

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. 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Vaughn, Jessica

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**From:** Vaughn, Jessica  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2016 11:57 AM  
**To:** 'Joseph Ryan'  
**Cc:** Stroick, Jule; District 1 Leadership Team; Teresa Holmes; Crystal Banse; Skidmore, Paul; McKinney, Barbara; Stouder, Heather; Fries, Gregory  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Joe,

Thank you for your email. Responses are provided below in *italics*. Please note that the applicant has requested to refer this item to the October 17 Plan Commission date. Also, in light of your questions and the relative newness of the association, I would like to suggest an informal introductory development review process tutorial. I am happy to coordinate something on my end; if you are interested let me know.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any additional questions regarding this matter or otherwise.

Sincerely,

Jessica Vaughn, AICP



**Jessica Vaughn, AICP**  
Development Project Planner  
City Design & Plan Implementation Section

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Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Planning Division  
Madison Municipal Building - Suite LL.100  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison WI 53701-2985  
Email: [jvaughn@cityofmadison.com](mailto:jvaughn@cityofmadison.com) Phone: 608.267.8733

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**From:** Joseph Ryan [<mailto:president@madwest.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2016 8:17 AM  
**To:** Vaughn, Jessica  
**Cc:** Stroick, Jule; District 1 Leadership Team; Teresa Holmes; Crystal Banse; Skidmore, Paul; McKinney, Barbara  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

After the town hall Alder McKinney held last night a couple more questions came in:

1. What is the impact on fire/police with adding an additional 156-400 people to this area? (Low and High potentials)

*Police and Fire are referral agencies that have reviewed the development proposal from a life-safety perspective. At this time neither agency has expressed a concern or comment from a service level perspective.*

2. Is the school district prepared to handle potentially 0-300 new kids? (Low and High potentials)

*The city shares a list of current development applications with the school district. At this time the school district has not expressed concern or comment from an enrollment perspective as a result of the development proposal.*

3. Storm Water is a big issue for our district. Given that the 50 year rains that happened and put the system over capacity in the last couple of weeks and per predictions weather is going to get worse , is this something that is being planned for with new weather predictions? (This question is to emphasize #10 below as it was a hot topic at the Townhall). Also there is underground parking being planned which is great but again where is all the water that flows down into it, going to go?

*There is a stormwater plan that is already approved for the subdivision that the project site is part of. The development proposal is reviewed for consistency with that stormwater plan in terms of system capacity and flows. For the underground parking, staff reviews site grading. Typically, staff looks to direct water away from building entrances with grading. If water flows cannot be redirected by grading a pump system may be required. Please note that I have copied Greg Fries on this email if there are any additional questions regarding stormwater.*

4. This was a big one. Why isn't the area being planned for mixed use (this relates to #9 below) and or development for condos? This area already has a high density of apartments, why not diversify?

*Staff believes that given the location of the project site in proximity to services (transit, retail, commercial, parks, etc.) the development proposal adds to the mixture of uses already present in the area. Overall, the development contributes to creating a mixed-use center as well as increasing the viability and success of the existing non-residential uses in the area.*

5. What is the target market for this development? Epic Employees? Students? Families? Etc?

*The applicant has not provided information regarding the target market. That said, staff believes that given the unit proposed mix of apartment types (studio, one- and two-bedroom units) that the development proposal will meet the needs of a variety of renters.*

Thanks! Sorry for so many questions but the Madison West Neighborhood Association only recently learned of this project and the community is just now responding.

Thanks  
Joe

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**From:** Joseph Ryan [mailto:[president@madwest.org](mailto:president@madwest.org)]  
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**To:** 'Vaughn, Jessica' <[JVaughn@cityofmadison.com](mailto:JVaughn@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Cc:** 'Stroick, Jule' <[JStroick@cityofmadison.com](mailto:JStroick@cityofmadison.com)>; 'District 1 Leadership Team' <[davidhandowski@yahoo.com](mailto:davidhandowski@yahoo.com)>; 'Teresa Holmes' <[holmes.email3@yahoo.com](mailto:holmes.email3@yahoo.com)>; 'Crystal Banse' <[crystal.banse@gmail.com](mailto:crystal.banse@gmail.com)>; '[district9@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district9@cityofmadison.com)' <[district9@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district9@cityofmadison.com)>; 'McKinney, Barbara' <[district1@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district1@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

My apologies, I forgot to add Alder Skidmore and Alder McKinney to the email chain. Adding them now.  
Thanks  
Joe

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**From:** Joseph Ryan [mailto:president@madwest.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2016 10:18 PM  
**To:** 'Vaughn, Jessica' <JV Vaughn@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** 'Stroick, Jule' <JStroick@cityofmadison.com>; 'District 1 Leadership Team' <davidhandowski@yahoo.com>; 'Teresa Holmes' <holmes.email3@yahoo.com>; 'Crystal Banse' <crystal.banse@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Hi Jessica-

Thanks for the call and email. I am adding the other officers to the email chain, so they can stay in the loop.

