

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** July 28, 2021

TITLE: 555 W. Mifflin Street - New Development  
in UMX Zoning. 4th Ald. Dist. (66561)      **REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Kevin Firchow, Secretary      **ADOPTED:**      **POF:**

DATED: July 28, 2021      **ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Christian Harper, Craig Weisensel, Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Christian Albouras and Russell Knudson.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of July 28, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for new development in UMX Zoning located at 555 W. Mifflin Street. Registered and speaking in support was Jeremy Cynkar, representing Destree Design Architects. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Mark McCaulley, representing Bachmann Construction; and Tim Kamps.

Cynkar presented plans for a proposed 3-½ story, 6-unit apartment building where there is currently an existing commercial building surrounded by residential, with current setbacks at zero and no greenspace. The building footprint maximizes lot coverage while meeting setbacks and amenities needed. Plan show a 5-foot setback at the front, just under 5-feet on the side, and a 15-foot setback on Bedford Street to provide landscaping trees within the terraced area. The basement area will be used for mechanicals, sprinkler system and potential tenant storage. The first floor contains an efficiency in front and single bedroom in the back. Staying under four stories means no requirement for an elevator and to have only one exit because the building will be sprinklered. The second floor mimics the first with recessed balconies. The third floor mimics some of the same concepts while adding an additional stair up in each unit to provide a second bedroom space on the back unit, and a bedroom space in a loft in the front unit. The exterior reflects some elements in the neighborhood, brick on the first floor, fiber cement board in tan/gray, metal panels in blue and windows that are stacked vertically as well as an element on the corner. The first floor sits back slightly from the upper floors. The team did receive positive feedback from the neighborhood. The Mifflandia Plan recommended setbacks would reduce the usable space by 36% and not make the project feasible.

Firchow noted the key issues regarding setbacks. The site is zoned UMX with a front yard has maximum setback of 10-feet and no side yard setback requirement. No change of zoning is proposed. The Mifflandia Plan had recommended a deeper setback of 15-feet along Mifflin Street and 10-feet along Bedford Street. This is an area that is recommended as a future Urban Design District which could incorporate new setbacks. The proposal meets Zoning regulations but doesn't meet the Mifflandia Plan recommendations.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I was excited by the Mifflandia Plan. My reaction to this is that it seems like a good use of that corner, there's not a lot of opportunity there, and you're doing a nice job of using it. The scale seems to be comparable to the building kitty-corner across the intersection. I would like to understand what appears to be shutters.
  - Those were venting elements for HVAC units, however we were able to put the mechanicals above and below the attic space and basement, thus removing anything that looks like a shutter from the design.
- The windows seem to be kind of disjointed, I see transom, a commercial looking corner, punched windows. Is there an opportunity to increase the size of the windows based on their location? The rear elevation shows a blank spot above the balcony, I'm not sure what's happening at the loft. The empty space above the stairwell, why we don't have windows to the bedroom in the front?
  - We did add a window that ties into the long rectangle you see on the front elevation. That dead space has been addressed with more windows to add more light. Above the balconies is unusable attic space. We could add some architectural elements.
- I'm seeing horizontals, then the more vertical punched openings and the commercial corner. It seems disjointed, there should be more consistency with the proportions and styles of penetrations of the building.
- A little restraint on this small building, I question whether a building of this scale is a candidate for spandrel glass too.
- Adding symmetry lines, elements that are different making sure you have some restraint. The Mifflin elevation, there's a recess for the patio but understanding if it really warrants having a different material setback or if the smart side should just go along the backside too. The color difference, if that's west facing it will increase the heat gain in an area you're also sitting in. Getting rid of those shutter elements but also the transition between the darker green and spandrel glass back to smart side, you also have a vertical element. Tying it together or dying it off to be one base. Some of those lines should just go away, especially on the base. I think what you're doing here as far as space, setbacks, you did a very good job utilizing the space.
- I can't read some of the call-outs on the plans. You've got some cement siding and I'm curious, there's a ribbed metal panel, is the design intent to have the same thickness, the metal panel vertical thickness and the cement siding? Align or not align?
  - The concept is the fiber cement siding has the residential tie in or context to the adjoining properties, the metal is a tie in to what is commercial while not having the scale of a large formatted panel. They are similar in size. This is a flush 8-inch with a one-inch setback reveal for a more contemporary commercial feel scaled down to a more residential size.
- I think you really want some clear intention there. If those distances are quite different it could look very misaligned. I'm not advocating for them to be the same though. A rhythm between the two that was intentional could be successful.
- Were you thinking storefront glass or curtain wall?
  - Storefront. Being living room space behind that it will have a kind of glow and be a beacon for the neighborhood.
- The neighborhood may not want that. I wonder if a continuation of punched window openings would be simpler on a small building.
  - Agreed, that might be a better option for this.
- I agree, the neighborhood may not want a beacon. They are not always the most evolved and mature in terms of interior décor.
- Make sure the glazing is all consistent.

- How you transition from material to material on a building this small could really make an impact. The rear elevation from cream color to blue and what's happening at the top for the roof trim, encourage you to investigate that and what happens at corners.
- I really like the loft. I would take that a step further, find a way for screened operable fenestration low in the space and high in the space to encourage natural ventilation and air movement.
- I see the open scupper and downspout is indicated. Depicting how the downspout contributes to the composition of the building.
  - We were able to have internal draining of the roof.
- Verify recycling and refuse in the northeast corner, is that outside the first floor unit's bedroom window?
  - Correct. We've been struggling with how to best deal with that, it's on our radar. We did move the windows as best we could. It's not ideal for sure but we haven't quite mastered that location yet.
- The building on Bedford has a wonderful opportunity for a green wall of some sorts. Not much mass on the other side, southern exposure. Ask that you consider that.

**ACTION:**

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.