

From: [Punt, Colin](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Hartmeyer project redesign and UDC approval
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024 2:46:45 PM

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From: gordian@nym.hush.com <gordian@nym.hush.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Latimer Burris, Amani <district12@cityofmadison.com>; Punt, Colin <CPunt@cityofmadison.com>; Urban Design Comments <urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Hartmeyer project redesign and UDC approval

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Wed. Dec. 27, 2023

Alder Amani Latimer Burris,

I am surprised to learn that Lincoln Avenue Capital's redesign of its housing project on the former Hartmeyer property will not require approval from Madison's Urban Design Commission. The proposed changes to the buildings are a major alteration to a previously approved plan. Drawings comparing the original design and the redesign are available; they hardly look like drawings of the same buildings. [1 and 2] Footnotes refer to sources listed at the end of this message.

This message dicusses redesigns of the senior housing building, proposed in Legistar 81251 [3], and of the family housing building, proposed in Legistar 81252 [4].

Lincoln Avenue Capital's redesigned housing project is much less appealing than the already approved design. Every unit's balcony would be removed. [5 and 6] The width of the sliding glass doors will be reduced by one-third. [5 and 6] A relatively open and inviting look would be replaced by a buttoned-up and forbidding appearance. [1 and 2] Any tenants who value convenient access to the outdoors in a private area would prefer a unit with a balcony. The much smaller glass doors would provide residents less light and ventilation. The balconies in the original, approved design would offer some protection from the sun and rain to the units below them. All changes in the redesigned project make the housing project less appealing.

BALCONIES REMOVED

Lincoln Avenue Capital's redesign removes all balconies from the apartment units. [5 and 6] This change reduces the square footage of private area in each unit by the area of the balcony. Residents would lose a convenient, private space where they could enjoy being outdoors. The courtyards in the housing development will not provide residents the same experience.

CANOPY EFFECT

Each balcony in the original, approved design shades the sliding glass door of the unit on the floor below it. This canopy effect protects the unit below from the sun and rain. Residents would be able to leave their doors open more often.

PASSIVE SOLAR COOLING

The shade provided by the balcony above an apartment would help to keep the lower apartment cooler. The same can be said of the projected eyebrow roof, which the redesign removes from the original, approved design. [5 and 6] Tenants will have less need to run fossil fuel powered air conditioners on hot days. The cooling effect is hard to quantify, but anyone who has found shade on a hot day knows that it is substantial.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a City of Madison policy goal:

"The City of Madison is committed to doing our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Madison has set the ambitious goal of reaching 100% renewable energy and net zero carbon emissions for city operations by 2030 and community-wide by 2050." [7]

A change in the design of the housing complex that reduces passive solar cooling is a step in the wrong direction.

NARROWER SLIDING GLASS DOORS

Lincoln Avenue Capital's redesign narrows the sliding glass doors in all apartment units. The sliding glass doors in the original, approved design are 50% wider than those in the proposed redesign. [5 and 6] The narrower doors will provide tenants less light and ventilation. The look and feeling of the apartment would be diminished by this design change.

DUE DILIGENCE

The purpose of the announced design changes is to reduce the developer's costs. We do not know whether other, less visible cost saving measures are contemplated. Cheaper appliances, fixtures, and materials would also save the developer money. Due diligence requires that the City verify that the original quality standards are maintained. The Urban Design Commission can call

on City staff uniquely qualified to do that verification, but only if the Urban Design Commission must approve the developer's redesign.

CONCLUSION

Considering these issues might take the Urban Design Commission outside its comfort zone. However, only a little empathy is needed to make the happiness of the residents a prime consideration in judging the quality of the design of an apartment tower.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Don Lindsay

[1] Project Plans Senior Lot 1 Redesign July 13, 2023

[https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12535065&GUID=40031513-462E-4CBA-80CA-AB614C32A90D](https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12535065&GUID=40031513-462E-4CBA-80CA-AB614C32A90D;);

Accessed 20231220

[2] Project Plans Family Lot 2 Redesign July 13, 2023

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12535066&GUID=039C5E29-306A-4090-B472-E4BFD9146AA6>;

Accessed 20231220, 2023

[3] Legistar 81251 Senior Housing Redesign

<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6449523&GUID=5060C81C-2F27-4EFC-9ACF-82688291B63C&Options=ID|Text|&Search=81251>

Accessed 20231220

[4] Legistar 81252 Family Housing Redesign

<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6449524&GUID=A1D2C574-96B6-419A-8627-3199E9C66C3C&Options=ID|Text|&Search=81252>

Accessed 20231220

[5] Letter of Intent Senior Housing Legistar 81251

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12535064&GUID=0A7901ED-D20A-4058->

[BB42-E5603D26AFE3](#);

Accessed 20231220

[6] Letter of Intent Family Housing Legistar 81252

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12535068&GUID=9AA8F5C7-A5BB-49B7-BBF4-D25313C29570>;

Accessed 20231220

[7] City of Madison Climate Goals

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/sustainability/climate>

Accessed 20231102