

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** April 11, 2018

TITLE: 53 West Towne Mall – Redevelopment of
Portions of the Sears Department Store and
Auto Center, and the Addition of Outpads
on the Property. 9th Ald. Dist. (43732)

REFERRED:
REREFERRED:
REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: April 11, 2018 **ID NUMBER:** 43732

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Tom DeChant, Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo, Rafeeq Asad, and Dawn O’Kroley.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 11, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of the redevelopment of portions of the Sears Department Store and Auto Center, and the addition of outpads of the property located at 53 West Towne Mall. Appearing on behalf of the project were Jeff Vercauteren and Tony Gosetti, both representing Seritage Finance. The team was last in front of the UDC in November 2016, the site is now complete. One issue they ran into during the modifications of the Sears box, for the constructability they had originally shown metal elements built into the façade and extending out. To install those they would have needed to shut down the Sears store for several weeks due to accessibility and restroom issues. The alternative they are now proposing to prevent the store closing for several weeks is to retain the existing EIFS (pillars at the entryway), which is now painted, cleaned up and they removed the 1970s-looking pillars off to the side. The west elevation was constructed as approved.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- To clarify, you built it not in compliances, right? You’re asking for approval retroactively?
 - That’s correct. Essentially the contractor left the two pillars in place and painted them.
- There’s a covered walkway that was original? It’s not there anymore? In my mind, we have approved plans here, I don’t see how this is an improvement over what we approved. Just because it got built without the necessary approvals, what is the incentive for this body to set a precedent to approve it? I don’t see any other elements there that are an enhancement at all to what was approved.
 - If we look back at the standards for a multi-use site, we can still meet those standards of being compatible with the adjacent uses. If you look at what’s been done to the Total Wine space, we think this cleaner façade on the Sears portion is still compatible with that space, recognizing that the prior version had some similar elements with the vertical and horizontal metal pieces, which are similar to the Total Wine piece, which are not on the Sears piece as proposed. I do recognize the point about changing what is there from what was approved.
- There was metal panels, trellises, overhangs and other things that were...somebody proposed doing that, we didn’t say you had to.

- So the west side has a different look than the east side?
- Is the EIFS all the way down to the ground level? I do have a problem with that.
 - Yes. That was the original material to the building. It's scored as shown.
 - This east façade was a new layer was added on with these updated score lines to bring it in line with what was proposed originally. In order to provide the modifications we originally proposed, Sears would have had to shut down this entrance and opened up the roof. It was something they couldn't tolerate in terms of closing down the store and losing money for those weeks it would take. They really pushed back.
 - There was also an issue with where the restrooms are located now since they condensed down to half the original box. That becomes a public facility issue.
- Now what?
- We can either grant them approval after the fact, or it becomes an enforcement issue for Zoning.
- If it's not approved, then what?
- If I make a motion to refer, they could deal with building inspection and Zoning, or come back with some other things they could do without closing the store down. In my mind, they came to us with plans, which we approved, I don't see that this is an improvement. Just because it's there and built, I don't know if we should set a precedent of letting them off the hook.
- They could come back with something that more captures the spirit of what was approved without taking the roof off.

- It's a substantial step down from what you did proposed. There's a lot lost in the modification. I would support trying again and trying to make the eastern façade more in line with what was proposed and what you've already done.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** the project to allow them to return with something else. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0).