

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 19, 2014

TITLE: 626 Langdon Street – Renovation and Addition to the “Roundhouse Apartments.” 8<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (33108)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 19, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; John Harrington, Lauren Cnare, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart and Tom DeChant.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of February 19, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for the renovation and addition to the “Roundhouse Apartments” located at 626 Langdon Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Wilcox, representing CHT Apartments; Curtis Brink and Jason Bollig. Wilcox presented the plans and described the site layout. This existing high-rise currently does not meet all the Building Code or Zoning requirements and needs upgrading to meet those requirements. The existing parking lot will be maintained; additional moped and bicycle parking will be included, some of which will be housed downstairs. An enhanced patio space is being included in the front for the tenants as well as customers of a potential market/coffee shop. This will also help to activate the front of the building. The use of pavement and lighting will make the entry to the building rather obvious. Some of the existing units will be renovated (17 out of 100). A mezzanine is proposed at the 8<sup>th</sup> floor which will help provide some volume since the building cannot be taller than 8-stories. The feedback they received from Planning Division staff suggested accentuating the face of the building, add vibrancy and keep any playfulness to keep interest at the street level and increase the quality of pedestrian views.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Will you be using walpaks?
  - Right now it’s going to be split system, so there will be smaller vents coming out the sides but they won’t be walpaks.
- Is the mezzanine considered another floor?
  - The Building Inspection Division determines that in relation to Zoning, and they determined that it is a mezzanine and therefore the building is not 9-stories.
- I’m struggling because we’re in a historic district and this is an addition to a non-contributing building to a historic district. My gut reaction is why are we extending the longevity of a non-contributing building? If this addition did something and enclosed the most public face of the Roundhouse, maybe there’s a way to make this site contribute more to this district. If you could present to me why this parcel

is more contributing to this historic district as a whole it makes a stronger case to me. I would disguise the round thing.

- Just so we're clear, to explain how the architecture of the building is going to enhance or expand upon or make the overall site better as a contributing building to the district?

That the addition would contribute to the district. And my personal suggestion is you build along the Langdon face.

- What's there right now? Are you taking any trees out? What kind?
  - I believe it's an Oak tree. 20-inches, it's substantial. It's a Locust.
- The only way I see approving an 8-story building on this site is if that the new building wraps the entire front face of the Roundhouse and maybe that whole parcel then contributes more to the street.
- I think even though the Roundhouse doesn't contribute anything to the Langdon Street historic district, I think it has a uniqueness and a character of its own, but this addition totally takes that away. I don't know that there's any way if you try and cloak part of it, I think you destroy what integrity it does have in some sense. If you're going to do an infill it really ought to be separate rather than integrated, but I don't think this separateness is distinct enough that it preserves the integrity of the Roundhouse, and masking it further is just botching it. Maybe a glass connection to connect the two buildings?
- The one perspective we don't have is dead-on to the intersection of the two buildings. I can't see what material that is, the connection.
- Does the building have any responsibility as a new building to contribute in any way?
  - It'll be reviewed because it's in the district.

But does it have a requirement?

“New construction in a historic district should be held to a standard that it would contribute.”

- By definition being a new building it needs to be separated from this idea of it just being a historic district. I believe we need to look at this in the context of this is an infill development and does it fit the surrounding context, and do these two buildings work together or tend not to work together. I worry if you start talking about historic districts, that's just not a point here.
- I think you've done a really nice job. It's really important to get all that bike parking in there. I like the idea of really activating the street with stuff that's not just for the residents but for other people too. I would agree that we need to try and make it even more separate. Really look at that edge where it comes together so there's no question about these being two different buildings.
- I would really discourage adding new brick to the existing brick. Something light, as little connection as possible from the street.

## **ACTION:**

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

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 5 and 5.5.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 626 Langdon Street**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	6	5	-	-	-	-	5.5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

General Comments:

- Keep two buildings visually separate. Terrace on front could be larger (take one parking spot).
- Awkward solution.