

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** May 7, 2014

**TITLE:** 2504 Winnebago Street (East Washington Avenue and Milwaukee Street) – PD(GDP) for the Union Corners Development. 6<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (32837)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

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**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** May 7, 2014

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant and Melissa Huggins.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of May 7, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PD(GDP) for the Union Corners Development located at 2504 Winnebago Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Gary Gorman, Michael Brush, representing Gorman and Company; Brad Hinkfuss and Lou Host-Jablonski, representing the SASY Neighborhood Association; John Steines, Ken Fitzsimmons, Maggie Freespirit, Susan Oshman, Satya Rhodes-Conway, Pat Lambert, Casey Healy, representing IBEW 159; Linda Lenzke, Judy Seymour, Robin Bechhofer, representing Madison Eastside Co-Housing; and Tamara Seeker. Registered and speaking neither in support nor opposition was Maya Lea.

Brush addressed concerns about the project from the neighborhood and City staff. New pathways for pedestrians and bicycles have been added to address accessibility and circulation. Subsurface parking stalls are being provided in address of vehicular circulation and parking concerns. Every building except one has some kind of underground parking component; 72% of all the parking is in structures with 220 not in structures. The middle of the site is as unencumbered with vehicular traffic as possible. The neighbors suggested a greenway that goes from Milwaukee Street to Sixth Street, with another amenity from East Washington Avenue to the bottom of the triangle that connects to a gathering space and back to a town square. There are plazas along this area addressing public amenities. One thing that has changed significantly is the moving of the health clinic to Sixth Street. This gives the neighborhood and the City the landmark building for the site. A transit hub is planned as part of the clinic structure. Within the transit hub is the access ramp to the underground garage with parking for 100 cars. The neighbors had requested that the buildings that front East Washington Avenue also be accessible from inside the site. A phasing plan will be submitted with the first SIP submittal.

Brad Hinkfuss spoke as the current chair of the SASY Neighborhood Association. He appeared in support and they feel Gorman and Company and UW Health have been very responsive to their concerns and needs. They

do want a commitment to working with them in each phase of the SIP phase going forward so they don't lose sight of how things are progressing.

Lou Host-Jablonski spoke in support. He has skepticism that the transit hub can exist. This should be a "place" rather than a glorified bus stop. This is a hugely important piece of the project. He finds the jump between 4-6 stories and 1-story in some of the buildings to be too much.

Maggie Freespirit spoke in support. The team listened to the neighborhood and took their concerns into consideration.

Susan Oshman spoke in support. She is hopeful to see this project move ahead and sees great strides have been made to meet everyone's needs.

Satya Rhodes-Conway spoke in support. She thanked Gorman and Company for their responsiveness to neighborhood concerns. She is particularly excited about the corner feature, the height and density grading between East Washington Avenue and the back triangle, and the elements of pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the site. She asked the Commission to keep in mind the importance of recognizing the greenspaces as spaces that need to be practically incorporated into a phase and not just expected to develop between phases. This GDP does actually have some real space in here that will be pedestrian-oriented and be green. She doesn't want to see it made piecemeal but rather paid attention to as the thing that is good and important in and of itself. Stormwater management will also be very important, in combination with green infrastructure. The idea of placemaking is important also. Bringing those principles to bear in this location will be very important.

Ald. Marsha Rummel spoke as the area Alder. She talked about the good working relationship between the neighborhood and Gorman and Company. She talked about the first floor retail with a loading dock being potentially pushed back, the potential for people to cut through the site to reach perhaps The Malt House, and she echoed Rhodes-Conway's comments made about greenspaces being important. This has been a long but thrilling process.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I think it looks great. I'd like to think there is a transparency along this side to take you to East Washington to the entry. I'd like to have some kind of treatment along here that brings the pedestrian and streetscape into this area.
- I love the greenways you have but I think there's some detail work that needs to be done. There needs to be some type of an entrance; this is almost an opportunity for a roundabout for pedestrians. But it's also a node. I'm not crazy that it terminates on a slanted façade of a building. It needs to be substantial enough to anchor that. Where it crosses the drive bump out the curb so it feels like cars going through a pedestrian-way rather than pedestrians going through a drive.
- There's some very soft curvilinear forms. I want to make sure we don't lose sight of the urban aspect too; there should be forms that are more urban.
- I agree with that termination, particularly because you can see the end. I think a more successful approach would be to look at this quad with first floor retail and instead of segmenting each use maybe this becomes first floor retail with residential above. Maybe trying to get multiple uses and really enliven Winnebago Street.
- I really believe the 1-story needs to be more than 1-story. Why would you limit yourself to 1-story? Maybe it steps down but definitely not less than two. It needs to hold the whole corner and relate to the anchor.

- I'm looking at the triangle where the co-housing is wanting to go and the size you need to have from an economic standpoint. I don't know whether that particular configuration is going to create an economically feasible project. You need to think about that. I struggle how retail is going to do here.
  - (Susan Oshman) One of the things we've talked about as a group is making this co-housing project much more affordable. We also want to standardize some of the choices for the actual units, so we see ourselves moving into a smaller building. At least one of the buildings would be more affordable and have more standardized units.
- I'm thinking about financing. Tax credits won't work if you're smaller.
  - (Susan Oshman) Absolutely, we've already talked about that.
- I feel like those 2-story buildings are so isolated from the street. It's lovely tucked in a corner but in an urban environment it's not appropriate to be tucked into a corner.
- Have you indicated what areas of the site would be using salvaged materials, the brick and whatever other historic pieces remain from the site?
  - We haven't really discussed that much as a team, except that overall elements like any gateway elements that might be created, any landscape elements might incorporate things like that. The only thing we talked about is not actually using that in new buildings, it would be used more for landscaping and features like that.
- (Rummel) Have you thought about where the children's play areas will go?
  - When we get into the design of the actual space then we can decide exactly how and where they will be. We show them here and I think that's still in play.
- Is the BRT stop an actual structure?
  - It's a building, it's got a roof on it. We are actually going to introduce that at a steering committee meeting tomorrow.
- Have you looked at the studies done by MPO? There are some pretty specific requirements for the various sized BRT stations. They have identified which size at which location so you should definitely look at that.
- You're right on the rail line. Someday that light rail will happen.
- Look at having the parking a more traditional double bay. It seems like an awful lot of asphalt because it's single loaded.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Slayton, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (5-0). The motion provided for address of the Commission's comments.

No rankings were provided for this project.