

## AGENDA # 3

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** April 24, 2019

TITLE: 780 Regent Street – PD, Construction of a  
New UW Campus Hotel. 8<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist.  
(54466)      **REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

DATED: April 24, 2019

**ID NUMBER:**

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

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of April 24, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a new UW Campus hotel located at 780 Regent Street. Registered in support of the project were Thomas Miller, representing Mortenson Development; Adam Winkler, representing The Alexander Company; and Dave Merrick. Miller gave a brief summary of the site and surrounding context. In response to the Commission's previous comments, they have increased the emphasis on the public rights-of-way, which oriented the restaurant and lobby more directly to the bike path. They will also connect the hotel to the mall on a pathway that exists for the current development on site at the rail corridor. They enhanced the pedestrian connections with landscaping. They have increased the signage at the primary entrances so they act like front entrances for the building. They increased the patio size and will provide outdoor seating. The EIFS is now in secondary locations so as not to be a primary material of the façade (from 25% to 15% of the façade), to be replaced by metal panel. They have added an opportunity for artwork on the screening of the parking structure along the bike path. Corrugated metal replaces what was wood looking material on the building.

Adam Winkler spoke in support of the project. The Alexander Co. thinks this will be a great asset to their surrounding properties.

The Commission discussed the following:

- How would the panel graphics be approved? The Sylvee was done as two separate items.
  - You can ask it to be done administratively or you can ask it to come to the Commission.
- (Firchow) Final details of parking lot screening panels are not included in this request and will require the approval of an alteration. Prior to final sign-off and recording such details shall be reviewed by the Urban Design Commission or the UDC Secretary with a recommendation to the Planning Division Director.
- (Glaeser) It appears that the signage you're showing might require a Comprehensive Design Review (not part of this motion).

- I don't see bike racks near the patio that's right off the bike path.
  - We have 18 bike racks for the project, four are internal to the parking structure, with the rest along the west face of the building adjacent to the loading area.
- Did you use any energy saving measures?
  - We do have a variety of items we are considering for this, specifically we are using LED lighting interior and exterior, high efficiency glazing, and we've looked at limiting the larger areas of glazing to the high traffic areas. The mechanical design for the entire building is on-going and is not yet complete, but we're looking at those opportunities as we continue with design.
- Overall it's an exciting project. I like the northeast corner and how it addresses the bike path, the activation. It still seems like there's a bit of a disconnect from the view we see here and the rendering of the vehicular entrance along that side over the stair tower to that corner. Can there be an architectural connection made so there isn't a division by that stair tower?
  - We'd encourage that as a condition.
- The landscape as it's proposed feels very suburban. It's functioning but in its form there's not a whole lot of ground plane interest. Take a more urban form with more ground cover, ground plane interest.
- Plant specific, the Daylily is so overdone. Something native or another species such as Coneflower is recommended.
- I commented last time about the missed opportunity of not addressing the East Campus Mall or the bike path. I see the concern reiterated in the staff report. We can acknowledge a good building design but we should also ask ourselves if this is really good urban design, and whether the opportunities we are given are more about murals than real connections and real presence on the roadways.
- We talked about entries and experience of the building. That southwest commuter path is the most active for the number of people experiencing the building. When you say primary entry that's vehicular only. I would like you to talk through how you feel you worked through scenarios and that orientation of the building hasn't changed. There were significant comments to this last time.
  - We did take a look at that. When we started to mirror the building we ran into several problems in terms of doing that. Fire access is a primary concern; the East Campus Mall is not considered appropriate or usable for fire access. The primary access the Fire Department looks to is Regent Street because that gives them the access to two sides of the building for the distance required. In addition we've had discussions with the hotel flag itself, and the necessity for them to have visibility of an auto entry from the primary auto thoroughfare is critical. It may look like we have not been responsive but we have analyzed multiple approaches and acknowledge the level of traffic invisibility along both the bike path and the East Campus Mall.
- Without flipping the building I do see that the majority of the lounge space is facing the parking and office space, and the laundry room and mechanical room, the break room, other back-of-house functions are facing the bike path. I see no significant redesign or effort to bring the real active space activating the corridor. I see some landscaping with sidewalk and trellis additions.
- If the orientation is such that the it must stay that way, getting the back-of-house away from that and activating it in a true genuine manner. The whole façade of the parking ramp needs significant work to make it fully integrated with the hotel. It should be treated like any major street, it should be a fully integrated design on that level.
  - The back-of-house area is below and gets further below the bike path. We were hoping that vertical articulation moves your focus up to the building.
- It might be worthy to think about how populations are changing. When people come to visit hotels they aren't necessarily bringing their cars, they're using an Uber and walking a lot more. Madison is the size that could really promote that. I question a hotel that focuses so much on cars when there's a path there the City's been trying to promote coming from the lake all the way to the Kohl Center. It gets used more and more and is becoming more of a successful link. I think it's a shame to not address that more.

- When I look at page 11 of the patio rendering, I question the scale of the patio. It looks like if you were on that patio and were going to go to the Kohl Center, you're walking through parking. The other end of the building is more accessible. The elevations on page 14 I think it's worth thinking about what that's like to walk at night and the safety of that. The façade had very few openings and it's very dark. If we really want to encourage pedestrians, that's a tough façade to convince me I would want to walk by very often. The landscaping there so far doesn't seem to have any purpose, I don't know why you would be in that space at all.
  - When you're coming from the east and go under the tunnel at the tracks, you see an 8 or 9 foot retaining wall until you get to the hotel. The experience here is built in to the division of the property, but I'm hearing what you're saying about this as well.
- There's a disconnect between elevations and renderings in terms of landscape design. It's nice to see some non-traditional trees and the artwork on the panels, but then you're showing tension mesh which is the exact opposite of the potentially color panels on the bike path side. Furthermore on page 12 there's some sort of upright vegetation, but the landscape plan itself you've just got a single long row of prairie grass seed. I would definitely like to see something more both in the screening of the parking ramp and the vegetation in front of it. Most of the plant material is somewhat standard, decent enough selections. On the big showpiece corner I think that could be developed a bit more as suggested. If you want it to draw people to that side entrance on the campus mall side, maybe that's a section you dedicate to annual plantings. The plantings cannot have stone mulch, it needs to be bark mulch.
- I want to clarify the Buckthorne along with the prairie grass seed, that's what you're seeing.
- On that same west elevation it was mentioned about lighting the landscaping. To your point on safety if it's lit, it's going to make a big difference.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Weisensel, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion for referral noted the following:

- That the previous comments for orientation and activation of the north and west have not been addressed, and that either through the program or exterior façade and landscaping, find a solution that activates those two either through orientation or other design.