

## AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** December 15, 2021

**TITLE:** 1128 and 1138 E. Washington Avenue -  
New Rehearsal Facility for WYSO  
(Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra)  
Located in Urban Design District (UDD)  
No. 8. 2nd Ald. Dist. (67172)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Kevin Firchow, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** December 15, 2021

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Tom DeChant, Lois Braun-Oddo, Craig Weisensel, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad and Jessica Klehr.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of December 15, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new facility for WYSO located at 1128 and 1138 E. Washington Avenue in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 8. Registered and speaking in support were Bridget Fraser, representing WYSO; Erica Mullins, Drew Martin and Brian Hearn, all representing Strang; and Jeff Reinke. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Melissa Huggins, representing Urban Assets; Rebecca de Boer, representing Saiki Design; and Kevin Yeska, representing JSD Professional Services, Inc.

The 40,000 square foot building will house rehearsal space, 9 studios and 8 practice rooms, a music library, instrument storage and repair, serving approximately 450 young musicians. The surface lot at 1138 E. Washington Avenue will remain for parking. Nearby arts destinations include My Arts, the Sylvee and Breese Stevens Field. The design was influenced by instruments, with warm wood tones and metal throughout the space. The landscaping mimics the elegant curves of the building's façade, with plantings providing rhythm and movement along the E. Washington corridor. Site elements including bike racks, bollards and seat walls will carry the sleek modern appearance. Striking curves define the major public and rehearsal spaces of the building. A drive aisle is included underneath the building between trees to preserve as many as possible, but does not include parking. Blue columns incorporate branding and color into the building while representing the five lines of a music staff. Outdoor patio space is located on the second floor with a curved lattice. A pedestrian plaza formed in front of the building includes a lot of colorful plantings and windows looking into the space. Nighttime renderings showed the playfulness of the building coming through. Interior views show a double height entry with a central stair utilizing WYSO's brand colors.

Jeff Reinke spoke in support and welcomed them to the neighborhood. He expressed a desire to slope the parking lot towards Curtis Court so the stormwater will get that rainwater, and keeping the nighttime lighting levels low. Two of the trees in the pocket park are healthy and could be saved, please reconsider and do everything that can be done to save two of the three trees. The bench is a memorial to the elders on Curtis Court, the metal plate will be saved and put on a new bench.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I like this project, the uniqueness of the design. I'm struggling with the materiality, musicality is light and the building still appears heavy. The interior renderings look dark. I struggle with the columns being offset.
- I agree. Taper or knife edge the roofline coming around because it's weighty. Lighter base? Columns supporting the roofline don't tie to the lightness of an instrument. Could be that the stone on the eastside comes up pretty far, maybe taper that down a bit.
- Are there any concerns about the added traffic on Curtis Court?
  - We've worked with City Engineering to minimize the impact as much as possible, directing all traffic onto Ingersoll Street from the stoplight, minimizing the through traffic on Curtis Court by directing the traffic under the building. We have a satellite lot further to the east of the building, and a pedestrian entrance right in the center on E. Washington Avenue.
- The ends of the curve chop off on the same plane, when all the images of curves taper. That might help with the organic feel and lightness of the curved wood elements. It feels dark facing the small houses on Curtis Court, something to think about. Those curvaceous elements could also go in and out on the sides so there are curves going all the way around the building.
- What's the depth of those brown roof fascia elements, how tall are they?
  - Anticipating about 2'4" to 2'6" depending on insulation and thickness of all the components. We're still in the development process to determine the structural thickness.
- The color and thickness of the lower white one looks so much more elegant.
- Have you looked at screening the loading area or any type of vegetation?
  - We can work on that. We are pretty tight to the setback.
  - We're balancing views into the site to make it feel more residential in scale and nature. The mature Lindens along Curtis Court do a good job and we do have a 10-foot MG&E easement that limits us. We're adding screening closer to the building with multi-stemmed ornamental trees.
  - The loading area is very infrequently used. It's not a daily or even a weekly event.
- I really think that if the fascia was not all on one plane, broken to 2 or 3 different planes and stepped as it ended its cantilever, that could go a long way to make it feel lighter. Those blue columns tell me the thing is so heavy they can't even stand vertical, it almost looks like they're straining under the weight of this soffit. The rusticated base is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century motif for saying strong and impenetrable. Not fundamental in the design, maybe too much in materials and elements and a little bit more refinement.
- The stone has such a nice soft quality and a rough texture, to see it go up in a curve goes against how stone seems to work in nature. The rhythm on your mullions and window treatments is working so nicely, I wonder if the stone shouldn't step down instead of going with a curve like that.
- Are those columns structural or decorative?
  - They are structural, maybe not required. They started as a gesture and have been utilized structurally with the angle coming from instruments.
- I think of that as a delicate thing but this has lost that delicate interpretation.
- Those curves are too thick. The columns, I like the way they represent strings and introduces color. I would point out that there are plantings all along the side and will be wrapped with climbing Honeysuckle. There will be leaves and vines on those columns and be fronted by columnar Arborvitae, that will take away a lot of the seeming mass of the stonework along the bottom.
- There's a lot to like in the landscape plan. We rarely see plantings where there's a nod to ephemeral spring plants (Virginia bluebells).
- I really like this building, it's strikingly different, unique and exciting to see. A few refinements could really take it to the next level.

- I really do like this building and it's so different than any other metal panel building we see going up. The curves might appear less thick if it ended at a 90 degree angle and not perpendicular to the ground. I do like the addition of the metal columns but when you get the base it's so tall and so much thicker. It might be successful if you just brought one down without that bulky base. Examine how this would be if you flipped the darker materials on the bottom to a reasonable base height with the lighter materials on top.
  - Maybe the renderings are not representing the metal panel in the best light. The bronze is meant to pick up on the metals of the orchestra, as well as the woods.
- I really like the wood, flat seam metal panel and stone. The copper never tarnishes and seems a bronze could be a little bit more true to the rest of your material palette.
- Now I struggle with the roof vs. wood. You have to revisit your material selection and placement. It's not a bad building, I love the curves and how it breaks up, I see the outdoor patio in a different material but I don't know that it needs to carry around to the front.
- I like this building very much. I would like to see some alternatives to the heaviness. The long curve on E. Washington may need the weight and strength of the heaviness. The E. Washington Avenue corridor plan called for a double alley of street trees in front of all properties. This landscape plan doesn't show anything other than the existing trees.
  - There is a double alley of trees. We aren't able to put in large canopy trees on the southern side due to the fire lane, but increased the others to improve that buffer. The maximum height was about 17-feet, which limits the height and the species.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0).

The motion noted the following:

- The Commission finds that the 17-foot setback and the proposed height of this development conforms to the spirit and intent of Urban Design District (UDD) No. 8.
- Revisit the material selections and how they are applied before returning for final approval.