

AGENDA # 8

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 7, 2011

TITLE: 1001 University Avenue – PUD(SIP),
St. Francis Episcopal Student Center
Redevelopment – Relocation of the St.
Francis House and Construction of an
Eight-Story, 80-Unit Residential
Building. 8th Ald. Dist. (21945)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 7, 2011

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton, Henry Lufler, Mark Smith and John Harrington.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 7, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD(SIP) located at 1001 University Avenue. Appearing and speaking on behalf of the project were Randy Bruce, representing John Leja; Noah Van Dam, Leigh Vicens, Andy Jones, James Stopple, Charles Quagliana, Kevin Delorey, John Leja, and Bill White, representing LZ Ventures. Appearing in support and available to answer questions were Steve Silverberg, representing LZ Ventures; and Bill Dunne. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Al Larson, Gary Brown, representing Luther Memorial Church; Brad Pohlman, Franklin Wilson, representing Luther Memorial Church; Douglas Swiggum, Brian Ohm, and Harvey Temkin, representing Luther Memorial Church. Appearing in opposition but not wishing to speak were Robert Steffen, Marsha Steffen, and Lynn Washington. The current proposal lowers the building to a maximum of eight stories, reducing the mass significantly by four stories. On floors 2-5 there is a projection of 8-feet to essentially reduced the unit count from 90 to 80 units; this gives a 14% reduction in total mass. Vehicular access has been changed to Brooks Street to relieve congestion issues on Conklin Place. Bruce presented shadow studies and discussed the shadows caused on Luther Memorial by other buildings in the area.

Al Larson spoke as congregation president of Luther Memorial Church in opposition. He doesn’t see much change in this plan; the reduction in number of beds is minimal. They still have concerns with light, congestion, traffic, parking, etc. He feels Luther Memorial will suffer a slow demise as people find challenges with coming to services. This project is too big for the space and brings in too much congestion.

Noah Van Dam spoke in support as a member of the board of St. Francis House. The location of the project site is very convenient for students.

Gary Brown spoke representing Luther Memorial. He feels the mass is too much for the context of this site. The same basic number of students would be housed here; the plans haven’t changed enough for Luther Memorial to feel positive them. The height overpowers the prominence of Luther Memorial.

Leigh Vicens spoke as a priest from St. Andrew's Church in Madison, and a former member of St. Francis House. She presented photos of the old chapel and talked about why the St. Francis chaplaincy is so important. College is an existing and unsettling time for students. Campus ministry can serve as a safe haven amidst all the change students go through.

Brad Pohlman spoke as a pastor of Luther Memorial. He reiterated the lack of space that would be between the buildings. He also talked about not only the impact on interior lighting but on exterior lighting as well. They are currently repairing the west side of the building and are finding that the limestone of the building envelope is not drying out and seeing significant disrepair. A lack of exterior lighting would further damage the exterior building materials.

Andy Jones spoke in favor of the project as a way to sustain college ministry. St. Francis House has been a good neighbor for over 90 years and would like to continue that with this proposal while still enabling them to fund this important ministry and keep it vibrant.

Franklin Wilson spoke in opposition to the proposal's mass and scale. He spoke to the importance of pastoral contemplative greenspace which would be destroyed if this project were to move forward. Their desire is to preserve mutual ministry.

James Stoppie spoke in support and pointed out that Madison Property Management has been a good neighbor.

Charles Quagliana spoke as the preservation architect on the project. The 1964 addition is to be removed to restore the west façade and return the interior to its original state. A balance between historic preservation with new use will be provided. O'Kroley inquired about the building's appropriateness of the entry to a public right-of-way. He replied it is at the edge of where it is comfortable for him.

Harvey Temkin spoke about their desire for a 5-story building on the southern portion of the lot. This would help preserve the greenspace and avoid any problems with shadowing, and take away the mass. Luther Memorial has been named a landmark since their last meeting with the Urban Design Commission.

John Leja considered that great compromise has gone into this project and that it is now 51% of the size of Grant Central. Compared to other projects on University Avenue this is small. They have 4, 6 and 8-story versions of this project built on the south part of the lot that didn't make any sense to the developers from design or financial standpoints, which is why they weren't brought forward.

