

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 12, 2021

TITLE: 12 N. Few Street - Addition and New Construction for 8 Commercial Spaces and 8 Residential Units Located in UDD No. 8. 2nd Ald. Dist. (64038)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: May 12, 2021

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 12, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of an addition and new construction located at 12 N. Few Street in UDD No. 8. Registered and speaking in support was John Seamon, representing Jeremy Knudson. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Kevin Yeska, representing JSD Professional Services, Inc. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was John Belknap.

The proposed development contains 8 commercial units on the lower level and 8 residential units on the second level. The smaller setback allows the building to better hold the corner. The existing trees will remain intact. The primary building materials are Scandinavian modern, bringing scale into the residential realm.

John Belknap spoke to issues with the blind intersection with this setback. The new building will extend out so far that people on Curtis Court will not be able to see traffic on Few Street. This development will have possibly 16 units with only four parking spots.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Interesting looking building. How do you move through these units? Are the four parking spots for the commercial units, and what is the plan for the residential and remainder of the commercial units for parking?
 - The intent of this is something more walkable, mass transit related. We recognize the concerns about parking, the reality might not be exactly what we want. The Zoning Code does not require parking here. To bring small business scenario to this site; any parking required would be off-site street parking.
- If it's residential parking, the residential entries are from the south and all the parking is on the north side. I see a lot of conflict with residential parking in the front, you're leasing the first floor to separate entities. You connected the interior of the commercial space with the unit above; is it truly work-live or you have 16 leases here?

- 16 separate leases. There is a disconnect but our point was there was a need and ask by the neighborhood to provide some parking. We found this was an opportunity to at least provide four stalls. The door inside, someone could have a lease on the upper unit and a separate lease for their business below, so there is an ability to connect those two.
- I'm not seeing any plumbing facilities on the first floor. The first floor, will it be rated for interior parking? Could someone lease that lower unit for a garage?
 - As of right now it is not. We are not intending to park those, it would have to go through a conditional use if we were to change the use in that way. There will be restrooms in the lower level units.
- It's very attractive, it's more functional issues that I'm seeing as problematic.
- The project looks great. I was wondering about the functionality too. What type of businesses do you see using these units? I think the perception of a garage door and a car in front of it is what's throwing off the parking question.
 - It wasn't our original intention, we're trying to alleviate concerns and issues raised by the neighborhood. We see a pretty wide range, craft shops, small handwork shops, professional services businesses that don't need a lot of space. Those garage doors become an opportunity for a sidewalk presence but if there's a car there we recognize that too.
- Aesthetically I like the project a lot. The vision triangle shows 12-feet. I don't mind the parking configuration, I'm a fan of these scenarios with an almost patio space that can double as a vehicular space and go back and forth. The landscaping in between those spaces, the Eastern Red Bud is a nice selection; make sure it's a single stem and you spec a minimum height on it. If the garage doors aren't actually used for parking, consider having an attractive piece of cut stone to serve as a curb stop, something more attractive than a concrete curb stop. Is that curb changing to be a roll curb or a depressed sidewalk in the front?
 - It's going to be one long continuous curb cut, not that different from what's there now.
- Ald. Heck spoke, noting the issues discussed are close to what the neighbors have been interested in: circulation of the building, the vision triangle (Traffic Engineering indicated they were content with what is being proposed), and the number of parking stalls (but that's not related to the UDD No. 8 consideration). There was interest in the installation of permeable pavers, how pedestrians circulate around the building is a bit confusing. He does support the change of UDD No. 8 for this project to move forward.
- Are you planning on canopies at all the commercial entrances? It kind of helps it look like more of a commercial entrance,
 - We have talked about that and like that idea.
- The lighting, safety and visibility along that south narrow alleyway, that's where the residential entrances are. From what I can see it's up against a masonry wall for part of it. That's a bit of an area of concern to me, what that would feel like to enter if you're by yourself so I hope it's well lit and has some kind of visibility.
- I like this project and how the building looks but I'm having trouble wrapping my head around the essential layout and flow of customers, residents and parking. With all the development going on around here the on-street parking has gotten even worse. Glad you're preserving those trees, the under-plantings need to go anyway and are being replaced with nicer shrubs and ground cover. Some of the planted areas are broken up with mulch and perennials, a strip of edging and perennials on the other side with stone mulch, I don't really see the point in that. All four of those parking spots could be made with permeable pavers. The parking is my biggest problem with this project, and the general layout too.
- I share the concerns and comments, I like the building but have severe questions about the parking and layout.
- The mechanical units, I don't see any rooftop units shown or any screening indicated.

- The second floor units are all through-wall mini splits. We've provided integral louvers for all those scenarios below a number of windows. We think we're going to be able to heat and mechanically cool the lower units with fans and exhaust, so no exterior condensers.
- The garage doors, if that went to a storefront system perhaps those four units could still function as you've described without feeling the need to drive into them and reduce the confusion about parking. Storefront systems perform a lot better thermally than garage doors.
 - We certainly can. We gravitated to the garage door because of the residential feel, we liked the vocabulary of that because it seemed to fit.
- The project wants to look like one thing but then function completely different. Some of this needs to be flushed out with form and function. That's where all of our comments are coming from. I think you have to make some choices.
- A clear access point from the sidewalk to the business that doesn't involve squeezing past a car that may be there for months on end.
- A lot of the confusion would be resolved if these units were rented as true live-work units.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0). The motion provide that the applicant work out issues discussed regarding circulation, layout and parking before returning for final approval.