

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: November 17, 2021

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

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Kevin Firchow, Acting Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: November 17, 2021

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Christian Harper, Tom DeChant, Christian Albouras, Craig Weisensel, Shane Bernau and Russell Knudson.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of November 17, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for renovations to Oakbridge Commons Retail Center located at 7820-7874 Mineral Point Road. Registered and speaking in support were Brad Koning and Steve Doran, representing Galway Companies.

The original phase on the west was built in 1989 with revisions and the Walgreen's added in 1994. The building has become tired and does not have enough presence. Walgreen's is not part of this development, although they have expressed interest in discussions with the development team. The 10-foot colonnade will be removed to brighten the storefronts and allow for more visibility, while expanding the sign band areas for tenants. The only vertical architectural element is the tower that was created during phase 2 as the main entry point to the site. Plans include replacing the sidewalks, creating fresh pedestrian experience, and replacing the large planters with more modern moveable planters. All the aluminum storefronts will be replaced with more energy efficient glazing. They have created a rhythm of tower elements and will replace shingles with a standing seam metal roof and add brick pier elements. New aluminum above-store canopies will be added for sun and rain shade and to add depth. Brick accents turn the corner with the flat roof and siding while dealing with the triangular roof form of the fire walls. They are proposing to stain the brick in a whitewashed gray to avoid long-term maintenance issues.

The Commission discussed the following:

- This building has a backside to it?
 - It is the back-of-house access to the retail, which is not being renovated.
- At the Men's Warehouse corner, was there any thought to making another tall anchor element so you don't have that issue?

- It's a fairly tall piece, we had to consider the roof rain water coming off and how we treat that. It's in consideration and we are looking for better ways to address that. We're trying to not disturb the tenant space on the interior.
- It's very stark looking, you're staining the brick gray, was there any consideration to a palette that would incorporate the existing color brick? Modernize the appearance but maybe keep that brick original color.
 - There definitely was consideration to leaving the brick as is. We were trying to accomplish a stark difference to what was there, and in our opinions try to modernize the space and the feel.
- Maybe it's just all the signage being in black print. Signage might liven that up a bit.
- You can see that centralized feature from the backside. That's a challenge of where you stop the renovation and how does it look between the old and the new. The northern elevation is very prominent, it's back of house but still making that transition of a singular design. You're going to see these colors and if they don't work well together, it's going to look like a patchwork building.
- The building is old with that huge roof, it's dated, but is this really an improvement? It has a ways to go, certainly with the color mentioned before and competing with areas you're not going to touch. I don't know that the main tower is an improvement at all. The corner piers at the main tall tower just go up and stop when I'm looking for them to come across over top to create a sign area. There's way too much EIFS here. While the colonnade has challenges for the tenants it does shade the building effectively, the canopies shown in comparison are flimsy. The whitewashing adds to that stark feeling. Those tower elements could have brick going up, a flat arch going over them and staying a bit more true to the brick masonry of the building around the sides, reducing all that EIFS and coming up with a more substantial and effective canopy system to provide shading on the building.
- Is staining versus painting in the ordinance?
- This is not in an Urban Design District.
- There is not an ordinance, there are design guidelines with suggestive language. There isn't a zoning regulation that would prohibit staining.
- This didn't strike me as an improvement. University Station has also recently undergone a major renovation, it has the same architecture and I find their approach more successful. They kept the brick color, added stone and a few other materials, it actually came out pretty nicely. I'd suggest that as another approach to renovating this dated building. I'm very concerned about the idea of front-to-back two buildings.
- Opportunities to add some greenery to this site. Some living things could create a nice balance from the starkness.
- To that point you'd be missing an opportunity to make some changes in landscaping, it would go a long way to softening the starkness of the current design. You have to make sure someone keeps up with the planters. That parking lot is very barren.
- The awnings and colonnade, we unfortunately see a lot of flatness of the façade and materiality, which is one thing the current building has going for it.

ACTION:

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