Bill White spoke to the viability of the congregation of Luther Memorial as not a struggling one.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The viability of Luther Memorial is not part of our purview; the viability of Luther Memorial is speculation.
- The applicant has gone above and beyond what is normally called for in being a good neighbor.
- The work has been incredibly thorough. I can't remember a project that has gone through this amount of work in response.
- Cities evolve and we have to adapt to what is around us.
- I'm not sure it's St. Francis' responsibility to preserve the greenspace for the use of Luther Memorial.
- The scale of the buildings built along University Avenue is an extremely valid point. With the Business School, Fluno Center, Grand Central (made possible in concert with Luther Memorial), etc. Luther

Memorial helped facilitate the benchmark for this property so in context of the site you've got a building that's twice the size already.

- In terms of preserving the building, its relationship to the street is something I would need to see and understand better.
- Still not comfortable with the treatment of the moped/bicycle parking surrounding the building in terms of it being an appropriate way to wrap that structure.
- How this project moving forward is going to affect pedestrian traffic will be very important to see.
- When there is some relief between the Conklin Street elevation parapet and the more forward University Avenue it more successfully feels like it's nestled into this site. It would have a better relationship to the remainder of the block if the Conklin Street side parapet were brought up a bit.
- Intrigued by the cantilevers.
- To successfully have this building strengthen the St. Francis House, the elevation studies of the horizontal datum will need to be included, more particularly in detail with the St. Francis House.
- Overall the massing and density being added to the site is a positive thing.
- Think about the views out of St. Francis House out onto that outdoor space. Either create some kind of optical illusion on the outside of the greenspace, or be very strategic about how you screen the proposed apartment complex or court.
- Rehabbing St. Francis is a win-win all the way around.
- The building design is nearly an ideal compromise between the materiality of it, the temperature, the scale, and now that it's lower, it fits into that procession of buildings on that side of University Avenue.
- It seems to be a really good high quality background building for the landmark buildings that are right next to it. The recommendations of the National Park Service for building next to a historic building are met with this design.
- There is a context we have to pay attention to. The building and landscaping are not separate issues. Things do change but the reason we're here is to guide that change.
- There is a way here to become more welcoming on that block.
- Put some green along the building so you wouldn't necessarily see the walk but see the green.
- Concerns that the precast will not maintain its quality appearance.
- Consider the east-west and the north-south planes having a slightly different texture.
- This space is important and you're doing a wonderful job with the space you have left.

Randy Bruce noted that the City Attorney has released a memo stating that this area of University Avenue cannot be considered a "religious corridor." Rummel stated that the Landmarks Commission did not agree with staff's assessment of no adverse impacts on the neighboring property. She stated that the Landmarks Commission is expressing concern and wants to make sure attention is paid.

ACTION:

On a motion by Lufler, seconded by Smith, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-2) with Rummel and Harrington voting no.

The motion requested the applicant to look at the following:

- The interior L-shaped courtyard features discussed by Slayton.
- Development of the building's "skin."
- Play with the potential for variation on parapets and building heights and provide elevational studies as previously noted.

- Consideration of the street/plaza features for the dead end of the court to be more than a bike storage area.
- Approach to St. Francis and creation of greenspace aren't solved by changing the surface. The setback off of University may need to increase including better integration of the courtyard between St. Francis House and the new structure to enhance and enlarge the green open space at University Avenue.

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 6, 7, 7, 7 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 1001 University Avenue

| | Site Plan | Architecture | Landscape Plan | Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc. | Signs | Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular) | Urban Context | Overall Rating |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Member Ratings | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| | 7 | 6.5 | 7 | 7 | - | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 |
| | 6 | 7 | 6 | - | - | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| | 6 | 7 | - | - | - | 6 | 7 | 7 |
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General Comments:

- Mixed review. Benefits and trade-offs.
- Too much mass for space “footprint.”
- Applicant has done an excellent job of addressing neighbors’ concerns.
- High quality background building for adjacent landmark buildings. Appreciate the effort in the shadow studies.