

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** September 11, 2013TITLE: 210 (212) South Brooks Street – Amended  
PD for “Longfellow School” Adaptive  
Reuse and New Apartment Complex. 13<sup>th</sup>  
Ald. Dist. (29811)**REFERRED:****REREFERRED:****REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:****POF:**

DATED: September 11, 2013

**ID NUMBER:**

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

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of September 11, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of an Amended PD located at 210 (212) South Brooks Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were John Seamon, representing The Alexander Company; Jeremy Frommelt, representing Iconica; Justin Frahm, representing JSD Professional Services, Inc. Appearing and speaking in opposition was Eric Shusta. Appearing in opposition but not wishing to speak were Don MacCrimmon, Katherine Loving, Barbara MacCrimmon and Cecilia Stephenson. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and available to answer questions was John Perkins. Seamon discussed changes to the project based on the Commission’s previous review. The color of the foundation block is now a custom color (sample distributed) in a warm tan range. They changed the south stair glazing and fenestration and it is now moved back to where it was previously, less centrally located. Ten parking stalls have been removed from the surface parking lot and that space has been rededicated to open greenspace with a bifurcated circulation path for the residents, with one path leading to “new” Longfellow and a second path leading to “historic” Longfellow. The bike parking provisions on the north and south sides have been moved interior to the courtyard. They changed the south façade by taking 5-feet off the floor plate to give more space between the historic school and the new construction; this caused the loss of the balconies on that corner but gives more breathing space to the historic aspect. They have also added fenestration to that façade. The loading zone will now be on the north end of the building, as well as trash and recycling. Now on the south side all that remains relative to vehicular access is the garage door. Clear story windows will be used on the first two floors where they had none before, and full windows on the third floor which changed the units slightly.

Staff noted that Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner has reviewed these changes and finds they are consistent with what the Landmarks Commission has recommended for approval.

Eric Shusta spoke as a neighborhood resident (across from the south elevation). He appreciates a lot of the improvements. He expressed his concerns with the 10-foot concrete parking wall and the gray color. Why can’t this be faced with materials similar to the structure? He investigated his neighborhood and without fail, the parking entrances of other buildings matched to some extent the building level. He wondered why the same

standards can't be applied to this project. He also expressed concern about maintaining the older Maple trees in the front of the building.

Questions and comments from Commission members were as follows:

- With those existing trees, protection isn't an orange construction fence, it's out to the drip line if possible. That's what your details should be and should be maintained throughout construction. If the trees are worth saving.
- That wall is a harsh element. Maybe plant something with more interest there. I like your selection of the Carpinus, maybe add some in other places to try and soften that wall.
  - Initially we looked at that edge and how it's going to interact with adjacent land uses. We're open to the concept of incorporating more trees and more vertical elements. When you picture a 1950s schoolyard it's very open and sort of void of any standard landscape application and that was driving the design on most of the critical areas, why there aren't very many shrubs at the ground level.

I think the vine idea is good. I understand that imagery of a schoolyard but that doesn't mean it's a great image because it was there.

- Along Chandler Street you're adding a Gingko – what are the other trees in that area?
  - Street trees are Ash, Maple, Honey Locust. I want to provide some variety based on some of the street trees.

You might want something that might be more branching and umbrella out to connect those two buildings. To be a unifier.

- Have you looked at matching the dark brick?
  - We absolutely have. A big driver of it is its relationship to the school color-wise and material-wise. If we were to make this more of a monolithic façade we think you start to get too far in front of that historic school as far as disturbing the strong presence of it. We establishing that foundation that gives it some differentiation while clearly still recognizing the school.
- The module is what I'm having a bit of difficulty with. Is it stack bond?
  - We'll lay it in an alternating fashion.

It doesn't have that same proportion of brick and certainly it's a much larger scale. Maybe alternating with some bands of 4-inch block? Nothing too fussy. I think that's what I'm hearing from the neighbors is that it just looks like concrete block. Maybe in deference to their comments, is there another module or another way to get that to be a little bit more of a texture or material you'd see in the neighborhood.

I really feel that between coloring, the modeling that's naturally going to occur when the mason lays it up, each brick is going to be slightly different. And then the texture we're going to get from the trellis and maybe even some additional texture, I like the idea of a different species growing there. Those things combined really take it out of the realm of just being red block.

- I'm not so sure making little "bumpies" along the way or changing the size is going to do anything.
- If you go down the block on Chandler to where Meriter's loading dock is, there's plenty of concrete block there.
- Maybe part of it is looking at the composition of that base. If you're applying another layer of rhythm with the trellises, maybe it's a simple detail below the bike parking windows on the south façade that now starts to make those read as a bay and composition itself rather than reading as a lot of concrete block. Particularly the backyard neighbors, they won't see it in a full composition, which on this overall elevation feels balanced, but to think of the narrower view that each neighbor is looking at, something subtle and simple that shows that you thought about it. The landscape growing on it will add a lot.
  - The trellises themselves, the shade and shadow we're going to get independent of any plant on it is going to add another texture to it. I'm not dismissing the idea.

