

CAPITOL

NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.
MADISON, WISCONSIN

May 15, 2024

Plan Commission
City of Madison

Re: 519-521 W. Main St.

Plan Commissioners,

The Bassett District of Capital Neighborhoods has assembled a Steering Committee to meet with the Neutral Project in considering this proposal and to provide input to City decision making bodies. The neighborhood has had several productive meetings with the Neutral Project. The Development team has been receptive to the feedback from the neighborhood.

This proposal, utilizing two small lots, is the first of its kind in the Bassett District since adoption of the Downtown Plan and may serve as a prototype. As such it is important to get this one right and set a high standard for proposals which may follow.

The plans submitted to UDC were a work in progress. The plans submitted on May 15th for your consideration reflect additional revisions. The neighborhood is supportive of this proposal but believes that due to the evolving nature of the proposal several conditions should be included in any motion to approve.

The Urban Design Commission motion to recommend approval included 6 specific conditions for that approval. Only 1 of those conditions has been fully addressed in the most recent submittal. The neighborhood supports each of the UDC conditions and urges the Plan Commission to adopt all of them.

We offer these additional comments:

Perimeter Brick Wall Fence and Accessibility Ramp

The May 15th plans now call for a mix of 6' high solid brick wall, 6' wood fence, combinations of brick wall and wood fencing along the perimeter of the property on three sides of the building. (Sheet A105) The elevation and plan drawings do not consistently reflect this wall. Along the west property line there is a significant difference in the elevations of the parallel sidewalks on the two properties. The current plans create a 9' barrier between the two properties which likely is not compliant with the zoning code.

At the front yard there is now a mix of brick wall and metal railings. It appears that additional revisions will be required in this area for compliance with building codes.

At the east side of the property an accessible ramp returns out to the edge of the public sidewalk. (Sheet A105) The elevation of this landing combined with the height of the metal railing results in a 7-8' high structure directly adjacent to the public sidewalk. (Exterior image on Sheet A901 of the May 15th submittal) This is not a desirable aesthetic or pedestrian friendly environment.

HVAC Exterior Wall Penetrations

The plan elevations do not show any details for HVAC penetrations or how they might be incorporated into the design. Given that there are very few deep articulations at any building elevation vent penetrations will be highly visible. The location and type of vent need to be specified and none should be located on the front façade.

Suggested Conditions of Approval

To address the conditions noted above the neighborhood recommends that the Plan Commission adopt the following additional conditions of approval.

- A. The applicant shall collaborate with adjacent property owners in the design and installation of the perimeter brick fence/wood fence to ensure that the uses, values, and enjoyment of those properties is not substantially impaired or diminished.
- B. As part of the integration of the accessibility ramp into the plaza space any portion along the public sidewalk should not exceed a height of 3' for the ramp or landing above the public sidewalk. The railing along the public sidewalk should be of a type of ornamental fence. (Defined in the Zoning Code as being less than 50% opaque.)
- C. HVAC vents of any sort shall not be located on the street facing façade.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Ostlind
Bassett District of Capitol Neighborhoods
Steering Committee Chair