

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 9, 2022

TITLE: 700-740 Regent Street - Planned Development (PD), New Residential Building Containing Approximately 363 Apartments. 8th Ald. Dist. (68730)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Jessica Vaughn, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 9, 2022

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 9, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PD for a new residential building located at 700-740 Regent Street. Registered and speaking in support were Joseph Alexander, representing the Alexander Company; Renato Gilberti, representing BKV Group; Robert Muller, representing Trinitas Ventures; Linda Irving, and Joseph Mayer, representing Trinitas Development, LLC. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Adam Winkler, representing the Alexander Company; and Nathan Wautier, representing Trinitas;

The team presented updated plans with further refinements based on the Commission's previous comments. The building is split into two distinct masses through the middle where they have removed four floors of units, with a 14-foot shift between the front and rear masses of project. Elevations show the creation of a four-sided design with an increased level of ground floor activity, a more prominent entry to the building to promote safety and security, a designated location for food truck parking and adjacent plaza for seating. A gathering lawn is proposed adjacent to the bike path with added planters and screening. To add activation the north and west sides of the building, they have shifted what was formerly part of the parking garage for a computer lab and study lounge, with the main entry looking down on the pedestrian sidewalk along the north side. A canopy element has been added on the west and north sides, as well as lighting in the southwest corner where the leasing offices are located.

Joseph Alexander spoke in support of the project.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Can you speak to the protruding balconies over City-owned property on the bike path side.
 - They cannot overhang in the right-of-way.
 - That portion of the building is on a zero lot line.
- What are the building materials?

- We propose metal panel in two types of colors and patterns to be installed in a vertical manner. The masonry base wraps all the way around the building. There are recessed framed elements for the windows in a silver monochromatic tone to provide relief from the striated cladding, in addition to glazing for storefronts and punched openings on the residential pieces.
- The planting list and blueprints are quite a head scratcher, the list and numbers don't jive with the plans. If you are looking to activate this area and the plaza, this list is way underdone. Norway Maple is not a top choice as an ornamental tree, and it shows up on the plant list but nowhere on plan. You show two American Lindens and two Autumn Blaze Maples, but only one of each appears anywhere on the plans. The planters in that lawn area show a beautiful palette of ornamental grasses and flowering shrubs, but the plants are nothing but a couple of Crabapple trees and Creeping Juniper. To sum up, this is an incomplete plant list that doesn't match the plans with strange plant selections we would refrain from using. Much work needs to be done.
- The landscape plan needs to be reworked to be compatible with our climate and consistent with the quality of the building.
- Very happy to see the amount of open space and amount of terraces, really good design incorporated to have those accessible spaces.
- I struggle with the materials; it's a different use of material that I welcome, and I appreciate this is not a standard material we see with other residential projects. I appreciate the reorganization of balconies, although if some are not allowed it will change the design so much by making them more cohesive.
- This is an exciting project, and interesting to see how people will flow in and out, particularly on the north side. For those arriving on bikes, have you looked at a gradual slope ramp vs. stairs? That might be challenging.
 - We went with stairs to increase the landscaping planting edges. We will incorporate a ramp section adjacent to the steps so you can walk your bike up while using the stairs.
- Nice, that's an elegant solution.
- I'm happy about the parking solutions, but the ramps seem very tight.
 - (Staff) The land use application process works closely with City Engineering and Traffic Engineering for those issues. It is currently being reviewed, we can pass that comment on to the current project manager.
- Appreciate some improvements to the order of materials and exterior massing. I'm still struggling with the deep courtyard, that light well is so tiny. You have plants shown at the bottom and are planning for activity in there, but I don't know how much natural light those occupants are really going to get. You have potential movies being shown in there that would be disruptive to others. Doesn't seem like a very humane solution for those apartments around that.
 - The activities programming here is similar to what we've done with other courtyards. We have hours of operation for when TVs are on. We've had zero issues of folks renting along a courtyard that has a movie theater. We see this as being a combination of a game garden and a theater opportunity with certain nights showing movies on a 9' x13' screen, with Adirondack chairs or blankets, game day event opportunities, and in winter this is a weather protected zone for being outside. Looking at restaurant domes for indoor/outdoor amenity.
- It feels like some of this new housing in Madison is more like downtown Tokyo, I struggle with that.
- Are there mechanical units on the roof?
 - It will be a central plant with 90% of them within that enclosure. There will be some exhaust on the eastern end.
- As an infill project to a surface parking lot this is a huge win. I like the design concept of shifting trapezoids, void spaces, open and green spaces, it's really strong. I love this corridor and your main entry being situated along the bike path. The views from the bike path excite me the most, seeing that

activation along the corridor, I almost want to see more of that. You could introduce more of that activity space in the middle as well.

- I wouldn't react to the planting quite as strongly, but I do think it could use another pass. Certainly to reiterate the Norway Maple and Barberry are non-starters. The Little Blue Stem is a sun-loving prairie plant, it'll get floppy and won't like that spot. I didn't notice bike racks at grade on the east end, that would be very appropriate and necessary.
- The lawn on the north side along the bike path might get people tossing bags and such on game days. I'm not sure how many people will lay out on that lawn, I could see another pocket of trapezoid hardscape being more successful.
- I still think the building façade seems busy and unorganized to me. Not to say the randomness isn't the problem, I like the shifting rectangles but I still seeing places of order, places of shifting and squares and rectangles, it's throwing me off a little bit; that could still use another layer of refinement.
- To review from staff memo, we should comment on the ground level orientation, the courtyard light well and potential signable areas.
- Does the proposed signage include the flamingos vs. bikers themes? Are we talking about those in this presentation or is that a future signage presentation?
 - Signage would be separate and may or may not be a Comprehensive Design Review. We're looking at whether there been enough thought to where signage might go.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Asad for final approval. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Discussion was as follows:

- I'm comfortable with designated signage areas, comfortable with the light well, the materials, I would recommend approval given the comments about the landscape plans.
- This is an excellent project and exciting, but I do feel there would be great benefit to one more round of this discussion. The extra story is significant, the added density is an overall plus, the light well situation is a huge part of the overall greenspace presented and the questions raised are valid. I'd like to see a more realistic experience of that light well than what we're seeing today. The discussions about landscaping are important and worth exploring and seeing back.
- I'd vote initial based on the landscape issues. If those balconies are going to come off there will be significant design changes. We need visuals or 3D models to experience that light well.

On a motion by DeChant, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).

The motion provided for the following:

- A corrected and revised landscape plan.
- A revised northern façade showing the loss of balconies and any changes to the design.
- Visuals of the light well/3D renderings to give a sense that experience.