

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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**REPORT OF:** URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** September 5, 2012

**TITLE:** 502 South Park Street – PUD, New Construction (The Ideal) in UDD No. 7, Mixed-Use Development. 13<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (25508)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** September 5, 2012

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Marsha Rummel, Henry Lufler, Melissa Huggins, Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroy, Tom DeChant, John Harrington and Cliff Goodhart.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of September 5, 2012, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD for new construction located at 502 South Park Street in UDD No. 7. Appearing on behalf of the project were Ben Gottlieb, representing University Audio; Scott Davis, representing Plunkett Raysich Architects; Ron Trachtenberg and Craig Enzenroth, both representing The Gallina Companies; Sue Ellingson, District 13 Alder; Duane Steinhauer, Constantine Choles, Mike Pudelwitts, Doug Carlson, Christopher Reynolds, Peter Taglia and Peter Dottl. Appearing in support but not wishing to speak were Virginia Choles, Randy Pfeifer and Mary Dottl. Appearing in support and available to answer questions was George F. Choles. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Daina Zemliauskas-Judzevicius, Amy Moran, Sue Hoffenberg, Steven Hoffenberg and Cynthia Williams. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Helen Kitchel. Enzenroth stated that they respectfully decline incorporating the front façade because of the aesthetic, historic, structural and cost reasons. The density has been reduced and the Planning Division is recommending approval. He named the Sequoia Commons and Depot developments as projects that neighbors initially did not support but came to realize the value they brought to their neighborhoods. The Ideal is scheduled to close on September 14, 2012 with the applicants ready to begin construction immediately. Davis then summarized the amenities of the building, including the retail component and two levels of parking. The building is split into two, one at 5-stories and one at 3-stories in height. There is now a tower element on the corner, the stairs have been pulled back into the building. The building steps back as you move along Drake Street to transition from a commercial district into a residential district. The walk-out garden units are now along Drake Street and engages the street and pedestrian activity. A courtyard has also been introduced to help transition between the 5-stories and 3-stories and incorporates plantings and a small water feature, as well as provides a second lobby area. A green rooftop terrace is proposed for residents. More glass and fenestration has been added to the building. Material samples were distributed. Detailed elements used to honor The Ideal include the old lettering, lighter brick color, medallions along the Park Street elevation.

Att. Ron Trachtenberg spoke to the changes the project has gone through and that Park Street could use something of this density and height.

Sue Hoffenberg spoke to the fact that the Greenbush Neighborhood Association has come out in opposition to this project because of its 5-story height. Up until now, the neighborhood's Alder Sue Ellingson has never come out in support of 5-stories at this location. Park Street is designated as a traditional shopping street and when compared to Monroe Street or Williamson Street, these have limits of 3-stories. Five-stories at this location would change the character of Park Street. The current zoning code, the code in the process of being adopted, the Park Street Design Guidelines, the Urban Design District 7 ordinance, the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan and the Park Street Corridor Urban Design Guidelines do not support 5-stories at this location. The large number of neighbors signing petitions, writing letters and testifying before the Commission opposing the building to be built; shows that this is not right for this location due to its height and density. This would have long-term impacts on these neighbors.

Doug Carlson spoke in support as a resident of the Vilas Neighborhood. Reasons include supporting urban infill development, it supports strong local businesses and a vibrant business community, the proposed project is within the scale of nearby buildings, and it's consistent with the current Park Street plan.

Steve Hoffenberg spoke in favor of infill where neighborhood can accommodate bicycling and pedestrians. However, this isn't the best type of infill. The bedroom counts for this project would cater mostly to students. He questioned the purpose of the City's code if they are so easy to get around. The character of this neighborhood will change forever.

Cynthia Williams spoke to the issues of density and light. Buildings of this height are creating canyons and the area in which she lives will be walled off. She urged the Commission to think about how this will forever change the character of this 100+ year old neighborhood.

Christopher Reynolds spoke in favor. Blighted and underused properties along Park Street does not help the City. He also did not consider The Ideal to be in the heart of the Greenbush Neighborhood. The step down from 5 to 3-stories as you enter the neighborhood works well and is more appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood.

