

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: January 10, 2018

TITLE: 1720 Monroe Street and 625 South
Spooner Street – Mixed-Use Housing and
Retail Planned Development (GDP-SIP).
13th Ald. Dist. (49395)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: January 10, 2018

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Rafeeq Asad, Lois Braun-Oddo, Amanda Hall, Michael Rosenblum and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 10, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a mixed-use housing and retail Planned Development located at 1720 Monroe Street and 625 South Spooner Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Anne Morrison, Doug Hursh and Brian Reed, all representing ULI; Tom Neujahr and Amanda Veith. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Jacob Morrison and Nicole Solheim. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak were Richelle Andrae, Dan Scanlon, Tim Thompson, Tanya Schlam and David Hoffert. Registered and speaking in opposition was Muriel Krone.

The design team worked with neighbors and staff early on in the process to create a high quality building and restore that corner on Monroe Street with something appropriate for the site. A lot of feedback was gathered that has shaped the evolution of the railings, the top of the building façade and how the site works from a loading/unloading perspective. In address of neighborhood concerns they have maintained the right-turn only onto Stockton, agreed to vent exhaust away from homes, and hired a consultant to study the noise on top of Trader Joe’s. They have agreed to preserve the house at 625 South Spooner Street, include a green roof on the lower roof portion, pet waste stations, and they are committed to a no smoking policy (in the units, on the balconies or anywhere on the property). They have agreed to limit the hours of the terrace, provide a water run-off plan, have trash and recycling fully enclosed within buildings, limit retail entrances on Spooner Street, no loading and unloading from Spooner, inclusion of commercial bike racks, high quality materials and traditionally inspired architecture. The project meets the intent of the Monroe Street Plan and fits within a PD. Morrison shared some public comments, including a letter from a resident who has already chosen an apartment unit. Shadow studies were submitted, and they conducted a traffic study (given to the Plan Commission). The project seeks to restore the strength of Monroe Street retailing while offering residences to people in the neighborhood who wish to downsize. They feel there has not been a development in the last 20 years on Monroe Street that is more responsive to the spirit and the details of Monroe Street Plan than the project they are proposing. The plan calls for 2-4 stories in height; they don’t feel this proposal at 5-stories is precedent-setting. When Trader Joe’s was built that building was approved at what is 5-6 stories, depending upon where

you're standing. Empire Photography may read as a four-story building from Monroe Street, but on the neighborhood side it is 5-stories at 55-feet from grade to the top. Similarly, the project at Oakland and Monroe Streets is 5-stories (on Oakland), 58-feet from grade to top. Hotel Red is a bit over that limit too. There's a terrific need for housing in the Monroe Street corridor, and if density is not to occur at this intersection, there really is no other place for it to occur.

The design team reviewed the context of the building with aerial and existing views. Commercial storefront views would be flush with the sidewalk even though the street does slope, while creating some entrances that are recessed back to make them more pedestrian friendly. Underground parking is accessed from Stockton Court with surface parking behind the building along Spooner between the existing house and the retail. The residential entry is mid-block on Monroe Street to activate the street and be part of that retail environment. There is also access from the rear of the site to the residential entries. Trash rooms are located along the back, all internal. The commercial entities wrap from Monroe Street onto Spooner and Stockton. Underground parking slopes down to 68 stalls where the first floor aligns with Monroe Street. Upper floors and terrace layout were reviewed. The fifth floor is stepped back from the fourth floor.

The existing trees on Monroe Street may need to be removed due to upcoming street reconstruction. If so, they propose that new street trees be located in response to the building entries to enhance that entry experience. The urban edge will continue around Stockton. On the backside they propose some foundation plantings to provide a visual buffer between the two uses, as well as a vehicular entry experience into the parking lot. All plants are native, urban and drought tolerant, and there is a small bioretention basin just to the north of the parking lot. They are proposing a screen fence wrapping around the north and northwest sides of the property, which will transition to a green living fence. There is a lot of variation in the façades, they are looking at two different brick materials. The retail base of the building will be cast stone, the next three floors are brick and metal panel spandrels all the way around the building. There is no proposed hardiboard siding. The fifth floor is shown in medium bronze metal with the brick parapet raised and the railings lowered and stepped back, with the upper floor units setback and adjusted to respond to the lower levels. There is some variation along Monroe Street while also repeating the rhythm. Most of the balconies are recessed partially with the backside balconies extending more. Spooner Street has no retail entries, and the Stockton end is more setback with some outdoor seating space. Some minor shadow impacts would occur in the spring and fall; everything is in shadow in the winter no matter the height of the proposed building.

