

AGENDA # 8

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: July 10, 2013

TITLE: 441 North Frances Street – Mixed-Use PD with 25,000-30,000 Square Feet of Retail and 250-300 Residences in the Downtown Core (“The Hub”). 4th Ald. Dist. (30040)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: July 10, 2013

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Tom DeChant, Henry Lufler, John Harrington, Richard Slayton, Lauren Cnare and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 10, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a mixed-use PD located at 441 North Frances Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Jeff Zelisko, Joe Antunovich, Brian Munson, Brad Mullins, Tom Harrington, Brian Neiswender and Marc. Antunovich began the presentation by talking about the importance of the streetscape and the desire to come back to retail with living spaces above. The designs show the building addressing the street with several different façades. The red color has been removed from the color scheme. Zelisko discussed the updated designs and supplemental information. Approximately 20,000 square feet of retail is proposed, possible townhomes and approximately 160 underground parking spaces on two levels. The residential entrance and leasing center will be located on Frances Street with the loading location off of Gilman Street. Because of the amount of traffic generated by this parking lot they don't see that many cars moving out and therefore feel only one entrance and exit is called for; it would also cause the loss of 1,000 square feet of retail space. Bicycle parking requirements are satisfied in the parking area as well. Moped parking will depend on how the needs arise but there is flexibility to accommodate the mopeds. They have provided an additional trash room. They have added a fifth elevator off the secondary entrance for occupants located closer to Gilman Street. Amenities for the building are along the second floor and include an exercise facility, living room, courtyard surrounded by the 12-story element of the building, outdoor volleyball and sitting areas. Forty-four market-rate units have been added. Floors 3 and 4 have residential elements extending out to State Street and the building starts to setback, with floors 5-6 providing terraces that do not extend out to the edge of the building. There is a large mix of studio and 1-5 bedroom units. On top of the building is a swimming pool and terrace and includes a mechanical penthouse. Many of the units are providing bike parking within the unit with a rack that they provide. Presently they have approximately 988 beds with the mix of different types of units. They have provided the required landscape areas for each floor using deciduous indigenous plants arranged in a very organic manner within the elements of the building. Because of the form based Zoning Code provisions, the shadows do not extend any further than the shadow lines created by the neighboring four-story buildings. Brick elements and cast brown masonry will be used with the darker colors starting at the base and lightening as the building goes up. Lighting will be a soft glow on the building with some canopy lights shining subtly on the sidewalk.

Staff noted that signage will return for a separate approval with more details provided. Based on tonight's referral of "The Constellation" and the Mayor's concerns there will have to be a staff evaluation on the consistency with the Sign Control Ordinance.

Comments and concerns from the Commission were as follows:

- I like the random pattern on the State Street façade (upper).
- On the sheer wall, I prefer Option A to keep some of the randomness with the windows.
- What's your sense of place on State Street?
 - It's a mix of bars and stores and we feel we'll fit right in. Our building is similar in size to what is already on State Street. We want flexibility too, we don't want it so broken up that it doesn't fit in terms of massing. Within our 250-feet we have six façade changes.

When you look up and down State Street it's got some grittiness to it, the building shapes have changed and it's not just size. My concern is this seems more sterile than gritty. This would be perfect around the Square, but I'm not getting the sense of place in terms of State Street; need to demonstrate that the storefront façades mesh with the feel of State Street. The other concern is part of that grittiness is the "independents" on State Street; we're going to see more chains coming here and the whole sense of place and personality of State Street is going to change. I look at your shadow patterns and I disagree; I think you're covering at 80% of State Street at times when it needs the sun, in the winter. I'm concerned.

