



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

Heather Stouder, Director

126 S. Hamilton Street
P.O. Box 2985
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985
Phone: (608) 266-4635
www.cityofmadison.com

TO: Urban Design Commission

FROM: Chris Wells, Planner

DATE: May 22, 2017

SUBJECT: ID [46932](#) (UDC); [47238](#), [46971](#) and [46974](#) (Plan Commission) – Approval of a request to rezone property located at 3601 Cross Hill Drive, 17th Aldermanic District, from A (Agricultural) District to CC (Commercial Center) District and TR-U2 (Traditional Residential - Urban 2) District; approval of a conditional use for a residential building complex containing 189 apartments in three buildings and a clubhouse; approval of a 2-lot Certified Survey Map; and an amendment to the Nelson Neighborhood Development Plan.

The applicant, John Lancaster, is requesting approval to construct a residential building complex at 3601 Cross Hill Drive. The development will consist of three three-story apartment buildings with 189 total units. The development also includes an attached one-story clubhouse and pool. Residential building complexes are conditional uses in the proposed TR-U2 (Traditional Residential–Planned) zoning district, which require approval by the Plan Commission following a recommendation on the design of the project by the Urban Design Commission. As stated by Section 33.24(4)(c), the Urban Design Commission shall review the exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and the landscape plans of all proposed residential building complexes.

The subject site is an undeveloped approximately 6.8-acre parcel bounded on the south by Cross Hill Drive, on the east by undeveloped land, on the north by Wilde East Towne Honda, and on the west by High Crossing Boulevard.

At this time, the Planning Division does not support this project in its current form. One key consideration is that the proposed rezoning is not consistent with the City's adopted plans which currently recommend employment uses. The Planning Division believes that the site may still hold promise for future Employment/Office/Service uses. Discussions regarding the process and support for a possible plan amendment are ongoing. Considering the southern end of the site's proximity to existing residential uses, the Planning Division believes that some residential development may ultimately be appropriate for a portion of the site, though this would require further discussion and plan amendments.

Staff's second concern relates to the design and layout of the development. As proposed, there are concerns about the short and long-term desirability of some of the units, especially as they are situated between existing and future auto-oriented uses (e.g auto dealer).

Design Considerations for the UDC

The Planning Division asks for feedback from the Urban Design Commission on the following design-related issues:

Properly Fitting the Development into the Surrounding Context

- The Planning Division is concerned with much of development's internal orientation, in which several units are oriented towards parking lots. For several recent large apartment complexes, staff has recommended that interior drives are created with an urban street-like character compared to a parking lot character. (e.g. parallel parking, street trees, sidewalks, amenities, etc.).
 - Could the placement of parking and or the stormwater areas be better integrated into the composition?
 - Could the stormwater areas serve a more active space?
 - Is additional peripheral landscaping or site work (i.e. berms) necessary?
- There are also concerns regarding 'Building C's' orientation which faces a parking lot and stormwater area (beyond which is a parking area for a car dealership). Is there a way to explore other unit types, e.g. townhouses, or some other form that would not need to front towards the north? There are similar orientation concerns for 'Building A' to the west.

Simplification of the Material Palette

- In reviewing the material palette, the Planning Division is concerned with the number of materials proposed (counted by color and material) – seven on 'Building A' and six on 'Buildings B & C' – and asks the Commission to explore how a reduction might improve the reading of the three buildings as a whole.

Entrance Articulation

- To improve the relationship to Cross Hill Drive, the Planning Division believes the applicant should explore alternative ways to better articulate and emphasize the buildings' primary entrances.

Four-Sided Architecture

- Staff is concerned with the expanses of blank walls along the northern "ends" of 'Buildings A & B' as well as the western "end" of 'Building C'.