Richelle Andrae spoke as a resident, coming from a new home buyer event. There is not a lot of housing stock in the neighborhood. One main concern is the lack of affordable housing and housing stock in general in this neighborhood. Thoughtful, informed community development is important. The developers have been responsive to many of the concerns of neighbors; concerns still existing over safety and traffic flow. Some of the precedent setting nature is concerning, but overall it could add value to the neighborhood.

Dan Scanlon spoke, recommended a 4-story limit to this project. The Monroe Street Commercial Plan states that buildings of four stories or more would be out of character with the street and homes in the neighborhood. The homes in this neighborhood have small yards, small spaces in which to enjoy the outdoors. This project is nearly void of outdoor amenities, lacking even a small outdoor space for a small child's Big Wheel, a flower garden, the balconies are even truncated and the stepbacks are negligible. The project increases congestion, blocks sunlight, adds lights at night and noise all day. Any development on this site would do that, but this proposal exceeds what is tolerable by proposing a density 30% higher than any development on Monroe Street. This building represents few of the values that make this neighborhood so great, and mere pageantry on the outside does not make up for that.

Nicole Solheim spoke as a nearby resident in support of the current proposal. It will benefit the residents of the building as well as the entire neighborhood, and support the existing Monroe Street businesses by enhancing the retail corridor. It expands the housing options in an expensive neighborhood where there aren't a lot of opportunities.

Tim Thompson spoke as an immediate neighbor who moved into the neighborhood aware of future development. It will be a plus, there are concerns given this specific proposal. He disputes that it's mandatory for any development on this parcel to be at least five-stories while recognizing the financial impacts. It's a lovely building, but not a requirement that it be five-stories. Specifically he is concerned about the noise, noting that the Monroe Commons development vents out the side of the building which is a 24/7/365 noise you can hear blocks away. He hasn't seen any venting for this project's underground parking. The increase of traffic is also of concern, and adding traffic to this area is a danger. There is no plan for accepting deliveries for the retail and restaurant portions of the project.

Murial Krone spoke as a 30-year resident with her backyard facing this building. She is a gardener and is concerned about losing sunlight. She is further concerned about noise, 24/7 lights and losing privacy in her backyard. Five-stories with 6-foot windows will be staring down into her backyard. This is very burdensome for this project to be in her backyard. While they have seen many schematics of a nice looking building, she hasn't seen one of the backside and that's where the neighborhood is. The 5th floor having a meeting room with open air is a huge nuisance to the neighborhood. That should not be allowed.

Amanda Veith spoke as a neighborhood resident, her family also lives in the neighborhood. In talking with family and friends, it's inevitable that something will happen here and the developer has done a good job of working with the neighborhood on their concerns. This is part of the vision of the neighborhood plan.

Tanya Schlam spoke as a neighborhood resident. The new development would be immediately next to her house on the side and on the back. She appreciates the developer responding to neighborhood concerns. The development shouldn't adversely affect the neighbors or their own health and quality of life. Her top concerns are fumes from any restaurant, exhaust from the underground parking, noise from the mechanical functions and the proposed building height. She is thrilled to hear that the building will be no smoking. She would like to see a solid masonry wall between the properties, to keep customers out of her backyard. Exhaust from the underground parking should be vented appropriately away from the neighbors. Noise should be kept at a residential level. The building blocks their sun and doesn't mesh with the neighborhood plan. A more gentle slope from this giant development to the little houses is more appropriate.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I don't think that all buildings need to be symmetrical, but you've made the building more symmetrical. On the renderings, the balconies worked better on the other side.
 - That particular unit has a balcony as you turn on Stockton. The bay window faces Monroe and the balcony faces Stockton.
- The fifth floor plan, is it not setback as far as it was the last time?
 - The depth has remained the same with some parts that jog in farther than previously. We wanted a slightly bigger terrace.
- It appears there are pavers all the way around the perimeter of the 5th floor?
 - Yes at the balconies, with a roof ballast where it would be occupiable space, 2-feet at the narrowest.
- So how will you keep people from trying to walk on that?

