

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 7, 2013

TITLE: 610 John Nolen Drive – Construction of a New Four-Story, 111-Room Holiday Inn Express in UDD No. 1. 14th Ald. Dist. (30769)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 7, 2013

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Melissa Huggins, Henry Lufler, Tom DeChant and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 7, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for construction of a new four-story, 111-room hotel located at 610 John Nolen Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Wilcox and Kevin Page, representing Nolen Hotel Investment; and Rich Strohmenger, representing The Bruce Company. Registered and speaking in opposition was Ron Shutvet. Wilcox gave an overview of the site and surrounding context. Feedback from the prior meeting indicated something that should be more fitting in the gateway to the City of Madison. The key element was to create a contemporary mass with key layers to it that always has light and activity. They have reduced the amount of EIFS and added metal panels. The darker metal panels offset the signage to give it a more contemporary signage feel. They brought the height down for a more monolithic roofline. The louvers have been moved to below the window frames. On the side elevations the metal panel has been brought around the corner to accentuate the signage that is there, with the stair tower using more glass and metal. Low level accentuations of some of the projecting soffits will be used with downcast blue lighting. There is a shared access agreement between existing office building and the proposed hotel. Landscaping and pedestrian amenities have been added at the front to invite more activity to that area, brick pavers have been added with benches, as well as a ground sign and flagpoles. The area along the railroad tracks has been made more dense with additional plantings and more native species to blend with the wooded area. A large outdoor seating area, gaming area, grass area, outdoor fireplace, and trellised seating area and is proposed. The radius of the glass looking into the pool will be lit 24/7.

Staff noted the Planning Division’s concerns with the project’s previous iteration, including addressing the requirements of UDD No. 1. The landscape plan is much improved, as well as many of the building architecture components. There is still concern about the amount of EIFS and the hat effect of the extended overhangs. As mentioned previously, it being in UDD No. 1 means signage would require an exception for anything over 10-feet in height. It was suggested that signage be looked at that would not require an exception.

Ron Shutvet spoke in opposition of the project, noting his concerns with a sea of parking and the property's use for another hotel. He is concerned about having too many hotels near the Alliant Center with no other activities being offered. He would prefer to see mixed-use buildings, elimination some of the parking and more greenspace. We need to accommodate for the future in this City and this project underutilizes this property. He thinks there should be a moratorium on building in this area until the Alliant Energy's vision process plays out.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- There are some trees on the property, around the front of the building, show where they are, find out what species they are and if there are species that are worth keeping, see how they can be integrated. I'd like to see if you can't make an attempt – you can take 30% of the root mass and the tree won't suffer terribly. The other trees located in the back area, I'd like to think we could do something that integrates it a bit more, maybe even a few stalls in there. Somehow to save the 36" trees.
- I think anytime EIFS is used in a dark saturated color it's even less successful than when it's a lighter more neutral color. The rear elevation is a better composition than the front one.
- The back seems successful because it's asymmetrical. The guidelines talk about the view corridors and the entrance to the City. When your two hats on the end, you just grounded your building again. I'm not certain what's going on with the mechanicals in the center.
- Don't like roof "hats."
- It does concern me, sitting on the Alliant Board, it is almost impossible to look at all these acres in the middle of downtown Madison and not think of something more comprehensive in terms of planning. This amount of land in downtown is being developed rather hodge-podge and that does concern me.
- I know there are limitations because there is a brand involved but this is such an important corridor. I realize you're trying hard to recognize that, it's just really hard for me to envision EIFS at all as a part of this corridor. I realize it's probably on the hotel down the road but that was before our time. The office building right next door is quite successful and I do recall seeing an office building that was going to complement that one. It would be really nice to see glass and metal. If you have to use EIFS it should just be in the back, if at all.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 610 John Nolen Drive

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	5	5	5	-	-	6	5	5
	6	5	6	6	-	6	7	6
	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-

General Comments:

- Look at existing tree groupings, especially large caliper (20"+).
 - What are the species?
 - Reconfigure parking and storm detention to save trees as appropriate.
- Rear elevation much more successful.
- Better composition. Still weak materials, especially EIFS.