

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: October 26, 2016

TITLE: 1109 South Park Street – New
Development of a 4-Story Mixed-Use
Building with Underground Parking in
UDD No. 7. 13th Ald. Dist. (42707)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: October 26, 2016

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Sheri Carter, Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Richard Slayton and Dawn O’Kroley.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 26, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a new development of a 4-story mixed-use building located at 1109 South Park Street in UDD No. 7. Appearing on behalf of the project were Steve Shulfer, project architect; Nick Badura and Alan Fish, representing Sue Jiang. Registered and speaking in opposition were Carrie Rothburd, representing the Bay Creek Neighborhood Association Planning & Economic Development Committee; Bonnie Schmidt, Jim Winkle, Sue Rosa, Steven Keidl, Stanley Jackson, Mark Schoendorff, Yaniv Lazimy and Amanda Soelle. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Helen Kitchel.

The Secretary noted packets of comments by neighbors received on this project. Shulfer reviewed changes to the project, including simplification at the corner of Emerson and South Park Streets, elimination of the trellis piece, a setback on the fourth floor on the corner itself, and the elimination of the social room/fifth floor, utilizing the rooftop of the townhouse components as outdoor space. The open patio space will be a green roof. The balconies are more unified along the east side of the project. The landscape plan has been enhanced to create a solid wood fence from 4-feet down, and made the landscaping around the site more dense. The building materials have become more simplified. Some small planters will be introduced along the commercial area of the building to add a bit of rhythm.

Jim Winkle spoke to the issue of height, and to which City body deals with building height. Does the City care about solar? There are no specific ordinances regarding solar use. He distributed a handout pertaining to conditional use standards. He talked about how the use of his property will be diminished from the blocking of sunlight. The immediate neighbors would lose sun two full hours earlier than it would otherwise with the construction of this project. Lack of solar generation, lack of usable sunshine, gardening of sun crops and fruit trees and loss of property values are of great concern.

Sue Rose spoke in opposition to a project that will negatively impact her neighborhood. She is impressed by the effort put forth by the City to strengthen our neighborhoods, as well as the recent rewriting of the Zoning Code.

She is not opposed to development along South Park Street and would enjoy businesses and services within walking distance of her home. She is dismayed, however, by what seems to her to be a too-ready-willingness to override these guidelines in favor of commercial interest and opposed to the interest and well-being of neighborhood residents who have put in untold hours of energy and time for the common good of all of us. She is not convinced that Madison as a City will be ahead if it prioritizes commercial interests over the interest and well-being of neighborhoods and residents.

Amanda Soelle spoke in opposition, sharing the concerns of height, massing, decreased solar light and increased traffic for narrow streets. The possibility of the short-term residences means these residents will have no vested interest in the neighborhood or community in a vibrant and diverse neighborhood. She worries that these could eventually become student housing. The Commission should give very serious consideration as to whether or not this project meets the Commission's mission statement of maintaining our community's established property values, let alone improving them.

Yaniv Lazimy spoke in opposition, noting that in relation to his house this development would actually be 5-stories because of the grade change. It doesn't blend in with the existing residential character. The development should be at three-stories. He cited 320 South Baldwin Street as a good example of something that blends in with the existing character of the neighborhood. The neighborhood would become very depressing from the loss of sunlight and having this large development looming over the existing houses.

Mark Schoendorff spoke in opposition, reiterating that this building is too tall and too massive for this site. From this all other issues and problems stem. It does not fit with the character of the neighborhood, its design creates many problems that would negatively affect the quality of life. The parking lot in the back would act as an echo chamber and the screening is inadequate; a trellis with vines and/or foliage would do very little to dampen noise from the project. That trellis would also be ineffective in wintertime at shielding homes from headlights. Lighting would also spill into his home. This will not be a positive addition to the neighborhood.

Stanley Jackson spoke in opposition, noting how many children are in this neighborhood where this project would add 55 vehicles that would come out and go through this neighborhood. It does come down to the height. Many people support this because they want something developed at this site, but this is not the right fit. Emerson Street should not have such a drastic impact in traffic.

Steven Keidl spoke in opposition, citing the mass and height. Size is an element of design. He agrees with development and urban infill, noting many neighbors would support this project if it were kept at three-stories with fewer efficiencies and long-term renters.

Bonnie Schmidt spoke in opposition, noting her solar panels and the enjoyment of their yard. Even if this were a 3-story building, it would actually be four stories because of how it is that Park Street is one-story higher. If you go down Park Street north towards campus, you see Dunkin' Donuts, Klinker Cleaners and a sandwich shop, all of which are 2-stories. If you go south there are no buildings as tall as the one being proposed. Why is it that when you get the corner of Emerson and Park Street, is it that you are looking at a building that is so imposing and so large that it would have a negative impact on the people who live near it, and it does not contribute in any substantial way to the neighborhood as a whole. This will impact the desirability of this neighborhood, and the investment many neighbors have made in solar panels.

Carrie Rothburd spoke in opposition, noting the incompatibility of the project with the adjoining residential areas. She asked the Commission to discuss how the developer might keep the building to three stories, focus on family sized units that would encourage long-term residencies, focus on the transition smoothly and move the parking entrance and exit to a different location.