- We looked at it from a management perspective, we could add railings between them that wouldn't be visible from below.
- The neighbor was concerned about roof deck noise, do you have time constraints for using that space?
 - Yes we do, we usually have quiet hours after 9:00 p.m. It's not a heavily used hub, and with only 64 units and quiet hours.
- Can you confirm where the exhaust is located?
 - We have said that if we have a restaurant tenant we would vent it through the roof or otherwise away from the neighbors. The garage exhaust is shown in the plan. Fans for the garage do not have to run at night; we have a non-mechanized louver that doesn't have any noise, according to the sound engineer, that is close to the house that is part of our development. The other is in an area on the corner of Stockton away from the houses.
- It's a nice looking building and I don't have any aesthetic issues with it.
- What about deliveries?
 - Some of that is very difficult to plan for long-term. We have a loading zone, we don't expect semi deliveries. The loading zone is for smaller retailers in the back parking lot.
- I wondered about bringing all that truck traffic into the neighborhood. The transition to the residential neighborhood, the green roof is successful at that end; at the Spooner Street side at a minimum I would look at getting rid of one of your parking stalls to make an effort of continuing that public greenspace along Spooner.
 - I would point out that the parking lot now has twice as many spaces as we're proposing, and receives vehicular traffic day and night since it is a drive-thru. It also currently does cut the corner, but we have fewer lights in our parking lot and expect less traffic during peak hours than what Associated Bank has.
- Each of the retail bays pushing into the building is very successful in widening that public street, but on Spooner Street the pedestrian activity feels like it's getting pinched. Maybe look at some relief in that pedestrian transition.
- I agree on taking out that parking stall. If that's all you have for retail bike racks that seems inadequate to me.
 - We have what code asks for. We'd have some in front and some in back.
- Bikers want to park in front of the store, and if there isn't a bike rack there they'll tie it to something else, they're not going to go to the back of the store. I would encourage you to get more bike racks, in a good style that holds the bikes up.
- I'd encourage more tree density along the street. Work with Forestry and Fire to increase the size or move them closer together.
- The bioretention area looks small. What is that taking care of? Is it just cosmetic?
 - Civil calculated what was required and that was the size required, just for the parking area. There are some neighbors that liked the idea.
- We have to make a finding on specific standards. The only one I need a bit of help from the applicant on is to demonstrate that no other base zoning could achieve this pattern of development.
 - It's because of the house. We were warned early on that we couldn't pursue a PD that would exceed density otherwise allowable under zoning. We want to provide adequate underground parking as well.
- H: Applying the above standards to the application for additional height. "The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned character of the surrounding area." I think it is, I think it's in character with Monroe Commons. The way it's designed and broken up is in character with some of the commercial development there. I also think that the way the it's detailed really does a lot of justice to the traditional urban apartment building.

- (Kevin Firchow) Standard H would actually not apply to this project, that refers to a downtown height map, so you don't need to reference that in your recommendation. Take a look at "E" as it relates to the objectives. The Plan Commission will be looking for this body's recommendation on the mass, as it relates to Monroe Street, and the rear yard transition.
- In this part of Monroe Street, the mass is fine.
- Some areas of this neighborhood and Monroe Street were looked at very specifically, but this one was left with very minimal guidance. This particular site, at the time the plan was written, did not warrant anything specific.
- A street like Monroe Street has different characters for different parts of it. The 3 or 4 rule probably ought to be more strictly applied as you move away from the stadium rather than closer to it.
- This is a corner that needs some activation. For me it works.
- Urban edges and urban transitions are the most difficult thing that we deal with constantly, but it's one of the things we have to make judgments about.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion for approval was conditioned on the following:

- Increase the amount of bike racks and select better style (holds up bikes better).
- Increase the tree density or get bigger sized trees.
- Study losing the parking spot on Spooner Street in favor of greenspace.