

CAMPUS AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Johnson & Bassett Project Steering Committee Report

Letter to Plan Commission

June 12, 2023

To the Plan Commission & others whom the Johnson & Bassett Project concerns:

For the Johnson & Bassett Project, CANA (Campus Area Neighborhood Association) and CNI (Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.) were first alerted of the development proposal in November 2022, when they were undergoing their pre-application process for submission. An initial neighborhood meeting was planned for February 2023, but the plans fell through with the ensuing election activity for February primaries and the April 4th general election. The development team provided materials and updates from UDC informational hearings they participated in throughout March. The development team officially filed their application March 27th, 2023. The development team presented the project at the Miffland Neighborhood Association of CNI meeting on April 5th. We were able to meet the development team and go over the development proposal via Zoom on April 13th, 2023. At this meeting, the team introduced us to the development with their UDC (Urban Design Commission) graphic package from the previous night's UDC meeting where they were granted approval. For the Neighborhood "Postcard" Meeting on April 27th, the development team utilized their UDC (Urban Design Commission) Presentation and were able to answer supplemental questions asked by the public. Hence, this is the first letter we could send to the UDC with considerations from the Steering Committee and input from other community stakeholders. We have had repeated positive engagement with CORE and have done extensive in person outreach, with over 80 people as of May 30th responding to our community survey. These people were engaged through social media, in person door knocking, and the postcard meeting.

Responses from the Community Input Form

In May, CANA created an online community survey in May, and distributed the survey through social media, neighborhood email lists, postering, and knocking on over 100 doors in the surrounding neighborhood. We are also very grateful to District 8 Alder MGR Govindarajan for his help in distributing the survey to his constituents, most of whom live in this neighborhood.

As of June 7, the community survey has received 83 total responses, a majority (55%) of which were from University of Wisconsin email addresses, indicating a high level of student engagement with the survey. This input is critically important, as this development is being proposed as student-oriented residential. The voices of the target demographic and prospective

future tenants of this building need to be heard by the developers and the City. The following is a summary of the key themes from the community survey responses.

- Lack of Affordability
 - Responses from our community survey were overwhelmingly concerned with the market rate prices proposed for this development. Comments that concern the UDC include:
 - “I believe that concerns should be raised about the prospective costs of this apartment. Madison does not need more luxury apartments; there are many near campus such as The James, The Hub, Ovation 309, The Waterfront, and many more. Further, there is also a multitude of luxury housing a bit further from campus such as close to the Capitol. However, Madison is experiencing a housing crisis. The answer to this is not creating new housing and overcharging for units, with prices exceeding rates that most students cannot support based on their own incomes. Rather, space should only be allocated to builders and companies who are willing to offer housing for lower rates.”
 - “Everything listed in the amenities reinforces the fact that these will be luxury apartments built on a college campus. As these apartments will be marketed to students because of their location, many of these amenities are completely unnecessary and seem to be only a way to justify charging insanely overpriced rent.”
 - “Madison needs more affordable housing around the university campus so that students can live and work without being stressed about financial issues all the time. If off-campus housing price trends keep going in the direction they’re going, then prospective students who do not live a reasonable commuting distance from the school might choose not to attend the university based solely on the fact that they could not afford to live in the Madison area.”
 - “Projects like these push low income and disadvantaged students into housing further and further off-campus, cutting off their academic, professional, and volunteer opportunities.”
 - Many neighborhood residents felt that certain amenities were added primarily to justify charging higher rents - in particular, multiple residents expressed concerns about the inclusion of rooftop pool areas and in-unit laundry in the development. As one respondent noted:
 - “While some amenities, like in unit laundry and trash chutes on each floor, sound nice, a lot of the amenities sound like a way to overcharge students. Why is a complex putting in a pool or a gym when students have access (and many choose to use) gyms accessible through the school?”

Based on this community feedback, we have suggested that an affordability component be added, but the developers have rejected these requests. CANA is now making the following requests of the developers and the City:

- All profits from EV chargers should be put forward to subsidize at least 3-5 affordable apartments for “disadvantaged” students, with eligibility determined in coordination with the UW-Madison Office of Financial Aid per a Memorandum of Understanding with the University and the City of Madison (see [Oliv Madison](#)).
- Future housing developments in this neighborhood should include at least 15% affordable units, or should create a number of new affordable units equivalent to the number of existing “naturally occurring affordable housing” units that are demolished to facilitate the development, whichever number is greater.
 - This would be consistent with the [Downtown Neighborhoods Coalition Affordable Housing Resolution](#), which was approved by CANA, Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc., Marquette Neighborhood Association, and Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association in 2021 and 2022. This resolution requests that at least 15% of available units be qualified as affordable, and that residential units in a proposed development should be considered “affordable” if a tenant’s monthly rent would constitute 30% of the monthly income of an individual making 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) of Dane County.
 - CANA encourages the use of creative methods to create new affordable student housing in the neighborhood, such as those employed by the City and CORE at [Oliv Madison](#).

