

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: October 26, 2016

TITLE: 302 South Gammon Road – New  
Development of a Mixed Commercial  
Center. 9<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (44779)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: October 26, 2016

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Sheri Carter, Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant and Richard Slayton.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of October 26, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for new development of a mixed commercial center located at 302 South Gammon Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were Douglas Kozel, Jeff Vercauteren, both representing The Livesey Company; Melissa Huggins and Ken Saiki, representing Ken Saiki Design.

Kevin Firchow of the Planning Division gave a brief introduction to the new MXC zoning designation for this property. This is not a Planned Development in terms of an initial/final approval method. As a master plan district, the role of the UDC in this process is to advise the Plan Commission and Common Council on the master plan itself. This is also the approving body on the design standards; the development team has to meet the commercial standards, but anything above and beyond what is already required for the commercial and mixed-use zoning standards would be approved by this body. Once this framework is set-up and the master plan is in place, the individual buildings themselves wouldn't necessarily return to the Commission, unless something triggers other standards such as big box or conditional use.

The existing property contains 23 acres, with approximately 15 easements for storm sewers, etc. The overall development contains an initial 15 buildings in phases. Phase 1 consists of five buildings and a parking structure, 106 apartment units, retail and restaurants and office uses. The drive is one organizing feature, the other is a series of public spaces: the plaza that connects across the street through the building to an upper plaza that contains parking and public space, eventually connecting down to open space. Phase 2 would be continuous spaces of the first four buildings, mixed-use with underground parking, and some sort of senior housing. Phase 3 is a single site that had originally been thought of for a specialty grocery store, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of interest in that in the neighborhood; it would probably be commercial space. Traffic studies are underway. The upper plaza is more focused on the residential uses in Building 5 with a dog walk area, tenant garden spaces and a gathering space. The stormwater management is integrated within the plaza to make it part of the expression of the landscape. A water feature will come through the center of the plaza as both a visual and noise making element to help with the ambience of the space. They are proposing to use Magic Paks. The intent is to

give Memorial Drive a main street feel; this is a 2-way street with perpendicular parking on either side and retail.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- If people are coming off of Mineral Point Road in this first phase, are you seeing them coming through that Noodles driveway?
  - Yes, and we're going to have to reconfigure it.
- Are you thinking of putting any controlled lights at that intersection?
  - I think they won't let us. We've had casual discussions about exactly that sort of thing, but the way that intersection works now is that it's both directions. We think most people are probably leaving to turn right, which is the tough turn, and they're coming from the west which is a left turn in, which is not an easy turn. There's a stoplight one intersection back and one forward.
- Does Memorial Drive continue through Phase 2 to that signaled access?
  - Yes.
- I think you're heading down the right path. You may be challenged by technical people that there's a different way to do this that takes away from some of the aesthetics. Fight them.
- You mentioned elderly housing, is that assisted living?
  - We don't know yet.

It's somewhat remote from the plaza, but to have a very generous pathway to get there that becomes part of their daily activity.
- Consider a dog park for a connection to become a social scene.
  - It's not that large, it's more of a convenience.
- Is there discussion of green roofs?
  - We have some.
- With the balcony consider limiting what can be placed there.
  - I don't know how to enforce that. Does our screening of the Magic Paks work for you?
- Yes, I don't mind it.
- The flow of open spaces is important.
- I think this is one of the most exciting plans I've seen in awhile. I'm not worried about the corner because the other corners are weighted down. I'm excited about pushing stormwater control, green infrastructure and daylighting some of that. You could even have signage that tells you what's going on.
- I would encourage you to get as many canopy trees in here as possible.
- I do share concern about the ins and outs of backing up with perpendicular parking. I think at least a diagonal parking would get the motion versus people backing out and the conflict with pedestrians and other vehicles, and really making it feel like a street.
  - The counter to this is when you are looking for a spot, if it's perpendicular and it's over there, you can just go there. If it's diagonal you have to come out and go around, so it makes the utility of those better.

This Commission agonized about adding five stalls at Hilldale Mall, which were not approved. This is at a much greater magnitude, and it's on a curve, and it's a fresh slate. To say we can't make the parking...

  - I was just saying you can get more parking, but we're still under what we need in reality.
  - To me it's a trade-off because we've gone to a great effort to avoid structured parking.
- We're going to want that grand plaza to go to the drive, not to where a car is parked in front of me. That's the big point about Hilldale.
- I very much like the curved drive.
- I'm struck that right now it's a very green site and I'm not sure 5% greenspace is really what you want to have as a result. Is that set in City code? That's minimum, so we can expect more? If you look up in

the Tree Lane what you see is an urban forest. If you look at your proposed development, I don't see there's going to be any urban forest there. This is a good attempt to do new urbanism commercial and mixed-use, but there's still some qualities about this City and what we think urban life should be like in this area. You have to get some of that character, you have to think about how that works as an ecosystem too.

- I think the parking ramps at Hilldale work, and if you have that much grade changing maybe you could do decks, not a real garage of parking that puts more of it underground, because I also see a lot of concrete and parking there.
  - Underground parking is not attractive to people coming to retail or restaurants. There is underground parking associated with the residential.
- Consider if it would be helpful to create what would look like almost this natural piece that's a juxtaposition to this bosk. Where you've got some old river side trees that are just there before this was built, it could be an interesting play, and it could carry all the way through the elderly housing.

**ACTION:**

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