

Steinhafel's East Towne site/Starkweather Springs site

Urban Design Committee Members,

We, of Friends of Starkweather Creek, support the development of this site by the Steinhafels Furniture. While we might prefer to see as much existing green space remain green space in order to extend habitat and watershed function, we do not have the resources to make that happen. In evaluating who might be an ideal candidate to care for this site, I can come up with a short list, and as to commercial enterprises, Steinhafels, as a Wisconsin based company with a strong history of environmental action would rate on that list.

Current improvements in DNR storm water regulations have significantly reduced the new construction impact on urban systems. Steinhafel's commitment to environmental issues as reflected on their page of Environmental Initiatives, is promising (copy submit). I would ask them to look at implementing, in time, similar programs at this site as able and appropriate (e.g., bluebird houses at periphery). I think planting some nut bearing species, for instance, in this space, would feed habitat, and be a meaningful contribution to this environment.

As to specifics of this plan, of primary importance is cistern storage for landscape watering purposes, native landscaping along the edge of the wetland, shade designed into parking space, and permeable paving. To these points, I would say:

1. I do not have a 'guide to best practices for green design and site planning' nor can I claim to be an expert on either, however, I expect the city to maintain that expertise, and apply it to sensitive areas like this.
2. The more roof water (considered clean) stored or returned directly to the ground through infiltration without mixing with roadway runoff, benefits aquifer and watershed dynamics. Use of the excess to dilute road way run off in retention ponds seems reasonable and practical.
3. The areas of permeable paving could be expanded to encompass the anticipated root zone of shade trees planted within parking zones. This could be done as an art installation and educational project, defining the root structure as critical to tree health, and displaying this zone to the public. Permeable pavers might allow more surface to air exchange for root structure health. These pavers could have a short vegetative growth, which could be mowed. Runoff impact from specific tree parking sites ought to be minimal enough not to damage tree health. However, it is critical to recall that the #1 urban polluter of urban systems is paved surface runoff.
4. Information forthcoming about the revitalization of some number of seeps and springs in the Autumn Lake area immediately upstream, east of I 90, give those of us within FSC, hope for the hydrologic health of the watershed. Knowing that this is no longer the only functioning spring takes some pressure off this site. That in no way diminishes the respect that we feel needs to be given to all functioning spring sites. These sites provide the natural, replenishing of cold flow, which has been all but lost in our urban systems. Instead, storm water runoff has become the major contributor to urban systems, replacing natural spring and drainage systems. Some rebalancing of that formula is desirable for healthy systems.

Sincerely,

John Steines, FSC Co-chair
1/21/2009

AGENDA # 11

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: April 22, 2009

TITLE: 2101, 2109, 2115 East Springs Drive –
Conditional Use/Planned Commercial Site;
99,000 Square Foot Retail Building,
Steinhafel’s. 17th Ald. Dist. (12240)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: April 22, 2009

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Mark Smith, Dawn Weber, Richard Slayton, John Harrington, Ron Luskin and Jay Ferm.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 22, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a conditional use/Planned Commercial Site located at 2101, 2109, 2115 East Springs Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Larry Stone and Alan Theobald, representing Steinhafel’s. In coordination with the presentation of the revised plans in address of the Commission’s previous comments on the project for April 1, 2009, staff summarized issues to be resolved with the proposed plans; where the presentation team provided details on specific modifications to the plans in address of the Commission’s concerns. During the review of the plans and accompanying applicant presentation, staff noted that many of the comments by the Commission relevant to the project during its discussion were not totally consistent with the Commission’s subsequent initial approval of the project. Staff further noted that the motion for final approval of the project referenced that the “superior design of the multi-phase project and its context with adjacent existing development mitigated minor issues with the consistency with the standards for “large retail establishments (big box standards).” Following a building materials, color and palette review, staff noted that signage details contained within the proposed package would require separate consideration due to issues with its consistency with the Street Graphics Ordinance that will require approval as part of separate future public hearings as either multiple variances or exceptions to be approved under the standards for “Comprehensive Design Review.” Further discussion by the Commission noted the need to provide address of previously stated comments relevant to the use of more native species adjacent to Starkweather Creek, along with the placement of plants around the bike path to be more natural in character, including the detention pond area along with the use of more groupings and openness. Additional remarks on this issue required change to some of the plant species against Starkweather Creek to provide alternatives for the proposed use of Austrian Pine, Wayfaring Viburnum and Blackhill Spruce. It was further noted the arrangement against the creek was not natural, along with a reiteration for the need of providing groupings of trees in a more natural patterning and layout.

ACTION:

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by Slayton, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-1) with Luskin abstaining. The motion noted that the project represents a superior design where its context with existing and adjacent development mitigates minor

issues with consistency for big box standards (provisions for “Large Retail Establishments” within Section 33.24(4)(f) of the Madison General Ordinances) and recommends that the Plan Commission waive any deficiencies with these standards.

