

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: November 18, 2015

TITLE: 7933 Tree Lane – PD(GDP-SIP), 46-Unit
Multi-Family Apartment Building. 9th Ald.
Dist. (40007)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Jay Wendt, Acting Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: November 18, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant, Lois Braun-Oddo and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of November 18, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a PD(GDP-SIP) located at 7933 Tree Lane. Appearing on behalf of the project were Matt Melendes, Nadia Underhill, David Jennerjahn and Jacob Blue, all representing Heartland Housing. Registered and speaking in opposition were Judy Grover, Eric McLeod, Judy Susmilch, representing Oakbridge Retail Center; Sonya Huebner and Joseph Krzos.

Applicant presentation: Energy efficiency, high quality materials, health and community building are all very important to Heartland Housing’s projects. They typically pay for utilities for some families who cannot afford them. They have increased the amount of parking to 27 stalls. Bicycle parking has been increased by 8 spaces. Revisions to the southern edge resulted in a new design for stormwater management. The building itself changed its position with the stair tower having changed to address the Commission’s previous concerns. There will be no impact to the abutting wetlands. They have integrated the roofline with the overall building form as well as provided a screen for the rooftop. The main stair tower is combined with a canopy over the main entrance to balance the form while highlighting activity through three types of glass, which has been reduced by 30%, with a similar approach to the second stairwell.

Judy Grover spoke in opposition, specifically to the building’s height. The location is greenspace as a buffer for the residential and the retail on Mineral Point Road. She lives directly across the street from this location where she gets sunshine and light without having to see through anybody else’s windows. This building will eliminate the sunshine and gives her a view of a parking lot. She encouraged Commission members to visit the site and get a better understanding of just how wooded and small the lot is.

Eric McLeod spoke in opposition, representing the Oakridge Retail Center. The purpose of this project is a goal we all share, but the question is whether this proposal adequately serves that goal. One of the goals of this Commission is to foster civic pride. This building will be occupied by families and many children. This is a very constrained site; the building is too dense, the units are too small, there is too little common area and

greenspace and there is inadequate parking. Aesthetically this is not an attractive building. The selection of this property for this project has nothing to do with whether this is an appropriate place for this type of project. The residents of this building deserve to live in a neighborhood, not one that stands out in such stark contrast to the community.

Judy Susmilch spoke in opposition as the owner of a salon directly across the street from the property. She has owned the salon for 18 years with 31 stations. The density is too high with hardly any usable open space. There are likely to be 120+ children at this site, with 45-90 adults, that's 230 people in this tight site. The units themselves are very small and the community area or outdoor space need make up for that. She is very concerned about the quality of housing at this density. On the north there is a waterway, on the east there is a detention pond, to the south is a service area, this property is going to be enclosed on three sides, basically isolating it from the rest of the community. To compare this project to the Milwaukee project is not reasonable as they have on-street parking in Milwaukee, and the units are approximately 16% larger in size than the units proposed here.

Sonya Huebner spoke in opposition as a home-owner in the neighborhood since 1986. The greenspace is part of what makes this neighborhood family-friendly. She commented on the recent news that the City of Madison is contemplating demolishing several buildings downtown to make room for more greenspace, and here the greenspace would be taken away. The size of this facility would loom over everything else in the neighborhood. This is not enough space for the children that would be moving into this building, noting safety issues with traffic, crossing the street, and having single-parent families that cannot constantly watch the children.

Joseph Krzos spoke in opposition, echoing much of what others said. This proposed rezoning is inconsistent with the land use envisioned for this property by the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and should be rejected on that basis. A giant 4-story building being proposed next to a greenway is disheartening. None of the buildings within eyesight of this site are over 2-stories. This building will stick out like a sore thumb. If an elevator shaft is needed the building will be even higher at its peak.

The Chair noted that many of the issues raised by the speakers are appropriate to the larger discussion about this project, but perhaps not so particular to this Commission which is charged with design rather than with questions of overall density or placement and policy on where such housing might go. The Plan Commission and Common Council will weigh those issues.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I'd like the applicant to address some of the concerns about having outdoor amenities/playgrounds and other facilities for the anticipated number of children that will live here.
 - We have the tot lot which is well-used in other buildings. There are never 45 kids at one time. We also have greenspace to gather. There are 3 parks within one mile of the site. As far as on-site, we have outdoor space and indoor space for tenant meetings and families.
- I see the two greenspaces, how are they developed, what amenities, what equipment, what reason do the kids actually have to go out there and play?
 - The intent is to have some sort of structure there, it's gated. It's a place to toss a ball or Frisbee. We know this is a constrained site. The amount of greenspace we've provided is consistent with this development knowing we have parks closer than one mile.
- It sounds like the neighborhood really uses that greenspace now.
- With such a predominance of bike parking in the basement, there has to be a way to accommodate the realistic fact that not everybody is going to go through that motion every day and we'll see bikes all along that fence.

- We have talked internally about a separate stairwell for that purpose to steer people away from the elevator.
- The little kids can just ride their bikes and then take them in the elevator up to their apartment.
- You should make it a little bit easier on the residents. It sounds like not all the residents will have cars, you don't have enough parking for all of them.
- The bike storage is not going to be easy for people.
- The redesign looks good.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Rosenblum, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provided that every effort be made to maximize bicycle parking, even if it means the City has to relax its bike stall parking regulations to make it more convenient for the residents of this building.