

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 20, 2017

TITLE: 502, 506 East Washington Avenue & 7, 11 North Franklin Street – Demolition/Relocation of Four Existing Homes and Construction of a New 5-Story Hotel Building in UDD No. 4. 2nd Ald. Dist. (48451)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 20, 2017

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; John Harrington, Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo, Amanda Hall, Rafeeq Asad and Tom DeChant.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 20, 2017, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of the demolition/relocation of four existing homes and construction of a new 5-story hotel building in UDD No. 4 located at 502, 506 East Washington Avenue and 7, 11 North Franklin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Joseph Lee, representing McGrath; Marc Ott, representing Michael Metzger/Rider Rental/Apex Equity Holdings; and Michael Metzger. Registered and speaking neither in support nor opposition was Rick McKy. Registered and speaking in opposition were Janelle Ramsel and Mariah Renz. The team reviewed updates since their informational presentation to the Commission on October 4, 2017. As the City grows and develops in this corridor, the building will become part of the fabric of the street and the area. The building is simple white box cantilevered over a wood and glass base. A random fenestration pattern in size and placement of windows adds to the articulation of the building. The ground floor is transparent with storefronts along East Washington Avenue and an entry canopy for the hotel. The upper levels cantilever over the lower floors. They have integrated some walk-in units in an effort to relate to Franklin Street and give it a more residential feel. They are working with B-Cycle to integrate bicycles into the project. The entire building has been moved about 7-feet further away from the property line and square footage reduced by roughly 10%. Shadow studies have been done showing existing and proposed on various occasions. A screening element has been pulled back so as not to be visible from the street, removing the corner emphasis. Building materials were reviewed and samples shown, including metal panels with reveals on the upper floors, black fiberglass windows on the upper levels, black aluminum storefront windows and wood on the ground floor. A segment of the Zoning Code is not met with this design based on articulation of the building above the ground floor. The design team finds it difficult to legislate design and it should be done on a case-by-case basis. They agree with the importance of articulation, but the design concept is to keep it pure and simple by keeping the fenestration pattern, placement and size, and to create interest and a dynamic flow both horizontally and vertically; they feel that is a sufficient articulation for a building of this size.

Janelle Ramsel spoke as a Franklin Street resident and member of the steering committee. She submitted a 46-page packet of community feedback on the project. She wholeheartedly opposes the proposal as not being a

good fit with the existing neighborhood, and tailored her comments to things the I can act on. The building is nice but does not represent exceptional merit. The metal façade does not fit with the goals or look of this residential neighborhood. The residential homes do not go over two-stories; a 5-story building will be a huge intrusion. This project also takes down affordable housing and displaces people. It also sets the tone for the rest of the Isthmus. The ventilation for the parking structure is of concern because it will vent towards the residences. There wasn't much give and take with the development team addressing community concerns; this is very similar to the first picture shown and it hasn't changed, despite the concerns and ways they have tried to work with the team. Although they did widen the driveway, they have asked the neighboring property to use his property to help create a transition to the hotel, suggesting the resident install a fence on his property so they can create a transition into the neighborhood.

Mariah Renz spoke as a nearby homeowner and steering committee member. This is the entrance into a neighborhood; it won't feel like a neighborhood. The City has done a lot of work to encourage people like her to buy homes in this area to turn them from rentals into owner-occupied housing again. Taking away houses to put in something like this seems like the exact opposite of that intention.

Rick McKy spoke as an owner of many area properties. This project reminds him of one from 2007 to build a 64-unit apartment building on the same block. The recommendations of the I were good; the project went up facing Blair Street after working with the City and the neighborhood. Having the building fit into the fabric of a residential neighborhood was of vital importance. Stepping back the hotel from 5-stories to 3-stories as you move down Franklin Street on the one-way would certainly help; adjusting the scale and material would help the transition from East Washington Avenue. It's very important to listen to what the neighbors want, to create a residential feel for the 300, 400 and 500 Blocks of East Washington Avenue.

Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator spoke to the articulation issue as a Zoning Code requirement. While it's not necessarily in the purview of Commission, it would need to appear before the Zoning Board of Appeals. This is a new building in a downtown district that has a number of design requirements. The City worked very closely with the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission to figure out who should do what in regard to reviewing and approving, and having regulatory authority over certain buildings. This property will have to satisfy the street-facing articulation.