- There's a very strong masculinity to this building. If you look at the blocks with these two pieces that just hunker down, it reminds me of the lions at the library. You've done a great job but I'm not emotionally moved yet. Did you look at something else?
 - We've gone around the block and back with the color and various elements. Once we started with the brick element we felt it was important to have a different base than what was happening above and we feel we've achieved that with lots of elements and components. We feel it's an elegant color scheme. We feel the dark brick has a "gritty" character to it too. The whole thing is going to have an incredible glow to it.
- I can appreciate the complexity of this project. It's a concrete building and you're trying to make it look like a steel frame. It's really dark. These examples look like fortresses that aren't welcoming. This part of State Street is always in the shade and this is just going to suck the life out of the streetscape; explore a lighter color. I think this could use one more level of refinement, particularly at the Frances/State Street corner. Why not a canopy that goes all the way around? On the sheer wall, are they actual windows or just spandrel glass?
 - They could be either. It's on the property line. We prefer they be vision glass. We think that the glow will add to the activity. On the ground floor, the retailer will come and as much as we try to depict how this will look; if we're successful with local retailers they'll have as much to say as we do as architects, and how we nail that together, we're setting up a framework on the first 20-feet to accommodate practically any retailer. They do want to be expressed individually with color, banners, awnings that protrude out, etc.
- I question the use of the steel frame, it's very industrial.
- I'm struggling with the corner element the most. I happen to like that aesthetic but contextually is what I'm having a hard time with. I understand you want something different and I like the other façades but something about that corner element looks out of place; look at alternatives.
- I like the quasi-randomness of the windows. I can see where money was being spent and where money was being saved. This doesn't have the style that this does.
- Maybe play with the shape and form at the top and give it some variation.

- You have the ability, instead of it all being random, get more variation by going random/variation, random/variation, random/variation.
 - Buildings don't have that transparency in the daytime. At night these buildings have to contribute something to the street and if it can contribute this playfulness and unpredictability, and maybe grit...

I'm not saying that's your model. How do you rebuild something new and at the same time integrate that personality that works on State Street.

- There's the green thumb approach too. We could allow ivy to grow up the building.

Heather Stouder of the Planning Division summarized staff's recommendations for the project. Staff recommends moving ahead with the supplemental detailing on State Street sheer wall treatment (with random concrete panels and windows); across the board staff strongly recommends the rectilinear window pattern because form follows function and in this case it's the one exception to this building. From a program standpoint there isn't a strong reason for it but staff is open to compromise for an area on the building that allows for the randomness. On the whole this is a very strong project and the Division supports it.

Harrington noted he cannot support the project. He remarked that businesses like Porta Bella will be forever changed. It's more than just what the Zoning Code allows, it's aesthetics. There is a bigger discussion that needs to be had about how this affects State Street. This isn't just "any street." Wagner sees this as being in line with the adopted plans but the City needs to have the larger discussion about a sense of place. There are a number of "high rises" in town and the City hasn't gone back to look at them and ask the question "what works here?" We never get any evaluation of what's going on the City. It's the same for the low-rises along Langdon Street; what has worked and what's the sense of place along Langdon Street. There's no evaluation once the project has been pushed through. Cnare noted that this will change State Street forever, bits and pieces of State Street as it exists now will stay, but this feels very "east coast." This is tomorrow's Madison; it's not bad but it's different. She stated the seminal moment in our City's history will happen at the Common Council and she strongly encouraged people to come for that catalytic discussion about our City and the notion of place making.

ACTION:

On a motion by Lufler, seconded by Cnare, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-2) with Harrington and Slayton voting no. The motion required address of all comments made by the Commission as noted.

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 5 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 441 North Frances Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	5	5	-	-	6	6	5
	8	6	7	7	-	7	7	7
	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-

General Comments:

- Nice building but wrong location. Belongs on Michigan Avenue in Chicago/the Square but is too static for State Street. Let the towers have some life in the form – why a monolithic block?
- Black warehouse aesthetic out of context for State Street. Big grid too brutal. Needs more delicate detailing.
- Some awkward design elements. Don't like random windows or steel frame and black brick on corner of State and Frances.