

## AGENDA #4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	<b>PRESENTED:</b> June 16, 2010
TITLE: 1552 University Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP) for Wisconsin Energy Institute New Laboratory Building. 5 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (16837)	<b>REFERRED:</b> <b>REREFERRED:</b> <b>REPORTED BACK:</b>
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b> <b>POF:</b>
DATED: June 16, 2010	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>

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Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Bruce Woods, Richard Slayton, Ron Luskin, R. Richard Wagner, Mark Smith and Jay Ferm.

### **SUMMARY:**

\*On a motion by Rummel, seconded by O’Kroley, Agenda Item No. 4 was taken out of order prior to Agenda Item No. 1 at the request of Ald. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0).\*

At its meeting of June 16, 2010, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 1552 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Gary Brown, Peter Heaslett, Jim Moravec and Alan Fish, all representing the UW-Madison; Ald. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, representing District 5; Brad Ricker, representing the Vilas Neighborhood Association; Patrick Gleason, representing Hor Architects; Ken Saiki, representing Ken Saiki Design; John Rakocy, Darsi Foss and LD Oakley. Fish presented revised plans as well as changing site conditions. This is a two-phased project with planning currently for the first phase. The substantial “nose” to the building on the south side has been brought back to open the courtyard and bring in more greenspace. He indicated that a misreading of the height of the church nave (First Congregational) has caused this current plan for the Energy Institute to be off by about one floor, causing significant consternation. He indicated the need for brainstorming to align with the new Old University Corridor Plan relevant to building height. This site was selected for a specific reason, as the UW does not have very many empty lots. This area involves all the hard sciences on Henry Mall and will have potential connections to the Institutes for Discovery and Computer Science. They have received a \$125 Million grant to be one of the only places in the country to invent a process to take plant material from trees or agricultural products and turn it into fuel. He indicated taking out floors of office or laboratory space to deal with the building height issue won’t give them the critical mass necessary to make this grant effective. Moravec spoke to the reconfiguration of the building based on the Commission’s previous concerns and comments. Now each floor has a lab “core” with offices that wrap around them. This has led to a gathering space that connects the office block to the north and the office block to the south. There are currently two entrances to the building; the main entrance addresses University Avenue and the intersection of Campus Drive and University Avenue. There is a large bioretention area out front for all of the stormwater/roof run-off. The plantings along University Avenue will provide screening of the ROTC building. Bike parking will be located to the south below an overhang, with additional bike parking being considered at the east end. The building is now a two-part façade which relates better to Breese Terrace. Both stairwells are across the center core. Brick will be used to define the major masses with all the offices defined as a glass system with an integrated complexity. The glazing on the spandrel is similar to

what is neighboring at the Engineering Center building to stay familiar to the palette currently on campus. Material samples were shown. Sixteen bike parking stalls are shown, as well as moped parking on the east.

Darsi Foss with the Regent Neighborhood Association spoke to the neighborhood's relationship to the University as a neighbor and their general approval of the University's project. She mentioned the neighborhood's concern with the height of the building not being in line with the nave of the church. She mentioned the Congregational Church as an icon to welcome people into their neighborhood. The neighborhood feels this is too much mass next to the church. Brad Ricker, president of the Vilas Neighborhood Association spoke about the University being a great neighbor, but that they respectfully disagree with this project. They are concerned with the precedent of allowing a building of this height in this location. There is concern about whether this will still be considered a livable, walkable neighborhood, or will it become an urban neighborhood. He mentioned the need for the University to be flexible to changing programs and funding in the future. Ald. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff spoke about how the University has held a number of meetings and engaged the neighborhood. The neighborhood sees the greenspace at the corner as a very positive element to this project. However, the height is out of proportion with the neighborhood. She mentioned that this is a very important area: the entrance to the neighborhood, the entrance to the west side of Madison from the central region, and 60,000 cars go past that corner every day. She noted her concern with the building's massing and how it will essentially build a wall along old University Avenue. She noted the lack of a striking design in the building; breaking up the mass could be very important. Rummel asked if the neighborhood has any concerns about modern materials mixing with older materials, like the church.

