

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 23, 2022

TITLE: 7820-7874 Mineral Point Road - Exterior
Renovation of Oakbridge Commons Retail
Center. 9th Ald. Dist. (68156)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Jessica Vaughn, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 23, 2022

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad, and Russell Knudson. Excused was Christian Albouras.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 23, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of an exterior renovation of Oakbridge Commons Retail Center located at 7820-7874 Mineral Point Road. Registered and speaking in support was Brad Koning, representing Sketchworks Architecture, LLC.

Koning presented updates on the project, which will now encompass Walgreens as well. The large overhang and colonnade will be removed in order to provide better visibility for tenants and a larger signage area. The sidewalk will be replaced, parking and islands will remain the same, and some built-in planter beds will be removed. Groupings of decorative planters with a variety of grasses and perennials will be added to the sidewalk area. The orange brick firewalls will be stained in a light warm gray with white EIFS signage bands. The larger signage areas will allow the signs to be more spaced out. There will be canopies over the doors with brick piers, and the existing lap siding will be painted and transition into the EIFS signage board. There are flexible areas for tenants to have outdoor seating. They propose changing the overall architectural theme of the main tower element to something more modern, in addition to changing the roof pitch. Asphalt shingles will be replaced with a standing-seam metal roof in order to provide a contrast and brightness it is currently lacking. Walgreens will use their new prototype design, which includes stacked fiber cement panels, additional storefront glazing on two bays under the signage, and changes to the drive thru canopy around the side of the building.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Slight improvement on previous plans. Vertical height of EIFS bands could be helped by framing with a metal panel or fascia along the top and bottom. The proposed signage band appears to have more EIFS than before, likely because the overhang is being cut back. It's lacking something consistent throughout the plaza; it is framed on the ends and could use a more substantial continuous fascia to frame the EIFS.
- With the projecting canopies, will there need to be gutters and downspouts? Is there an internal gutter where the new standing seam roof is proposed?
 - Yes, gutters and downspouts are needed. We'll try to hide the gutters in the fascia. Downspouts will be tucked in on the inside corner of the brick piers at each major bump-out. Another gutter

will be built in conjunction with the standing seam roof so it is hidden within the new roofing system, then where it comes out we will try to get it alongside the pier.

- There isn't an internal roof drain? Will the the downspouts drain on the sidewalk?
 - There is a perimeter system in place, so we would tie into the existing conduit.
- I'll miss the arched walkways and flying buttresses; it was an interesting look.
- Kudos for dressing up the front of the building with planters; vegetation and flowers will go a long way toward brightening up the color palette of white and gray. It is tough to grow perennials and keep them alive in planters. Plants on the list are hardy in Wisconsin if planted in the ground where it freezes and thaws slowly, but trying to grow them in containers that freeze and thaw repeatedly destroys the root structure of the plants. Thumbs up for the variety and amount of planters, but you should use flowering annuals in the spring and summer. I don't see a feasible way you would have luck keeping the plants listed here healthy long-term.
- The black standing-seam metal roof pitches toward the walk; make sure it has a beefy edge to it so when the snow is melting on a warm day, no one walking under will get hit with snow.
- The Oakbridge Commons central tower element could be simplified. The EIFS area would benefit from framing, maybe in black. The four dots are distracting. I'm wondering if the part between the ground and underside of the EIFS could be simplified by staining the brick pillars black, then simplify the large signage band and bring it inboard of the columns. There is a lot going on and it is distracting. It would be more of a focal point if you change the color of the brick stain to black and bring the signage in so it's not proud of the brick.
 - After the last few days of discussion, I would eliminate the EIFS in that location, leave the brick, and stain it. The black dots are existing; they are currently green, so we were going to paint them. I could see taking the whole tower and going darker because it would tie into the darker piers.
- Is the top glass canopy part at the center intended to be lit up at night?
 - The upper windows are not. I see the Oakbridge Commons signage being illuminated.
- The existing glazing looks opaque, but in the rendering it looks clear.
 - It will remain as it is, which is more opaque than shown in the renderings.
- Is it a cost savings to remove the colonnade?
 - No, it's a desire by the tenants and owner to get a better visual connection for the center. There is currently a 10-foot overhang, so there are always shadows across the windows and you can't tell if stores are open.
- I think that recent advancements and public opinion on dining outdoors and the Streatery program should be considered; now the outdoor tables are exposed. I think it detracts from the goals you have in trying to simplify and modernize the building, and it made more sense with the healthy colonnade area.
- Are you planning to light the entryways from the bottom of the projecting canopies?
 - No, it will just be the existing post lighting along the pathway.
- I didn't see a photometric plan. Is there lighting under the existing colonnade?
 - We aren't changing the lighting, so we didn't submit a photometric plan. Yes, the colonnade has lighting now.
- I commend you for getting Walgreens to come around and join the effort because it provides more continuity. I don't know that the whole building has the continuity I'd like, but it certainly is an improvement.
- The improvements to Walgreens are part of the review, including the drive-thru on the east side.
 - We are just taking off the gable roof on the drive thru and squaring it up so it's consistent with the architecture of the building.
- Can the Commission be more specific about the condition for framing of the EIFS in the signage band?

- Reduce the EIFS portion to 6-8 feet (scaled by eye) and frame with metal fascia along the top and bottom. There is a desire to avoid more EIFS than is already existing. We're looking for a ~12-18 inch accent band around the top and bottom, but we give the architects latitude to design so it looks right.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Harper, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1).

The Commission discussed the motion as follows:

- I think we are missing an opportunity and losing a valuable piece of real estate. I understand the tenants' desires, but we also need to think of the public's experience of the building. I disagree with the removal of the colonnade; I would like to see the project develop that further in enhancing that pedestrian plaza.
- I would like to see a more substantial and realistic planting plan.
- We have an opportunity to see more detail on how stormwater will be controlled with the gutters discussed.
- It is important to see how the plaza is lit at night from a site light spilling perspective and an aesthetic public experience perspective.

The motion for final approval provided for the following:

- Reduce the EIFS portion of the sign band across the building front façade to be consistent in size. Add metal framing along the top and bottom.
- Refine the design of the central tower element, including elimination of the proposed EIFS and maintaining existing brick.
- For plantings, use annuals instead of perennials.