements via overhangs on MLK Jr. Blvd face of building; noted that overhangs should not protrude in a way that would conflict with healthy growth of street trees (PS.1)

END OF NOTES