

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** July 29, 2015

TITLE: 4103-4119 (formerly 5422) Portage Road – **REFERRED:**
Multi-Family Apartment Development
Including Three Multi-Family Apartment **REREFERRED:**
Buildings and One Tenant Use
Pool/Clubhouse Building. 17th Ald. Dist. **REPORTED BACK:**
(37462)

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: July 29, 2015 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo, Richard Slayton, Tom DeChant, Dawn O’Kroley, John Harrington, Sheri Carter and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 29, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a multi-family apartment development located at 4103-4119 Portage Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were Joseph Lee, representing JLA Architects; Rich Strohmenger and Jon Hepner, representing T. Wall; and Zi Chong. Appearing and speaking in opposition was Susan Pastor. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Lance Green, representing the Friends of Starkweather Creek. Since their last presentation to the commission the bays have been removed from all the buildings, they’ve simplified some of the detailing a little bit, and revisited with the neighborhood, which resulted in the B1 building’s mass being reduced by two floors, leaving a 2-story mass with a roof deck that sets back. They also added significant landscaping along Portage Road. A second building was also reduced in mass after their presentation to the Common Council, to reduce the overall density of the project. The material palette is the same with the addition of stone along the base. Strohmenger discussed the landscape plantings around the buildings and common green areas, touching on the Commission’s previous comments and concerns with the landscape plan. Nearly 300 trees will be preserved, with fifteen species identified. Parking islands are located every 12 stalls with additional shade trees.

Susan Pastor spoke in opposition. She thinks this development highlights the need for a more democratic, better, more inclusive, more transparent process. The more time that passes the more troubled she is with two precedents being set: the project is 10-feet from a wetland area; the Comprehensive Plan states it should be 75-feet from a wetland. The density is low but the greenspace of this project is being used to calculate the density. If you take out that space this is 40-units per acre which is the high end of the recommended density; the Comprehensive Plan calls for such density to be located near an employment center or commercial district; this isn’t near anything. She does not understand why it was necessary as a Commission to reject the neighborhood’s preferred design. Those changes made the project more desirable to the neighborhood. Why are our tastes inappropriate in our own neighborhood, and why are they appropriate in somebody else’s neighborhood?

Lance Green spoke in support of the creek and the environmental corridor. The Friends of Starkweather Creek are concerned about the density, specifically that the density count includes a natural area that really can't be used, as well as the 10-foot setback that looks to become a standard. Both of these are bad precedents. He described what happens to the creek on the other side of Portage Road and how far it runs.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- White Oak versus Red Pines issues need to be resolved. Pines take over (provide an alternative).
- Reduce Maples to be replaced with Burr Oaks.
- Try to save Burr Oaks next to parking lot with chain link fence at the root line (2).
- The red color composite siding at the ends and entries need to be changed to the blue colored composite siding utilized elsewhere.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-2-2) with Slayton and Harrington voting no; Braun-Oddo and Rosenblum abstaining, and Goodhart, DeChant, Carter and O'Kroley voting yes. The motion provided for address of the above comments.

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 rating for this project is 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 4103-4119 Portage Road

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	4	6	7	-	-	-	-	-
	6	6	7+	-	-	-	-	-
	4	5	5	-	-	6	5	5

General Comments:

- Needed existing tree plan several meetings ago!
- This is a very good project, can't fathom neighborhood opposition.
- Western-most building should be redesigned based on tree survey.