

AGENDA # 9

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: July 24, 2013

TITLE: 441 North Frances Street – Mixed-Use PD with 25,000-30,000 Square Feet of Retail and 250-300 Residences in the Downtown Core (“The Hub”). 4th Ald. Dist. (30040)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: July 24, 2013

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lauren Cnare, Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley and Tom DeChant.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 24, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a mixed-use PD located at 441 North Frances Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson and Joseph Antunovich, both representing Core Campus Student Housing. Appearing in support and available to answer questions were John Myefski, representing Myefski Architects; Brad Mullins and Tom Harrington. Appearing and speaking in opposition to the project was Mardee Dapin. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Sarah Momut Atis. Munson summarized integration of the comments from the Urban Design Commission’s previous review of the project. The exit onto Frances Street has been removed, the storefronts have been more embellished, showing how the sidewalks can be activated by the retail with five different retail storefronts. The material has been changed as it comes down the street to a light colored brick to have a separate expression. The corner element has been toned down to appear more in keeping with masonry although they still have retained some of the steel. The building doesn’t look as dark. They will work with the tenants on roll up storefront doors (garage) and outdoor seating on the sidewalk. A trellis has been incorporated around the corner element. Window patterning has changed based on the Commission’s previous comments, with some facades having a “whimsical” pattern. The Plan Commission did not agree with the “whimsical” patterning of the windows. Discussion focused on the façade treatments, building materials/colors, brick sizes and the shadow lines.

Mardee Dapin spoke about the City not needing something like this. It would be a travesty to demolish a house from 1895. She asked about the possible retailers moving into the project. Antunovich responded that they haven’t begun that process, other than their first choice to have small local (existing) retailers.

Sarah Momut Atis asked if the separate expressions of the storefronts correspond to the interior space?

- They correspond directly to the elevations. We need to move along with the sidewalk so the entry flows into the space. The tenant mix is not determined at this time.

- We may have a tenant that does extend over beyond the common wall of the façade. We're trying to work with the retailers that are there right now. We'll certainly be coming back as we present our signage package and that will reflect the final product.

Momut Atis further inquired about signage and canopies, and outdoor seating coming back to the Urban Design Commission. Staff responded that sidewalk cafes are handled by another entity within the City. The ability to adjust the prototypical façades to fit "white box build outs" are usually handled by Planning staff with the developer. If there is a major change that requires a revisit to the overall scheme then that has to come back to the Commission.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Based on the recommendation to omit one of the drive access points: do you have that revised elevation?
 - We showed it in the plan but we felt so strongly about it we didn't draw it.
- Have you now taken advantage of that and put activity on the street?
 - Yes. We showed how it would work if it were to take place, but we really felt it was a dangerous condition with all the pedestrian movement. The change means we lose 1,000 square feet of retail but this is safer.
- How will these garage roll up doors work in the winter?
 - We have a number of projects in Chicago that have been very successful with these types of doors. They're insulated and we pump warm air from top and bottom. There's a lot of seating on the street right now and that's one of the things we'd like to encourage with the retailers.
 - We're also looking at glass doors that work like garage doors or nano-wall storefronts. It opens it up to the street. It would be closed in the winter. There would also be a swing door.
 - The separate retailers will be able to kind of put their own stamp on the building. But we also want it to be cohesive.
- I think that concept needs to be reviewed with the elevations as well. In some of these areas you're getting a change in grade from sidewalk to storefront. In reality it may be at 42".
 - We show where we propose a nano-wall or a garage door, subject to working with the tenants. We don't have any leases signed and that's what's really going to drive the configuration. We tried to get architecture that would allow smaller bays or larger bays depending on the retailers' needs.

Just work with your grades and slabs because you've got quite a slope.

- The smallest retail on the left, the lightest piece, did I hear you're reinstalling the historic terra cotta façade ("Roast" Restaurant)?

- Yes. We're going to take the terra cotta apart, restore it and reinstall it.

With something different at the base?

Yes. We'll take off the piece of plywood.

Generally it's in very good shape.

We don't show the decorative elements on this. It's way of recalling what was there. Above it we step back so that building in scale, that will actually drop down and then the next building...that's State Street, it does up and down and has some variation as you walk the street.

- (Staff) We expect full cut outs and dimensions of everything existing and proposed (storefronts at State Street). There has to be a minimum kick plate below the windows otherwise we'll have a problem with mall maintenance. So some of those might not work, they won't be able to go down to grade in some instances. And we do want a variation in that kick plate.
- We're debating between the staggered windows or not. Each of these pieces are separate expressions, according to your plans. That corner has a nice composition and cap. One of the elevations looked like you had a different material on the upper floor and that looked nice. It kind of created a base-middle-top

dialogue to it. I would anticipate that the large volume on its own would have some sort of a base that's starting to read from behind the building in front of it. The full dialogue within each expression is where I'm going, it might need some more attention as we look at them as individual volumes.

- With the other building I haven't quite determined how that is hitting the sky (non-Frances Street elevations). There are some fairly unarticulated buildings in downtown Madison now that don't necessarily have a dialogue when they hit the sky, and this building seems like it's missing that opportunity. I'm not certain what it wants to be but it doesn't seem like it meets the sky yet. The end wall is successful with that solid read.
 - Unfortunately zoning doesn't allow for fixed trellises on that level. The pool element is going to be an element cap to that unfortunate building and we do like the dialogue between those two.
 - Anything with a roof on it is perceived as another floor. We had some options that had trellises but that was determined to be the 13th floor of the building and not allowed under the zoning.
- There was talk of ivy last time, are we still going for that?
 - We didn't put it on these drawings and we've actually played down the trees also because we had drawings that showed the trees in full foliage and you couldn't see anything. We think that there are spots where we can leave cut-outs and have the ivy incorporated.

