

CAPITOL

NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.
MADISON, WISCONSIN

Urban Design Commission
City of Madison

March 24, 2022

UDC Commissioners

Re: 519-541 W. Washington Ave.

The Bassett District of Capitol Neighborhoods has formed a steering committee to engage with the development team for the referenced proposal. The development team will be bringing their design to your March 30 meeting for review.

Since this is a voluntary presentation at UDC there are no formal review standards defined for your considerations. The 2019 Mifflandia Plan, which covers the area where the proposal is located, recommended the creation of an Urban Design District to “ensure that new development contributes to the evolution of a unique, identifiable and creative destination district within the City”. Unfortunately, the design district and associated design guidelines have not yet been created.

The Mifflandia Plan includes proposed general Guidelines for a new Urban Design District. We suggest that the Commission use these design guidelines as the basis for your consideration of the proposal. In addition, The *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines* (Zoning Code section 28.071) are also relevant for your review of the proposal.

In our neighborhood meetings and steering committee meetings there have been varied reactions to the design of the proposal. Some have suggested support for the design and feel that it is fine for this location. The deep recessed areas of the street facade are a compelling feature.

Other residents have expressed concerns about the design and its relationship to the surrounding area. Some of these concerns include:

- The design appears to be very typical of current multifamily buildings
- Railings for the rooftop area should be set back from the facade to reduce their visibility and distraction from the overall design
- Concerns have been expressed regarding the functionality of the drive area for trash removal, deliveries and move in/move out activities
- The design doesn't enhance this grand entrance to the downtown as called for in the Mifflandia Plan

- The design does not pay any homage or respect for existing turn of the century buildings on W. Washington
- The design is not visually compatible with adjacent buildings
- The design of the Depot building at the corner of W. Washington and S. Bedford was noted by several residents as an architectural style that would be more fitting for this location. The Depot building addresses the concerns noted above yet is not mimicking the past and reflects its own period of construction

The neighborhood appreciates the design team's willingness to bring this proposal to the Urban Design Commission for review. We are also grateful for the Commission's willingness to add this to your full agenda and appreciate your consideration and input on the design.

Thank you,

Peter Ostlind
Steering Committee Chair
Bassett District of Capitol Neighborhoods