

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** April 8, 2015

TITLE: 3414 Monroe Street – Advisory Opinion at the Request of Planning Staff, Conditional Use for a Four-Story Building Exceeding 25,000 Square Feet in the TSS District, “The Glen.” 13th Ald. Dist. (37907) **REFERRED:**
REREFERRED:
REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: April 8, 2015 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Melissa Huggins, Lauren Cnare, John Harrington, Dawn O’Kroley and Tom DeChant.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 8, 2015, the Urban Design Commission recommended **APPROVAL** of a four-story building exceeding 25,000 square feet in the TSS District located at 3414 Monroe Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Paul Cuta and Marc Schellpfeffer, both representing Patrick Properties; and Patrick Corcoran. Appearing and speaking in opposition were John Imes and Lynn Peter, representing the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Shawn Schey, representing the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association. The project has changed in regards to pedestrian experience, parking, the character of the space, all of which were important to the neighborhood. The building steps back from the building after the ground floor, with parking tucked underneath the stepback. The first floor commercial space is envisioned as professional use. The entrance to the residential lobby is off of Glenway Street, roughly across the street from Wyota Avenue, with 9 at grade parking stalls, and a ramp that drops down into the building with a tray of parking. The building will have 19 units, 20 parking spaces underground, as well as bicycle parking. They pulled the building back from the north and added landscaping, pervious pavement and a bioswale. The plinth created by the first floor at 30-inches allows for the parking to be kept above the water table. They are trying to create a mix of units which will include three 3-bedroom units and some studios. The terraces afford views of the Arboretum while still respecting their neighbors. The building steps back at several points like a “wedding cake” on various sides of the building. The proposed building materials were selected to respect the residential homes going up Glenway Street, while providing a different read along Monroe Street and include a sandblasted concrete plinth, dark masonry, wood siding and a historic plaster. Renderings, comparison elevations and sun shadow studies were shown. The fourth story component is less impactful than it would have been with a building of smaller scale with the way it had been articulated.

John Imes spoke as the owner/operator of the Arbor House Inn. Their mission is to provide high quality hospitality while showcasing environmentally friendly design, technology and practice. He is not opposed to density in this location. Last week the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association Council voted to oppose the previous iteration of this project based on size, massing, and inadequate setback from the Arbor House Inn. While not anti-development, this project is too large and the underground parking is not needed and could

reduce the project by 3-4% in gross square footage. If the underground parking goes away, the ramp goes away and there is no longer a 6-foot setback that would affect mature trees and the woodland garden; the building could be pulled another 4-feet for a minimum 10-foot setback. They are concerned about the ground water issues; some previous projects have had serious issues thinking the water table was not an issue, only to run into major trouble once they began construction.

Lynn Peter spoke and pointed out that the statement from the DMNA Council was based on John Imes stating he was going to look at the easement again. The easement agreement has not been a part of these conversations because it has been a private matter, even though it is an important factor in the building and parking design for this site. Things have changed over the last 20 years since that easement agreement was made and perhaps it's time to relook at that, and perhaps the entire block. The changes the developer has made are appreciated and are an improvement to what they previously saw. This fourth floor space is the largest of any four-story building along Monroe Street.

Heather Stouder clarified that the Landmarks Commission has seen this project three separate times. Initially they did recommend that it was not so large or visually intrusive; they reconsidered that motion and determined that it was so large and visually intrusive as a 3-story building, and then months later, very recently when they saw this iteration before you, their motion was just a little bit different but it's worth pointing out that distinction. They still did vote that it was so large as to negatively impact the Arbor House landmark property, but they thought the changes that were made really helped a lot with the visual intrusiveness that was there before. Focusing the discussion and advice to the Plan Commission on two main issues will be helpful: consideration of the appropriateness of the 4th floor in its current iteration; the Plan Commission will be considering a specific standard of approval for a building that exceeds three stories in the TSS District. Secondly, like with any conditional use the Plan Commission will consider the design and compatibility with the area as a whole, and this is where they have an opportunity to request Urban Design Commission advisory recommendations, so looking at the compatibility with the area as a whole.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The current iteration seems quite appropriate to its context and thoughtful design elements in terms of breaking down the scale. And it is very much of its time. I would find this to be an appropriate design, particularly for its adjacent historic context.
- Without commenting on the size, it seems to me that Monroe Street is an area that has multiple design periods in which it has occurred, so I think the design reflects its current period, that's appropriate. But there is the question of size.
- I don't think you can compare this to Empire because it's an entirely difference context. You have to look at how this particular area is going to develop: the Arboretum on one side, long-term residences on the other side, it's not going to change a whole lot. I think for the size and the context of that neighborhood, it's too big and it really starts a direction in that neighborhood that we don't want to see.
- I would strongly disagree. There is plenty of opportunity for development going towards Odana Road. For as well as Tom is doing in the Lakeside Vet Clinic he's outgrowing it and could easily look for new space. We're already marching down...we made a choice when we approved Parman Place and I think at this point one-story across the street looks silly.
- I have a huge issue with these ridiculous setback fourth floors so we can pretend there's not a fourth floor. I think that Empire Photo, every time I look at that it makes me angry, for other reasons as well, including the fact that we didn't actually approve that building, but I do think this is again a Madison cop-out on being a City, by pretending we're a 3-story building, but in order to make this economically feasible we have to, which we have to understand because that's part of a city growing. I would just prefer to say "let's have four-stories." This is going to look like a little beanie on the top of the building.

I believe this is yet again one of those situations where change is scary and we're going to throw our hands up, but I think this is an extremely sensitive building to the neighborhood and would be a good addition to the corner.

- I agree with what you're saying about the other buildings but I don't think these are ridiculous setbacks, I think these are substantial.
- I like the setbacks but not the white chunks at the top.
- But it's so stepped back and it creates roof terraces. To me, in this case it doesn't look like a little beanie, it looks almost like a sunroom up there, and it relates to other elements of the building as well. I like the rationale for stepping back: responding to the neighbors and not to something in the zoning text. I think the neighbors will get real benefit from those setbacks.
- I note the simplicity in the number of finishes, it's a very handsome composition.
- In looking at the apartment building on the other side, what's the zoning if there was a replacement there?
 - I think it's zoned residential. I don't think the plan has a specific density recommendation for that site.
- Parts of Monroe Street are very lovely single-family residences of a scale that's very clear. This is an area where it's not clear.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Huggins, the Urban Design Commission recommended that the Plan Commission grant **APPROVAL** based on the Urban Design Commission's finding that the design is appropriate to the context, including the setbacks in relationship to the historic neighbor, and is of its time and has a very elegant composition, including the 4th floor because of its setback and its specific response to the neighbor to the east and its continuation down to the first floor in some areas. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1) with Harrington voting no.

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 rating for this project is 9.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 3414 Monroe Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	7	9	6	6	-	6	10	9

General Comments:

- A proper design for 21st Century on this corner, step backs and deep balconies very effective.