

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** May 12, 2021

**TITLE:** 145-151 W. Wilson Street & 309-321 S. Henry Street - New Mixed-Use Building in UMX Zoning District. 4th Ald. Dist. (63797)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Janine Glaeser, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** May 12, 2021

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Christian Harper, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Albouras and Rafeeq Asad.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of May 12, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL** of a new mixed-use building located at 145-151 W. Wilson Street and 309-321 S. Henry Street. Registered and speaking in support were Kevin Burow, representing Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC; and Jonathan Cooper, representing the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Adam Kaniewski, Dave Diamond, Bruce Bosben and Randy Christianson. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Evelyn Freimann.

Changes to the project include moving the solar array to the northeast corner, moving the dog run central with a separate fence, the addition of a perimeter railing around the walking path, lowering the landscaping beds along Henry Street to a pedestrian scale along the entire frontage, the addition of an entrance to get to bike parking directly, enhanced and revised the window patterning, additional windows along John Nolen Drive, and changing the sawtooth balconies to be more square along Wilson Street.

Jonathan Cooper spoke as the Chair of the Bassett District of Capitol Neighborhoods. The team has listened to the neighborhood's concerns and made changes. Overall the neighborhood thinks this is a good development, like the design, will be a good addition to the neighborhood and downtown in general. They are very pleased with some of the sustainability aspects of the building, the green roof, solar panels, electric vehicle parking. Concerns include: first floor lobby space that would be most likely used to view the drop-off/pick-up space on the Henry Street side is filled with mailboxes, making it difficult to view cars waiting. The podium is still awkward, it's improved but still pretty plain. The Henry Street side does not give the best experience for pedestrians. On the backside facing John Nolen, the trees do a great job of screening that podium in the summer, but when the leaves are gone it's going to present a pretty plain and not terribly attractive view from John Nolen Drive. Both the podium and the landscaping do need a bit more work.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The Commission should focus on visible entrances, façade articulation, high quality materials, screening of mechanical equipment, the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, the Downtown Plan, and articulation of the streetscape façade.
- The glazing on the podium, is that clear, frosted, spandrel?
  - Clear at the lobby, transitioning to frosted, no spandrel. All translucent.
- This is a very handsome project, I like the simplicity, the forms, the sawtooth balconies. The podium still seems a little klunky compared to the crispness of the building above. Maybe it's the materials, I'm struggling with what it is. Over at the new bike entrance, does that have something for a bike wheel to ride up on or do they have to pick up the bikes? Seems a little unnecessarily difficult.
  - There will be a sloped track along the steps to roll your bike up. It will be an oversized door with a controlled access point. We could look at a power actuator to have easier access.
- You have to go back out to get into your unit?
  - This is immediately adjacent to the lobby and elevator core so it's an easy connection.
- Some more articulation, there's a scale issue I think with the expanses of the plain wall and the size of those windows.
- You'd expect to see columnar large trees or something growing up that wall.
- I really do like the planting scheme and design for the roof terraces. Diversity, interest, textures, not just a flat sedum roof, nicely done. You did a much better job in bringing some permeability into that podium. The planting selection along the south façade shows smaller trees, a little bit of tree canopy wouldn't detract at all from that experience, it might be appreciated on hot summer days. My recommendation would be to maybe anchor some of the corners or replace the trees along the podium with larger scale trees. It's good to see the bird glass. Architecturally I like a lot of the things I'm seeing. The angled balconies are an interesting feature and will bring interesting play with light and shadow.
- The extensive and varied components of the green roofs is something we don't normally see and is pretty interesting. Three components: plug mix, border of Little Blue Stem, green roof lawn. What exactly is "green roof lawn?"
  - It is more of a turf grass. The overall design intent is more of a lawn surface that you can sit on and lay down on.
- I admire the concept you've stuck with, all the native prairie type plants, Rather than using the straight species of Big Blue Stem and Little Blue Stem, I would recommend going with one of the named cultivars. They've been selected for habit, growth structure or exceptional color, the amount of extra money would be very minimal. Shenandoah switchgrass might be a slightly too shady location for that; Red October (Big Blue Stem), Standing Ovation or Jazz (Little Blue Stem) are good selections. The building itself is really striking and handsome, I love the treatment of the balconies. The long view you provided, it's a nice addition to the skyline, I like the different color scheme.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0). The motion provided for the following:

- Columnar tree species along the wall of the podium.
- Replacing some small stature trees along south side of the podium with taller trees along John Nolen and Henry Street.
- Replacing some of the straight species, in the Big Blue Stem and Little Blue Stem.
- Refinement of the plant selection on the north façade to be sure it is shade tolerant.