

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: July 15, 2015

TITLE: 3520 & 3546 East Washington Avenue –
New Auto Service Station with Detached
Car Wash and Convenience Store for
“PDQ” in UDD No. 5. 15th Ald. Dist.
(38452)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: July 15, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Tom DeChant, Sheri Carter, Richard Slayton, Cliff Goodhart and John Harrington.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 15, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a new auto service station located at 3520 & 3546 East Washington Avenue in UDD No. 5. Appearing on behalf of the project was Tate Walker, representing OPN Architects. Registered and speaking in opposition were Kathy A. Warren, Diane Calhoun and Jackie Shivers. Registered in opposition and available to answer questions was Nancy Troxel-Hoehn. Registered neither in support nor opposition and not wishing to speak was Kip Schick, representing the Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association.

The site is currently 94% covered with hardscape; recommendations are for 85% and they are proposing 61% for a reduction in the allowable hardscape coverage. The contemporary design uses brick and metal panel and allows for 150-feet from curb cuts for pedestrian and vehicle safety. It is intended to be an open and transparent design for the neighborhood. The building has been pulled towards Schmedeman creating a strip of land on the western edge that provides a buffer for the residential area and provides an opportunity for that land to be used in the future. Extensive landscaping is proposed to capture rain water and soften the edges around the site. The Plan Commission recommended placing this item on file, citing two conditional use standards that have not been met (#3 and #4), as well as not complying with the Comprehensive Plan, and not being conducive to development on the site in the future. The developer strongly disagrees with that position. This project provides “eyes on the street” and a nice change from the empty restaurant building currently occupying this parcel.

Jackie Shivers spoke in opposition, noting ideally a different plan would be better. For 20 years the Prime Quarter site was a very well managed, quiet neighbor. The proposed plan doesn’t have anything to help the people living on the backside of this proposed building. She offered ideas on relocating the driveway in order to maintain the 150-foot buffer from East Washington Avenue, while giving more of a buffer between the gas station and the abutting residential properties.

Diane Calhoun spoke in opposition. She has great concerns about the high volume of traffic this will generate. The Prime Quarter restaurant that had occupied this parcel didn’t open until 4:00 p.m., meaning this was a very quiet area. Now with the PDQ opening there will be constant traffic and noise all day and night. She cited safety

concerns with people cutting across areas to reach the store. She noted that PDQ has met with the neighborhood twice, but not before having everything in place. Residents were not aware of this project until it had already begun going through the City process.

Kathy Warren spoke in opposition. She has lived on Ridgeway Avenue for 38 years and has tremendous concerns about noise and traffic. She is in her house 24/7 because of her health/situation. They have had issues in the past, they don't need another driveway. She would like the wall to be 10-12 feet high like they have along the Beltline, and she would like to see signs that state that Ridgeway is not a truck route.

