



Department of City Development

Housing Authority
Redevelopment Authority
City Plan Commission
Historic Preservation Commission

Julie A. Penman
Commissioner

Michal A. Dawson
Deputy Commissioner

May 15, 2001

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

Dear Committee Members:

Attached is File No. 001430, being an ordinance relating to the change in zoning from Multi-Family Residence (R/A/85) and Local Business (L/B/60) to a Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Lafayette Place, located on the northeast corner of North Prospect Avenue and East Lafayette Place, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

The applicant proposes to construct a 32-story, 318,712 square foot residential condominium building. The development consists of a 135 unit residential tower, 4 townhomes, some office/retail space and integrated parking.

A variety of unit types are proposed including one bedroom plus den, two bedrooms, three bedrooms and some larger units. The sales price range is approximately \$200,000 to \$2,000,000. Amenities within the building include a fitness area, a meeting/party room, outdoor terrace room, a catering kitchen, business conference center, game room, billiards room and a card room. Outdoor amenities include a rooftop garden terrace above the parking structure and landscaped open space at each corner of the property. A new pedestrian access from North Prospect Avenue to the Oak Leaf Trail is proposed at the north end of the site.

The 2 main entrances to the tower are on East Lafayette Place and North Prospect Avenue. The townhomes will have shared stoops along North Prospect Avenue. The base of the building will be clad in stone. Pre-cast panels will be used on the upper levels. An aluminum frame window system will comprise approximately 60% of the building enclosure. Office and/or retail uses are proposed along a portion of North Prospect Avenue.

The current zoning permits a high density, multi-family residential use and allows office uses as a special use in former one or two-family structures. The proposed retail/commercial space in the first floor lobby area of the building will be neighborhood serving uses consistent with those in other buildings along Prospect Avenue.

The northern portion of the site is zoned L/B/60. The southern portion and majority of the site is zoned R/A/85. The R/A/85 zoning district was established when the City created its zoning regulations in the 1920's. It was designed as a high density district allowing 290 dwelling units per acre and a maximum height of 85 feet. It was intended to provide a high density urban scale living environment. It also allows conversion of single-family homes to offices through the special use process.

In the 1960's, the Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") method was added to Milwaukee's high density zoning districts to allow flexibility in building design and encourage taller, narrower buildings with no height limits. Several definitions of FAR along with a graphic description are attached (See **Attachment 1**).

For the R/A/85 portion of the site, two options can be used to determine the size and intensity of new development. One method uses a lot area ratio to determine how many dwelling units are allowed. A height limit, setbacks and maximum lot coverage determine the building's size and location on the lot.

Using this method, 282 dwelling units are permitted (22 units on the northerly portion and 260 units on the southerly portion). The building could not exceed 85 feet in height and 2 off-street parking spaces for every 3 units are required. The building would also have to meet all setback and lot coverage requirements. **Attachment 2** provides a graphic representation of a building permitted under this method.

Using the FAR method and the current FAR, a 32-story, 139 unit building could be built on this site under current zoning, but with smaller units than proposed. The building would also have to meet the same setback, lot coverage and parking requirements. **Attachment 3** illustrates various ways the site could be developed under the FAR of 4.0 and **Attachment 4** illustrates a 32-story tower on top of a 3 level parking deck.

Map A illustrates building heights in the district. 1 and 2 story buildings are in most cases, original single-family mansions that have been converted to other uses. The 3 to 8 story buildings represent either buildings that were built prior to 1920 or were built using the conventional zoning method for this district. Most buildings of 9 or more stories were built using the FAR method. **Map B** indicates generally which buildings meet conventional and FAR zoning standards and which buildings exceed the FAR standards.

The Prospect Avenue Statistics sheet provides comparative information on buildings in the R/A/85 zoning district. Because of difficulties in acquiring data information on FAR, average unit size and units per acre is not available for all buildings. The statistics indicate that 19 or 35% of the buildings in the district exceed the original 85 foot height limit and 32% of those 19 buildings exceed the 4.0 FAR standard, ranging from a FAR of 4.3 to 6.8. The last column indicates the intensity of many of the buildings as measured by the number of units per acre. The more intensive buildings range from 87 to 233 units per acre. Lafayette Place is proposing a density of 125 units per acre (290 units per acre are allowed under current zoning).

The building is stepped back at the 10th floor along North Prospect Avenue. This setback and the building's massing along the street help relate it to the taller buildings nearby.

Two hundred and eighty-nine enclosed parking spaces and 6 surface parking spaces for temporary/guest parking (2.1 spaces per unit) are proposed. Eleven enclosed spaces will also be dedicated to guest/ day staff parking for a total of 17 guest/day staff parking. The parking structure is concealed by locating 3 levels of parking below ground and using the townhomes along Prospect Avenue to screen the upper parking levels. The side facing the bike trail will be composed of patterned stone and precast panels with four louvered vents. The roof of the parking structure will be developed as green space.

