

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	<b>PRESENTED:</b> January 25, 2012	
TITLE: 723 State Street – PUD(GDP-SIP), St. Paul’s University Catholic Center. 8 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (20458)	<b>REFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REREFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REPORTED BACK:</b>	
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>POF:</b>
DATED: January 25, 2012	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>	

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Members present were: Richard Wagner\*, John Harrington, Henry Lufler, Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Marsha Rummel and Melissa Huggins.

\*Wagner recused himself on this item. Barnett acted as Chair.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of January 25, 2012, the Urban Design Commission’s **RECONSIDERATION MOTION FAILED**. Appearing on behalf of the project and in opposition of the reconsideration were Mark Landgraf and Ron Trachtenberg, representing St. Paul’s; Sarah Carpenter and Eric Schmidt, representing CG Schmidt; and Robert Shipley, representing BWZ Architects. The Commission had granted initial approval at its previous meeting, but concerns were raised about that approval and now that motion is being reconsidered. Landgraf spoke in opposition to the reconsideration. His experienced team is rather confused about why this reconsideration is taking place. They feel they have put together a good plan that deserves approval. This team has no other objective but to deliver a project with a significant standard of architecture that will last for a very long time. Trachtenberg then spoke about their team’s several presentations, the Commission previous comments on the project and the team’s subsequent solutions to those issues. Trachtenberg remarked that they addressed each and every issue at the last meeting, and the Commission voted (6-1) to approve the project with three items to revise (real bronze doors, brick on the back and a small roof over the front entranceway). The developer is allowed to select the basic architecture so the general comments about architecture should not apply. They feel they have met all the concerns previously raised and oppose any kind of referral. The Secretary reminded Trachtenberg that this consideration was for parliamentary procedure and nothing more. Shipley then spoke about his role as a liaison person and not the architect of record. The transition from conceptual to more detailed drawings were discussed, as well as the commitment from this team to develop the details and to respect the integrity of these details, as well as their commitment to work with City staff and commissions.

Discussions then moved to why the reconsideration was taking place. Huggins stated that after the previous meeting, she and O’Kroley and the Secretary discussed frustrations with how the architecture in general would fit in the context of its location, the fact that it is copying historic architecture as opposed to being of its own time, and they felt as if that point had been ignored. They felt they should address some of those issues rather than later down the line. As it stands now, to come back for final approval they would want to deny that. The more appropriate thing to do was to bring it back and revisit the initial approval. From an ordinance standpoint that was the recommendation from City staff. O’Kroley spoke to the December 7, 2011 referral that requested this same issue regarding emulating a historic style of architecture. Essentially the discussion at the January 18, 2012 meeting again deferred that. Based on that being a large portion of initial approval, it’s not the level of

detail, it's a larger issue that should be addressed at the initial approval level. In terms of massing and scale it has definitely resulted in something more successful, but the choice to emulate historic architecture goes against the Urban Design Commission guideline that "buildings should be designed as creations of their own time and copying historic appearance and details is discouraged." Barnett stated that he prefers architecture that reflects today and not a style of 100 or 200 years ago. He could only recall one occasion where the Commission stated something was out of context. This area is an eclectic assembly of different styles of architecture and he feels that if the Commission felt strongly enough to state this should be a modern building, then they have responsibility to state that early on. While he appreciates the positions of the two Commission members who wish to reconsider the initial motion, he would not support that. Rummel stated that she doesn't have an opposition to the traditional architecture, but what struck her with the presentations of other churches, she thought this could be simplified. She also has issues with the light effects on the mall, and especially daylighting in the new building. She would like to see the interiors of those buildings so she knows when you are working or studying, what it's like to be inside. She asked about the windows previously but those designs have not changed. Barnett stated he also raised concerns with the windows, the fenestration and the lack of daylighting they will provide. Huggins stated that at the initial presentation, the Commission questioned the direction of architecture in this important spot; that has been a message conveyed every time but yet not resolved. O'Kroley reiterated that the Landmarks approval was provided with comments and staff concerns about the unresolved architectural styles creating a complexity that could be considered visually intrusive, and to pursue a unified architectural expression for the building. Those comments were reiterated at the first Urban Design Commission presentation of this project. She further stated that this is a phenomenal site in the heart of Madison, it's a lovely building and program, but the architecture is emulating historic construction of which they have asked twice for how those details could be resolved to give it the spirit of its own time. There has been no resolve of the struggle between traditional and contemporary. Slayton stated that this is vastly improved over their first presentation. Initial approval requirements have been met and detailing could be done at the final approval level. Huggins stated that the applicant has repeatedly not done what they've been asked by the Commission and it feels like a strategy of beating the Commission down until they decide to move on. Lufler stated that it seems the architects have had plenty of time and opportunity to reconfigure plans and look at other forms of architecture; it has not been a rush project. We go all the way to the end and then "buyer's remorse" sets in; it's a difficult moment at that point to say let's reconsider when in fact the stage at which we were sitting, everybody agrees is acceptable. If there is to be more consideration of various aspects of this project, it should come through in the final design. The Secretary stated that the problem is that the motion did not specify that. Harrington was bothered by the fact that these things were not dealt with at the previous meeting. Barnett recalled that during the Edgewater proceedings, the Commission had asked for further details between the initial and final stages of approval.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Huggins, the Urban Design Commission's motion to **RECONSIDER FAILED**. The motion was passed on a vote of (3-4) with O'Kroley, Huggins and Rummel voting yes; and Harrington, Lufler and Slayton voting no, with Barnett as Acting Chair breaking the tie on the failed motion.