Something affixed to the brick?

That's what I would like.

It may turn out that you can't do it but I want to know that all possibilities are tried.

- I was harping on this building here, and I see you've made some significant changes down at the street level, but I still feel like there's some inconsistency with bringing in a base, middle and top, but then you still have that museum red and a cornice that just stops, I see a lot of different sized windows. You want a modern structure there but it has a lot of playfulness in it that seems appropriate for this building, but for this building it seems like there's so much going on with the red and window sizes. Are you planning on giving it one more level of refinement, because that's the corner, that's the thing everybody is going to see.
 - Firstly there are separate functions that go on here. Some of these spaces are bedrooms and some are living spaces, the window sizes respond to that. The steel kind of ties in with the other element and how it wraps around. The corner reads more traditional and we need that because that is where we have a knee wall, that's why it's above the skin line. You're seeing some elements that are us working with parts of the program.
 - You used the word playful, that was our intent. To celebrate the retail, the activities that happen on the second floor, eyes on the street, light on the street. It's going to have activities all the way up to that cornice line.

I just don't see a unifying theme there.

We like the whimsical nature of this building. It celebrates retail and the energy of the space. The energy on this corner and on State Street. You challenged us to do this.

- What is Plan B if you're not granted the Building Code Variance (allowing vision windows on the shear walls)?
 - Right now the way the wording is in the modified approval from City staff is for vision glass. We've had conversations with Building Inspection and Fire Department for a different technique for those glass windows where we think we can get to the same fire rating they are looking for. We're committed to pursue that. Currently the way the approval is written if we're not able to achieve that we'll have to come back with something else.
 - We've done this in many different places and we think we can make this work.

Heather Stouder from the Planning Division mentioned that the random window pattern is much improved when it was alternating, however, staff felt like it would instantly date the building. A secondary concern was that it draws attention to the solids in a way that the linear pattern doesn't. And thirdly they felt that the linear

pattern, while it is what staff recommends, could be improved by adding more glass, either by widening each window or adding more windows on that façade. They would be very interested to know the Urban Design Commission's preference on the brick color.

- I think the lighter brick will help the steel pop. I do like what you've done with the corner building. And I agree that the fenestration, it mixes the message from stark modern to something else. A different material may give the appearance of more glass.
 - We did make those windows bigger, perhaps that elevation just doesn't show it. They were almost like slit windows before.
 - We have two levels of that pattern because it reflect the residential uses.
- On the upper tower there's no variation there. That's going to be a very flat façade. The brick you have is very singular in color and very flat in texture. On the openings in the steel frame building, it looks like you have beams sitting at window heads. Study that, those openings.
- The dark brick is much more successful. Maybe it's the taupe color but I still see Sellery Hall; the randomness helps with that. What do we do about that center piece? Dawn hit on something there that makes a lot of sense.
- The composition and the color gives us the sense of the old University dorms.
- Something to grab your eye as an entire composition.

Steve Cover, Director, Department of Planning and Community & Economic Development noted his take on the project, stating that the central section of the tower piece could be broken up and solve the problem of the window patterning by adding more glass in the central section that breaks up the massing and the repetitive design elements.

Staff noted as a summary of the issues requiring address that the bulk, mass and height is already there, the general forms are already there and the Commission has already accepted a lot of the design changes, with things that still need to be addressed including:

- Where the long elevation meets the sky because the glass railing is not enough of a treatment for the top of the building.
- The non-resolve of the window patterning where the Commission favors random, and the Plan Commission favors straight, with the brick still needing to be resolved.
- How that parapet treatment goes around to where the two buildings meet, it has to be more consistent, the corner element is still an issue about how it works or doesn't work (at State and Frances Streets).
- Openness versus the closeness along State Street.
- Where the bump out on Frances Street relates to the linear 11 stories above.
- Specific elevational details with the shadow lines is a requirement, especially along Gilman Street.

ACTION:

On a motion by Cnare, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-1) with O'Kroy voting no. The motion provided for the following:

- Ink spot brick (darker brick option) is recommended.
- On Frances Street the random window pattern in the tall element is recommended (shear walls).
- Study the base of the Frances Street tower element to see if a different treatment at Floors 2-3 would better set it apart as the base with change in proportion regarding the base; larger base or larger read of

base or articulation of the second through third floor windows. If they study this and determine that no change is best, that will be fine with the Urban Design Commission.

- Study the proportions of the fifth and sixth floors of the corner of State and Frances Streets; the proportions of the openings and the detailing cornice need more consistency architecturally with what's below on floors 1-4.
- On the State Street tower façade (and similar façades as the building turns toward Gilman Street), study and make changes such that the top is better defined when it meets the sky, explore additional glass, and explore additional articulation through a plane change or additional balconies. The decision on whether random windows are best here is dependent on reviewing the revised composition of this part of the building upon further review by the Commission.
- Provide colored and rendered elevations with shadow lines.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 6 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 441 North Frances Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	8	7	7	7	-	8	8	8
	-	5	-	-	-	-	7	6
	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-

General Comments:

- State/Frances corner element needs refinement. Thanks for listening.
- Much improved. Going in right direction, committee hit on all weaknesses.