

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 6, 2015

TITLE: 510 University Avenue – New 12+ Story Mixed-Use Project, “The Hub at Madison II” with 348 Apartment Units, Approximately 8,740 Square Feet of Retail and 2,2992 Square Feet of Flex Space. 4th Ald. Dist. (36901)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: May 6, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant, Richard Slayton and Sheri Carter.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 6, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a new 12+-story mixed-use project located at 510 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson, representing Core Campus, LLC; and Brad Mullins. Registered and speaking neither in support nor opposition was John Morris, representing Cheba Hut.

The Landmarks Commission requested a referral of this item to allow them time to review the project and give input. Planning staff also has concerns with the project; they recommend this be a discussion with no formal action to be taken. Munson distributed updated packets directly in response to a meeting with City staff. They are asking for consideration for initial approval and feel they can address all the issues raised. In terms of the Landmarks Commission referral, this project was unique in that when this project first came to the Urban Design Commission the Landmarks Commission had already reviewed the notice and taken action and voted against removal of the building. The façade of that building has been designed into the façade of this new development. The site is identified for up to twelve stories in the State Street District of the Downtown Plan. Within the plan there is language to look at the evolving context of areas where the height is proposed to be above what is currently there and opportunities to look at address of the mass. Updated plans were shown based on Planning staff’s review of the project.

Jay Wendt, Principal Planner discussed the concerns of the Planning Division regarding this project. How the building relates to the texture along Gilman Street, when you look at the existing rhythm, size and scale of buildings, how does this work and how do those stepbacks with the mass of the building achieve that. How do these relate to your cone of vision as a pedestrian? Staff is very concerned about that from a massing standpoint. From a composition standpoint, they’ve addressed that quite well. How does the historic building work with the texture? Building materials have been addressed in terms of breaking up the mass of the building. Staff is concerned about the Landmarks Commission referral and would like the Urban Design Commission to weigh in on that as well.

John Morris spoke of his concerns with the way the building curves over and impedes on their patio at Cheba Hut. Munson clarified that the 12-story portion of the building is pulled back from the corner so that it's really at the roof of the second floor is where it then comes up to meet the corner, which will be a masonry façade. The corner you can see through, that will be glass.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- What's the long-term future of the buildings on Gilman Street?
 - As it is right now this is not a historic district. The Downtown Plan would speak best to State Street and the greater area.
 - (Fruhling) This was talked about in the Downtown Plan. One of the things happening with State Street, even before the Downtown Plan was adopted, is to try to create the feel of a district around State Street, so it's not just the six blocks between the Square and the University. As we reconstructed State Street the next phases went out to those surrounding blocks: the streetscape, the street lights, the design treatment is all done with the intent of creating the feeling of a district for State Street. This is not a historic district but we are going to be revising plans for State Street, the Capitol Square and the surrounding areas that would include this area, but current adopted plans have it as part of the State Street District. The Zoning Code, including the Downtown Design Guidelines that need to be addressed with this project, codified and added more specific criteria that talks about new buildings fitting in with the existing context, walkable streetscapes and there is a section about massing with guidelines that really come into play here. The Urban Design Commission will need to weigh in on how well this project meets those guidelines.
- If they're not historic, I'm thinking of things like the Ovation where you had something designed to relate to State Street in terms of its height and massing. They came in with something that actually conformed to all of that.
 - This project does respond to the stepback maps that call for 15-feet after four-stories.
- (Parks) Yes the Downtown Height Map does identify that twelve stories may be possible on this site. However, any building that is taller than four stories and/or greater than 20,000 square feet in floor area is a conditional use which requires a subjective approval. If we didn't want there to be a discussion about the specific context of buildings taller than four stories we wouldn't have the requirement that you need to get a conditional use approval. These larger buildings, while they may be appropriate, they go through that approval process so we can have conversations like this about the context and where it's appropriate for height and where it's not. At no time during this discussion have we raised major concerns about what they're doing on the Gorham/University side of the building because when you look at that context that's perfectly appropriate. But coming in to this 2-4 story height on Gilman Street and you have a lot of intact character and it's not a designated historic resource, but it is still a collection of historic resources, there is still something special happening so when we add things to that context, they need to fit into it. We need to expand the discussion beyond just "the downtown map says 12 stories." Now that we have this somewhat unique referral from the Plan Commission to the Landmarks Commission by Alder Verveer's request, I think the Landmarks Commission is going to be looking at this perhaps through a different lens, and that's going to come back before you here for further conversation.
- (Secretary) The first time we saw this we talked about the team having to frame the presentation from beginning to end and address this criteria. Therefore the ability to do that more based on the changes we looked at today is much more enhanced because we need to make a finding that these criteria are being met. And they need to provide that case.

- It looks like you're doing your best to respond to the issues from the previous review. When we saw something that was a modern interpretation of a warehouse building compared to what we see today with all the subtle ins and outs, breaking down of scale and even how that 4-story portion relates to the brick building to the east, I think is really going to enhance that in a real positive way. I think it's a handsome composition along Gilman Street, the way the upper and lower façades relate to each other. The dark panel way up at the top, is it really going to be that black?
 - It's called "gun metal." But yes, the idea is that a good portion of it is that dark element and then there's a play with the other two gray colors. The intent is a very vibrant difference with the play in panels.
- Maybe those could even be expressed in a light gray, something to pop them out. Overall I think it's a huge improvement.
- The biggest concern I have is the canyon down Gilman.
 - I don't think we'll get that effect, there just isn't enough mass lined up against each other.
- Seeing how that other replacement buildings would actually work in light of the zoning we have adopted is something that should be modeled to help us understand how that street is not going to be a canyon if it's redeveloped, which you're starting to do. Need to model to see Gilman Street build-out based on future development anticipated with Zoning provisions, in conjunction with the development.
- I think having a porous façade is going to help because even though there's construction it seems like the sidewalk is narrow and buildings are very tight.
- Concern with dark metal at top; need to play with lighter gray alternatives, especially on exposed balconies.

ACTION:

On a motion by DeChant, seconded by Carter, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-0).

No rankings were provided for this project.