

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: December 16, 2009
TITLE: 1552 University Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP) for Wisconsin Energy Institute New Laboratory Building. 5 th Ald. Dist. (16837)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: December 16, 2009	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Mark Smith, Dawn Weber, Todd Barnett, Bruce Woods, Richard Slayton, R. Richard Wagner and Jay Ferm.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 16, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** on a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 1552 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Eric Lawson and Jim Moravel, representing Potter Lawson; John Rakovy, representing Wisconsin Department of Administration/Division of State Facilities; Rob Weise, representing M.A. Mortenson Co.; Gary Brown and Peter Heaslett, representing UW-Madison; Ken Saiki, representing Ken Saiki Design; William Odell and Patrick Gleason, representing Hok Architects. The subject under consideration is a proposed PUD(GDP-SIP) which provides for the development of the Wisconsin Energy Institute's new laboratory building following the demolition of the former UW Health Student Health Services Building and Navy ROTC building. The new structure features a combination of laboratories and offices including a coffee shop at the site's frontage with Old University Avenue. The plans emphasized the development of first phase at the former UW Student Health Services site with the second future phase anticipated on that site currently occupied by the Navy ROTC. A detailed presentation of the plans was provided including review of the demonstration garden along its north side at the apex of Old University Avenue and Campus Drive. At the end of the presentation the Commission noted the following:

- The sweeping curve of the building façade at Old University Avenue gives the church space. The prow should be on the Campus Drive side which allows for the gardens to be located on the south side.
- As designed, the garden will not be actively used, building will block sun. Sun is needed to activate space. Make it exciting and fun.
- Agree with flipping prow. It needs study. As proposed it does not allow for a two-sided relationship and question building's fit with the neighborhood.
- The south façade appears institutional (University Avenue façade) needs to be more playful. As other elevations as it relates to the neighborhood. Also lower façade needs to connect to the street.
- Provide an identifying feature for the main entry on the building's south face.
- Resolve traffic/pedestrian issues in the vicinity will impede with the functional use of the site.
- Consider extending building wall along Campus Drive in combination with less than a fully developed southerly prow.

- Something needs to happen at point of the intersection to receive pedestrians. How building is clad is critical consideration for providing for a “fit”. Needs to be less suburban.
- The amount of space in the open space will limit how you pull it off as designed.
- Crosswalks need to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrian as well as walk along the face of the building.
- Use large canopy trees along Campus Drive to provide a visual and noise buffer.
- The easterly end elevation artificially truncated.
- Tie pedestrian bridge into planning for the building as well as look at the appearance of the west intermin elevation associated with the first phase of development; it will be there a long time.
- Support efforts to work on intersection improvements with Traffic Engineering.
- Consider moving the big mass of the building to the highway side might be a good recommendation.
- Redesign the building to be more of a barrier against Campus Drive; beyond just providing a wall.
- The east elevation penthouse is crushing the atrium’s openness below.

Following the presentation the development team noted the Commission’s concern about the orientation of the open space to Campus Drive as well as issues with the extended prow as it relates to Old University Avenue and the neighborhood noting the design’s efficiency for maintaining the open space as proposed where shade studies will be provided to see how well the courtyard and its plantings function.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.

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, 6 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 1552 University Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	4	2	4	-	-	3	4	3
	6	6	-	-	-	6	5	6
	7	7	7	8	-	7	8	7

General Comments:

- Return of bad 70s brutalism? This needs to be the most beautiful and interesting new building on campus.
- Intense use of parcel, concern about transition to neighborhood. TE help with intersection needed to accommodate dozens and dozens of new pedestrian users.
- Project would be greatly improved if reconfiguration of Campus Drive and University Avenue intersection were completed by Traffic Engineering.
- Congratulations, this design will now join Humanities and GEF I as the worst buildings in town.