

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: October 17, 2007
TITLE: 115 West Doty Street – Public Building, Communications Tower. 4 th Ald. Dist. (07752)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: October 17, 2007	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Bonnie Cosgrove, Richard Slayton, Bruce Woods, Lou Host-Jablonski, Todd Barnett, Jay Ferm, John Harrington and Richard Wagner.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 17, 2007, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a communications tower on a public building located at 115 West Doty Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were John Welch, Dane County Public Works Engineering, and Robert Holloway. The project provides for the installation of a radio communications tower atop of the Public Safety Building for use by the Dane County Emergency Management, Emergency Operations Center which provides command and control functions of local and county government during a response to major emergencies or disasters. According to the letter of intent, a metal lattice, guy-wired tower is proposed that will extend 50-feet above the elevator shaft of the Public Safety Building approximately 70-85 feet above the adjacent ground floor level. The tower is necessitated with the location of the control center located within the safety building, which lies between the adjacent taller Dane County Courthouse and City-County Building. The tower will be 8-feet above the height of the Dane County Courthouse and 6-feet above the adjacent City-County Building. Robert Holloway from The Capital Neighborhoods spoke in favor of the project, noting that the impact is not likely to impose problems with people in the neighborhood, with other buildings in the neighborhood, therefore in support.

Following the presentation the Commission noted the following:

- Concern with precedent with creating a demand for more communication towers in the downtown area.
- Tower elements are add-on to project, should see as part of the original approval of the “public building;” this could be integrated such as spires or other architectural elements.
- Guy wires are a bothersome issue; consider alternatives.
- The Public Safety Building is not done yet. It was intended to provide for future vertical expansion. When building does go higher issue should be dealt with in a more architectural manner. The placement of courthouse next to it helps create the current problem.

ACTION:

On a motion by Woods, seconded by Host-Jablonski, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-3) with Harrington, Barnett and P. Wagner voting no. The motion noted that this consideration is a stopgap measure for a building located in a bowl; any future expansion of building communication towers should be integrated as part of the architecture of the vertical expansion.

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 2, 4, 4, 4 and 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 115 West Doty Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4
	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
	4	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

General Comments:

- Unsightly addition to the downtown.
- Really, there ought to be integration of spire elements with the architecture, especially on public buildings. This one looks like a dumb old ham radio antenna.
- Given the limitations of the existing building, this is acceptable. Any future projects should anticipate community needs, not deal with them after the fact.
- Poor solution for our one true urban condition.
- The tower is necessary but the anchoring engineering of these towers need much more creative thought.