

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 11, 2019

TITLE: 126 Langdon Street – New Development
of The Hub II. 2nd Ald. Dist. (57757)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 11, 2019

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Christian Harper, Jessica Klehr, Tom DeChant, Craig Weisensel, Rafeeq Asad, Syed Abbas and Shane Bernau.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 11, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for new development located at 126 Langdon Street. Registered and speaking in support were Brian Munson and Jeff Zelisko, both representing Core Spaces. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Mark Goehausen, representing Core Spaces. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Robert Klebba. Registered and speaking in opposition was James McFadden.

Zelisko addressed the Commission’s comments from a previous informational presentation including the entry canopy being too bulky in character, and the metal panel material not fitting into the context of the surrounding buildings. He also noted that zoning allows for two additional bonus stories but the building has to be made better for it. The building will contain 88-units and 383 beds. Loading will have to be off the street. He reviewed floor plans 2-5, levels 6 and 7 are a smaller footprint, with the pool and terrace area not visible from the street. The building is now entirely masonry in two brick colors of brownish red and soft white. The entry is recessed at the windows with a bronze element and a more subtle canopy. Views of the rear shown from the lake give shoreline context. The building looks better with the additional floors and gives more value to those top units.

Public Comment:

James McFadden spoke neither in support nor opposition but giving suggestions. He is concerned as a neighbor, the inspiration page shows large mixed use buildings in major urban thoroughfares taking up an entire block. What we have here is a purely residential building in the middle of the block with no commercial space for pedestrian interest. The inspiration shown is inappropriate as it is surrounded by small houses with light street traffic where pedestrians outnumber vehicles. There’s a rich history of purely residential apartment buildings here, this doesn’t look like an apartment building. It doesn’t even look residential necessarily. Some minor tweaking will not fit into the neighborhood. The size is allowed with the exception of the height but it needn’t look like a mixed-use building.

Robert Klebba spoke neither in support nor opposition as a neighborhood steering committee member. He noted that some design features are missing, there is no defined access for food/package deliveries or Uber pick-up/drop-offs. There are fire lanes on either side of the building but there is no space, they need an area for traffic. The neighborhood expressed concerns about the roof deck and swimming pool, there will be a considerable amount of activity generated by the pool. While the current design is an improvement, it does feel commercial and does not reflect the historically collegiate feel of the neighborhood. There is concern about how the mix of living spaces are defined with a great number of units with 4 or 5 bedrooms. There should be a better mix to attract more ages.

The Commission discussed the following:

- It's refined, I like everything except for the rear view, something about it looks heavy. This is better than the metal panel.
 - It looks less exaggerated in far views.
- This is much improved.
- I agree with the radioactive green water. I appreciate the section running the long way on the site because the building is the opposite direction. Is it up to us to determine how high the building goes?
 - It's up to us to make a finding that the request for additional stories contributes to a much better design than would be provided with fewer stories.
- I think a section cut the other way would be helpful. How it meets the ground from a human scale is nice, but the same elevation that Rafeeq was referring to, the way it hits the ground it lost some of its human scale somehow, and the streets down there are very narrow. What that feels like to walk by is very important. It doesn't feel residential and I question how that feels when the streets are so narrow. All the detail around it is much smaller. I have concerns about that.
 - This area is for fire access. There is going to be landscaping along here so it should be a lot softer than what you're seeing here. Vines will be planted to climb up as well. We did want to separate those elements and the fire access lane drove that.
- Provide views down the alley, what pedestrians see, what it feels like walking past these buildings.
- According to the floor plan there is an exit on that back wall? Could that be a small canopy to activate that alleyway?
 - Yes that's a great idea.
- I agree with everything said so far. Although it doesn't look like a residential building it's provocative. It looks like an Art Deco adaptive reuse. I wonder about stepping back those upper two floors would benefit for all the neighbors and pedestrians.
 - These two actually do step back, we expressed it as the same form that takes place here. There's two covered terraces here that could be left off so it reads as set back. I feel strongly that this mass playing against that would diminish it.
- You're really packing them in here, I'm not seeing the amount of amenity space that a dormitory like this mimics would have. Even in the dorms they have storage areas for suitcases and things. I don't see enough bike storage, just a real lack of amenity space for this dense a population. That many students in that space seems unrealistic. There's an opportunity at the front of the building to activate the front of the building with more amenity space.
- The exterior, particularly the front straight on is a huge improvement. I like the masonry, detailing around the windows and the accenting, it all works nicely. The extra floors, referring to the comments on the back, I have to wonder is that sorority below going to get any sun at all in the wintertime? I'd be curious as to what a shadow study would show happening to the adjacent buildings.
 - We will prepare a shadow study.

- Some of the neighborhood concerns jump out at me too. Looking at the floor plan and trying to picture that many people moving in at the same time with seemingly inefficient room for drop-off, loading, etc., that concerns me. The roof terrace and noise associated with it is a concern, and being Wisconsin it's not used year-round. I spoke with people who have experience with these buildings that have pools, it's used by not the year-round residents as much as people who are subletting in the summertime, and that's where a lot of the behavioral issues come from. I realize it's a great amenity, but I don't see it as essential.
- Rendering #16, I'd like to ask if my fellow Commissioners think that cream brick at the top is a little heavy. It's a base, middle, top but it's a very massive top. It doesn't distinguish itself as a top through its fenestration, it's just a different material. If you brought the red brick up close to the top of the window it could be less heavy, or insert some of the whiter brick into the details of that particular part of the building to give it some elegance. I like the backside with the tall narrow piece because it's a separate mass.
 - We'll look at the height on this part, we liked the idea of how this mass felt different from that.
- You could change the opening sizes and bring it up higher.
- Where the brick goes all the way up makes it look like a solid mass, and the brick here looks like a skin, it's a very different language, it's noticeably different.
- Than your entrance really becomes something special.

ACTION:

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