Heather Stouder from City Planning focused on the elements of the staff report relevant to the Urban Design Commission's review of the project. Planning staff from the beginning has expressed its concern with the site plan, its inefficient use of land and its suburban design. It would be one of the largest sites for a gas station in the City of Madison. Planning staff feels the site could support much more and in a more sensitive way. The suburban style layout of the buildings and parking doesn't do much to hold the corner of Schmedeman and East Washington Avenue; more could be done. They appreciate the applicant's work on meeting this concern; they were able to do a slight shift with the car wash that creates a space for a future retail building, but that is not what Planning staff had in mind. They envisioned a much more significant shift of the grouping of buildings in order to really meet that concern. They have little concern about the actual architectural details of the building; they feel it is a very strong example of what a gas station could be as far as how the building is designed. Pertaining specifically to the UDD No. 5 guidelines, parking spaces need to be no more than 70-feet from a canopy tree, the guideline related to the location of parking (the building would need to be moved and really hold that corner), the lighting plan needs to be adequate (detail on canopy), avoid long unbroken façades (they have added clear-story windows to the building but could add more), and the use of stone mulch which is not allowed in the Zoning Code. The bioretention area is rather small and is of some concern as well.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The removal of large trees is a concern. This landscaping is pretty inadequate and could be more extensive. I would like to see calculations for the bioretention areas. If there is stone mulch in there, it's got to get removed. I have concerns about whether this fits the district or not, but if it did, I'd like to see the driveway moved so you don't have to take out that large tree.
- Regarding conditional use standard #4, to me that talks about context, whether existing immediate context or the potential context as the neighborhood develops. That, in addition to John's comments, I'd like to see them take another try at it.
- I think it's worth bringing the building to the intersection, having the entire circulation happen from East Washington Avenue, no access from Schmedeman Avenue at all, and provide enough of a buffer between Ridgeway Avenue and the gas station functions are, that we can have rather than a 12-foot high fence, I understand the need for that, but I'd like to do that with dense vegetation, conifers and deciduous trees to fill that zone in. That leaves an opening of bareness between the "arts district" but I think a buffer can be provided there too.
- My concern is that we look at site plans very carefully as part of an overall design issue, and we have a site plan that has a big question mark on one side. We're not very fond of site plans that leave a question mark, neither we, the Plan Commission nor the neighborhood know how that question mark gets filled in. You're creating such a small narrow other little parcel there that it's questionable whether you can get good development in that. I drove around the neighborhood to get a sense and feel for it and it really is small little streets out there. Something like this is clearly oriented only towards East Washington Avenue and if you really think about a project of almost this size, it really has to have a sensitive relationship to other things, not just East Washington Avenue, so I think there's some issue with the site plan on this project.

- Also there should be plenty of property to do the things we're asking. Sometimes we see site plans that are so tight there's only one way to maneuver, but with 1.88 acres there should be room to do these things. The only concern I would with bringing everything out towards East Washington Avenue is that we're concentrating more and more activity to the back of the site near the neighbors, so we really have to pay attention to that vegetative wall, that screening because it'll become imperative that that gets taken care of and solves that problem.
- (Alder Ahrens) Unfortunately this has been referred to as a gas station. Although it sells gas, they sell a lot more than that, and that's of very significant importance to the area because there's no other place to buy food. Without the parking lot of Prime Quarter, Visions is gone. As long as Visions is there that neighborhood will never change or become more densely populated. There's very little investment there. In terms of a transition, this is really a transition from this very blighted issue with Visions and the run down restaurant, to no Visions, the possibility of development on that block, and everything will be relating to the 51/151 interchange. These are the real contexts for this space. If you move the building to the corner, you lose Visions and you want to build housing behind the PDQ. With that intensity of lighting required I don't see that happening.
- I think it's a good point that there's an uncertainty about this area. I don't think Visions is a long-term use, obviously the boarded up houses are not a long-term use. What's the possibility for the Planning Division to help envision a mini neighborhood plan that can talk about how that area can be something that has a broader future rather than looking at a parcel here or a parcel there. This is one of those special cases where we need some extra attention.
- (Stouder) Looking back at our 2001 Carpenter-Ridgeway-Hawthorne-Truax Plan, it really did go parcel by parcel for several areas, including the Visions block, looking at multi-family development for that block. It did talk a little bit about perhaps redeveloping this block for multi-residential/mixed-use. We could certainly go in and do a more updated version of that, but the bones are there, the framework is there to support multi-family residential or mixed-use on these two blocks. We'd like to see more space made for those other uses in the back along Ridgeway aside from perhaps a landscape buffer. Let's look at activating Ridgeway Avenue.
- Driving out there I was impressed that this is a small little neighborhood, it has some fragile populations, how does the City come up with tools to make sure that that kind of a neighborhood can continue to exist and be strengthened when you have some opportunities for redevelopment that obviously exist along East Washington Avenue? That's the broader strategic question for the City, rather than deciding on this particular use or not. Do you have that capability to help come up with those strategies and those systems?
- (Cornwell) I would say that it's already fit into the zoning. It's a transition zone district looking at moving from auto-oriented development to a more mixed-use condition. We're doing all sorts of planning related to the transit system to improve East Washington Avenue as one of our BRT corridors. We really want to preserve our potential to get mixed-use development along this corridor, whether that is housing or office or more intensive commercial development, the critical element is making sure we're maintaining a pedestrian environment and everything that we're doing is moving in that direction. The examples we've got speak to the kind of form, we're not actually opposed to the use, but the form is critical here and the zoning is very clear in the purpose statement about that transitional use. Our plans are really pointing at East Washington Avenue as a really critical growth corridor. It's not at all out of the question that we could see 3, 4 and 5-story development along that corridor as that critical mass comes together. If we are building fast food restaurants and convenience stores and gas stations in that conventional form that we're trying to move away from, we're going to seal the deal on it. This is a critical turning point for the decision makers in the City.
- Obviously it will remain at least in part a residential neighborhood because of the publicly owned housing there, in fact we're just reinvesting in that as well, and to not encourage its companion

