

January 19, 2005

To the Honorable Common Council
Zoning, Neighborhoods and
Development Committee
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members:

Attached is File No. 041053, being an ordinance relating to the change in zoning from Local Business (LB2) to Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as the Kenilworth Building for land located on the South side of East Kenilworth Place between North Farwell Avenue and North Prospect Avenue and North of East Park Place, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

This property is an existing 500,000 square foot former manufacturing building that occupies almost a city block along Kenilworth Place between Prospect Avenue and North Farwell Avenue in Milwaukee. It is currently used by the UWM as studio space, printing and storage.

The Development Plan consists of a major renovation and addition to the existing Kenilworth Building and a new free-standing condominium building to be constructed on the south end of the property off Prospect Avenue adjacent to the bike trail.

The Kenilworth Building currently consists of a five-story (with penthouse) 1914 brick and concrete factory building and a 1943 cast concrete addition of equal size. Plans for the 1914 building will include retail space on the ground floor with frontage along Prospect and Kenilworth. The main tenant of the 1914 East Building (brick building along Prospect) will be the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee's Peck School of the Arts. A Ground Level Lobby, Exhibit Space and Screening Room will be topped with Studios and Labs for sculpture, ceramics, painting, music, theater, dance, film and digital arts and a small parking area (16 spaces) for the south condominium building.

A primary design goal is to separate the two existing buildings by introducing an open air pedestrian street which not only breaks down the scale of the building, but engages people along a dynamic landscaped walkway and serves to connect the community to the functions in the Kenilworth Building and to the bike path on the south end. The connecting pedestrian "green street" will extend through the entire building, allowing access to shops, the art school and exhibits, housing and retail spaces and the bicycle path. It will feature outdoor seating, planting beds, vine-covered walls and a sculpture court. Another goal is to revitalize this building with new window replacements consistent with the original design of the building, keeping all of the existing openings, and repairing and maintaining the brick and concrete character of the building.

The five-story 1943 West Building will be expanded with two additional floors and will primarily feature one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartment suites for graduate students, married students, upper class students (senior and juniors), art students and non-traditional students. The Ground Floor will also contain retail spaces along Kenilworth Place and North Farwell Avenue, parking, and the UWM Housing Lobby. The entire Second Level of both buildings will be enclosed parking for use by the School and Housing.

The Condominium Building is a free-standing building along Prospect Avenue just south of the 1914 brick building. It will consist of two levels of enclosed parking and six floors of for-sale market-driven housing containing a maximum of 28 one- and two-bedroom units. A Ground Level Lobby will be entered off Prospect, with the parking accessing off a service drive between the buildings.

Under the current Local Business (LB2) zoning, all of the proposed uses are currently permitted or limited uses. The maximum height under current zoning is 60 feet. The existing height of the 1914 building is 70 feet (5 stories with partial penthouse) and would be grandfathered as an existing building condition. The proposed height of the new condominium is 70 feet (8 stories; aligns with existing 1914 building) and maximum height of the 1943 building with 2-story addition would be 97'9" (7 stories), with the top floors set back 4 feet from the existing building face. The required percentage of glazing on the first floor meets the current 60% requirement. Overall, the project is consistent with the existing zoning designation and meets the spirit and intent of the code requirements.

The City Plan Commission held a public hearing on January 18, 2005. At that time several people spoke in favor of the zoning change including the Developer, Architect, UWM Legal Affairs, and UWM art instructors. The local neighborhood association, Water Tower Landmark Trust, and the UWM Board of Regents developed a "Memo of Understanding" and therefore support the proposed zoning change. Since this proposed zoning change is consistent with the City plans for the area, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on January 18, 2005 recommended approval of the attached substitute ordinance conditioned on:

1. Including the Memo of Understanding between Water Tower Landmark Trust, Inc., and the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System in the DPD file.
2. Prohibiting certain retail/business uses.
3. Submission of landscaping plans for condo site (Lot 2-DCD/CSM #2439) to be completed if condo building is not under construction within one year of completion of both the 1914 and 1943 buildings.
4. Upgraded exterior wall/landscape treatment on Farwell and Kenilworth.

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux
Executive Secretary
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. D'Amato
File