

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: May 25, 2011
TITLE: 4716 Verona Road – Modified PUD(GDP-SIP), “U-Haul” Rental/Storage Warehouse, Pylon Signs and Wall Signage. 10 th Ald. Dist. (21680)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: May 25, 2011	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Mark Smith, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, R. Richard Wagner, Melissa Huggins and Jay Handy.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 25, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a modified PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 4716 Verona Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were David Pollock, representing U-Haul; Lawrence Winkler and Tom McKenna, representing the Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Association; Robert Artis, and Jeff Glazer, representing the Dunn’s Marsh Neighborhood Association. Appearing in support and available to answer questions was Thomas Hodel, representing U-Haul. Appearing neither in support nor opposition was Joe Bunker, representing Strand Associates, Inc., consultant for WisDOT. Pollock presented changes to the plans which include real windows instead of fake windows, landscaping at the front of the property, added screening and landscaping to the area by the bike path, added bike racks in the front, heavily landscaped around the propane tanks, condensed the operations which allocates 75,000 square feet for future development of retail or business, designed the outside storage units using the same materials of the building, and removed the canopy. He stated that he will attempt to see how turning the storage units into an L-shaped configuration would help with the viability of the site in address of comments by Heather Stouder of Planning Division staff. Huggins stated the strength of enhancing the commercial viability of those lots is important. Blocking the view of the lot would make that much more difficulty, thus the L-shaped suggestion. She doesn’t feel the storage units add anything of value to the neighborhood context; it’s important to see the U-Haul building from Verona Road but not the actual storage units. Rummel asked about the latest schedule for the Verona Road reconstruction; Bunker replied that construction is planned for 2013-2015, Verona Road will be raised approximately 7-10 feet from where it is today from the bike crossing to the entrance of Home Depot. A roundabout is proposed to provide better access to the neighborhoods in that area and a connection made to the bike path. O’Kroley stated that this (the storage units) should be designed from the top down, that the parapet roof does not work. She sees the shape of these structures as a point of interest in this facility. She commented this is an excellent reuse of an existing building but would like to see more design elements. Since the vehicles themselves will act as signage she feels there is too much signage included in the plan and the signage package should be simplified. Glazer spoke in support of this project for the Dunn’s Marsh Neighborhood. This site has been empty for over three years, the neighborhood would like to see this property refurbished and the job openings that would go with it. Huggins inquired as to how many employees would be hired; 10 full-time and 20 part-time was the estimate given. Barnett inquired about the exterior unit locations; Pollock stated they will study the L-shape but they will not relocate them any more than where they are now.

They were asked to condense it by shoving it closer to the building but will not; they want to be able to use their site as they see fit. They feel being up front of the site draws more attention to their business. Barnett also commented that bringing a photo of the plight of the homeless as a mechanism for approving the project is interesting and unfortunate. Smith observed that the drive aisle seems troubling after looking at the presentation of the interchange rework. There is such a great opportunity for branding and presence. The Commission had asked for a design that incorporates the front of the space as an area where the activity will take place. But it seems they are hiding that activity with the little buildings; they could flip them so they are framing the entry and the yard. He doesn't think they need to go all the way to the back of the building, they won't act as a security fence. In regards to the architecture he compared it to the U-Haul building on West Washington Avenue. These storage units could have that same purpose and not act as a fence or billboard. He would like to see them present some options for that and present that to the Commission. Pollock stated their board will not accept that.

Robert Artis spoke in favor of U-Haul because of the economic stability it could bring to the neighborhood. To leave the building vacant another several years would be a travesty to the City and the neighborhood. Tom McKenna spoke as a past president of the Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Association. They have met with their area Alderperson even though they were not consulted ahead of time by the applicant. They would like to see this project move forward with some considerations. They do not want any landscaping close to the bike path where anybody can hide, as a security issue. Out of an email group of 300 or so residents, 75 have come in over the last couple of weeks speaking to this concern. Fences or barriers would make the bike riders feel much less safe. Nobody else has come forward to look at this property and it cannot sit vacant any longer. They want to improve the neighborhood and they want this building, especially since no other developer has shown any interest in this site. The neighborhood has concerns about traffic and they object to having any more traffic coming through the neighborhood. The completion of the frontage road doubled the traffic on residential roads who do not pay attention to the 25 mph speed limit; the traffic probably was cut in half when the City closed off Hammersley Road at Whitney Way. Lawrence Winkler spoke as the current president of Orchard Ridge. The board is enthused by this proposal as the vacancy of this parcel has been a cause for concern for the neighborhood. The neighborhood is also very sensitive to any increase in traffic through this residential area.

Rummel inquired about the memo from Heather Stouder and the resistance of moving the building. Pollock responded that they have made about 12 changes over the last 6 months based on the Commission's comments. They have been willing to make a number of compromises and give up a number of operational items, but there are some operational and logistics things that they cannot change the way they do business. Turning the building 90 degrees would be one of the things they are willing to do. The Secretary stated that Ald. Brian Solomon does support the project but would like to see the Planning Division concerns addressed. O'Kroley asked if they would consider making those storage units double loaded as opposed to L-shaped. Pollock replied of course; they would rather see active units they could get revenue out of. He added that U-Haul is not interested in putting landscaping along the bike path because of the security issues; it was done because of Planning Division staff comments. Slayton stated this is something that needs to be worked out with the neighborhood; the safety concerns are also important, in addition to screening. He also reiterated the number of points needed for their landscape plan, as well as the signature of a registered architect. He asked them to remove the spirea, and would prefer a more major tree over the crabapples for more shade. He strongly suggested removing the crabapples from the tree islands near the parking spots. Barnett thinks there is a way to come up with a landscape plan that would complement the bike path as well as the proposal, with the neighborhood's approval. This is an opportunity to complement the building and improve the bike path.

ACTION:

On a motion by Rummel, seconded by O’Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0). The motion provided for the following:

- The location and design of the exterior storage units are not part of the initial approval and require further attention to address Planning staff and Commission comments.
- Review of the signage package and relative issues with the Zoning Administrator against the standards of the Sign Control Ordinance.
- Work with the neighborhood on the landscaping along the bike path to address security issues as well as improvement to the property with the plantings.

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 2, 5, 5, 5.5 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 4716 Verona Road

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	5
	4	5	4	-	-	6	5	5
	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	2

General Comments:

- Outside storage building location is questionable.
- Good infill project for neighborhood. Study location of storage buildings.
- Parking lot and storage units are a mess – site needs to be resolved – please make storage back to back and add architecture!
- Bullying the Commission not a good strategy.