Amy Moran spoke in opposition and distributed petitions of neighbors opposing 5-stories at this site (approximately 200 signatures). They do not object to the development or the infill, simply the magnitude. She read part of the ordinance and argued that this development is not contributing to the character of the neighborhood and that 3-4 stories is called for in this area. With Drake Street being the gateway to the Vilas Neighborhood and the Henry Vilas Zoo this project does not fit with that character.

Mike Pudelwitts spoke in support of the project, as well as density in general. Part of the reason he moved to this neighborhood is because things were going to be improved and developed.

Constantine Choles spoke as a Park Street business owner and is excited about the project. He pointed out that in order to provide the amenities people want and have asked for, such as underground parking to keep cars off the street, an extra floor is necessary to make the project work financially. Madison's plan includes infill development and higher density in these areas and for those reasons this project works.

Daina Zemliauskas-Judzevicius spoke to concerns with permeable surface and water run-off into the bay. She also spoke about aesthetics and pleaded with the Commission to pay closer attention to uniqueness.

Duane Steinhauer listed some of the 3+ story buildings in the neighborhood and the fact that Park Street is so close to downtown that the infill and density makes sense. He would like to see this project move forward and not have an empty building sit for years.

Pete Dottl spoke as the third generation owner of The Ideal Body Shop. He lauded The Gallina Companies and their management of rental properties.

Peter Taglia spoke to his concerns about the slow economic growth in Madison. He pointed out that sometimes the economics just don't work for a project in a smaller magnitude. Good construction like this is what Madison needs to keep our City sustainable both economically and environmentally.

Ben Gottlieb spoke as a small business owner in the neighborhood. They've considered moving many times and have found that Park Street is really not the best neighborhood for them to be selling high end stereo and home theater equipment, but they don't want to. He sees that the quality of people this project will bring to the neighborhood will only enhance the area.

Ald. Sue Ellingson spoke in support of the project. She is generally in favor of 5-stories and talked about the number of cars using Drake Street every day. To have this investment in the future to bring density and people to the neighborhood is going to be good for everyone. She named several surrounding buildings and businesses that are at least 5 stories.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I was struck by the comment that Drake Street is a gateway to the Vilas Neighborhood. Have you thought about that kind of linkage to the zoo?
  - Ald. Sue Ellingson: No. No one has ever talked about this being a gateway to the zoo. I agree with not having 5-stories on Drake Street. Even though this isn't perfect I think we should accept this proposal.
- Does the Greenbush Neighborhood Plan have Park Street in it?
  - Tim Parks, Planner II it does include the west side of Park Street and recommends mixed-use buildings between 2-4 stories in height with residential above the first floor and neighborhood-oriented services and uses on the ground floor.
- I like the brick but I'm struggling with the use of fiber cement that looks like wood. Examine an industrial look on the former blacksmith shop site, use something more urban; there are some incredible materials you could use to honor this building's past.
- I like how the tower is not expressed at the corner. As a neighborhood who turns left on that street all the time I think that's a much improved entryway into the neighborhood than what you've got now.
- The Planning Division report commented on the cornice overhang at the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Is there any concern about the cornice or canopy at the ground floor?
  - Parks noted that the lower canopy overhangs the sidewalk more than the cornice at the top of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor on the tower. However, we're a little more comfortable with the proposal at the ground floor because it's more in keeping with the pedestrian scale, whereas we feel it's disproportionate at the top of the building.
- It sounds like they meet the standards for setbacks and stepbacks. Is that a fair assessment? And do you think the parking ratios are too low as one neighbor expressed concern about?
  - Parks noted that yes and no, we're generally very comfortable with the parking provided. There is not a recommendation from the Traffic Engineering Division that the project not be eligible for permits, because they are providing a 1:1 automobile stall and a sufficient amount of parking for the retail.
- The massing has been much more nestled into the neighborhood. The increase in height is appropriate and in context. You've made your case that the building is not salvageable. I think the character of the site and adjacent buildings is kind of industrial. The nature of your window openings should be more

industrial; architecture should be more industrial. The choice of your infill material between your bricks should be more industrial. Your second story fenestration could be larger in some areas.

