

## AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** November 20, 2019

**TITLE:** 636 W. Washington Avenue – New 5-  
Story, 50-Unit Apartment Building with  
Underground Parking and Ground Floor  
Commercial Space. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (57114)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Janine Glaeser, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** November 20, 2019

**ID NUMBER:**

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

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of November 20, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new apartment building located at 636 W. Washington Avenue. Registered in support were Kirk Keller, representing 636 W. Washington; Jeff Lee, representing Greenway Real Estate, LLC; and Suzanne Vincent, representing Greenway Real Estate, LLC. Keller presented the revised plans based on the Commission's previous comments. The building material palette includes darker brick and mortar on the backside of the building, modular brick accented with suede mortar, and cast architectural stone in antique white, along with metal panel and trim. The railing on the edge of the fourth floor has been eliminated, while the fourth floor parapet height has been increased. The cornice thickness and locations have been adjusted to simplify the front of the building. The design team looked at adjusting the window lintels and sills, as well as the horizontal and vertical patterns that are created. Keller clarified that on the back of the building the garage door is indicated with a drive down and a retaining wall. This door will be at grade or about 8-inches down for the ramping design, and the fencing shown next to the dog walk area will not be there. They also included information about the larger vision triangle as you leave the site.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The cement board appears to be a shingle.
  - It will be the lap siding.
- I wonder if you'd see a bit more of the old if you weren't doing the windows this way.
  - That went around a lot in our design discussions. The intent it to get a plainer surface with the windows on the cement board, then returning full brick and brick insets at the patio, using that to differentiate the two.
- I feel like there's a lot of siding on that back part. Is there a way to bring more brick from the base up through to a corner treatment? It looks like a big monolith of cement board.
- The landscape plan, there's an area of annuals, is that intentional?

- It was intentional, the idea was to give the owner the ability to have more tropical, lush, colorful plants at the front of the building during the summer versus perennials that aren't as tropical.
- The front is all perennials. The entire northeast and northwest sides of the building. This effort towards extra landscaping right next to the drive, it kind of contradicts all the siding in the back. It seems like a weird place to have something special.
  - That would be the entrance for the commercial tenant. We wanted a splash of nice landscaping where customers will be coming in.
- I would recommend no annuals other than the areas on the West Washington side. I think 30-inches is enough space to plant something meaningful. I have no problem with the smaller annuals on the front.
  - These won't be irrigated either, I'm skeptical of healthy vegetation in that area.
- I agree it's a hard space to grow something, but annuals I think will be blank and bare for most of the year.
- I liked the patio/front stoop areas on West Washington. Do those still exist?
  - Yes in front of the two commercial spots. One of them we're showing the ability of a low fence, the other side the intention was to delineate that space with seasonal planters placed on the patio.
  - There would not be plantings in front of the fence, it would be what's shown on the landscape plan.
  - We could reduce the landscape and put in more hardscape.
- Up on the roof terrace, are there any plantings proposed?
  - It's not a green roof. We use our large metal troughs so it's seasonal flowers, growing tomatoes.
- South elevation and north elevation, I'm wondering what you're thinking is when you're looking at window placement and wall opening from top to bottom. Where vertical lines come down, why don't windows align and why doesn't that vertical line continue? To me it almost looks like three different buildings because of the window placement, they jog around. I wonder if it would be better if they aligned more.
  - That was a very heavy discussion. There is not a direct relationship between the first floor and the floors above. It is the reality of trying to work with the modular of what works best for an apartment while opening more glass for the commercial space. It could certainly be aligned.
- It's just a comment, it seems like a massive load coming down to just a window.
- This gravel path off the sidewalk to the northwest, who is using that path? It seems like the one way to get out that door back to parking. Is that going to be heavily trafficked?
  - It's a destination for dogs.
  - The commercial tenants parked in the back will use that main entry. The side door is for folks coming down to take their dogs out.
- The spaces allotted for plantings is very slim. The one on the east side color coded for annuals, if it's at least 30-inches wide, irrigated or not, decent soil in there will help perennials grow. On the back side below the dark brick some shrubs or perennials that enjoy winter would work, smaller ornamental grasses, colored small Dogwoods (Arctic Fire), smaller Hydrangeas (Little Lamb/Little Lion). The far west side you have Diervilla, in modest amounts I like that plant. The ones sitting all by themselves, it's not the greatest plant to have singles.
- There are some vertical expressions where you could take the brick all the way up to the fifth floor.
- It's very stark.
  - I hear your point clearly, I'm wondering if it's a tonal difference on the tower pieces, whether it's brick or different tone to break up the run across the back so you feel the connection. It adds a patterning to the back of the building.
- What if it was just the recessed balconies in the back?
  - There is metal panel that is above these patios and that occurs in all the insets and sides. It is a dark tone but it has a metal sheen to it.

- It's way too much siding for a downtown building, the back is almost all cement board. You need more brick coming up.
- It's so dark.
- Is it possible to use the other material and lighten it up?
- If you did spandrel panel grid work where you just keep it on the outside and turn the corner, and above the window heads you don't have the load bearing piece. That gets you more of the brick on that corner but allows them not to have to go to the expense of having lintels and additional brick in some of the openings. Look at it three dimensionally as the brick turns the corner.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0). The motion provided for the following:

- Landscaping conditions:
  - Replace the annual areas shown on Plan North and Plan East with perennial plantings per the recommended list below:
    - Smaller ornamental grasses;
    - Colored small Dogwoods (Arctic Fire);
    - Smaller Hydrangeas (Little Lamb/Little Lion).
  - Add additional Diervilla on the far west side, it's not the greatest plant to have singles.
  - Assure container plantings on the roof terrace.
- Expand the patio hardscape at entry areas on West Washington Avenue.
- Look at the window alignments on the front and backside of the building.
- Further study the material types and placements. Concerns regarding too much siding and too dark on the backside of the building.
- For the next meeting, bring more renderings of the sides of the building and show material details.