

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 22, 2021

TITLE: 5817-5830 Gemini Drive - Planned
Development (PD) for Capitol View
Townhouses. 3rd Ald. Dist. (67174)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Kevin Firchow, Acting Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 22, 2021

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Craig Weisensel, Rafeeq Asad, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Christian Albouras, Shane Bernau and Russell Knudson.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 22, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a Planned Development (PD) located at 5817-5830 Gemini Drive. Registered and speaking in support was Bradley Servin, representing Scott Frank.

Servin presented plans for a 12-unit townhouse development with two driveways off of Gemini Drive to private garages on the north side of the development. Each unit will have a pedestrian entrance directly off of Gemini, with a rooftop patio over the garage for the 2nd story units and balconies facing Gemini for the third story units. Building materials include a mix of horizontal siding, wood grain aluminum siding, and board and batten engineered wood siding to express the verticality of the structure.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Appreciate some of the more simplistic geometries. Having trouble with the materials, particularly the stone. Not seeing any rhythm or pattern of why the stone exists where it does, if at all. Wondering if it would be more successful with no stone at all, give the geometries more purity and simplicity in their form. Do appreciate you've started showing some of the downspouts, maybe even try to incorporate the rhythm of those more consistently as well. The garage stepping up the hill, the glass guardrail at those walk-out areas might be more consistent with the trellis or privacy screen if you went more of a horizontal aluminum railing system, the glass is a bit distracting and doesn't provide any privacy.
- Struggling with the towers, feel like if the units were the same height it would appear more cohesive. Are you making them taller?
 - No it's a matter of how they step up the hill, it's not consistent. The third tower to the fourth tower, the finished floor elevations are greater between those two than the 2nd and 3rd one.
- They seem odd. I like the stone on the front side but not on the garage. Those pillars are unique. Something about those towers seem out of proportion or out of scale to the rest of the development.
 - It's the relationship of finished floor from one unit to the next as you go up the hillside.

- Recognize you're working on a slope. The driveways along the back, what's on the opposite side of this street, is it front doors to other residences?
 - It's facing the garage level of the apartment building we just looked at previously, it's a shared access easement.
- The driveways seem kind of short, though it's a tight site.
- The green towers, I actually would debate, I find the proportions of the taller ones more successful than the lower ones. If you are going to have dividers between units I'd recommend having them consistent. On the rear to have those patios outside is such a lovely idea, not quite sure about privacy or where you have dividers vs. where you don't, suggest reviewing.
- Getting ahead of the landscape plan here, knowing it's early. The garage and driveway side could really use some plant material, like trees anchoring the corners and breaking up the monotony. It's a difficult project type and plan on such a slope but it would be great to break up that elevation with some mid-size or canopy trees but also help with heat effect.
- As far as stormwater, thinking about where that is going, opportunity for driveway sections to be permeable sections.
 - It'll be collected underground, a portion will be conveyed to the regional detention pond and another portion is going to a pond located on the client's property to the west.
- I like the tower forms, nice way to deal with this grade situation. The sidewalk looks like an ice slide in the winter, I don't know if that's the project's responsibility to make it accessible or a City problem, but it concerns me a little bit.
- Thinking about kids, have you considered making one or two of these units a four-bedroom? We're often trying to encourage room for families.
 - There's a combination of 2 and 3 bedroom units.
- Is there public parking along Gemini Drive?
 - Yes. Also to the west there are some shared parking stalls.
- It feels tight and it's not a great view, and there is a privacy issue.
- What is the intent of materials and color on this project? This is a festive looking project.
 - The colors didn't come across the way we're hoping the materials will look. Directly across the street is a sister building developed 15 years ago that was very monotone in color, we're trying to break away from that appearance to provide some visual interest. The larger building adjacent we've kept in tone with the surrounding community.
- My reaction is I appreciate the way you've responded to that context.
- I have mixed feelings about the stone on the front of the building. Halfway up between the 6th and 7th unit where the divider is stepped, realizing that's responding to the slope of the street but it seems awkward when there isn't one dividing the two 2-story units. It's hard to tell what that stone will look like. I do not like it on the back, and have concerns that the garage sides of this building are unattractive compared to the front. Wherever you have the stone on the back, if that was replaced with the red that's on the front it would be nicer to look at. The lack of space for landscaping is problematic, go to great lengths to do something interesting at the ends of the buildings.
- I like the way the garages are arranged to allow the residents to spend less energy heating and cooling that space. There's a stairway inside the garages, is that stair a function of the changing grade from the face of the building to the back?
 - Absolutely yes.
- Is there an opportunity to have the garage floor slope up to accommodate that?
 - They'll be sloped 4" already, to slope it more than that is hard to park a car.

ACTION:

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