

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 31, 2021

TITLE: 4800 Voges Road, Building #1 - New
Construction in UDD No. 1. 16th Ald.
Dist. (63801)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 31, 2021

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Craig Weisensel, Christian Harper, Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Syed Abbas, Tom DeChant and Russel Knudson.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 31, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of new construction located at 4800 Voges Road in UDD No. 1. Registered and speaking in support was Dave Hull, representing Ruedebusch Development. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Wade Wyse, representing Wyser Engineering, LLC.

In address of the Commission’s previous comments, Hull noted what has changed. He provided further detail on tree species and conditions by having an assessment done, report submitted, which included a diagram that showed the location of the extension of Galleon Run and Street A identified on the site plan. The plan shows the healthy trees left, with an overlay plan showing the site plan and road extension going through. Based on the tree report there’s less than 2% of existing trees that are healthy, another ¼ of those would be either removed because they’re in the roadway or so close to the roadway they would be difficult to maintain. It is a challenge with the site because of the high water table and elevations of Voges Road and Galleon Run, the entire site will be raised four-feet. The landscape plan shows more detail of the pond plantings for the bioretention basins. They looked at a redesign of some of the planting groupings along the building to create more of a central impact, created larger impact elements at the entrances and corners of the buildings. They looked at modifying the overall shapes of the larger ponds along Galleon Run to create additional undulation of those ponds. The overall size of those are being dictated by the stormwater requirements since Galleon Run also has to drain into those ponds. It is a challenge because it is such a low site.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Thank you for the report, many of us are appreciative of the thoroughness. Your 2% number, when I read the report there’s quite an extensive table listing basically every tree 6” in diameter or greater, it appears there are many more than 2%. Could you clarify that number?

- Basing that off the additional diagram that showed the road going through the site. They reduced any trees they felt weren't of large size or health, so that's the 2% I was referring to within the report.
- Much of what we were hoping for was to see to what extent existing trees could be repurposed and brought into the design, it seems that there really are none.
 - Unfortunately not due to the low elevation of the site and high water table. By raising that site 4-feet I doubt any of those would stay healthy enough to remain.
- I echo the appreciation for the depth you've provided on those trees. I can also appreciate the number of challenges you're up against, a lot of those trees are being removed for City streets beyond your control. I'm still kind of disappointed that there's no response to the existing conditions of the site, while acknowledging the raising of the site is another major hurdle, just the fact you went through that effort and there's no response to me is still troublesome. In particular that northwest parking lot, I want to know about the need and function because within the tree inventory the healthy mature trees, in particular Burr and White Oaks, clearing that for a parking lot doesn't sit right with me, I would be happy knowing that there was some small corner, even one or two 100 year old Oak trees could add a lot. Could you describe the function and need of that parking and whether you could carve out a space to preserve some of those older Oaks in the northwest corner?
 - Due to the building sizes of both lots and uses for each building we believe we will need those spots to meet the Zoning requirement for parking. Not having a second tenant does leave that open to interpretation. Initially when we started this project that Street A wasn't going to be there, but the City has now mapped that east-west street location which creates this small section to the northwest. We can look at a way to keep some of those larger trees if possible.
- Acknowledge what I'm proposing would not allow you to grade four-feet under the Oak trees, I'm suggesting you would be well outside of their canopy and root zone.
- The effort was made to help group some of the plantings around the foundations, there's still opportunity for improvement, instead of a single row lining the building, if you had a double or triple row that makes a much greater impact.
- (Secretary) The development team can officially request a parking reduction from Zoning, but it would have to go through the process and be approved. The Commission can make a condition that the applicant work with Plan Commission and staff to go through that process.
- (Firchow) There are mechanisms for phasing parking and administrative level parking reductions, but I don't know at this point what the numbers are to meet the thresholds. They could explore those options that could be approved by Zoning.
- Seems like that tree analysis should have been done before the rest of this to assess what's worth keeping. The confusion over the 2%, I found myself crunching those numbers. To dwell on this after the fact, this should have been addressed. When we have a parcel that has mature trees on it like this, what is the consideration given to how this is developed? Those existing trees support a significant amount of wildlife. I do acknowledge the efforts for the bioretention and other plantings. I'm disappointed in the process.
- (Firchow) The process for the creation of streets is referred to as official mapping, the City reserves corridors for future connections. That process has many considerations, mapping corridors to align with existing street connections with the area recognized for industrial zoning. It's reviewed by different agencies, in this case I can't speak to what level of consideration when into the trees in this location. That is a separate approval and is not part of review in terms of a UDD. The corridors reflect the official map reservation.
- It's really the City dictating that the developer needs to raise the site for the road.
- I echo the comments on the trees and also appreciate the developer's efforts on the tree survey.