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, 6, 6, 6 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2101, 2109, 2115 East Springs Drive

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

General Comments:

- Solid “infill” project for build-out lot.
- Appreciate the adjustments and effort.

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: April 1, 2009
TITLE: 2101, 2109, 2115 East Springs Drive – Conditional Use/Planned Commercial Site; 99,000 Square Foot Retail Building, Steinhafel's. 17 th Ald. Dist. (12240)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: April 1, 2009	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Bruce Woods, Mark Smith, John Harrington, Richard Slayton, Jay Ferm, Dawn Weber, Marshal Rummel, Ron Luskin and Todd Barnett.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 1, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a conditional use/Planned Commercial Site located at 2101, 2109, 2115 East Springs Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Larry Stone and Alan Theobald, representing Steinhafel's Furniture; Paul Skidmore, representing Iconica; and Gary Steinhafel, Juliette Wegner.

The modified plans as presented provided address of the Commission's previous concerns from the meeting of January 21, 2009. Following the presentation staff noted comments from Kevin Firchow from the Planning Division regarding "Large Retail Development" contained within Chapter 33 that require address. Staff noted that the ordinance provisions provide both the UDC and Plan Commission a regulatory framework for review of "big box development;" where Firchow's report noted several deficiencies. Discussion of the project by the Commission on these standards was as follows:

- Project as designed is a superior design solution which may outweigh the project's minor deficiencies. Concerned with pedestrian flow would walk on the other side of the main entry and each sidewalk from the street.
- Concerned with pedestrian crossing over the drive aisle entry to the north with the adjacent bowling facility.
- Need bike parking beyond the 10 for the Steinhafel's building, especially at the main entry.
- On the south and east facades of the Steinhafel's building, the vertical pilasters are sufficient to address Section 33.02(4), but place lighting sconces on the pilaster, the overall facades are okay due to their orientation.
- Per Section 33.24(4)(f)7, need direct pedestrian entrance to East Springs Drive; needs to be visible.
- Per Section 33.24(4)8a & b, 40% vs. 60%; this is a new clean site, no impediments to address. Building can be stretched and reconfigured to address.
- Per Section 33.24(4)(f)10, relevant to screening of loading and storage, concerned with view from the bike path needs screening.
- It's okay to use bike path to access Steinhafel's building where the 40% to 60% main issues to be addressed.

- The walkway okay for the 10K outpad site as well as the Steinhafel's building which provides for less impervious surfaces.
- The buildings' locations ties the site together well especially in comparison and context with adjoining/existing development.
- Use a lot more native species adjacent to Starkweather Creek. Placement of plants around bike path should have a more natural character including the detention pond area and use more groupings and openness.
- Don't want to see a parking lot in a green area within a proposed green area at the street between outpad sites. Not concerned about the 40% vs. 60% building frontage issue with 75 feet of right-of-way.
- Look at more direct sidewalk connections, extend details of native area within five feet of the bike path with prairie vegetation.
- Compare to existing development within the area, the project raises the bar as far as expanse of green space.
- Place a piece of sculpture closer to the street where only one has been identified within the plan.
- Make clearer your sidewalk connectivity.
- Sidewalks to connect to buildings and bike path.
- Can reverse buildings to meet the 60% requirement.
- Like the south building's scale, but it could be modified as an option to meet the letter of the code.
- The southerly building entrance should be visible from East Springs Drive.
- The entry from Building #3 should be visible and accessible from the sidewalk.
- Placeholder future parking shown on the plans between buildings 2 and 3 should be green, not paved.
- Make natural areas more natural with the use of native plantings.
- Provide appropriate landscape screening at the loading area for the Steinhafel's building.
- Pave the current bicycle path to connect to the Steinhafel's building.
- Consider connecting the north drive aisle walk to east to the Steinhafel's building.
- Provide bike parking at the front of the Steinhafel's building.

ACTION:

On a motion by Barnett, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-2-1) with Slayton and Weber voting no and Luskin abstaining. The motion required address of the above-stated comments and noted that the superior design of the multi-phase project and its context with adjacent existing development mitigated minor issues with its consistency with the big box standards for "Large Retail Development."

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, 6, 6, 6, 6, 7 and 8.

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	7	6	5			6	6	6
	6	6	6	6	5	5		6
	6	6	6			6	6	6
	6	6	7	8	5	6	6	6

General Comments:

- Applicant working very hard to make an outstanding, pedestrian-friendly and beautiful project. Good, creative infill project.
- Applicant's superior design treatment merits consideration for a waiver. Street frontage may not meet building % requirements but offset by greenspace, no parking facing street site design overall.
- Fairly attractive big box project has made big strides in addressing UDC's comments.
- Pull south sconces to pilasters.