

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: September 2, 2015
TITLE: 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue – Advisory Presentation at Planning Staff’s Request for a New Mixed-Use Development Containing 60 Market-Rate Apartments and Approximately 6,700 Square Feet of Commercial/Retail Space, in addition to a 6,667 Square Foot Commercial/Retail Pad Site to be Developed in the Future. 12 th Ald. Dist. (39566)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: September 2, 2015	ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 2, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** giving an advisory recommendation on a new mixed-use development located at 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Kirk Keller, Suzanne Vincent, Jeff Lee and John Fish. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Nancy Thayer-Hart and Jim Thayer-Hart. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak were Jennifer Argelander, Annie Johnson and Don Lindsay.

Jay Wendt, Principal Planner gave some background information on the project’s current status. The Plan Commission is requesting an advisory recommendation regarding the conditional use in terms of design and particularly standard number 9. Issues include how to address the corner, the flat iron option, the pass-thru under the building, the material choices and incorporation of brick.

Keller addressed the issues of concern of the Planning Division. He distributed new plans that show organization and massing at the point of Sherman and Fordem Avenues. At the center section on the Sherman side it feels much more welcoming through the drive-thru, and the general façade. The owner pushed for the use of quite a bit more brick and glass. The building itself is “cut open” in the center for a single-loaded corridor design. The setback at the second floor along Sherman Avenue is now a true four-story form with a modest setback at the second floor. A 20-foot setback is noted in response to Traffic Engineering.

Nancy Thayer-Hart spoke in opposition, not to development on this lot, but there is no rationale for going above and beyond the height limitation of 3-stories and a density recommendation of 40-units. In addressing the conditional use standards, her already established purpose is getting up early in the morning and watching the sun come up; with a 5-story building she will no longer be able to watch that. She will no longer get morning

sun into her house. Instead of being able to watch the park, she will see parked cars on her already narrow street because the parking being provided for this development is not realistic. This doesn't fit the area at all. There's been no demonstrated need for this development.

Jim Thayer-Hart spoke in opposition. If you drive down Sherman Avenue, there are no buildings that exceed 3-stories and none of them have a zero setback. This building doesn't fit the character of the neighborhood. Please consider how important it is that it matches the character of the neighborhood. This structure is too massive compared to the single-family homes nearby.

The Chair noted that the Plan Commission is the body that judges the conditional use standards. This Commission is concerned about design and makes a recommendation based on that.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- At our last meeting we saw a design that on Sherman Avenue, the upper stories were pushed back significantly. I remember that being a positive feature to the design because it created this common public upper outdoor living area against the park. But you said you were told to bring all of your massing forward to Sherman? I just don't recall that from our last meeting.
 - No it wasn't at this meeting. This was when we met separately with Planning staff and Mr. Martin and what was told to us is that they are very much looking for a flat iron piece at the front. We responded to that, we're trying to look at these elements to get the point right. This could simply be layered also, but we responded to the discussion we had last Thursday with the point brought out.
- My question isn't really about the point, it's about the face along the park. The Sherman elevation essentially was setback significantly which created a greater, grander gesture to the park.
 - The length of this building has been shortened about 10-12 feet. This area has been widened, we tried to give more of an warehouse feel as you start to come out at the point where we're punching some of the store windows. Bear in mind that the mass that was in here is what caused us to get a more simplified form across the building where the previous design did have a one-to-one setback.
- The previous design was more successful in that setback along Sherman, and the infill of this void. I don't think anyone was excited about this parking vehicle drive-thru. We talked about this eventually infilling with storefronts and vehicles, never penetrating through this building. The previous massing seemed more successful.
 - We're dealing with a challenging triangle, there's a very minimal number of parking in support of that. On this very acute triangle it's limited to get a design for parking that would work with traffic radii, setbacks, etc.
- You really need to have street trees on this street. You're not at all giving space for that to happen. It's too open and too loose. These trees are not just aesthetic and this is way under-planned for what we recommend for City coverage. I don't have a problem with the rest of the design. You need to get that canopy there.
 - The proposal is to bury the power lines so this becomes our fire access. We're not zero lot line, there's grade opportunity to bring in trees.
- We don't have any information on what the 5th floor bonus rooms are about.
 - Five of the units on the fourth floor will have stairs. What we're really looking for is a way to create the Fordem Avenue side for marketing purposes is a challenge. Loft units facing toward Fordem could come up the stairs in their individual units and have a room with access to the patio facing towards the lake. We see a diverse marketing here, we're in a transitional area, not a set neighborhood area, so we're providing a wide range of product, leaving the Sherman Avenue

area, abutting Maple Bluff, some of the retail along Fordem and it's this unique pocket that is a nice opportunity for us to use.

- Given the other comments, I want to address the staff comment about effective proportion placement of brick and the material palette. I almost see three separate buildings, instead of taking the 3 materials, break it up in components versus breaking it up every 10-feet. Really make a statement and express this for what it is. Instead of bringing all the materials all over the place, find a way to express these different elements differently.
- That would break up the length visually. What do you perceive as a likely tenant for the larger retail space?
 - Currently the negotiations are being discussed as a dental user that would relocate their practice here, and in discussions with a very popular coffee place that does not have a drive-thru.
- I'm bothered by the widening of the pass-thru, it grew. And while it gives distinction to the two building masses, maybe one row of the parking under the building could be eliminated.
- The one-story piece clipping into the 2-story open balcony bay isn't necessarily the strongest resolution between those two pieces, when if you had the one-story piece clipping into a solid interior usable space and the roof of the one-story piece extended along Sherman, it could become outdoor living space that then served on that side as opposed to on this flat iron kind of commercial face. As opposed to having balconies in the brick mass, leave that mass as an occupied residential unit, and then create their outdoor living space facing Sherman. It's just an odd configuration, the L-shaped masonry corner face, first it being L-shaped in addition to having balconies on it, it isn't a very strong anchor to the composition, when in reality it's that masonry detailing of that 3-story mass that anchors the composition and it has a lightweight one-story piece clipped onto it.
- That whole point being an integrated design, versus something clipped on to a masonry piece with some cement board paneling behind it.

The Secretary noted that in making the advisory recommendation, the Plan Commission would like the motion to structure what that recommendation is.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** giving an advisory recommendation. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1) with Carter voting no. The motion to refer noted reservations about the 4-story mass on Sherman, the lack of setbacks from the previous iteration of designs, and the large vehicle space.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	5	7	-	-	-	7	8	-

General Comments:

- The plans are good and improved from last time. The 4-5 floors are fine, but would consider 3-4 floors. Nevertheless, the plans are improved. Mixed-use parking needs improvement, unify the color palette for each section. Parking entrance caused concern, they could reduce the opening.