

Dear Urban Design Commission members and city staff,

We are writing in regards to the proposed development at 210 (212) S. Brooks St, (Longfellow School), your item #29811 on the 9/11/13 agenda.

Although positive changes have been made to the design since the 8/7/13 initial UDC meeting, we feel the following architectural features are still a concern:

1. The camel colored (light tan) masonry brick surrounding the foundation of the building
 - a. The 10' foundation of the building does not make the building interesting and engaging to the neighborhood and passersby. The camel foundation makes the entire development look massive and unappealing. Having viewed the actual material to be used (at neighborhood meeting on 8/19) we feel that the building would be better served to be faced with materials and colors (such as the blended red brick) already in the elevation instead of introducing another color.
 - b. The architect stated that the camel color tied in with the limestone water table and string course (above 2nd floor windows) on the old Longfellow school. While the color may coincide with this detailing from the old school, the limestone used on the Longfellow school was minimal and decorative compared to a 10' masonry brick wall.
 - c. The foundation has been visually divided with vines and deciduous trees but these will not be visible during most of the year to break down the large expanse of foundation material.
2. Courtyard surface parking
 - a. Noise, headlight glare and the view (of a parking lot!) all reduce the livability of the units abutting the lot. The new design shows 10 less parking stalls but still leaves a total of 18 courtyard stalls.
 - b. There appears to be little screening of the lot from the apartments in the new building, while those on the side of the old Longfellow school are to be screened with small trees and trellises with vines. Much of the year, due to the deciduous nature of the proposed landscaping, there would be little or no screening.

In the City Comprehensive plan, one of the questions that arises is "How can existing neighborhoods be protected from the potential negative impacts caused by the introduction of more dense redevelopment or infill development into Madison's established neighborhoods." We feel that one of the ways the potential negative impacts can be mitigated would be to have an "Outstanding or Excellent" development instead of the Fair- Very Good one (as rated by 3 of the Commissioners in the UDC initial approval. In addition we feel that the visual character of the *new development* should enhance the unique character and beauty of the landmark building and not detract from it. Towards that end, please consider re-facing the foundation with a color similar to those already used in the elevation and eliminating the surface parking lot.

Respectfully,

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