

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION	PRESENTED: June 16, 2014
TITLE: 734 Williamson Street – Third Lake Ridge Historic District – Mixed Use Residential Redevelopment – 6 th Ald. District Contact: Jim Bower (34084)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: June 16, 2014	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Fox Gehrig, Vice Chair; Christina Slattery, Jason Fowler, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

Jim Bower, registering in support and wishing to speak. Bower provided a brief introduction to the project.

Thomas Miller, representing Kahler Slater, registering in support and wishing to speak. Miller provided a brief description of the massing of the building elements in relation to the other buildings in the VRA. Miller also described additional views, shadow studies, and volumetric calculations that were provided. Miller requested clarification of comments in the staff report.

Tom Bergamini, registering in support.

Steve Ohlson, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Ohlson explained that he does not support the project due to the scale of the current proposal and because the proposal challenges the BUILD II plan. He believes the current proposal will have a negative effect on the neighborhood.

Lindsey Lee, registering in support and wishing to speak. Lee explained that this proposal responds to the BUILD II plan with the exception of the one additional requested story which allows for necessary density. He explained that placing the taller massing, in the middle of the block is acceptable and that due to the BUILD II plan, the design has improved.

Linda Lehnertz, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Lehnertz explained that she does not believe the proposal meets the volume standard of the Ordinance. Lehnertz explained that it seems in response to the recent Steve Brown proposal, that the Commission and Common Council supports the interpretation of this ordinance standard.

Lehnertz explained that the proposal is for one building and the articulation does not successfully reduce the mass.

Lehnertz described the buildings and uses present on the site based on the 1908 Sanborn map. There were commercial/industrial uses and single-family residences on this block. The proposed building is not compatible with the historic uses of this block.

Lehnertz explained that an approval for this project will set a precedent for other large developments along Williamson Street. The development pressure will erode the character of the district.

Michael Soref, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Soref explained that Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) has not taken a position on this proposal and that the Landmarks Commission should make a finding after hearing from the neighborhood. Soref finds that the proposal is close to compliance with BUILD II plan, but the eight stories goes against how the neighborhood feels about density and height.

Peter Wolff, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Wolff explained that the volume is too large. Wolff also explained that traffic is an important consideration for this neighborhood and that this proposal will impact the traffic issues. Wolff explained that the standards in the BUILD II plan should be strictly followed.

Rummel asked if the BUILD II plan preparation dealt with lot coverage.

Wolff explained that the BUILD II conversations related to aesthetics and height 10 years ago because development pressure was not as great then.

Rummel explained that the BUILD II plan seems silent on the lot coverage issue. Rummel asked John Schlaefer to comment.

John Schlaefer, registering neither in support nor opposition and available to answer questions. Schlaefer explained that the Committee only discussed height not bulk.

Gary Tipler, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Tipler explained that he helped create the Third Lake Ridge Historic District and worked on the BUILD II plan. He explained that preservation issues in the 1970s were concerned with not allowing the creation of parking lots. The historic district and BUILD II conversations related to materials, height, mass and relationships to other buildings.

Tipler explained that he is opposed to the height of this development and that he appreciates the development teams' response to neighborhood concerns.

Levitan asked how the eighth story affects development pressure that a seventh story would not.

Tipler explained that the height should be based on the adopted plan.

Rummel asked if the BUILD Committee discussed lot coverage. Tipler explained that the issue was discussed, but that it was determined that setbacks and height would cover the issue. Tipler explained that lot coverage is covered in the BUILD by the Landmarks Ordinance through the value placed on open space which makes a difference in livability.

James R. Wilson, registering in opposition but not wishing to speak.

Gregory Humphrey, registering in opposition but not wishing to speak.

Rummel asked for an update on TIF. Bower explained that any proposal on this block would be required to provide parking equal to the existing parking onsite. Due to the parking needs, financial and height issues result. Bower explained that a level of parking was pushed underground to keep the height of the building lower, but due to associated costs, it makes the financial gap larger and results in a larger TIF request.

Miller explained that in addition to pushing parking underground, the development team has also articulated the volumes of the building massing to relate to other buildings in the VRA.

Rummel explained that she is struggling with the proposal. She explained that the development team has worked with the neighborhood; the Sanborn maps show historic patterns of open spaces in the block; the volume of the building has been visually reduced through articulation of the masses, but it is still a large building, the larger context will be negatively impacted; this project would be precedent setting; just because it mostly works with the BUILD, doesn't mean it is right for the historic district.

McLean explained that he agrees the building is large and that this more industrial area provides a different context and the gateway from downtown to this neighborhood is also a transition of density. McLean explained that the articulated massing makes the development look like numerous building that share party walls and that the tradeoff for the eighth story is keeping the parking out of the surrounding residential streets.

Gehrig explained that each historic district can be treated differently and that context, character, and zoning play into those differences.

Rosenblum explained that this proposal is different than the Steve Brown proposal due to district character.

Slattery explained that the articulation of the massing is successful and only building volume 4 is larger than the adjacent Olds Building. Slattery explained that the main street façade is compatible and has an industrial feel and the use of brick is successful.

Staff explained the staff report comment that requested the further reduction of the visual size of building volume 4. Miller explained that there are some opportunities to vary the parapet use height or other material treatments to meet this requirement.

Levitan asked if people were concerned about the volume or the height of building volume 4.

McLean explained that he is concerned with both volume and height and while the approval of this height and volume could be seen as precedent setting, the Landmarks Commission will evaluate each development proposal on its own. McLean explained that the volume is disguised and that the height is held toward the edge of the historic district.

Rummel asked if the bike path became a street again, would the Commissioners feel differently about this proposal.

McLean explained that the back of the building faces the bike path which is a concern all along the entire existing vacated street, but that this building has a two-story presence on the rear which could work along a street which has always had a railroad context.

Rosenblum explained that this site can handle development of a certain size and that each project has its own individual context and limitations. Rosenblum explained that the development team has proposed a building that has a large size and seems to work in the odd shape of the site.

McLean asked if the project incorporates green roofs. Bergamini described the locations of the green roofs, roof gardens, and related treatments. Miller explained that photovoltaic roof panels may also be incorporated in the project on the roof of building #4.

Bergamini explained that structured parking is driving this development and that the team started with a 10-story building and have worked down to an 8-story building.

Rummel asked for clarification about the CSM and the land division review. Staff explained that the land division will be reviewed by the Commission in the future.

Rummel explained that the neighborhood spent a lot of time on a plan that states their priorities for development in their neighborhood and that plan should be followed.

Gehrig explained that this development is one building that looks like many which is similar to the Block 89 development.

Levitan explained that the BUILD II plan informs about the neighborhood concerns, but that the Ordinance does not refer the Commission to review the plan.

There was general discussion about the conditions of approval in the staff report.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Rosenblum, seconded by McLean, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with comments in the staff report as conditions of approval with review of Comments 1 and 2 by the Preservation Planner. The motion passed by voice (5:1). Rummel voted No. Levitan does not vote.