residential neighborhood that's privately owned, would seem not very strategic for the City in terms of making a decision right now. I think there are broader issues than the parcel design issues in this case.

- (Alder Ahrens) I think the concepts of pedestrian oriented are fine but this is going to be, for some of the plans, this could be around 100-feet from one of the biggest intersections in the City where traffic goes over East Washington Avenue. This is an area that carries 55,000 cars per day and would probably carry 10's of thousands of more with these plans. Under the plans Pedro's would be gone, all of that would be gone, and this would be one of the first non-expressway sites. A series of townhouses overlooking the highway, maybe that's OK for some people.
- Part of the charge of this Commission is to consider the context of things. David, you're trying to be helpful in bringing in the context of what may happen to the interchange and what those designs may be. One, we don't have those here so that's not context that we have here, and that's part of my complaint about what we get from developers. They give us narrow context of just a lot and understanding both the context of what you're trying to bring, the context of what the neighborhood needs, those are things that have to inform a decision that this or any other public body should make about this kind of a project. I'm not sure how long the DOT will even have money for these projects with the way the State's going and the City before has refused to do an interchange out there. There's lot of things that potentially could affect this. The question for the City strategically becomes how do we handle our traffic and design streets so that we don't kill residential neighborhoods, because that's what used to happen. Have we learned enough as a city in this last decade or couple decades that we could do something better than just abandon it to a traffic corridor with gas stations and other things. This deserves more discussion and thought than we're having by looking at a small parcel.
- Are you familiar with the one on Fish Hatchery Road? If you moved the breezeway and moved the parking you would have more room for something to go here.
 - The dimensions are kind of set on that because of the setbacks with the pumps.
- That doesn't necessarily mean it's the only design that could work. You're just defaulting to what your pattern is.
- I'd like to be more up to speed on the delivery truck schedule: how often is it there, what time of the day does it come. A lot of the pavement I think is because of the circulation with that truck coming through.
 - Gas delivery is usually once a day, the truck would come up Schmedeman and into the site near the tanks and exit the site on East Washington Avenue. That was the safest consideration that we could come up with in working with Traffic Engineering. We've worked on so many iterations. I really think we've gone through a lot of these ideas before and this is kind of where we are now.
- Is there any way you can look into saving the tree? Or even taking off the car wash so people can walk that way? It would give more room in the back.
- If the success of Visions is occurring because of the use of the vacant building's parking lot, could City staff see if there's a way to temporarily barricade that parking, or talk to the owner and get essentially those construction fences that everyone is desiring with this project up early?

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion provided for address of comments in the Planning staff report, address of UDD No. 5 provisions including more details on WisDOT plans for the area, along with neighborhood plans and area context with "Visions," and to provide more dense vegetation screening, including deciduous materials along its boundary with the residential and a buffer for residences on the "Visions" streetside; and the following:

- Much more context is needed for the next review.

