



<b>Agenda Item #:</b>	8
<b>Project Title:</b>	3100 E Washington Avenue - New Multi-Family Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 5. 12th Ald. Dist.
<b>Legistar File ID #:</b>	77926
<b>Members Present:</b>	Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad, Russell Knudson, Marsha Rummel, and Wendy Von Below
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of July 26, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new multi-family building located at 3100 E Washington Avenue in Urban Design District (UDD) 5. Registered and speaking in support was Nick Orthmann. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Steven Rosandich, and Adam Templer.

The proposal has gone from two buildings at varying heights to one, five-story building, while still reading as multiple buildings. They have increased the setback along E Washington Avenue to 18-feet, combined with 15.5 feet from sidewalk to back of curb. Along Ridgeway the previously proposed 10-foot setback has been increased to 20-feet. Other changes include centralizing green amenity space in the middle of the building with grilling stations, turf areas, etc., and the addition of balconies along the E Washington Avenue façade.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- I recently looked at this property, there's some existing elements that I wonder if they will survive the construction process. There's a long row of tall arborvitae, is that on your property, will that be maintained? As it exists it's a really nice barrier of the parking lot from Ridgeway.
  - We agree, there is actually another row along the L shaped property line bordering the houses. We think it's a great idea to keep them, so if we can we will keep them.
- The six-foot tall wood fence separating your parking lot from those 3-4 single-family homes, would it just be the L shape there or beyond that?
  - Just the L shape.
- At the end of the cul-de-sac on Ridgeway you have a little sidewalk that goes up to the street, I was struck by the fact that it just goes out to the street, there's no sidewalk on that side of Ridgeway. There's only a sidewalk on the far side of the street. I wondered what your thinking was, is there any concern that that sidewalk doesn't lead to another one on Ridgeway but just to the street?
  - The original genesis of that sidewalk was an emergency access requirement. It is a little unique that it doesn't connect on our side of the street, but as you cross of the cul-de-sac there is a sidewalk there.
- From a practical standpoint I'm always interested in these large buildings. The real world logistics of moving in and out, it seems sparse in terms of entryways and elevators. How does that play into your thought process of the layout of the building, where those access points are?
  - We do have two elevators, we have done at least an ok job spreading them around. Something we will study further.

- I appreciate that you rethought how to shape the building and put those social uses right on the edge. I still remain concerned with how close it is to E Washington Avenue, in general because of the decibel levels and it seems like a really intense place to live. The BRT stop will be in front of those social spaces, from what I understand if you are coming eastbound you will not be able to get into Melvin Court. I want to make sure you've thought about how to enter the site.
  - Our understanding is you'd have to go up one additional block and turn-around. It is a bit of a challenge, but we think it is ok.
- I asked you to look at that letter from Safe Skies Wisconsin that included a noise contour map. You're in the 65 decibel level; I don't know that I support residential here, but assuming I'm in the minority, I want to make sure you're investing what you can to address/mitigate that and are fully aware of what this location brings.
- Could you tell us the extents of the underground parking?
  - It essentially mirrors the floor plans; it is identical to the first floor footprint.
- My crosshairs are on the surface parking. I appreciate that the greenspaces are coalescing together for more opportunity to use it, but at the same time one of the key areas is inside the hook, which is going to be pretty heavily shaded. It becomes a little less attractive in terms of being out in the sun during some of the colder times of the year. Can green space find its way where there is surface parking now? Can you tell me the parking ratio now?
  - 1 to 0.73.
- Does the BRT encourage any change to your surface parking?
  - Typically on a standard development like this it is 1 to 1. While it could be modified we would prefer not to.
- The box, the square that comes off the J hook, you have delineated that as something special from a design perspective. It stands out. Programmatically, is there something interesting about that square or that façade distinction?
  - The space is just more units, there's nothing really different about the space, just utilizing what we have on site there. We thought it would be interesting to have different colors and materials there to break it up a bit. Nothing really more to it than that.

The Commission discussed the following:

- It was an ok project before, it's better now with increasing setbacks and switching units from being right up against E Washington. My only criticism is the materials. Where two materials meet there should be a change in plane. Something should be propped and something should be recessed. You should revisit where you have certain materials located, there's a randomness that doesn't really connect this form because it is so irregular. Because it is so irregular there needs to be some regularity in the materials. Where they start, stop and how they intersect with each other.
- It's an improvement, I still see 192 units and I think it's just too much program for the site. I like your streetscape inspiration photos but have a hard time with those six units right on the sidewalk or right on the property line; four stories above the first floor plan. As I look up and down E Washington for blocks from this site, I don't see anything right on the sidewalk and it's virtually at an on-ramp there. I am just thinking ideally from an urban design standpoint, you'd lose those six units on each floor and move that whole wall back. With regard to the square, I think it would work better as a three-story element, but to have that piece step down will provide a little more intimate space and better daylight for the occupants. I'm a little concerned about the parking lot, but I know you're pressed for stalls. The occupants will end up doing a lot of pulling in and backing out as they search for a parking stall. The big concerns are the setback on E Washington and the square element being the same height as everything else.
- You captured my comments, but I was going to go a step further and question whether the cube could just go away altogether to give you a more cohesive, usable greenspace. Maybe those units can be placed elsewhere. I was looking at street view and trying to picture that mass of the building at the corner of Melvin right up against the sidewalk. I'm all for holding the urban edge but it is hard to picture that much building right behind the

sidewalk in this streetscape. The 18-foot setback is great, it gives you space for a tree canopy and as a pedestrian it feels a whole lot better. All your precedents had some sort of setback, layering of building and landscape to the pedestrian realm. There are places where that would work and is appropriate but this cross section of E Washington is hard to picture. Thanks for looking and responding to all the things we requested last time. I think you're site plan is way better than it was previously. I agree that the parking lot circulation will be difficult with regard to vehicle maneuvering, should all the stalls be full.

- With regard to the patio in the courtyard, if the cube stays, if the patio can become more of a polygon to respond to the shape of the greenspace, it is pinching the two usable greens, there is a pinch point. If the patio was more of an angle, there would be a wider area connecting the two greenspaces.
- Looking at Sheet SD6.1, there is something about that window arrangement and separation of windows from the balcony, those are the most successful portion of your facades. These are long facades to deal with, there is something about the design of that cube that really breaks it up in a different way than all the other ones, where you have the white base surface. I think that's working well proportionally for the height of this building, it might be worth looking at making that language stronger throughout the building and giving it more of an identity. The cube part really sticks out as being more successful, more recognizable and having more of a flair to it.
- I will agree with all other comments. I'm bothered by the cube in terms of the courtyard experience, knowing it is north facing; it is going to cast a lot of shadow. Have you looked at shifting it or any other way of configuring that to give a little more breathing space to that valuable green space? For a complex this large it is really very small in terms of usable open space. The two units facing east are looking straight on into the other units, that won't be a very pleasurable living situation. Look at how that can shift in any way.

## Action

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