Here are some questions we have so far:

1. Has there been a traffic impact/pattern study done in lieu of this project? High Point Apartments kitty-corner of project already has issues. High Point Rd has a bottleneck of traffic at peak times.
2. What is the estimated rental pricing between unit types?
3. Can you define what low, medium, high, etc density is?
4. How does the square footage compare to other apartments (Low Density, Medium Density, High Density)
5. Is there any subsidized housing being considered or thought of in this project?
6. Has the Sustainable Madison Committee or any other city committee had any visibility into this project?
7. Has there been any regard given to sustainability/renewable resources (energy (gas, electric, etc), materials used, etc) for this project?
8. What commitments to the community/neighborhoods have been given if any?
9. There is a number of apartments in the area especially from Watts down to S Jct Rd & along High Point. Has the city looked at making this a condo/business (whatever term is used for condos on top, shops/restaurants on the bottom) area instead of apartments? And if so, what studies/facts were used for this determination?
10. With the recent storms, there was a lot of flooding in the area. Has there been any study on the impact of this project on the surrounding area in terms of rain water flow and drainage to the surrounding area?

Thanks  
Joe

---

**From:** Vaughn, Jessica [mailto:JV Vaughn@cityofmadison.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 19, 2016 4:47 PM  
**To:** 'Joseph Ryan' <president@madwest.org>  
**Cc:** Stroick, Jule <JStroick@cityofmadison.com>; District 1 Leadership Team <davidhandowski@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Ryan,

Thank you for your email! To follow-up on my voicemail, I would invite the chance to talk with you in person or via telephone to introduce myself as well as get to know you and the association. To follow-up on your questions below, neighborhood association pre-application notification is only required if the subject property is located within the association's district. In this case, the project site is not located within the boundaries of the Madison West Neighborhood Association, so notification was not required.

In terms of submitting comments; comments can be submitted directly to me via email, US mail, telephone, etc. up until the Monday, August 29 at 4 p.m. If comments are going to be submitted after 4 p.m. on Monday, they should be submitted directly to the Plan Commission at the meeting. Ideally, I would like to have any comments before next Wednesday, so that they can include them in the initial materials and as part of the staff report that gets forwarded to the Commission for their review and consideration. In any event, there is still time to submit comments.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,

Jessica Vaughn, AICP



**Jessica Vaughn, AICP**  
Development Project Planner  
City Design & Plan Implementation Section

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Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Planning Division  
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**From:** Joseph Ryan [<mailto:president@madwest.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 19, 2016 12:06 AM  
**To:** Vaughn, Jessica  
**Cc:** Stroick, Jule; District 1 Leadership Team  
**Subject:** Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Greetings-

We are a newly formed Neighborhood Association recognized by the city (Born. 5/2/16), that borders this proposed project (Boundary). We were not informed of this massive project, till it was brought to our attention by a couple of members. Not sure if that was an oversight or not ordinance (we are still learning the rules).

We do have some questions/comments but noticed that the comments due date has passed (Aug 5<sup>th</sup>). Is it still possible to engage on this project with community input? Also what is the purpose of the Plan Commission Hearing on Aug 29<sup>th</sup>? Do we need to sign up to speak or ask questions?

Thanks  
Joe

**Information Links on Project:**

- PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT:  
<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4627925&GUID=6BE87B86-0A2F-4189-85B4-08108EFE4F50>
- 7901 Watts Road Project - <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/7902-watts-road/2060/>
- Legislative Information Center Link:  
<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2780358&GUID=9B78BAFE-3C12-4C53-A66C-45E5689FF6A6>

Joseph Ryan | President  
Madison West Neighborhood Association, Inc.

