

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 16, 2011
TITLE: 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street – PUD(GDP-SIP) for a 44-Unit Apartment Building. 4 th Ald. Dist. (19953)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: February 16, 2011	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Marsha Rummel*, Mark Smith, Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton*, John Harrington, R. Richard Wagner, Melissa Huggins and Henry Lufler, Jr.

*Slayton recused himself for this item. Rummel left prior to the motion.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 16, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of revisions to a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were John Bieno, representing TJK Design Build; Rick Broughman, Pat McCaughey, Rosemary Lee, Bert Dennis, Diane McCaughey, and Scott Kolar, representing Mifflin West District, CNI. Appearing in opposition to the project were Peggy LeMaheiu, Kate Robertson, Michael Stluka, Hanna Somers and Rachel Kalven. Bieno spoke to the Commission about changes to the plans since their last visit to the Commission. The building setbacks have been increased, and the fourth floor has been stepped back so the massing at the sidewalk isn’t so great. The architecture has been simplified to minimize some of the ins and outs of the building. The base material has been increased to a larger size concrete block, and a recessed accent band has been added. They have also changed the base material in some locations to brick and added masonry to the entire façade of the building at the middle. They have tried to tie together the more vernacular of the siding material to what is adjacent to them. Two bike stalls are shown on either side of the entry, and four bike stalls located in a covered area for a total of eight, as well as the bicycle and moped parking underneath. The fourth floor will have a patio area but it is setback from the edge of the roof. They have gotten rid of some of the transom windows and some of the pop outs at this location in addition to reducing some of the massing.

Rosemary Lee spoke in support of the project. The clientele for this project would be young professionals which would certainly stabilize the neighborhood. She feels strongly that this will benefit the neighborhood and will not affect the rents in the area for students.

Peggy LeMaheiu spoke as a member of the West Mifflin District Steering Committee to object to the development. She feels this project will overpower and diminish other properties in the neighborhood. The density and height of this project remain a significant contrast. There will not be a break in the four lots allowing for grass, sun and trees to be present. The front entrance and balconies do not offer the same ambience as the larger porches that exist.

Kate Robertson spoke for the “Save Mifflin Group” to address concerns regarding the setback for an open atmosphere. They don’t feel that the project flows with the Mifflin atmosphere. Big porches for students to gather and commune are what they are looking for. The lack of greenspace concerns them, as well as the flat roof that doesn’t flow with the gabled roofs in the neighborhood. The height and mass are too overwhelming. They would like to keep it to 3-stories as stated in the Downtown Plan.

Michael Stluka (Indy) spoke to the fact that the students in the neighborhood are not against any new tenants coming in. In the 400-500 Blocks they do not want to see anything larger than the Ambassador. The building is beautiful but not right for this location. The community and the atmosphere in the area are very important to him.

Rick Broughman spoke as a member of the Mifflin Street Steering Committee. He feels the size of this building is appropriate for being able to make the project work financially. The architectural efforts to break up the mass are effective, with the new setback further reducing the mass of the building. The flat roof is more conducive to adding green projects more so than slanted roofs, as well as keeping the height down a bit. The proposed landscape he feels will eventually reduce the complaints about the massing. A greater supply of beds will result in a reduction of rent in the neighborhood. There will be an abundance of sub-standard housing for students for years to come.

Ald. Mike Verveer spoke as the Alder of the Mifflin Street neighborhood. There is no consensus on this project and the Steering Committee is split. Verveer mentioned the student involvement in this particular issue and how this has never happened in all his years as an area representative. The previous developer walked away from this parcel because he thought he heard loud and clear from the neighborhood, as well as Ald. Verveer that four stories would not be acceptable. He has pushed the developer for the generous fourth floor setback to appease the development of a fourth floor. He further noted issue with the lack of stepback of the elevator/stair tower sticking out; it needs to be resolved.

Heather Stouder of City Planning Division spoke of the Planning Division’s concerns with this project, as detailed in a staff report.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- My personal preference is not for utility brick.
- You’re trying to force the entry to be symmetrical when it’s very asymmetrical.
- I struggle with the setback because it feels like we’re being either one or the other. I prefer the original as previously approved (initial) by the Commission and as an Urban Design Commission member that is what I would like to see. I understand that change is hard and this neighborhood has a lot of emotion and nostalgia. But I would hate to see urban development compromised.
- Look at fourth floor stepback story and its light colored material needs to be re-examined; also not in favor of utility brick.
- Instead of trying to hide things let’s try to accentuate them.
- Those are some pretty small units. I would hate to make those any smaller.
- Pushing the building back has lost some depth.
- You’ve got some extra space on the second and third floors by the stair tower. If you give this one or two more iterations here, I think this false space could go away and you could add a bit of space to some units, making this living space a bit more realistic.
- Taking into account some of the other members’ comments, look at the façade and the massing of that façade, maybe embracing that asymmetry at the entrance and letting that stair tower be a vertical element that is clearly a vertical element as far as massing.

- Overall I think you can still see that there's a very strong sense of connection with that height, cornice or the roofline. That's very convincing. I think your proposal has a very strong 3-story presence at the sidewalk.
- The two stairways should be wider, at least 6 or 8-feet.
- Think New York brownstone stoop.
- Maybe each patio that is larger can receive their own stairway.
- On the east wing I greatly prefer your previous option; some massing that projects off the façade and breaks the three identical portions.
- I don't understand the canopy over the garage as an entry piece.
- The porches really are the identifying piece of this neighborhood. Trying to get some depth and a porch on the east wing would help the overall composition. The west end is fine as it is, the changes balance it.
- I don't have a problem with the materials.

ACTION:

On a motion by Smith, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0-1) with Slayton recusing himself. The motion provided for the following:

- Need to see fourth floor changes as noted during the discussion dealing with enlargement of units and redesign of elevator/stair tower.
- The porches and stairs shall be redesigned to give continuity of "stoop sitting" that is commonplace in this neighborhood.
- Change the color material choice for the fourth floor; needs to integrate with other façades, have same color on lower floors or pull down.
- On east wing of front façade return previous option of projecting bays above garage, eliminate canopy above garage, provide a porch and add transom windows to the upper level mid-section of the projecting bay.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 6 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	6	-	-	-	-	7	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	5	5	6	-	-	5	6	6

General Comments:

- Reasonable and appropriate redevelopment.