The Chair clarified that it is the Zoning Administrator's testimony to this Commission that there is not the zoning articulation required by ordinance. The Commission cannot approve it.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Is it strictly in the ordinance that the articulation has to be horizontal? There is modulation from top to bottom.
 - There's modulation on the first floor, and then the second to fifth is like a box. The language is in front of you; it talks about vertical articulation at 40-foot intervals. It can be changes in material, columns, we've had other situations where people did bays or alcoves to create less boxiness and more relief along the façade.
- Based on the language I would agree with what the presenter said, it's not limited to just those five methods. I would argue that it's not clear so there could be an allowance for that.
- But we don't have the power to make that decision, the Zoning Administrator does.
- If you're saying this doesn't meet Zoning, then why are we here?
- This should not have been put on the agenda; this apparently arose just after the agenda was created.
- There's a number of findings we would need to make. Assuming this gets worked out maybe we should comment on the appropriateness of the material palette. Other than that, I don't see any problem with the

height or the massing from a zoning standpoint. There's a statement in the report stating dissonance between the Downtown Plan and the Zoning Code. More specifically, how deep does this district go along East Washington Avenue?

- (Developer) The struggle we have is that design is so subjective. We would agree articulation is clear in the code. Who determines what articulation is?
- The Zoning Administrator, or the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- (Developer) At the very least, we'd like comment on the other items: height, bulk, overall concept, materials. If we could get initial approval...
- Initial approval means approving mass and we can't do that.
- Can you comment on the exhaust from the garage?
 - We're not into the full HVAC design just yet. There is concern about exhaust location and fan noise. The owner has made a commitment to work on and look into and minimize those issues as they affect the neighborhood. We have had some initial computations run from a local HVAC contractor. As we continue and get the building approved we'll work through those issues.
- What about the generator? They're loud and very dirty.
 - It's a monthly test. It would probably run for 10 minutes. The fan would be on East Washington Avenue below grade with a grate above it. The actual fan would be below where people stand on the corner. It's not a large fan that's required to move that much air for only 20 parking spots.
 - As far as the neighborhood meeting and addressing concerns, there have been changes in the design that we have done to address concerns, maybe not to the extent they might like. A lot of them have been operational things changed to address concerns. We do feel it's important to work with the neighborhood and we have been.
- Other than articulation, everything else meets zoning: height, size. It's actually zoned for a taller building?
 - The Zoning Code allows a potential taller building, but there's a process.
- It's not an automatic.
- We have to make a finding that it's exceptional to use metal?
- Yes. I like the design but it doesn't fit here.
- That particular metal panel is very high quality, dense non-reflective material. Broken up the way it is I think it's appropriate for the design. I would encourage the design team to take this requirement for articulation and maybe use it to modulate the building a little more and address some of the concerns that we heard about the historic context of the neighborhood going down the street, and our earlier concerns about a more regular rhythm. Maybe you can achieve that and satisfy the Zoning Code.
- Looking at the retail/commercial space, can you tell me more about setting that back and bringing the residential space so far forward? I ask this because it seems it will be shaded a lot of the year.
 - For the pedestrian experience, giving more room on the sidewalk. The idea of a box that cantilevers over that space.
- I heard the "pure, simple, white and very plain," and I'm thinking why? This is a vibrant neighborhood.
 - We see this as a building that doesn't need to have a lot of fussiness to it, we wanted a clean look.
- I'm hearing that that's what you did and I get that's what you did, but why?
 - Personal preference. Design is subjective. That's the concept we wanted to go with, it's really no more than that.
- I looked at this, especially the daylight view rendering, and I thought "that's pretty small for a hospital." There is more we can do here, I don't think it's fussy, I think you're going to be in a historic and very important part of our City, you have to give us something more here.
- I didn't support this last time and still do not. I don't have a problem with the building, or a hotel here, but this doesn't fit in with the neighborhood. I also think the overhang creates problems because you're

talking about putting plantings in there. The extension to the east leave just pavement; it's not adding anything. I'd really like to see views down Franklin from the neighborhood because I'm not convinced.

- As far as the vertical articulation, looking at the site plan that depth seems to be appropriate for the footprint of a commercial space, and seems like that would be where you would articulate the next piece of the building. I would suggest keeping it as simple as possible. It is small enough to be simple but I would suggest you keep the articulation simple. What they do to articulate the vertical.
- I agree 100%. I like the building and the changes you made. But once you start to try to meet this zoning with the articulation you could easily lose this concept by adding too much.
- I like the building too but I do struggle with that building in this context. Deal with the articulation first.

ACTION:

On a motion by Hall, seconded by Goodhart, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0). The motion to refer was based on the Zoning Code requirement for building articulation.