Comments from the Commission were as follows:

- The building is doing a little too much clashing and not enough meshing.
- Appreciate the mix of materials and interest in layering the building and expressing each of the zones.
- The building doesn't communicate a cohesive body. Looks a little bit too distracting, particularly on a site that is a gateway to the University and the west side. Needs greater clarity.
- The nose of the building loses something, looks cut off.
- Move Phase I northerly greenspace at Campus Drive to south along Old University Avenue to provide more greenspace.
- Flip conference space in the internal core to outer wall where there is office to open up to Old University Avenue.
- Concern with maintenance of "no mow" grasses.
- Details of the building might look different when you're on the ground.
- The planting plan seems stiff, too regimented, form doesn't interplay with the building.
- Concern with how mowing will be done between trees.
- The view from Breese Terrace – there are opportunities for that.
- Adding the fast growing trees seems a bit disconcerting. Doesn't seem so cohesive. The front angle seems really intense.
- I think this is an important building. Appreciate you not just throwing up an industrial building.
- It's not quite coming together yet.
- View to Breese Terrace/Campus Drive west needs a lot more attention; missing an opportunity to create a terminus.
- Ninety-eight percent of Madisonians will see the building from University Avenue. I challenge you to make this a beautiful and compelling façade.
- Need something to show the beginning and the end of the building, like the church.

- This is a building about collaboration; the demand for pedestrians and bicyclists coming to and from here is maybe higher than it first seemed, given that it's not a classroom building, need to accommodate better.
- Would like to see more street level renderings, especially from Old University. Need a sense of mass from the street level.
- Phase I is self-contained and stands on its own. But when you add Phase II the mass really comes up, especially along Old University. We need to understand the impact of that; need to see more on Phase II.
- Use vertical elements in the landscape plan to relate better to Breese Terrace.
- No prominence of building components when viewed as terminus with University Avenue toward Campus Drive and Old University Avenue.
- Office mass creeps too close to Old University Avenue and church; shift floors to align with mass of church with more stories to the north.
- Move more building mass into open space court.
- The high screen transparency of east façade should be moved down façade.
- Like new modern approach but need to see more context with surrounding development.
- The mirroring of masses is definitely the comfortable move.
- The mass is creeping too close to its neighbor.
- This is an incredibly smart building.
- Don't think a rain garden is the appropriate way to deal with stormwater on this site in this location, unless it's more of a built trenched-type system. Don't see a natural element being successful on this site (in terms of visual, not functional).
- The material palette is great.
- It's fantastic that you're talking to all of your neighbors.
- This design is still trying to find its sweet spot; it hasn't fully resolved itself. Seems a little bit disjointed.
- I like the way the different forms relate to the church.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Rummel, seconded by Barnett, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0). The motion for referral provided for address of the above stated concerns and the following:

- Look at massing elements.
- Show us more bike parking.
- Investigate ways of terminating the view coming from the south on Breese Terrace.
- Be more specific about the landscaping plan.
- Address the retention area and see if that is the most appropriate placement.
- Study bringing the north side of the building further to the east; this might allow you to play around with the mass.
- Study possible design/visual tricks to help it feel lower than it really is, since you can't eliminate that floor.

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 4, 5, 6, 6, 6.5, 7, 7 and 7.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 1552 University Avenue**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	5	4	6	-	-	6	5	4
	5	5	5	-	-	5	5	5
	5	5	5	-	-	5	6	6
	7	6	-	7	-	6	8	7
	5	5	4.5	-	-	6	8	7
	6.5	6	7	7	-	8	7	6.5
	5	6	5	5	-	6	7	7

General Comments:

- Still needs a lot of work – context folks! Smooth design, not so choppy and aggressive.
- Mass/height is fine. Breese terminal view needs dramatic improvement.
- The height and massing dilemma – step back height from Old University, address Breese Terrace views, create space from church. Don't use larger brick at base.
- Comments per presentation.
- Further integrate with urban context. Continue to express building program through form. Excellent project.