Maybe the trellises themselves vary. Just a different dialogue at the base.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion required the provision of a tree protection as noted within the comments, in addition to landscape comments including trellis applications.

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 6 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 210 (212) South Brooks Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	6	7	6	-	-	-	7	-
	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6	6	6	-	-	6	6	6
	7	7	7	7	-	8	8	7

General Comments:

- Maintain tree protection throughout construction.
- Appreciate the applicant's continued cooperation and efforts to respond. Need to honor neighbors' request for brick at base, not CMU.

# MICHAEL BEST

& FRIEDRICH LLP

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September 12, 2013

Mr. Ken Opin, Chair  
City of Madison Plan Commission  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Suite LL100  
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Adaptive Reuse of Longfellow School, 210 S. Brooks Street  
Legistar #29811

Dear Chair Opin:

This letter is sent on behalf of The Alexander Company, the contract purchaser and proposed developer of the above-referenced project. At the Plan Commission meeting on August 26, 2013, several suggestions were made as to how the project may be improved in accordance with the perceptions of the various Plan Commissioners on the merits of the project. We made those changes plus several suggestions from the National Park Service and others and we are pleased to report that those changes have been approved unanimously by the Urban Design Commission and have received staff and alder support. For these reasons, we ask that the revised proposal for redevelopment of Longfellow School be approved at your meeting on Monday, September 16, 2013.

Briefly, the changes which were included in the revised plans include:

1. Relocating the trash/recycle, garbage pickup and resident loading to the north side of the building off of Mound Street.
2. Reducing the width on the south side of the building closest to the historic school by 5 feet from grade to roof and balconies were removed on the southeast side facing the school.
3. Windows were added on the east side of the building which was affected by the 5 foot reduction and set back.
4. Ten (10) courtyard parking stalls were removed which increases the amount of open and landscaped space between the Longfellow School and the "to be constructed" building.
5. The entry sidewalk and arbors were redesigned to allow for independent sidewalks to both the historic Longfellow School and the "to be constructed" residential building.
6. Bike racks were relocated from Chandler and Mound Streets into the courtyard and the number of bike stalls were increased overall.

**Agenda ITEM 15**

# MICHAEL BEST

& FRIEDRICH LLP

Mr. Ken Opin, Chair  
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These significant changes have improved the quality of the development and we appreciate the time that the Plan Commissioners spent in assisting in the design. If there are any questions prior to that time, please do not hesitate to contact me at 695-4946. We look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Sincerely,

**MICHAEL BEST & FRIEDRICH LLP**



William F. White

cc: Members of the Plan Commission  
Alder Sue Ellingson  
Katherine Cornwell, Planning Director  
Steven Cover, Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Tim Parks, Planner, Planning Division  
Randall P. Alexander  
John A. Seamon  
James Woodward

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**From:** Eric Shusta [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 06, 2013 10:01 AM  
**To:** [UDC Members – e-mail addresses deleted]  
**Cc:** Parks, Timothy; Martin, Al; Scanlon, Amy; Ellingson, Susan  
**Subject:** Remaining UDC concern regarding the newest Longfellow design.

9/6/2013

Dear UDC members,

Thank you for considering many of my earlier comments regarding the Longfellow design. We have just received the updated Longfellow designs that were submitted in response to Plan Commission concerns and that will be considered at the 9/11 UDC meeting for final approval.

Although I have mentioned this issue in a previous email, I wanted to follow-up and reiterate my (and neighborhood) concerns as this project nears final approval. One of the UDC concerns raised in the previous UDC meeting regarding the masonry block that will be used for the parking level remains unresolved. We saw samples of this alternative "camel toned" block at a recent neighborhood meeting and it really is just a slightly darker gray masonry block, and will continue to be an eyesore for the neighborhood. The developer has additionally tried to "hide" the block behind trellises and ivy, implicitly acknowledging the spartan nature of the parking level. Thus, this concern still remains for me, for the neighborhood attendees at the many neighborhood meetings, and likely for the UDC.

As I mentioned in a previous email, one wonders why the parking level cannot be faced with materials that match the actual living structure (i.e. the new red brick facing the rest of the structure). I took a brief tour of the many new apartment complexes in the downtown Madison area and noted that all of them had parking levels or parking entrances faced with materials similar to the apartment complex itself. I would advocate for similar standards to be applied to the Alexander project.

Many thanks for considering this request.

Best Regards,  
Eric Shusta  
Homeowner, 1023 Chandler St.