Jessica Vaughn of the Planning Division clarified her staff memo in the areas of parking and having adequate buffers and screening year round, building massing and articulation (height), materiality and application of those materials, and building corner presence. Both the Plan Commission and the Urban Design Commission consider height; the two really work together. The Zoning District sets a requirement of three-stories, with more with a conditional use permit; the Urban Design District says at least two-stories, with a limit of four, but a potential of six with an enhanced design aesthetic. In terms of shadows, they are minimally talked about in the City's conditional use standards for approval. Generally, the conditional use standards are focused on the overall "whole" rather than individual properties.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I'd like to see the green screen for the parking again.
 - This is on the east side of the building in the parking lot, we've got an 8-foot tall screen arbor but the lower portion of that is solid. We do have some Evergreens planted along here too. There is vegetation planted on the inside as well.
- What is the width of that planting strip between the alley and the parking surface?
 - It's five-feet wide. There is about two-foot of grade change. There are Hydrangeas proposed on the backside of that arbor proposed. We also have vines to go up the arbors, and some perennials and ornamental grasses.
- Is it necessary to have parking on that side at all?
 - If we don't we run into a situation where the site could be under-parked and that would exacerbate the problem of parking along Emerson Street.
- What was the reason there wasn't access on Park Street?
 - They're trying to close the access points to Park Street along that stretch. If we did provide access we would have to tie it back in with the gas station through point. We'd have to get a cross-access easement with the gas station.
- If you had that would you gain additional square footage you had previously lost? This becomes another townhouse, this parking lot is closed down to Emerson and comes out onto Park Street. The discussion of the cars that will circulation back into the neighborhood is prompting this discussion. How could this be done properly? If the curb cut were moved so it straddled the property line, if it hasn't been considered it should be looked at, at least exhaust the possibility of it. This access needs to be reconsidered.
- (Staff) We have had conversations about access to the site with Traffic Engineering. Anything on Park Street would be right-in/right-out only; this allows us to have that full access. Traffic and Fire would also be looking for some sort of circulation there. From a Traffic Engineering standpoint, this is the ideal situation, anything here would conflict with the bus stop, and conflict with circulation within the site.
- On the fourth floor, is there a reason why you still have a blank backside to the building?
 - In losing this entire floor we lose effectively 25% of our units, at least. We did look at trying to stepback parts of that here, but in effect the building itself gets to be so narrow that we lose about six units off the backside by trying to step it back.
- Did you try to design this with three floors or not?
 - We did look at it, absolutely. We've also looked at two-level parking decks, a six-story building, a five-story building. We are trying to minimize the impact along this side of the building.
- I think you addressed the corner well. My issue is a broader one of height and mass. Park Street development in general has not been addressed with a corridor study the way East Washington Avenue has. My concern is with precedent; initially I thought this site could take four stories, and the idea of density as being the greenest way to develop, and transit-oriented design. But what we don't have something that clearly states block-by-block what the heights could be, and they negotiated with

neighbors very carefully so there are blocks that vary. We're doing it here incrementally and to go ahead and approve the four-story precedent concerns me. Where I had been more supportive I am probably not going to support this tonight, mostly because I want the City to move Park Street up in its priorities in terms of a corridor plan.

- This is not what we want Park Street to be.
- The Urban Design District was based on the Park Street Urban Design Guidelines which involved the whole community, but it was not as intensive on a block-by-block basis as with the East Washington Avenue Corridor Study that underlies UDD No. 8.
- This Urban Design District is 9 years old, and this seems to permit up to four-stories without exceptional design or anything else, and certainly Park Street is a little low scale for my liking at the moment. But I'd like to address the changes on the north side of the building, particularly with these little units you have. It looks like 400-500 square foot units? They seem to have 16-foot height to the second floor. Would you consider making those larger units that were more in the scale of one of the residences that are along Emerson Street so that it has this feeling of a little bit larger house versus a commercial building with these tiny little apartments in it. I like the corner, I think repeating the little hat you have on that corner element diminishes that roof overhang that's on the rest of the building. I would encourage you to just leave that off; it contributes to the heaviness on that corner.
 - In terms of these units here, that was not our original intent. We're trying to provide some bridge across to the neighborhood to establish an Emerson Street that is satisfactory to all involved, and if that means larger units we could look at that. With regards to the hat, that was a change since the last time.
- I would agree that this elevation really has quite a bit of bulk and mass, especially as it transitions down the hill to Emerson. That corner treatment in particular, and the two-story piece with the units that come down to the more residential scale, is the kind of piece that would make this successful, to be nestled into that neighborhood in a more appropriate manner.
- Towards the gas station end of the property, you're lowering the parking lot and creating more of a commercial face?
 - Yes. It's an 8-foot difference from Park Street to the grade here, so we need to lower grade to get down into this elevation here.
- Try to think of a way the mass could be brought down. The solar implications are the biggest issue for me, especially since it's a City of Madison objective, people have invested and that would be taken away.
- I really encourage the Commission to consider the four-stories from the east side, not from Park Street, because it really is five-stories when you look at it from the east side, and that's what's really impacting the neighborhood so much. I'm not convinced it sufficiently allows for the success of any solar panels that are already in place, or just the aesthetics of the homes in the neighborhood.
 - To what degree does existing vegetation come into play? There are some very mature trees around the neighborhood that do cast shadows.
- The interesting thing about a deciduous tree, in the winter the leaves are gone and it doesn't cast that shadow it does in the summer. We frequently need to adjust trees to accommodate solar panels as well. I understand what you're saying, but the building is a solid mass where the tree is more interactive, especially in the winter.

ACTION:

On a motion by Carter, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1) with Goodhart voting no. The motion provided for the applicant to return with address of the comments made tonight.

A previous motion by Goodhart, to grant initial approval, failed for lack of a second.