

From: [Bennett, Juliana](#)
To: [Kevin Carey](#); [Cleveland, Julie](#); [Urban Design Comments](#)
Cc: canamadison@gmail.com
Subject: D2 Ald - 529 University Ave UDC Informational Meeting
Date: Sunday, July 16, 2023 10:43:47 PM
Attachments: [529 University Ave Context 1.png](#)
[529 University Ave Context 2.png](#)
[529 University Ave Context 3.png](#)

Hi there,

I am following up with comments on the proposed development at 529 University Ave after watching the UDC Informational Meeting. I wanted to submit these comments for review of the development team and UDC when this comes back. Please don't take my comments as a judgement on whether I support or oppose the development at this juncture.

I wanted to structure my comments around things I have been hearing from constituents and my own observations from the informational meeting including: building materials and colors, landscape and greenery, public art and lighting, usable open space, and safety planning.

Building Materials and Colors:

I concur with many comments issued in the informational meeting. I found and have heard from constituents that the dark materials is off-putting. It contributes to a black curtain that is unveiling along as one said "the gateway" to downtown Madison.

I specifically wanted to point to the context photos that are attached to this email. As you can see from the photos, most of the buildings on this block corner utilize warm tones, funky colors, and architectural detailing on the ground floor that is inviting the the pedestrian experience. I struggle to visualize the design of the proposed development in the context of what is currently there.

I encourage the development team to utilize warmer tones that reflect the current context. Additionally, I would be interested in seeing the incorporation elements of the Vintage current building (ie. iconic blue paint with yellow and green tiling).

Landscape and Greenery:

I am no landscaping professional, but I am of the opinion that some greenery and planting would be a welcomed improvement. I have heard from residents that the Vintage plantings liven the pedestrian experience and help contribute to a welcoming environment. I am hopeful that bringing some green elements to the development would break up some of the dark elements in the current proposal.

Public Art and Lighting:

I appreciated the comment about the use of the alley. From my recent visit to the site, I noticed that there is public art on the side of the building. I also know that with the proposed massing and context that alley, there needs to be significant lighting to combat some of the safety issues that may arise.

Usable Open Space:

I understand that the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines encourages on-site usable open spaces. It even proceeds to encourage "permeable" indoor spaces that extends outdoors. I believe that the current building Vintage occupies does an excellent job of creating a permeable indoor and outdoor space.

I am a bit disappointed that there is not planning for a first floor commercial space. I am further saddened that the current program is set to be used for a fitness center. It seems redundant to allot this space as a fitness center, given the Nicholas Recreation Center is a 7 min walk or 2 min bike from this location.

I'd encourage the development team to consider alternatives for the first floor space. For example, a communal

gathering space will be missed with the loss of Vintage. Replacing that loss with some form of gathering space, lounge, game room, or something of that nature may alleviate the pain of the loss.

Safety Planning:

I wanted to mention this, though it may not be under the purview of the Urban Design Commission. I have heard from residents at 515 University Ave and 505 University Ave that there is a problem with trespassing and unwelcomed visitors. I am hopeful that when designing the building and specifically the first floor space, safety of residents will be kept in mind.

I hope these comments are helpful for the development team and to Urban Design Commissioners. I look forward to working with you all on the proposal moving forward.

Warmest,

Juliana Bennett
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