

From: Michael D. Barrett
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 4:10 PM
To: Martin, Alan
Subject: Marling Lumber Redevelopment

Hi Al,

Please submit this for consideration by the Urban Design Commission:

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get a proposal that actually *engages* its unique site? Say, a building that is:

- perhaps 6-7 stories along East Washington (E. Main's heights are fine),
- architecturally stair-steps down to ground level toward the river, providing,
- each unit facing the river with a nice, spacious--I mean *really spacious!*--garden-able, *sociable* balcony. I'm talking a summer outdoor living room.

And a project that engages its site at the ground floor with:

- A terraced engagement of the river for all store fronts along the riverside.
- Each storefront (including along E. Wash) *purposefully* designed for indoor/outdoor life--cafe space, partially covered by deep & wide significantly inset storefront entries, shelter of which is in turn extended by...
- purposeful design for awnings in the expectation of protecting outdoor diners full use use during non-stormy summer rains, and mid-summer blazing sun.

What an opportunity this is to recreate the park/plaza/piazza/place/platz sort of feel of our beloved Memorial Union Terrace! Here we have another wonderful opportunity to engage places, private & public, right on the waterfront with its constant parade of bikes & boats!

Instead, the proposal before you is just another bloatitectoral Interstate interchange box shoe--

horned into a unique urban environment. And with the same cladding we keep seeing--in one unimaginative variation or another--all over Madison, Verona, Sun Prairie and beyond. (On a recent trip to Atlanta, every new-ish building follows the same product formula.)

I mean, look at it, it is right on the waterfront! Instead of engaging it with each waterfront-facing unit, you just provide them with yet another scrunchy, dog-crate sized deck. It's more like an appendage; a formality whose purpose everyone has forgotten. Indeed, these things look like the sort of faux-decks you'll see out in the ticky tacky burbs. (Remember, this is the *URBAN* Design Commission.) There isn't even enough room for people to sit facing one another! Furthermore, it won't be exactly inviting for hanging out on if it is not purposefully designed for awnings. The sun will be blazing on that side. The architecture should assume tasteful awnings.

This commission continues to make huge mistakes on all of these counts all over the city. The new Barriques on Atwood is the perfect case in point of a site that should have provided plaza space for outdoor seating. Instead, the street frontage is dead. It turns its back on the neighborhood.

And finally, Parking. We do know that Atlanta architects are obsessed with their cars. But please, let's go with the natural advantages built into this site. Urban amenities are all within an easy 10 minute walk. Car ownership is going down across the board. (Oh yes, it is: <http://www.npr.org/2016/02/11/466178523/like-millennials-more-older-americans-steering-away-from-driving>) Given the significantly lower rates of car ownership of isthmus residents than even those national averages, and the younger generations arriving here for good tech jobs--people who are more interested in productivity and a fun social life than a dead machine--this site should be a natural for having no more than 0.5 car spaces per unit. (I'm in the real estate rental business, I know that there are vast numbers of new residents seeking housing that is reasonably priced, meaning, that it does not force them to pay for other people's wasteful car

ownership.) Moreover, forcing this much parking on a car-lite neighborhood very much undermines the pro-bike/pro-walk/car-reduced neighborhood plans for both neighborhoods that border on this site.

How about if for once, Madison planners demand art in its architecture, planning for engagement of place rather sealing off from its surroundings?

This project would look wonderful out at the Badger Interchange.

Sincerely,
Michael D. Barrett
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