6-7

## Vaughn, Jessica

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**From:** Joseph Ryan [jryan@josephryanconsulting.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 30, 2016 10:29 AM  
**To:** Skidmore, Paul; 'Joseph Ryan'; McKinney, Barbara; 'Michael C. Morey'; Vaughn, Jessica  
**Cc:** 'District 1 Leadership Team'; 'Teresa Holmes'; 'Crystal Banse'  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Great, and thanks Alder Skidmore!  
Joe

---

**From:** Skidmore, Paul [mailto:district9@cityofmadison.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 30, 2016 10:12 AM  
**To:** Joseph Ryan <president@madwest.org>; McKinney, Barbara <district1@cityofmadison.com>; Michael C. Morey <mcmorey@oakbrookcorp.com>; Vaughn, Jessica <JV Vaughn@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** District 1 Leadership Team <davidhandowski@yahoo.com>; Teresa Holmes <holmes.email3@yahoo.com>; Crystal Banse <crystal.banse@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Ryan,

Thank you for reaching out to me. I have been in regular contact with the developer of this project as it has progressed. We met several months ago to discuss the project timetable and permitting process, and I identified that they reach out to the All Saints neighborhood to the west on Watts Road, and to the neighborhood association that represents Coventry Village to the south. At that time, there were no other neighborhood associations in the area that I was aware of. I became aware of your new organization very recently, via an email forwarded to me by you about a week ago.

I do feel that an informational meeting would be of benefit, and I am willing to assist in setting up. I am forwarding this email on to the development team and City staff for their consideration. I will coordinate with them to set up a time and place for this meeting.

Paul Skidmore, 9th District Alder  
**City of Madison, Wisconsin**  
13 Red Maple Trail  
Madison, WI 53717  
(608) 829 3425  
(608) 335 1529 (C)

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**From:** Joseph Ryan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 30, 2016 9:41 AM  
**To:** Paul Skidmore, McKinney, Barbara  
**Cc:** District 1 Leadership Team, Teresa Holmes, Crystal Banse

Greetings Alder Skidmore & McKinney-



We received a lot of feedback while at West Fest on this development. Alder Skidmore this is in your district but is borders ours (District 1) and our Neighborhood Association (MWNA). Currently there is no NA in the area that this is being planned for.

The MWNA at this time does not have an official response to this development. We are looking at a sept meeting and will probably have one then.

However it seems like an informational meeting might be a good idea. Do we need to request this beyond this email?

The feedback points to a question to the density of apartments in the area and an appeal for more mixed use/condos (shops/restaurant space with condos above) to help diversify the area with different living styles. The other concerns that resonated were the following:

1. Traffic – High Point Rd is already congested and has two bottle necks.
2. Storm water – With recent storms, people are concerned about additional flooding from the run off
3. Community Involvement – The development in its current state has no commitments to the community
4. Renewable Resources/Energy was not considered an important aspect to this development

Attached is the full Q&A with the city planning project lead.

Thanks  
Joe

Joseph Ryan | President  
Madison West Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
708-469-6055 | O  
517-862-3579 | M  
[president@madwest.org](mailto:president@madwest.org) | [www.madwest.org](http://www.madwest.org)

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Sincerely,

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**Jessica Vaughn, AICP**  
Development Project Planner  
City Design & Plan Implementation Section

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**From:** Joseph Ryan [mailto:president@madwest.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 19, 2016 12:06 AM  
**To:** Vaughn, Jessica  
**Cc:** Stroick, Jule; District 1 Leadership Team  
**Subject:** Planning Project - 7901 Watts Road

Greetings-

We are a newly formed Neighborhood Association recognized by the city (Born. 5/2/16) , that borders this proposed project (Boundary). We were not informed of this massive project, till it was brought to our attention by a couple of members. Not sure if that was an oversight or not ordinance (we are still learning the rules).

We do have some questions/comments but noticed that the comments due date has passed (Aug 5<sup>th</sup>). Is it still possible to engage on this project with community input? Also what is the purpose of the Plan Commission Hearing on Aug 29<sup>th</sup>? Do we need to sign up to speak or ask questions?

Thanks  
Joe

**Information Links on Project:**

- PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT:  
<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4627925&GUID=6BE87B86-0A2F-4189-85B4-08108EFE4F50>
- 7901 Watts Road Project - <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/7902-watts-road/2060/>
- Legislative Information Center Link:  
<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2780358&GUID=9B78BAFE-3C12-4C53-A66C-45E5689FF6A6>

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