- We need to see the Carpenter-Ridgeway Plans for the neighborhood and what the CDA is currently investing in housing.
- The context of development along Ridgeway behind this project and how that will be incorporated.
- This site is deserving of much more density and activity and ability to flourish and support the neighborhood. What comes back to us should have a realistic plan for a substantial scale development and considerations for parking and access, and how it could really succeed.
- Save the tree on Schmedeman.

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 3 and 4.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 3520 & 3546 East Washington Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	3	5	3	-	-	4	2	3
	3	5	3	5	-	4	3	4

General Comments:

- Site layout/building placement is very suburban...design an urban solution!
- Inadequate use of space. Bioretention adequate?

To: City of Madison Plan Commission
From: David Ahrens, Alder, 15th District
Date: July 14, 2015
Re: 3520-3546 E. Washington Ave Demolition and Conditional Use Permit

While evaluating the major conditions of the proposed building, the staff analysis does not consider the most significant factor in the discussion of the demolition of the current building, Prime Quarter (PQ) and its replacement with a PDQ- the neighborhood environment in which it resides now and likely to exist in the future.

The factor that has been critical in the determining the quality of life in the community has been Visions Nightclub which is located immediately across the Schmedeman St. Because of the scarcity of parking spaces in their own lot, most Visions customers park in the largely empty PQ. The owner/operator of Visions has stated that customers would not want to park throughout neighborhood streets and that the elimination of the PQ parking would require fairly immediate closing of Visions. Alternately, if the PQ parking remains an option, he could continue operations on a month-to-month basis.

The impact of Visions on the community has been corrosive. Adjacent to the "club" are a half dozen boarded up homes which face E. Washington. Many other homes in the immediate area are old and in disrepair. It is unlikely that there would be any substantial investment in the area along with the continuing operation of Visions. If one considers the immediate primary impact of the proposed development on the source of blight in the neighborhood as well as the "first impression" of the city for the tens of thousands of commuters on E. Washington Ave, the PDQ is a strong net positive in evaluating Condition 4.

Other factors related to Condition 4:

While focusing on long-term and thus, hypothetical land-use issues, the analysis omits two important social effects of the PDQ. First, the C-Store is generally recognized as an above-average employer in their employment sector. They prefer to hire and retain full-time employees, provide health insurance and other benefits. They estimate that the store would require 20 full-time employees. In discussions with residents of Truax Homes, this has been a positive factor.

Second, the analysis omits that in addition to being what is characterized as a "fuel station" (see Analysis and Conclusion, p.3), PDQ is also a retail food store. There are no other food stores of any kind in the area. Much of the food sold in the PDQ is prepared but it also carries food staples that are otherwise unavailable to a large population within walking distance of the site. These two high impact effects on social conditions for the community should be explicitly addressed and given merit.

The argument made in regard to Condition 4, that the lighting, traffic and other ambient conditions might impede future development eastside of Schmedeman (the current Visions site) is inconsistent with the later argument that the building site should be pushed to the corner of Schmedeman to allow greater "intensity" of use. Rather than a substantial green barrier of trees and grass mound separating the building under the current plan, this suggestion places the lighting, traffic, etc. virtually next door to any future development. Additionally, the comments on the lighting do not reflect the current state of lighting technology and the use of high-intensity LED lights as opposed to broadly lit vapor lamps that has been used by the PQ to light their parking lot.

The development of the PDQ at this site might meet the perfect definition of a Commercial Corridor- Transition (CC-T). It replaces an unused and increasingly decrepit building, the Prime Quarter as well as be instrumental in closing of a long-term community problem- Visions. Given the long-term state plan to broadly expand the intersection of E. Washington Ave and Hwy 51 and its uncertain takings of properties likely east of the site, sale of the block may be more difficult than usual for a property of this kind and location. The on-going delays as well as the unknown but extensive size of the DOT's Hwy 51/151 project create numerous levels of uncertainty that is not conducive to the purchase and development of an expensive property.