- Relative to the setbacks on your first floor plans versus your renderings on Park Street, would like to see where you pull back and have alcoves. Where you have canopies it would make sense to be up to the street, but you may want to recess back a bit where you don't have those. The benches on Drake on the public side, I don't know that those will be successful as places where the public will sit; study how benches work at public street.
- Overall I think your team has been very receptive to comments and has made those adjustments.
- The landscape needs a complete reworking. This is pretty bland and this building deserves much more than your giving it. You need a strong theme that matches what the building is doing. You've got the nooks and crannies to make it happen.
- Little details in the courtyard, the water feature doesn't relate to the building. Look at those forms too and maybe planted areas need to be larger. The courtyard is a great feature but it's just not handled properly.
- Along with people using the benches along Drake Street, those spaces to the south are for people to use as their front courtyard? If people were sitting on a bench with their back to me...it's become too park-like and I don't think it would be used for people to sit there. Concentrate on how private spaces relate to the street and use of public space.
- In general, the side yard to the west, I don't know what the program is for that but it looks somewhat arbitrary. Look at the rhythm of that landscaping. Question the use of the western barrier; how would it be used if you lived there? Plantings questionable if it is just a buffer; reexamine.
- Next time you come back the green roof should be more detailed about what's going on up there.
- Don't use vinyl edging, use steel or something more permanent.
- The landscape should reflect the care you put into the building.
- How will that western barrier be used? It looks like just a green viewshed and not a usable green.
  - We talked about a number of different ways that could be used. It is serving as a greenspace right now.

If it's grass that no one is using why not plant there? Make it more interesting to look at.

- No renderings of entries and door treatments, garages, etc.; provide details in elevation. Need to see more street views of buildings, that would be very helpful.
- I wonder what your thoughts are on addressing the cornice issue that was brought up.
  - Davis noted that the tower, being a strong anchor element to the building, needed a stronger top than the rest of the building, so it's raise up a couple of feet and hast that element of the extended cornice. We continued to explore the comments and suggestions that were made. We felt like it diminished the strength of the tower element. We like it better with the extension. In deference to staff we did the revised drawings.

Address staff concerns about the cornice treatment.

- These balconies would benefit from some protection. A recessed look is nicer than a hung look.
- I've struggled with this. I've done some research on the heights of buildings on Park Street. St. Mary's is already at 70-feet with two more floors approved. This issue of 4 or 5 stories is actually a height issue. That precedent has been set. I can accept the density.
- Park Street today is not a residential street. This combined with what is proposed at Lane's, this is 134 new bedrooms in an area that is not residential at all. This has an impact on cars, which I think this has successfully addressed, but the impact on crossing Park Street is huge. People are not going to walk down to the existing light at Vilas, they're going to want to cross right in front of the building and that is a horrid situation. This has me more concerned. It is a watershed moment and I like the direction but we are going to incur some big new issues.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0). The motion required address of the above stated comments relative to the building architectural design elements, in regards to fenestration, articulation, detailing and building materials, landscaping and outdoor space issues.

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, 6, 7, 7, 7 and 7.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 502 South Park Street**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	7	6	4	6	7	7	7	7
	6	6	6	-	-	-	-	6
	7	7	5	-	-	7	8	7
	6	7	4	-	-	6	7	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
	6	7	3	-	-	5	7	7

General Comments:

- Big improvement. Please give serious consideration to staff and Commission comments.
- Much improved; responding to Urban Design Commission’s and Planning’s input.
- Lots of improvement. No fake wood cement panel please. Five story on Park Street appropriate with articulation and stepbacks, plus hospital uses have set precedent for height.
- Restudy courtyard forms: Plant beds, water. Landscape must better relate to building.
- Landscape is a poor reflection of the architecture. Liven it up.