

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: December 7, 2005
TITLE: Union Corners - PUD(GDP) New Construction in an Urban Design District	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: December 7, 2005	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Lou Host-Jablonski, Lisa Geer, Robert March, Ald. Noel Radomski, Todd Barnett, Michael Barrett, Cathleen Feland, Jack Williams and Bruce Woods.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 7, 2005, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of the Union Corners project located at 2313-2525 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Todd McGrath, Lance McGrath and John Lichtenheld. Appearing and speaking in support was Ald. Judy Olson. Appearing and/or speaking neither in support nor opposition were Karen FASTER, Dan Melton, Brent Sieling, , Karolyn Beebe and Jim Welsh. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Ron Schutz, Bret Hagemeyer and Michael Johns. The plans as presented for the redevelopment proposal featured the following:

- The phased demolition of approximately 22 structures in order to construct a 12 building mixed-use development including the relocation and reconstruction of the “French Battery” building.
- Provides for the preservation of some existing specimen-sized trees off of Winnebago Street.
- All development will be LEEDS certified.
- An existing commercial retail structure contained within the project limits off of the property’s East Washington Avenue frontage (formerly the Unpainted Furniture Mart) will be renovated as a “sales center” with a renovation of an existing ground sign on the site.
- The revised site plan features a relocation of Winnebago Street and its intersection with Milwaukee Street, in combination with both pedestrian and vehicular circulation system. The project vision is as a main street project. The project will be constructed in three phases, with the last phase of development along its East Washington Avenue frontage, dependent on future improvements to the East Washington Avenue right-of-way.

Following the presentation several area residents spoke in opposition, and neither in opposition of the project, along with raising issues with this latest version of the redevelopment proposal as further detailed within an email and distributed publication from the Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association. Neighborhood concerns centered around the following issues:

- Concern with the specimen trees within a cluster off of Winnebago, their preservation and the plan’s accommodation of their maintained use.

- The deconstruction and reconstruction and location of the “French Battery” building; which was described as unique based on its unusual orientation to Winnebago Street and a visual feature of the neighborhood. Its current location and surrounding landscaped setback was noted as a park-like attribute to the neighborhood.
- The building height of new structures within the redevelopment proposal, specifically along East Washington Avenue, was also an issue in light of the amount of 1 and 2-story buildings on surrounding adjacent properties.
- Issues were also raised concerning the change in orientation of Winnebago Street.
- Although an area grocer was commonly agreed as a necessity, issues with the look and orientation of the grocer building, as well as the amount of surface parking were raised.

Following a review of neighborhood concerns, the Commission expressed concerns on the following:

- The issue of connectivity is better with this plan than previous versions but still presents issues with the lack of connectivity to the south, specifically to Jackson and Falwell Streets, in addition to the lack of alignment with the existing street grid of adjoining streets within the area.
- Provide a traffic study covering proposed stacking on Sixth Street and its relief by the reorientation of Winnebago Street.
- Woods questioned why the grocery store was oriented to Seventh Street instead of relating to its Milwaukee Street frontage, along with consideration for elimination of surface parking. It was also noted that the project needed something solid to anchor the corner of Milwaukee Street and East Washington Avenue.
- Need to improve Milwaukee Street orientation pedestrian-wise and provide resolve for the project serving people south of East Washington Avenue, but not to the north or west across the street right-of-way.
- Get an arborist to look at existing trees to determine if other trees are worth saving and produce a tree preservation plan.
- The idea of a village green is great. Consider introducing double-loaded diagonal parking both ways to reduce the amount of surface parking abutting Milwaukee Street and allow for an increase of greenspace on Milwaukee Street.
- Provide a shading diagram to deal with sun shadow issues with building heights as proposed.
- In regards to the grocer there is an issue with the front and back of the building dictating that the front of the grocery is oriented to the parking not to the town square as a potential rear, need to make sure that both sides or faces of the buildings relate to both the green and parking areas.
- Concern with town square as just a greenspace and not pedestrian-friendly.
- Since adding new area to the project limits existing houses’ character is not discussed; need to provide more info on existing houses, their potential for relocation with further consideration of the project.
- Look at a way to create a town square where the grocer building provides activation at the same time while turning the building to relate to Milwaukee Street to create an active corner feature.
- Consider the possibility of relocating “French Battery” building to the alternate side of Winnebago Street with a new park-like setting on its southwesterly corner.
- Provide a GDP zoning text for review that details the location, bulk, mass and height of proposed structures.
- Provide references to the project’s consistency with the East Washington Avenue BUILD Plan, especially in regards to building height.
- Need to alleviate concern with undifferentiated building mass and slabs that detail and discern proportions and massing of proposed structures.

- Look at street width issue and report back to the Commission in regards to requests for narrowing of widths.
- Look at the intersection of Milwaukee and Winnebago Streets with a redesigned corner feature and how it will be addressed.

ACTION:

On a motion by Host-Jablonski, seconded by March, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of the Union Corners project. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (9-0). The motion required address of the following:

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, 5, 6, 7.5, 8, 8 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: Union Corners

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	6	6	6	-	-	5	5	6
	8	-	7	7	-	8	9	8
	8	-	-	-	-	7	9	8
	7	-	7	8	-	7	8	8
	6	-	-	-	-	7	8	-
	6.5	-	-	-	-	6.5	8	7.5
	5	-	-	-	-	5	5	5
	5	-	5	-	-	5	5	5

General Comments:

- Add an arborist to evaluate existing trees and create a tree protection plan. Rework the grocery to address Milwaukee Street. Better connection from the north into the site and reinforce the intersection of Milwaukee Street and East Washington Avenue.
- Amazing project, concerns for gateway quality at Winnebago Street/East Washington Avenue. Like idea for “relocating” “French Battery” building.
- Street plan a great improvement. “French Battery” relocation worth it for this reason.
- Very nice project, however, issues with neighborhood need to be further resolved.
- Bike-ped access for development area into/across railroad tracks needs to be improved; move grocery store site; ped extension of Division Street; good work by developer, neighbors and Alder.
- There’s really a lot to admire and praise about this urban design. A few key areas of the design, plus lack of zoning text, earn a referral with kudos.
- Need assurances that town square will really function as one. Beware of ending up with backside of grocery facing square. Need inventory and photos of buildings to be demolished. Don’t lose ambience of existing “French Battery” building location.
- Major concerns re: keeping “French Battery” building at same site; narrowing lanes; eliminating the speed-oriented bypass road; lack of variety in building footprint sizes; better organization of central village green.