

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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**REPORT OF:** URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** March 21, 2018

**TITLE:** 5133-5237 University Avenue – New Development of Three Proposed Buildings with 90 Multi-Family Residential Units and Approximately 8,000 Square Feet of Commercial Use in UDD No. 6. 19<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (50844)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Janine Glaeser, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** March 21, 2018

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present: Cliff Goodhart, Acting Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Amanda Hall, Michael Rosenblum, John Harrington and Rafeeq Asad.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of March 21, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for new development located at 5133-5237 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Stewart Ellison, Eric Lawson, Tom Degen and Justin Frahm.

The applicant presented plans of the currently vacant Perkins restaurant site zoned Suburban Employment. There are two curb cuts onto University Avenue and the site is surrounded by residential uses. There are significant grade changes, and a storm culvert runs through the site. It's challenging geography with limited site frontage. There is a City of Madison stormwater facility lot to the southeast. The desire is to provide a transition to the neighborhood. The team has had several meetings with City staff and shared the plan with the neighborhood. Compared to other plans, this plan had clear wayfinding, building placement compatible with the current topography and better relationship between uses. There is opportunity for landscaping at the street. There is a well located to the north with no stormwater placed in front of half of the site. The studied the traffic turn from University Avenue that serves the existing and future uses. This is a long deep site, with little visibility to the rear of the site. There is an existing fire lane to the east of the site. They studied building placement and looked at connectivity for this unique site around existing buildings with storm sewer challenges. When they looked at a masterplan, the southern edge wants to be residential. All residential parking is under the buildings with commercial parking on the surface. Surface parking has been decreased following meetings with City staff, and the team worked on pedestrian connectivity.

Stewart Ellison spoke as the neighborhood association chair in support of the project. This has significant merit and protection for Well 14. With only 25 apartments per acre, they are likely to be longer-term renters. This has more greenspace and the ability to process stormwater. There would be traffic problems if this were a medical building. Noise from a building at the front of the lot would affect the neighborhood across University Avenue. Out of a 22-person poll, most were supportive.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Can you explain the underground parking?
  - All residential parking is underground. The two west buildings are connected through underground parking. The first floor commercial is a restaurant. The residential building to the east has one entry into underground parking. The surface parking is for retail and restaurant. Plans have been updated to address the parking comment in Heather Stouder's email, with all residential parking being underground.
- Add a sidewalk connector to the east end of the site.
  - We are proposing a bike path at the south end of the site to connect to the neighborhood.
- We have stormwater basins that look engineered. Can you do something more aesthetic? I would argue against filling in walkways in between parking stalls adjacent to the commercial area; it would be better for stormwater treatment to have more pervious surface.
- A restaurant would be good to have there, but I would like to see it stepped back a little more and add more landscaping on University Avenue.
  - We are looking at adding outdoor space.
- University Avenue is in need of larger landscape trees to help shade glare.
  - We'd like to add a landscape feature that relates to the park.
- The east building, is there potential for redevelopment of the motorcycle lot? Have you looked at saving the east redevelopment for later?
  - It's visible from University Avenue and appropriate to redevelop now. We could develop the motorcycle lot later, we'd rather have the lot yielding than not.
- Can you describe the vehicle circulation in more detail and respond to staff's comments. You have an opportunity to do something more meaningful.
- Could you use one of these fire lanes to be access to the apartments?
  - There is an existing tenant there now – this is their parking. We were hoping to have temporary access through there now. The motorcycle lot has access off of the east.
- Maybe make the entry drive more urban. Why the walkway east of site?
  - Traffic Engineering and Metro wanted a walkway.
- Explore taking the drive out on the northeast corner.
  - We want an alternate route away from the entrance.
- Cliff has a good point – explore a more vehicular layout.
  - If we were to remove the two central spines it frees up 20-feet allocated to the north that we wanted to feel like a feature. It was reduced in response to Traffic's comments to maximize the open space in front.
- Look at more pervious surface in the parking lot, and planting islands.
  - Do you think we can focus on this layout?
- If the parking lot is done well and special, not just by City standards a bare minimum parking lot.
  - The parking lot could be a feature, like Metcalf's parking lot.
- (Alder Clear) I raised concerns with staff. The east building placement and landscaping. I'm glad to see parking below grade. Curious about the setbacks from the street.
- The staff report talks about adequate pedestrian circulation. What's shown gets from point A to B, but it's not special. The open space needs to be more meaningful. The placement of buildings gives people the option to face the street or not. Effective screening will be important.
- Push to get circulation from sidewalks to the east end.
  - As we begin to understand the site, the bike path will bring in easterly developments into retail.
- It needs to get resolved. Usable open space – look at the area between the east and west buildings. Can you lessen the pavement and provide more greenspace? Do you need all those stalls?

- Add bike parking. There's a lot of bike traffic in this neighborhood.
- Maximize the University Avenue frontage. I like this layout.
- The play structure, how do people exit the building to get there?
  - Could be another door, we'll look at it.
- Keep in mind kids going out on their own.
- Not concerned re: maximize University Avenue frontage.
- Look at the rooftop space – Planning suggested activating the rooftops of the residential buildings.
- You could have some nice views from the rooftop.
- If you activate the roof space there would be fencing required –i.e. families. How would that look, and what about the view? Does the play structure have to be on the ground or can it be on the roof? Seems cramped in where it's shown now.
  - We'd prefer to keep people at the ground level, the site is large enough.

**ACTION:**

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.