

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** January 10, 2007

TITLE: 454 West Johnson Street – PUD-GDP-SIP, **REFERRED:**
Mixed-Use Development with 197 **REREFERRED:**
Condominium Units. 4th Ald. Dist. (05332) **REPORTED BACK:**

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

DATED: January 10, 2007 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Todd Barnett, Michael Barrett, Lisa Geer, Ald. Noel Radomski, Bruce Woods and Robert March.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 10, 2007, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** at the applicant's request for a PUD-GDP-SIP mixed-use development with 197 condominium units located at 454 West Johnson Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was Gary Brink. Appearing in opposition to the project was Randy B. Christianson. Registered neither in support nor opposition were Robert Holloway and Rosemary Lee. Prior to the presentation by Brink, staff noted a deviation from the posted agenda for initial approval of the project had been superceded by a request from Brink to provide for an informational presentation on the revised plans in order to address concerns by the Steering Committee of the State/Langdon District of the Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. The modified plans as presented emphasized the following:

- The terrace on both street frontages of the properties contain trees in grates and colored concrete.
- The upper elevation treatment has been modified to reduce or eliminate the application of EIFS with the addition of brick.
- A turret corner feature has been added to the lower 4-stories.
- Additional windows have been provided on elements of the upper south elevation. An increased radius on arches on the first floor of the North Bassett elevation has been provided to make them more compatible with that of the upper radius treatment on the second floor level.
- Additional band boards have been provided for signage within recesses in the first floor arches for tenants, in addition to details on banner blade signage.

Following a review of modified building elevation details, Rosemary Lee representing the Steering Committee of the State/Langdon District Committee of the Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. spoke to issues with the development relevant to the lack of complete shadow study, insufficient parking, inconsistency with the provisions relevant to the "Exterior and Interior Design Criteria for Planned Unit Development Districts in Downtown Design Zones," as well as height and massing concerns. A summary of testimony from others regarding the project emphasized the following:

- Need a shadow study as indicated for the loss of light.

- Concern with gentrification associated project in area creating economic segregation, as well as the need to provide more diversity in housing downtown.
- Issue with the elevator tower. A 20-foot rise from the roof presents a significant block of views from adjoining structures. It is not an architectural feature as represented.

Following public testimony, staff noted issues with the now “elevator tower” which was previously described as an architectural element. Brink noted that 12-feet of the 20-feet would be necessary for elevator override where additional height would make it more proportional as an architectural element. In response, the Commission noted that alternative elevator types should be looked at to downsize the elevator tower, as well as further study. Other concerns expressed by the Commission were:

- Shadow studies should include percentages of time areas are in shadow as well as providing shadow effects at various times of the year. In addition, shadow studies should include an overall idea of the effect of the proposed building and other buildings within the area.
- Consider an additional story on the corner treatment turret including more glass treatment.
- Consider adding more cornice above the second floor arches.
- Concern with bike parking/planters impeding the public way and access to the plaza.
- Staff raised issues with the proposed level of hardscape where no trees are provided within the boundaries of development site. The Commission agreed and requested that the applicant examine the use of above grade planters at a minimum of 4’ deep, 6’ by 4’ in size to be located at the edge of the property above lower level structured parking with a weephole to drain out to the sidewalk level to provide for on-site tree plantings.
- Consider continuing the baluster rail around the upper level of the Bassett second floor commercial level.
- Add additional balconies on upper floors of the Bassett Street elevation or extend proposed balconies to the turret feature on the corner.
- Consider rounding the corners of the balconies to relate to the turret feature.
- Make insets on upper arch features dark to emphasize openings with shadows.
- The portico car pull-in off of Johnson Street is not appropriate for urban site. Cars cutting off pedestrian movement on the sidewalk an issue.
- The large bike racks as proposed don’t meet code requirements.
- Under the criteria for bonus stories in Downtown Design Zones is a requirement for exemplary design; don’t see it yet.
- Like lower architectural treatment but upper floors/lower don’t relate.
- Elements of the upper story, full arches on top with shallow on lower stories don’t relate to shallow base.
- The turret feature is not quite there; feels stuck on, needs integration with structure, especially the base floor levels.
- Turret needs to be at least $\frac{3}{4}$, is more like a bay currently.
- The corner rectangular first floor window treatment below the turret feature does not relate to shallow arch of first floor windows on the remainder of the first floor level façade.
- The canopy cantilever at the main entry off of Johnson Street does not relate to the first floor lower arch treatment.
- The corbeled overhang on northerly portions of the West Johnson Street façade don’t relate as details.
- The elevator penthouse on perspective renderings is not consistent with the Johnson Street elevation.
- Don’t like the style of the baluster; it is a replica of another style and period.
- Still need a design element that extends across the roof edge of the second floor but not with a baluster along Bassett Street.

- The overhang over the drop off needs more detail work such as a support cable.

Brink noted that the mass of the elevator penthouse was brought out to the front edge of the Johnson Street elevation. In response it was noted that the location of the elevator penthouse was inconsistent with the location of the actual elevator shaft, which is further back atop the building. The enlarged elevator tower as a feature of the Johnson Street elevation draws too much attention to itself.

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 4, 4, 8 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 454 West Johnson Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	4	5	2	-	-	3	4	4
	5	4	-	-	-	5	4	4
	7	8	-	-	-	8	9	8
	5	6	-	-	-	5	7	-
	-	8	-	-	-	-	8	8

General Comments:

- The main issue is bringing such a massive building down to the street at a humane scale. Currently, this building violently crashes down into the street, leaving naked, very uncomfortable space surrounding the building. Civilized societies around the world have historically dealt with this by either a) scaling the building down to 1, 2 or 3 stories at the street elevation; or b) creating a portico “skirt” around the building. This developer rightly wants to do the latter – porticos. The City has apparently rejected this gift to our civic, urban fabric. Another major issue is the inappropriate pull through loading area is a peril to pedestrians and very, very anti-urban. This building should cater to the 65% of downtown residents who don’t drive routinely. Finally, any building on this site should scale down from the 12-story buildings on Gorham down to the 2-4 stories across West Johnson. That means 8-9 stories here.
- Architecture still does not come close to making an “extraordinary contribution.”
- Much improved, particularly corner treatment.
- Great improvement, but more is still needed.
- Architecture much improved:
 - No EIFS at elevator overrun.
 - Accentuate verticality at “strips” of windows.
 - Return windows all way around at corner turret (plans look like it does).
 - Make corner turret one story further.

- Lower story ought to be one story taller.
- Look at bike racks and how they affect performance of terrace.
- Terrace treatment requires further study.
- Much improved architecturally. This is the kind of well-made infill that belongs in this part of the City. This has retail, too, unlike all the other towers in this area. Kudos.
- Eliminate auto drive court convert to pedestrian open space and landscape trees and planters can be notched into the stairs, pots can still be used but placed along the façade piers for the color accents.