Factor (1) of the CC-T test: "improving the quality of the landscaping, design.....". The proposed design greatly improves the PQ site when it was operational- let alone its current and future condition. It replaces a vast, parking lot with a few shrubs on the side streets, with be a substantial grass moun and tree plantings on all four sides. Additionally, there is a wooden fence to protect Ridegeway residents from light, noise and potential pedestrian traffic.

The second factor of maintaining residential viability has been addressed previously. Providing food as well as a retail site for other purchases is a missing element in the community and has reduced its capacity for positive change.

Condition 3: PDQ has made substantial efforts to mitigate the potential negative environmental and ambient effects of its continuous operation. Having said that, conditions on its operations are warranted to reduce disturbance of the community in which it resides. For example, limiting operations of the car wash from 8 AM to 8 PM and requiring that bay doors be closed during its operation. Second, maintaining the large space of its operation to be clear of debris and providing trash cans in the area. Third, limiting the time for fuel and beverage deliveries. As much as possible, to direct out-going traffic to the E. Washington driveway and away from Schemedeman. Fourth, limitations on alcohol sales to be determined by the ALRC.

Conclusion and Summary: The staff analysis takes the position that the city has the option of choosing between what exists and an optimal condition of high "intensity", minimal community impact and a mixed use. However, this optimal outcome is not and likely will not be an option. The actual, existing condition of the neighborhood- both residential and commercial- indicates that an intermediate solution to the land use be adopted. The PDQ proposal for demolition of the PQ site and construction of the convenience store that will provide jobs for potentially unemployed or underemployed individuals, a food source, reliable operation and management of its property and a greatly improved landscape and greenspace satisfies the conditions under CC-T.

Stouder, Heather

From: Martin, Alan
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 10:27 AM
To: Stouder, Heather
Subject: FW: PDQ

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: jackie or mike [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 9:52 PM
To: Martin, Alan
Subject: PDQ

Here is a letter from a Hawthorne Neighborhood member who is unable to attend the meeting on Thursday, but wants to give his input.

Jackie Shivers

Hi.'

I'm not sure if you got my email last night.

I'll be unable to attend due to work.

I looked over the plans and my feeling is that this layout is much, much better than before.

That said, there are still a few concerns.

The driveway on east wash is still too small. With the way the parking is now shown on page 12 of the rewrite... everyone is going to exit Schmedemann. It makes the most sense as that's the majority of the parking. This also means that super long delays at the corner of Schmedemann and East Wash. It's already challenging to make a turn at that corner and this is going to make it 1000 times worse. Therefore, REGULARS... will learn that they can take a left instead and cut through the neighborhood and go out to Rowland, Graceland to Straubel or circle back and around over to Riendahl. Anyone who's a regular will learn and then you have monkey see, monkey do syndrome. So over time, others will catch on as well. This is bad.

Secondly, the fence... it no longer comes all the way out to Schmedemann. Therefore they are putting the pedestrian access back into the picture. That was one of the primary concerns for all of us. It will encourage foot traffic, which PDQ wants, but the residents do not want. IT will mean increased noise at all hours of the night and it means a significant increase in trash as people buy their food and dump it on their way home.

Third... the RED NEONS that go all the way around the canopy and the store, will forever be turned on. 24x7. At night, a red glow will be everywhere. In their drawings they show 6 or 7 new homes built behind the lot along Ridgeway. Well... that's "Future" and also "best scenario". It could be decades or never... before those appear and act as a buffer between this lot and Ridgeway residents. I believe that this red glow will impede on the quality of life for all parties concerned.

I believe the lack of a fence coming all the way up to Schmedemann and then around the corner back towards East Washington will also impede the quality of life for everyone living on the corner of Schemedemann and Ridgewood Ave.

I drive past the East Wash store on a regular basis now, in the morning and at nights. I hear the car wash from the street prior to 7am. That is bad! I have also heard that running past 8pm, from my car while driving past. So, if that is a model store... I'm not impressed. What catches me the most though, is the red glow from the canopy that shines on everything. It's not bright... but it's not dim either. It's just "always there".

