

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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**REPORT OF:** URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** December 14, 2016

**TITLE:** 301 Cross Oak Drive – PD(SIP), Multi-Family Townhome Development Consisting of Nine Units. 9<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (44467)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** December 14, 2016

**ID NUMBER:**

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

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of December 14, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a multi-family townhome development located at 301 Cross Oak Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project was Steve Shulfer, representing Leaders Custom Homes.

They have simplified the exterior a bit, expanded the front porches to include some seating areas. The buildings have been moved approximately 8-feet to the north to get them closer to Silicon Prairie Parkway, which reduces the steps by about one-foot across the front of the building, and brings the asphalt farther north to create a better greenspace. They have reduced the parking by about 10 spaces. Shulfer noted that the building next door has vinyl, realizing that the Commission does not typically approve vinyl siding as part of a project’s building materials. Jessica Vaughn of the Planning Division discussed her staff report and the points contained therein. Staff was concerned with how far the building was setback and the height of the building as it moved away from the sidewalk. Originally this was a large expanse of parking, which wouldn’t work for required greenspace for the families living here. The street facing elevation seemed to have large blank wall expanses and the lack of light in the townhome units was of concern to staff. Staff also requested elimination of one of the access points to the site.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Substitute some of the Malus species for native understory trees (Amelanchier) so they’re not all Crabapples.
- Around the infiltration area, the lines of shrubs should be in more of a grouped pattern. Respect the edge of the pond rather than the line of the parking; make the infiltration area more of an “ameba” shape.
- I agree with trying to get more light up in that second story on the stair/streetside of the elevation.
- The detail on the front entry stairs, the guardrail is commercial looking. It needs something to bring the scale to a residential feel.
- What are the dimensions of the front patio?

- Approximately 7-feet wide from the edge of the stair and projects out about 7-feet.
- On the units that are recessed, there are porches that still return back to their own unit wall, when if you just let them fill in that space it would almost feel more nestled in.
- Make rowhouse units appear more like the neighboring building; provide more simplicity to the unit or module itself.
- I would suggest looking at City Row on the corner of East Johnson and Blount Streets. It's not a true rowhouse walk-up as your project is, but it does a nice job of making this feel like neighboring buildings without getting too hokey. It has simple subtleties in the composition.
- Make units read as single units, not divided as they appear.
- It looks as though this is being expressed as two mini units when this is one unit (individual townhouse units). I don't understand why you're having a change in color and material if each one of those units had its own identity instead of trying to make two look like four. It lacks a level of refinement; it needs another pass on whether it wants to be contemporary or traditional.
- Deal with exposed foundation wall and stairs more effectively; maybe landscaping can help to conceal some of this foundation wall and the tall stair to make it feel like it terraces up more than just ground plantings right against the wall with this huge stair. Terrace up ground and landscaping up to the building or use stone wall as planter up to the building.
- You could do multiple colors with each unit without vertically separating them and having the appearance that they're individual units that were separate designs.
- Look at "City Row;" multiple colors for each unit.
- "City Row" has more change of plane when those colors occur, so you wonder why that vertical element isn't here in this case. Need change in plane with more vertical units.
- Looking more closely at the landscape plan, the bed is quite a bit back from the bottom of the steps. That bed should go at least to the bottom of the steps so that it embraces the steps and creates a nice entry sequence. The main thing is to cover up the edges of the stairway.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0).