

## AGENDA # 4

### City of Madison, Wisconsin

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**REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION**

**TITLE:** 6854 Stockbridge Drive – PUD-SIP to Construct 86 Multi-Family Units in Three Buildings. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ald. Dist. (23445)

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

**DATED:** October 5, 2011

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**PRESENTED:** October 5, 2011

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, Henry Lufler, Dawn O'Kroley, John Harrington and Melissa Huggins.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of October 5, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD-SIP located at 6854 Stockbridge Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Stoddard and Ald. Lauren Cnare. Appearing in support and available to answer questions were Marc Ott and Dan Schmidt. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak were Lori Studnicka, Sandra Hardie and Brian Hayes. Stoddard reviewed changes to the plans per the Commissions previous comments. Parking spaces have been added to the drive entering the parking garage, allowing the introduction of a pedestrian link to the open space corridor. Canopy trees have been added, and wrapped around the paved and parking areas. The central architectural element has been revised and softened to break down the mass using a triple gable and different materials/color variations. The building is designed to fit into the surrounding suburban neighborhood; their primary concern with using a more urban form would be the context.

Brian Hayes spoke to concerns with lowering the building from a 3-story to a 2-story, and the location of the main entry. He also noted the 100 year old Oak trees on the site. He mentioned the concerns of many people in the neighborhood about the ability of City services to reach this area in a timely manner.

Sandra Hardie praised the addition of greenery. She expressed concern with the project's flat roof because her house looks down on it. In her opinion that would negate all the planning of making the aesthetics more appealing.

Lori Studnicka reiterated the importance of the gabled roofs. She also appreciated all the greenery that has been added to the site.

Ald. Cnare thanked the developer for their work and listening to the neighbors' concerns. It is a very slow-growing notion that apartment buildings can blend into the fabric of suburban single-family neighborhoods. Having a truly urban form in a suburban neighborhood does not sit well and she asked the Commission to drop the notion of a flat roof. The neighborhood really did not want this building here, but after the neighborhood and developer worked hard together to achieve the things they wanted, the pushing of flat roofs does not sit well.

Huggins noted that the issue is good design; this is not good design. A lot of the things that people object to with respect to multi-family housing is exacerbated by this style. If you take an urban form to create a bigger building you would actually end up with something that is good design. My concern as a design professional, as I watch the City grow we are creating an ugly city. The neighborhood needs to remember that when they bought these single-family homes, this parcel was zoned multi-family. We can create better built environments by going with better design and this would fit better into the neighborhood is it didn't have the giant peaked roofs. Both Monroe Street and Willy Street have single-family homes and multi-family homes that blend very nicely together.

Ald. Cnare stated that this is not Willy Street. Whether or not it's good design there is a compromise. The good neighborhood for the folks who live here, that's the design that reflects that. Grandview Commons has many styles of roofs and buildings; and if this neighborhood had been built as such we would welcome it, but that's not what this neighborhood is about. Not everybody wants the Monroe Street look. The beauty of this City is allowing people to live in a 5-story, flat roofed apartment building downtown or this apartment building out in the suburbs or a single-family home. There's nothing wrong with giving people what they want. While I honor your effort to make the City as well-designed as possible, that's what your mission and your charge is, I also ask that you reflect the variety of sensibilities that we have in this City.

Further comments from Commission members were as follows:

- A 2-story building is going to be 20-22 feet tall. When you put a huge roof on it your building becomes 30-35 feet tall. I understand the neighbor who doesn't want that view, but what that roof is going to do is block the view that you actually want to see – the open space.
- For me the issue I face is a grid of streets, that's what makes it a City. I appreciate you rearranged the parking lot and came up with some good solutions.
- The height of a building (had it been a flat roof) you would probably have another 1/3 of views of greenspace available with the same density. It's unfortunate that this roof form is uncomfortable. This roof is gigantic.
- The walk does not have a comfortable crossing.
  - The site drops and in trying to minimize the asphalt, we could have steps and ramps but we're trying to minimize it.
- You have an opportunity add planting that would screen the parking and create much more of a park-like feel.
- Break away from landscaping line around building with plantings, provide beds that break from line of buildings.
- Encourage more fluidity with your plantings, especially in the back where you have existing trees.
- I don't mind shutters as long as they are somewhat real; the shutters here are not half the size of the window opening. There are some areas of brick with shutters and some without.
- The triple gable feature might be more successful as a double gable on the building.
- There may be a little too many styles going on at once. The building is trying to do too many things at once; need simplifications.
  - We can look at simplifying some of that detail.
- Consider speed grades in some parking areas.
- I'm still struggling with the issues we're trying to address here with the roof and the views from existing houses.
- The setbacks you've chosen to create your roof form should be restudied because if it does remain a hip roof building the hips or the taller elements have to relationship to the entry.

- Is it safe to say there is more decoration than function to the dormers; the dormer should be real as it relates to interior space within the units or removed.
- There are buildings in the neighborhood with hip roofs that are broken up and don't feature the mass of roof as proposed.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Rummel, seconded by Lufler, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-1) with Huggins voting no. The motion provided for the following:

- Study a more park-like treatment for the landscaping.
- Refine details on s-curve; treat to be a secondary access drive, more pedestrian and user-friendly than vehicular.
- Reduce mass of roofs of buildings, the mass of the two and three-story buildings is approved but not their rooflines. Massing for the purposes of this motion only refers to the fact that these are two and three-story buildings; not the roof design.
- Study the parking as it relates to the open space/greenspace.
- Look at ways of improving drainage.
- Suggest proportion of roof be modified so as the building face is the predominant form if the hip roof is the choice of the applicant and eliminate center gable feature.
- Minimize use of vinyl siding; if necessary provide in real colors beyond beige, in combination with other materials and utilize solid corner board, rakes, headers and sills. Encourage the applicant to look at vinyl selections that have more than just beige, if vinyl is absolutely necessary.
- Study adding more interest to the columns supporting exterior walls, replace with brackets.

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 5, 5, 5, and 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 6854 Stockbridge Drive

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

General Comments:

- Mediocre building design is trying to do too many things.
- Improved landscape and parking lot design. Break up roof mass so it doesn't look like 4-story house the size of a football field. Reduce vinyl siding to extent possible.