

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 17, 2014

TITLE: 1902 Tennyson Lane – Planned Residential Development for Multi-Family Building Complex Proposed Zoning SR-V2. 12th Ald. Dist. (32668)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 17, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Tom DeChant, John Harrington and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 17, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a Planned Residential Development for multi-family building complex located at 1902 Tennyson Lane.

Appearing on behalf of the project were Jeff Liebergen and Gary Woolever, both representing T.W. Sather Company. Changes to the project include a flat roof instead of pitched, the addition of individual unit entries along one side to be more responsive to the street, reduction of the paving to make it as compact as possible to maximize greenspace, and address of the façade articulation with parapets and varying building materials. They did receive a \$1 Million from the City and another \$850,000 grant from Federal Home Loan Bank. This project has been going on for well over a year.

- The Secretary noted issues with the project, which include the landscape plan that does not show Elliot Lane, so you have nothing that interfaces with their actually being a street there in the plan. It’s lacking. Because Elliot Lane is not there, linkages to it pedestrian-wise are not there either. Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator basically says that street-facing entrances to individual units, which is an improvement over earlier versions, the Zoning Code requires that there be primary entrances in addition to those to the street, and we don’t have that. The HVAC walpak issue needs to be addressed.
 - The HVAC walpaks are all strategically located so you never see them on any façade.
- Tucker said those details were not included with this submission. The Planning staff report notes issue with the setbacks. Staff believes the site is open to improvements that relate to having a street frontage, which again the landscape plan doesn’t cover, and direct pedestrian connections to that street need to be addressed. Although not part of the property but part of the plat, there are a number of single-family lots being created; staff notes that adjacency should be changed by at least 20-feet in depth to provide a better transition to the subject property and to better match the surrounding lot pattern.
- On the setback, the landscape plays with the setback and if you put a double row of street trees inside the sidewalk that would create a strong edge. There’s not a real strong pattern being created.
- Why aren’t you using Elliot Lane to access your parcel?
 - We’re required by the City to put in that street.

- In looking at some other renderings I notice that these elements (multiple roof caps) only go back 5-6 feet and then they're truncated and especially noticeable here and the site elevations. We see a lot of this brick siding and I'm wondering if there's a way to bring a bit more visual interest and continuity into the design. For example, you've got a strong line here and a canopy down here, the bricks stop halfway at the mullion and I think that's more visual clutter than the building needs. I'm looking for some integration of the elements and steering away from these things that really don't reflect a higher ceiling or volume, they're just slabs on the end of the building.
- Maybe all of your upper level decks aren't covered, maybe there are more ways you can create a non-completely repetitive on that side by playing with that composition. Are the two buildings identical in material?
 - In material, yes.
- I would encourage each building having something unique about it. Maybe it's how high the brick is, maybe the brick on every bay doesn't go up 2 ½-stories. You're a large development but you're creating a neighborhood and with the amount of developable land around you, you're an early player.
- There is no building entrance at the street, even though it's required by the Zoning Code.
- The housing grant that this project referenced, who is awarding these, the City Council? I'm wondering if the City has decided that this is a place for subsidized housing, in the old days we had the CDA to do that with federal money. But then to get something from the Police Department that was forwarded from Kevin Firchow that says they have a problem with putting more low cost housing here, either the City Council is deciding this or the Police Department...
 - (Rhodes-Conway) I represented this area for six years, I think the former Police Captain would have had a different opinion of the project. I think there are strong minority voices in the neighborhood that thinks the north side has more than enough affordable housing and doesn't want any more. In general I think the City needs more affordable housing. The number one thing I would say is this is the north side, it's not the suburbs. What I see in front of you is very suburban and I find that incredibly disappointed. This site has huge potential. They started this project when I was still Alder and the first thing I told them is that this is not the suburbs and it's disappointing to see that this is what you have in front of you. I think the staff comments are all good and I encourage you to push that.
- When was the last time this plan was looked at for the development of that field, the neighborhood plan with what's occurring here and the other parcel?
 - (Rhodes-Conway) It was about 4-5 years ago and at the time the neighborhood plan steering committee more or less declined to discuss this site because there was a proposal working its way through the land use process. Since then what staff and the neighborhood have said for the most part is that what was planned for the site immediately to the north should be reflected on this site.
- What did the Plan Commission do with it the last time we gave it the "pseudo-approval" to advance it to the Plan Commission? Did they approve it?
 - They approved it and then the City Council approved it.
- Does that approval allow you to go forward with your tax credits?
 - We've been told by staff that basically our approval is only in place for a year, so it would actually expire before we are able to break ground and WHEDA is going to require a zoning application. We've been working with staff the last several months to change the plans.
- This sounds like a catch 22 all around.
 - We do have the support of the Mayor and the Alder for this project.
- You probably should have come before you asked for an approval to show these changes, since you knew about them when you got to this point, that this wasn't going to work. We just did the same thing a year ago.

- (Wagner) I'm disinclined to slow this down. If the Plan Commission or Council want to that's their decision. I think anything we do has to say we have reservations about the design elements that have been seen by staff and various other members of our own commission that need refinement for the final design stage.
- I think the concept of the project seems to have some support from this body, it's the design that needs to be resolved.
- We hope this lets you go forward, we hope this helps the City's overall impetus to try and find affordable housing in the city, but we still have a lot of design work to do with this project.

ACTION:

On a motion by DeChant, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (3-1) with Harrington voting no.

The motion provided for the following:

- Address of the Planning staff comments contained within the Planning Division staff reports.
- Address of the comments by the Urban Design Commission contained in this report and the previous report of January 8, 2014.
- Provide more details on the project in relationship with the adopted neighborhood plan and other adopted plans, as well as existing context with adjacent development.

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: 1902 Tennyson Lane

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	5.5	5	-	-	-	-	-
	4	6	4	-	-	5	5	5

General Comments:

- With many reservations.
- Engage the street, rethink the landscape, make an urban space.