

## AGENDA # 3

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** July 13, 2016

TITLE: 425 West Washington Avenue –  
Modifications to Previously Approved  
Plans for a Mixed-Unit Development in the  
UMX District Known as “The Washington  
Plaza.” 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (29495)      **REFERRED:**  
**REREFERRED:**  
**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary      **ADOPTED:**      **POF:**

DATED: July 13, 2016      **ID NUMBER:**

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

\*Wagner recused himself on this item. Slayton acted as Chair.\*

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of July 13, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of three design changes for “The Washington Plaza” located at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project was John Sutton, architect. Registered and speaking in opposition were Peter Ostlind and Jonathan Cooper, representing 425 West Washington Neighborhood Steering Committee. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Stefanie Moritz. Sutton reviewed the four items that the Urban Design Commission requested be looked at. The trellis on the rooftop garden will be removed; the rooftop rail for the garden was of concern because of its visibility while the developer was worried about safety. The rail is in the same location but the planting is inside rather than in between, and the rail is lowered with a single pipe above the main parapet. During construction this building was pushed back which resulted in smaller back open space, which the developer used pavers on and does not exceed 90% coverage. A fence and retaining wall were removed during construction, with an agreement with the neighbor that they would be replaced. When the original fence was put back, he put the same fence on the other side as the dividing partition between units. City staff and the neighborhood felt it looked too suburban and didn’t tie in with the building architecture. The new fence would be in a dark bronze to match all their trims.

Peter Ostlind spoke in opposition as a member of the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee. He reminded the Commission that the standard under which this was originally approved was that it was a demonstrated higher quality building and could be achieved without the additional fifth floor allowed in this area. The railing doesn’t meet that standard. Both the upper railing and the fence are not designs that would have been initially included, this is trying to limit the expenses of meeting what was approved in the first place. This is totally incompatible with anything else that has been built in the Bassett Neighborhood. These requests should not be approved, including the upper railing because portions of the wood frame would still be visible across the street. A portion of landscaping that has been removed is not reflected on the updated plans. Solid metal or vegetative 4-foot fences on the property line are sufficient to shield headlights.

Jonathan Cooper spoke in opposition as a member of the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee. He commented on the process from a neighborhood perspective. Contrary to what the applicant's submission says, these changes have not been reviewed by the neighborhood. When we don't talk, we don't review. It's been very difficult for neighborhood residents to really tell what's happening and what is suggested. As Mr. Ostlind stated, this is an issue of quality. This building was approved at a higher standard; whatever remedies are ultimately approved by the UDC, make sure you know what you are approving and that it is of a quality that this building deserves. It's hard for us to tell what is being proposed.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Does that solution of steel mesh on top of wood actually work? It seems odd.
- Is there an option for masonry that matches the brick?
  - I did want to tie into the architecture. The fence was additional cost, we can just tear it out. But the people on the ground floor feel very vulnerable, they look out onto a parking structure. But I agree that this wasn't something I designed. But I did meet with the steering committee to talk about a solution, then the City wanted me to show it on context of the building. It's not an insignificant cost, these aren't "off the shelf." The significant change is more cost. He's had a lot of experience working with rooftops and people living here love the space.
- Is there wood on the building now?
  - No, other than the fence and what you see here.
- As built, but not as approved.
- Not even the floors of the balcony?
  - No, that's composite.
- I can't see the fence from the ground. If we don't see it from the street I don't think that should affect our decision.
- There is wood fencing on the west side of the subject property.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1) with Harrington voting no. The motion approved the lowering of the fence on the rooftop and the fence detail as proposed, the pavers in the rear of the building and the removal of the rooftop trellis. The applicant shall remove the fence or work with the neighbors on an acceptable ground level fence, and return to the Commission for approval.