

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 17, 2016

TITLE: 7902 Watts Road – Planned Residential Complex Consisting of Two Multi-Family Buildings Containing 156 Residential Dwelling Units and Associated Common/Amenity Spaces. 9th Ald. Dist. (43715)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 17, 2016

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Dawn O’Kroley and Richard Slayton.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 17, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a Planned Residential Complex located at 7902 Watts Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were Mark Hopkins and Michael Morey, representing Oakbrook Corporation. The grading of the site has driven the layout on the northwest corner of High Point and Watts Roads. An existing detention basin serves a portion of the drainage pattern for The Princeton Club. A model was presented to show the grades on the site. Entrances for the east building will be at the first living level, while entrances for the west building will be at the lower parking level. Each of the buildings off the access drive has a modest turn-around with short-term parking. Where the site is at its lowest (south) there is a small amount of surface parking; with each building allotted one car per unit in the basement and one bike space per unit in the basement. There are approximately 15 different unit types between efficiencies, one-bedrooms and two-bedrooms. Both of the buildings were broken into two major parts to break down the scale. The two level community space and fitness area will both spill out onto the deck with awnings, giving a very active feel from multiple angles. Building materials were discussed and shown including brick, base material, cement board siding, hardie-siding, and cast stone coping and window trim.

Jessica Vaughn of the Planning Division discussed concerns shared by staff, the blank walls, the possibilities of activating the internal access drive and street presence on all sides of the development, pedestrian amenities and two separate buildings, creating a presence, unit entries and activation along the street frontage.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- You have an opportunity to make this something other than just a hot dog shaped detention area. Something that has shape that relates to activities, people up above. I know volume is a concern, it’s just a very simplistic engineering approach and I’d like a landscape engineer to have a hand in this. A more level area can house the planters. Just a more naturalistic approach.

- We've had this discussion but we had restrictions because it's not ours. It's already existing and serves the Princeton Club.

Perhaps plantings that are more of a mass rather than dotted plantings so that at least visually, you create a form that changes the grading.

That goes along with the staff comments too, about the blank wall.

And not just trees, but ground cover that might grow, the way a Sumac starts to create its own mound.

- I'll add that you should consult with City Engineering. In order to improve this site there is going to be some effect on that adjacency and detention pond. We can talk about it.
- It would be nice if your building form felt like it was broken up in some way so it could nestle into these grades, rather than having this outdoor space be 10-feet above the retaining wall. If that were closer to the grade level at that point, it would feel like you nestled the buildings into the grade more.
- On the site plan, Building C the 1-story neighboring building already in place, it looks at though your Building B is pushed too close to the street to have a respectable relationship with that existing 1-story building. It feels like you might want to push that towards the private drive, then those two pieces aren't at a 90° angle with each other; you could use your links to twist your geometry to create a better relationship with the streets.
- The way the buildings get tight here, if they were diagonal to the drive, I just see gateway forming that's not really there.
- The materials, the way they're proportioned and the openings, I don't have any concerns on the aesthetics of the buildings.
- If they're going to be virtually identical you will need to do something to the site so it feels like one building that you happen to have a drive through, more pedestrian access on that center drive.
- The plantings next to the sidewalks just won't work. Otherwise I think your landscape plan is pretty good. Think about the Maple and River Birch; there's Oaks and all kinds of things that you could use. Your layout in general is pretty good.
- The massing is OK, the siting is where we have an issue.
- There's also blank walls (exposed lower elevations).
- That private drive, can you park on it?
 - No. They're adding a condition that it has to be signed "No Parking."
 - It's actually pretty fast. It's going to be a different experience having buildings and cars there. It may appear long, but it's not actually that long.
- My biggest concern is the west building, having a better relationship with Watts Road.
- And the relationship to the other building.

The Secretary noted that the signage shown is for illustrative purposes. Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator will assign a conventional zoning designation for the signs to meet. If they don't meet that, they'll come back to the Urban Design Commission for Comprehensive Design Review.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provided for the following:

- The massing is OK.

- Siting with integration with grades and blank walls, siting as it relates to Building B's relationship on Watts Road with the existing Building C, siting issues as it relates to the relationship of both buildings at the driveway entrance to Watts Road and how that works.
- The applicant shall return with a larger more detailed landscape plan.
- Work with City Engineering to adjust the configuration of the detention pond as it relates to development of new buildings on the site.