W Dayton Street Tower Mural

- We want the mural to be added and would the community to be engaged for its approval.

Additional Community Member Comments

- We like the bus stop.
- Sustainability:
 - Expansion of the green roof area is desirable given the risk of street flooding in the area of the project site. The CORE Spaces project will eliminate many open, permeable gravel and grassy areas and increase the impermeable character of the block. Stormwater runoff will increase with the new construction. The developer should build rain gardens along the borders with the Lux and the Domain site, given that surface water will flow downward and across the CORE site given the existing topography.
 - Geothermal energy is efficient and reduces fossil fuel dependence and greenhouse gas emissions. A ground source heat pump installation would make the building unique.
 - We support rooftop solar panels. Any PV installation is welcome. Remember that this building will be located on the boundary of the Mifflandia plan which calls for maximum sustainability in new construction.

- The fence should be made with recycled plastic or compressed hempcrete blocks.
- Concrete cement production accounts to eight to ten percent of overall CO2 emissions. Therefore, we recommend low-carbon concrete.
- Sustainable elements such as adding a purple roof, solar collectors, and painting other areas of the roof with white UV reflective paint should be added.
- The architect has not presented a shadow study. This is very egregious especially considering the availability of virtual reality and 3-D modeling used by architects.
 - Therefore, the hulking impact of this project on surrounding buildings cannot be determined. This is unfair to current renters on Dayton Street and other property owners. We all desire seasonal sunlight variation. Good design optimizes natural light and passive solar heating in Winter while mitigating the heat and brightness of Summer.
 - We recommend brise-soleil window louver treatments (sunblocks) to minimize solar gain. The addition of horizontal single louvers above windows would make the building more energy efficient and sustainable without impacting vision from within the unit. The brise-soleil window louvers need to be aligned with the glazing so as to not overshadow the building.
 - Installation of triple glazed windows on the Johnson Street side will reduce street noise.
- It would be cool if the Johnson Street façade would be framed in the pastels used in European block developments. This would breakup the massing and make for a more interesting view.

Townhouses

- We strongly urge that the Plan Commission restore the outside entrance townhouses to the project. Modernism does not require a bland, restrained socially aware structure, nor a circus show of a building.
- A vibrant mix of architectural typologies creates a multifaceted urban neighborhood—housing projects are also mini urban centers. If residents do not interact with the larger community, they become isolated and apathetic citizens. Townhouses are an element of placemaking and can scale massive developments to human proportions. Removal of outside entrance townhouses diminishes the CORE project. It removes architectural contrast in favor of sameness. If you add contrast, you do not automatically add chaos to design. Unlike many apartments or condos, townhomes promise more than just one level to your living area. This is great not just to have more space—it also opens up more decorating options and can also provide some added privacy for households with multiple people.
- Townhouses create a greater sense of place than the hulking mass of the larger CORE project. Porches encourage casual conversation and build connections between

neighbors. The neighboring Domain project offers outside entrance townhomes. Reducing the scale of the CORE project with townhouses also makes the project fit better with the older structures across Dayton Street. Eliminating separate townhouse entrances reduces the character and functionality of the building and discourages a friendly pedestrian experience and an aesthetic city.

Main Entrance & Garage Door on Dayton Street


- Lack of a corner main entrance is counter to common principles of good building design, also creates a lack of character. A linear, radial design results in an unappealing facade along Bassett and Johnson. The entrance is a visible conveyance of a building's purpose in its outward appearance.
- For the main entrance, we would suggest that they incorporate a brighter color to distinguish the entry and add additional contrast, such as a terracotta color or bringing down the wooden panels for the entrance, the name panel of the building on top of the entrance
- Unify the expression by painting the white fencing to match the entrance and change the color of the silver panels with a color less muted such as red to make the building more exciting.

Additional Information

■ 5.30.2023 UDC Letter from the Neighborhood Steering Committee.pdf

■ 5.8.23 Johnson & Bassett Steering Committee Request to Deferment.pdf

Survey: <https://forms.gle/QLcRCyoKksy8ifgFA>

Survey Responses:  Johnson & Bassett Community Input Form (All 83 Responses 6/7/23)

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Steering Committees and who had provided comments for the Steering Committee's consideration. We acknowledge Eli Tsarovsky, Tim Kamps, Cleo Le, and Alder Mike Verveer for coordinating with the development team to schedule the Neighborhood Postcard meeting and managing communications with the development team. Special thanks to Steering Committee members Stephen Smith, Evan Bonsall, Tanner Mechura, and Cleo Le for aiding in the submission of each report; and, special thanks to members of the Miffland District Neighborhood & Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. for their insights on the proposal.

The Committee also appreciated Brian Munson's ongoing communication with CANA and CNI throughout the process, and the development team's in-person hosting of the neighborhood meeting on April 27th and their attendance at the first steering committee on April 13th. We respect the work that the development team has done and hope to continue our cordial relationship on this and future development proposals.