I hope this helps. I support you all the way.

Walt

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: jackie or mike
To: bfruhling@cityofmadison.com
Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2015 12:06 PM
Subject: PDQ Proposal (and other proposals)

Open letter to: City of Madison Urban Design and Planning Commissions

Had people with a good knowledge of the Hawthorne neighborhood, and the work done by the four neighborhoods to formulate an overall plan to improve these neighborhoods, they would have known that a 24 hour gas station was not going to be an acceptable use for this property.

Being in Urban Design District 5, the Planning Department assisted us in doing a plan that was adopted in 2001 by the Mayor and the Common Council. Any PDQ proposals severely threaten the well being of our neighborhood! Our little neighborhood behind the 'Prime Quarter' has 45 homes of which 6 are 2-flats, 3 are duplexes, and 36 single family homes of which 15 are within 100 feet of the 'Prime Quarter' property line, which of course would become the 'PDQ'. Not only have we had to put up with 'Visions' nightclub with it's parking and other problems, we have had to put up with the nefarious 'Spence Motel'. The slum-like conditions across from the motel have improved because the city has gotten a fairly responsible owner to fix things up.

There are 5 short streets behind the 'Prime Quarter', they being Rowland, Schmedeman, Reindahl, Ridgeway, and Graceland. All are unimproved, thus they are not in good enough condition to handle the obvious increas in traffic anticipated by a 24 hour gas station operation!

A friend who is in the gas and oil business told my wife and I that in order for a station of this size to make a profit, they would need to attract 2000 to 3000 cars per day, with most of the traffic coming between 11:00 P.M. and 3:00 A.M.. He said that gridlock could be expected every day, especially during the rush hours!

A traffic count done on Schmedeman last September, 2014 showed a count of 554 vehicles during a noon to noon period. Schmedeman Ave. being the main ingress/egress street to our neighborhood, and also the "shortcut" to the Truax Apartment complex is a worry to all of us. It shouldn't take a "rocket scientist" to envision the problems we will have with an improper use of the 'Prime Quarter' property

Having lived on Ridgeway Avenue since 1962, and being a longtime neighborhood activist along with

serving as it's Alderman for 20 years, I can truly say that the PDQ proposal , and any other revisions similar to it are the worst that I have ever seen! An Alderman who is strongly supportive of his or her neighborhoods should oppose the PDQ' plan or plans!.

S. Michael Shivers

cc: Attorney Jeff Scott Olson, with attachments

Stouder, Heather

From: jackie or mike [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2015 9:03 AM
To: Stouder, Heather
Cc: Trowbridge, David
Subject: PDQ Proposal

Neighborhood concerns and conditions re: E. Washington Ave PDQ proposal:

Ideally, we would want a very different plan for this property, as we have had over 20 years of a quiet, well-maintained corner business that opened at 4 or 5PM and closed by 10:30 PM., with ingress and egress from E. Washington Ave. only.

The proposed plan does not have any transition from the single family homes on Ridgeway Ave. to the E. Washington Ave. venue except a 6 foot fence.

There could be much better planning and usage of this property than what is currently proposed. A combination of residential and business is a much better way to go.

Increased traffic and noise are a given in our already fragile neighborhood. Why add more?

If PDQ is approved:

Time of operation should be 6AM until 10PM, not 24 hours/day.

Move the car wash closer to E. Washington Ave, operate 8AM to 8PM only, or eliminate altogether.

Extend the external fencing on Ridgeway Ave around the corner on Schmedeman to buffer vehicle and store lighting from neighbors.

No single can, bottle, or container of any alcoholic beverage should be sold from the premises.

All deliveries should be made from the E. Washington Ave. driveway, as has been the norm for many years.

Change the proposed driveway to enter at the new tree on Schmedeman; don't eliminate the mature one, and move the pictured berm closer to the Ridgeway/Schmedeman corner.

Jackie & Mike Shivers
[REDACTED] Ridgeway Ave