



**Agenda Item #:** 5

**Project Title:** 5799 Portage Road - Residential Building Complex. (District 17)

**Legistar File ID #:** 82244

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Marsha Rummel, Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Christian Harper, and Wendy von Below

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of March 13, 2024, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a Residential Building Complex located at 5799 Portage Road. Registered and speaking in support were Kirk Biodrowski, and Andy Laufenberg. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Jeff Davis. First time use of a new proprietary model of building. Allows opportunities and different materials not afforded in a typical multi-family development. No landscaping is currently shown.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- Context and process. If annexation isn't imminent, is it staff who requested they come before the commission?
- Understanding is due diligence process. Discussion item
- Even though it's not in the city of Madison?
- I struggled too, we went through some older applications, we've done this a couple of times before. They do not have a current application for annexation.
  - We don't have a timeline for that. As soon as we purchase land and start moving forward.
  - This needs city services and that's what triggers annexation.
- Not looking at site plan and landscaping is typically not the way we roll with these things.
  - Our focus is on the design itself, given the site plan might change dramatically.
- You don't want us giving you major landscape comments.
- I like the design, it's different. We saw something similar, this had a lot more glazing and fluidity to it. I think the scale of the balconies don't work. But overall, this is a nice design that you don't see everyday. I was conflicted with the flatness of it, but I'm still trying to grapple with that, but I think it's a great direction and I like the way it's moving so far.
- I think the aesthetics of the building are wonderful. I presume it will go over a wood frame building?
  - No not at all, these are modules we bring in that essentially are completely manufactured, brought in and set in place like Legos.
- And it's concrete
  - The modules are steel, with precast façade.
- That really thin roofline is something that is achievable?
  - It is.
- And the balconies, would they be steel, would they be able to curve the railings and the edges like that?
  - We could, we're working with a manufacturer on those right now. We don't know yet if that's the direction we will go.

- My concerns are, as they are in many residential building complexes on sloped sites, the portions of the project that are windowless, parking ramp exposed finishes and that's really something that needs to be thought out, whether its terracing, landscaping at some of the less exposed areas so that the unit closest to the ground is more connected to the site. In order to look at it from the pedestrian experience, having some real softening and stepping up to the units versus a sheer wall is something worth looking at. Certainly, complete streets and integrating the site plan in the fabric and context that is planned is important as well. The site plan reminds me of a mid-century approach to site planning, when I would think some parallel parking, central greenspaces and so forth might be more in line with what we are looking for. But the building design itself is pretty fantastic.
- Agree the design is headed in a terrific direction. We see this glass connector, doesn't look quite finished at the top, would be curious to see how these rooflines are being finished. I also agree, you've got this plinth the buildings are sitting on, maybe try to look at the development of that so it becomes purposeful. Noticed you are treating the windows differently, sometimes solid, sometime mullion at top sometimes bottom, as a tool to break up large façades, make sure that is purposeful. The clubhouse and access from each of the four buildings, would be a nicely developed site plan, could you bury the parking, integrate greenspace, sad to see that is just a dog park when it could be for the people as well.
- I like it, but the one view from the street, it seems so huge. Up close it really works for me, from far away it's different. Does it break itself up enough? Maybe. Look forward to having you come back.
- The entire building is painted concrete?
  - A metallic painted finish that comes close to a bronze anodized color.
- The environmental corridor is part of the site?
  - Yes.
- It seems a little too auto-oriented. Minimalist, clean line site and landscape design that really enhances the architecture, and unfortunately right now Building 4 occupies that space where you would see a central greenspace, or it's the parking. I'm wondering what your parking ratio is? You did mention structured parking, what is your ratio?
  - This being somewhat a suburban area, cars are important and unfortunately, we are losing some parking space underneath because of the nature of the structure.
- If you're hovering around 1, that's what we expect for something more suburban. I was hoping you were much over that, and we could hack away at it to get more greenspace. Other building massing things that I would play with, Building 4 could be oriented east-west, have greenspace east of the clubhouse that attached that, and you had more of a green, open part to the more square arrangement then, that could open up some opportunities.
  - We also have a problem that the water table is really high in the area of the clubhouse and dog run, we're trying to avoid getting into the water table with the buildings, thus the orientation.
- Making sure all those sidewalks connecting the buildings go all the way over to the bike path. The architectural renderings are nice, I also was perceiving them as more metal, maybe that's the glazing or painting effect. Nevertheless, coming back to that idea of architecture inspiring a landscape, that they work together. Your renderings are hinting at a simple, monolithic landscape treatment, not that it's not diverse, but aesthetically simple. Don't do a lot of swoops, take cues from the really nice forms and geometry you have in the architecture.
- We've been hitting the ballpark with descriptors like swoopy doo, wallpapering, power on people, I love it. Could you tell us about the future road at the top, does that exist now?
  - The plan above is something that was presented to Zoning. This is the master plan here. That is proposed by another developer and starting to take shape. This is pretty much what Planning and Zoning pretty much approved already.
- Where do you see the road going?
  - If there was a road, the best location for it from a city traffic standpoint would be that left street on the west side. The connection would come down straight through the environmental corridor and connect to the site below. That site can only support about 83 units. Were looking at a street that would cost \$1 Million for 83 units. We're in discussions about the utility of that road and what the purpose is.
- This road is proposed below, does it go anywhere?

- That's what proposed in the master plan, it goes nowhere except to the 83 units to the south?
- Those units are planned and approved?
  - No, using that site to the south and subtracting the street from that area, using Housing Mix 2 low density residential, the most you can get in there from a zoning perspective is 83 units.
- Is this something planners would revisit, being from 2008?
- (Secretary) Right now the general temperature is allowing for more height and more density. This plan ideally was looking to concentrate density at this mixed node. When they thought about the street network here, they fully anticipated that there would be conflicts with the environmental corridor, but that there was resolution to them. Grade also plays a part in the location of the street. But it's part of a grid pattern to provide connectivity overall. Not to say this plan is definitely something that is going to happen as it sits on this piece of paper but will have to continue to be worked through with Planning and Traffic Engineering. It is officially mapped on our Comprehensive Plan.
- Regardless of the street, this could be more of a city street feel to that parking lot and how those buildings relate to one another, and perhaps even the integration of the bike path through there. Exciting stuff, cutting edge, the first in the country so I guess we're appreciative we're having a chance to participate in this.

## Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.