- Valid point raised from a City standpoint about process. A building should off-set that with energy efficiency and sustainability.
- (Firchow) Required parking is determined on the exact use, generally speaking many industrial uses require one stall per two employees (general or light manufacturing).
- I think that 2% is coming only from 20" diameter Oaks. Tree 777 appears to be on the property, it's an 8" Box Elder, in between Lot 1 and the highway, what's the fate of that tree for example? It doesn't appear to be in the way and it's not really on the paved structure, would it be saved or not? That tree provides some really great design aesthetic from the highway.
 - We can certainly look at that. The parking lot in the northwest corner edge of the pavement, if we can slope that down or put a retaining wall along that parking to keep the westerly and northerly portion of the remaining site low, we can maintain those trees along those two areas.
- Would you be willing to bank the parking in that northwest corner since it seems there's question as to how these buildings would be occupied? The area is paved for the prospect of large trucks, but to give flexibility I'm wondering for the potential of needing more parking, that could be overflow parking if big trucks aren't using that entire space.
 - If that is banked, what would be the re-approval of that parcel? What approval process would that have to go through to be developed at a later date?
- Difficult to figure out how much reduction without knowing number of employees. The process to reinstall those, if this remains as a permitted use it wouldn't be a Plan Commission review, it would be staff level with exception to being in a UDD. Code allows the Secretary to sign off on some approvals as administrative, or it could go to the Commission as a discretionary call by the Secretary. It would come back as a major site alteration.
- If the developer doesn't have all the lease agreements but could speculate what might not require that northwest parking lot, density goes up and needs the parking, the design has been reviewed, need has been justified, then the parking lot is constructed. That would not require additional Commission meetings.
- I think separating parking from the building as a way to move forward is a good suggestion.
- South of project plans appear to be some amount of greenspace, was that identified at all?
 - As part of the CSM there is 43-feet dedicated so that rectangle you see is a 43-foot dedication we had to include. Above that is greenspace we would intend to do plantings in. We want a visual buffer along Voges Road.
- Wondering if it's the best use of the site given the concern and desire about the existing trees.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Knudson, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote (5-4) with Braun-Oddo, Asad, Weisensel, DeChant and Goodhart voting yes; Abbas, Bernau, Klehr and Harper voting no.

Discussion on the motion:

- This is where the rubber meets the road as far as urban design and the work we review. It's an urbanizing edge and it does not sit well with me setting a precedence with this, that we can allow development to completely wipe a site clean regardless of its existing characteristics and amenities. If that northwest parking lot does move forward as a staff level review or process of banking, if the development proceeds over the next several years and not a single tree was preserved from the existing site, something failed us, something went wrong. I would like to see some gesture made to acknowledge the history and ecological identity of the site and carry that forward in the future.

- I want to put a shout out to Shane saying this is where the rubber hits the road. I'm on the fence too, I think sometimes it can be a good point for UDC to make a bit of a statement on what they vote on and hope for.

The motion provided for the applicant having a conversation with the City about the northwest corner parking to see if there is a way to work out banking of that development; and to stagger the plantings around the building.