

To Members of the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission

Dear Commissioners:

I'd like to comment on one aspect of "The Hub" design - its appearance from Gorham Street. I cannot attend the Plan Commission tonight, so here are my concerns.

I am opposed to the protrusions from the east half of the south facade. A continuation of the west balcony would be much better.

I've been watching this area for 47 years, first as a nearby resident then continuing as a frequent driver and cyclist through the area. I think the Gorham Street approach here is one of the iconic gateways in Madison, and I like to bring my visitors through here. This is the East Gateway to UW. It is also the view that most Madison residents and UW visitors will see of The Hub.

Approaching from State Street, you can see the campus high rise housing. As a Madisonian, I'm proud of these developments that prevent student housing from eating into all the Downtown neighborhoods.

As you enter the corner toward University Avenue you now start to see the procession of UW buildings, which have been well developed over the past 40 years. This view will become obstructed by the proposed building until you actually round the curve.

I regret that the full view across the curve will be lost, but I support high density at this location. Because it is located at the apex of the curve, I believe that the proposed building will seem much more massive than those to the south on the circumference.

I am opposed to the 2-4 story building protrusions, which I understand were added to break up the massive south elevation. To me, they give it the appearance of a commercial building, while the west balcony reflects residential use. As viewed approaching from Gorham, the protrusion extends beyond this facade and the adjacent facade, giving the impression that the high density has bulged into the street space.

Due to the one way traffic on Gorham and Bassett, and the tall buildings to the south, there is little opportunity for anyone to view the full facade. Most of the pedestrian views will be from within 200' of the building, and they will usually not be looking up at the facade. Most of the viewers will be Gorham Street travelers. I appreciate all the work you're doing on the Gilman facade, but the appearance to Gorham travelers should not be neglected.

I would prefer to have the west balcony extended across the entire front of the building to relate better to people at street level. Landscaping on the balcony adds to the street level experience. The balcony should also be accessible from the amenity areas, and from the adjoining apartments, as a place where people can sit in the sun.

The corner protrusions at the top also seem to emphasize the looming mass of the building compared to the buildings to the south and east.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint on this.

-Simon Widstrand, [REDACTED] Branford Lane East, Madison

cc: Alder Mike Verveer
Katherine Cornwell, Planning Director
Alan Martin, UDC staff