Due to the amount of on-site parking provided by the proposed development, the Department of Public Works does not expect significant negative impacts to on-street parking near Lafayette Place. Since neighbors expressed concerns regarding the loss of on-street parking and traffic congestion, the Department of Public Works requested a level of service (LOS) study from the developer as part of their final traffic study to address the traffic generation. The LOS study indicated that there would be a minimal impact on the intersection of Lafayette and Prospect. The Dept. of Public Works also indicated that the provision of off-street loading and guest parking

resolved the on-site parking issue (See **Attachment 5**).

The number of units proposed (139 units) and the density (125 units per acre) is less than the current zoning will allow (282 units) and (290 units per acre). The density of this building is low to moderate compared to other buildings along Prospect Avenue (see attached Prospect Ave. Stats). Almost two-thirds of all parking spaces are accessed from Prospect Avenue. The porte cochere's location off of Lafayette Pl. allows for better turning movements and provides the option of traveling east or west. It also allows loading and unloading of vehicles for residents, guests and service functions to occur on-site and not in the E. Lafayette Pl. public right of way.

Two building signs will be individual, bronze metal letters measuring 10" in height along the planter wall at the corner of Prospect and Lafayette. The two other signs with gold edge, black vinyl letters applied to the glass transom, will be at each entrance. Additionally an address number sign consisting of individual, bronze letters measuring 1'9" tall by 4' wide will be located above the entrance on Lafayette Place.

Two neighborhood meetings were held at the East Library on April 10 and 11, 2001. Both meetings were well attended and several people had questions regarding the proposal and raised several concerns to the proposed planned development. The main issues discussed were the proposed height of the building and traffic. Both the local Alderman and developer have made themselves available to address the concerns and comments of the local constituents. Numerous other meetings have been held with different organizations in the area.

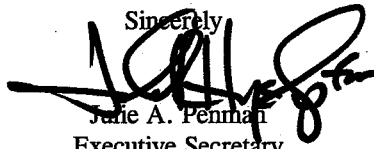
The initial proposal from the developer was for a 37-story condominium building with a tower structure that measured 601'3" in height and had 2 levels of exposed parking along N. Prospect Ave. That proposal evolved into a somewhat shorter building with the same number of stories, but revised the tower element to reduce the overall height to 509'10" and added townhomes along Prospect to screen the parking structure. The current proposal reduces the height to 32 stories (336'1" in height), reduces the floor to ceiling height and changes the tops on both the tower and townhomes to flat rooftops to better fit in the context of the neighborhood. **Attachment 6** compares the height of Lafayette Place to other buildings on the east side and downtown.

After analyzing the history and characteristics of the R/A/85 zoning district, staff has concluded that the proposed Lafayette Place planned development is consistent with the intent of the district and falls within the size and density of other buildings constructed in the area. The only significant standard of the R/A/85 district that the proposal does not meet is the FAR requirement of 4.0. Although FAR method does not limit building height, it has been found that a building meeting the 4.0 FAR standard could be built in excess of 32 stories. The proposed number of units is considerably lower than many other buildings in the district as well as the district's density allowance. The primary characteristic of this proposal that will be permitted if the DPD is approved is that the building will have unusually large units. This results in a wider/bulkier building than permitted using the FAR method. **Attachment 7** graphically illustrates the width of the proposed building with a width of a building meeting the 4.0 FAR.

On May 14, 2001, this ordinance was scheduled for a public hearing at City Plan Commission. Several residents appeared at the public hearing. About 2/3 of those people were against the proposed tower. Attached are copies of communications for and against the proposal received by the City Plan Commission. Also attached is a petition opposed to an earlier version of Lafayette Place. Staff's review of the proposal suggests that the project has evolved to a height and design that is reflective of the district, it will be built of quality materials, its design diminishes the view of a large parking structure particularly where it would be most visible along N. Prospect Ave., it provides a

rooftop garden terrace above the parking structure, it provides a new access point to the bike trail, it provides a very high ratio of on-site parking spaces per unit, the building design emphasizes the height of many nearby buildings, the number of units is relatively modest and will not cause excessive traffic generation and the proposal has responded to both citizen and staff comments during the review period. Since the proposed planned development is responsive to neighbor's concerns and the assets of the building and site design justify exceeding the FAR and is consistent with the approved general plan and City plans for the, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on May 14, 2001 recommended approval of the attached substitute ordinance.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie A. Penman', written over the typed name.

Julie A. Penman
Executive Secretary

City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. D'Amato