

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: May 7, 2014
TITLE: 9601 Elderberry Road – Conditional Use for “Paragon Place” to Include 146 Rental Units in 4 Buildings. 9 th Ald. Dist. (28969)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: May 7, 2014	ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 7, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** a conditional use located at 9601 Elderberry Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Pudelko, representing Trio Engineering; Tim Gapland, Shaun Sullivan, Jon McMurtrie, John Croning, Ryan McMurtrie and Robert Zoelle, all representing United Financial Group, Inc. Ryan McMurtrie presented updated plans that addressed two concerns from their previous presentation to the Commission. In regards to the appearance of the parking garage off of Bear Claw Way, the design has been modified by bringing the grade up on the buildings, and eliminating the stairs by moving the entrances to the buildings. In address of undistinguished architecture with one color scheme on four buildings, they are now presenting two different color schemes for the four different buildings. The landscape plan has been further detailed as one component of an overall master plan. The overall site is embraced by a selection of street trees with the goal of creating a development with an arboretum-like setting. They have provided additional amenities with hiking trails, benches, bird feeders and houses throughout the overall development. The use of River Birch, ornamental grasses and Boxwood are all repeated elements throughout the four buildings to provide a cohesive design theme. Each unit has its own balcony, with walpak units interior to the balconies. The building concept is one of developing a form that steps up from the ends, the overall roof form has been broken into several pieces to eliminate one long linear form. They have introduced three basic materials into the façade: dark brick, lighter brick and a composite-type panel. Buildings A and B will have the same floor plans with Building B in dark and light contrasting brick. Masonry columns carrying an aluminum-wrapped coping and roof form is proposed at the entries, which will match the aluminum soffits. Building C is lighter brown with a darker cladding material. Building material samples were distributed.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I can’t recall the exact staff report comments about the mass of the building being unbroken for the lengths of the façades.

- There were comments with regards to making sure there was articulation between the buildings. We feel we did a good job of using vertical elements and changes in materials, the balconies. We feel we met that.
- One of the key issues is Building A and B on Bear Claw having no address to the street. Having heard that comment from staff is there any way you can improve that? We do want a street presence.
 - We do plan on addressing that by providing an additional entrance in the center. We can create a lobby.

We need to visualize that. Is there a canopy or portico over each of the two main entrances?

- That comes out 8-feet.
- Where is the address going to go?
 - It will be on the street side.
- I appreciate all the variation you did in color and materials, but you still essentially have varying buildings as opposed to four separate buildings with their own identity. The landscape plan does a nice job but it seems to me from a building form standpoint they're all the same and I struggle with that. I don't think this does it for me.
 - The landscape will really effuse what will happen here.

Unfortunately we don't have our landscape architects here to help educate us, which is a problem. For me this is the perennial problem. This could be Florida, Arizona, this could be anywhere U.S.A. This doesn't say anything about where it is and it doesn't say anything about the type of building it is, it's just trying to blow up a big house. These are big buildings with a huge impact, they need to have some kind of architectural integrity.
- I like the landscape plan but it'll take it a long time for it to be like the arboretum, so for a long time these buildings are going to be gangly youthful features there, and they can be beautiful as everything grows around them and fills them in. I think that entry stuff is one of the important things to continue working on.
- Last time we talked about more than just a material difference between the buildings, but somehow getting the massing of the buildings to relate to one another, which is paralleled by Melissa's comment and in the Planning staff report, the idea of articulating these really really long buildings. Although you have undulation you have a rigid repetition and the way that the materials are used consistently across the whole face doesn't give that kind of broken up idea of 12-units kind of being a family of units, and if it had a walk-up entry it would help more, but the massing doesn't support or the color material selection doesn't support a series of buildings placed next to one another.
- I have concerns about how that retaining wall, what material that is and what you're walking by and what angle it's coming off the building. Right now it feels like something false hiding a basement, it doesn't quite feel integrated yet. I'll leave that to the landscape architects. What material those walls are will matter, and now you'll have another pair of retaining walls for the main entry.
 - It's like an 8-inch beveled edge so it's a little softer when it's laid out, it steps back on each course so it will, they work very nice.
- You will see walpaks on this elevation (east Building B), there will be two walpaks on that 2-foot section of brick, that is not hidden by the balconies. So get those reflected in your floor plans, if you don't have enough brick in that corner it's going to degrade from your strength of use of masonry.
- I think there are bigger issues.
- When you were here before you brought one perspective and it was effective. I remember saying "you're going to need to show a lot more to really convince us that it doesn't just look like an enormous building that is unarticulated." As I look at this, the one rendering here almost hints towards little townhouses that are grouped together. When I see the rest of the elevations and perspectives, I see an enormous building that slopes down towards its edges. It doesn't have a strong composition, it sort of melts away as it terminates both elevations. I question why it needs to be so rigid and symmetrical.

- Where I see entrances and other elements, right in the middle I see a column or a solid element, even above the entrances where I might imagine some strong solid elements with some opening in the middle. It just feels a little uncomfortable with the relationship of solid to openings. When you look at each individual element as a grouping...
- I don't think we're there yet. Look at the staff report and think about some ways you can come up with some architecture that really is distinguished building by building. Take into account all these comments.

ACTION:

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-0).

- Address comments in the Planning staff report relative to issues with the mass of the building having façades with long, unbroken lengths.
- Resolve issues with Buildings A and B on Bear Claw having no address to the street and provide a street presence.
- Provide an emphasis that there is a canopy or portico over each of the two main entrances.
- Create four separate buildings with their own identity.
- Modify the massing of the buildings to relate to one another and provide articulation of the façades of the really long buildings.
- Reexamine the undulation and rigid repetition of the materials across the face of the building façade; it doesn't break up the building's façade effectively.
- Provide a walk-up entry and resolve that the massing doesn't support the color or material selection and doesn't support a series of buildings placed next to one another.
- Resolve issue with the design of the retaining wall at the base of the building, the material and the angle it's coming off the building. Right now it feels like something false hiding a basement, it doesn't quite feel integrated yet. What material those walls are will matter, and now you'll have another pair of retaining walls for the main entry.
- Resolve the issue with walpaks on the east elevation of Building B, there will be two walpaks on that 2-foot section of brick that are not hidden by the balconies.
- Resolve the issue with the building's sloping down towards its edges and strengthen their composition.
- Look at the staff report and think about some ways you can come up with some architecture that distinguishes each building.

No rakings were provided for this project.