

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** April 18, 2012

TITLE: 531 West Mifflin Street – PUD(GDP-SIP),
Building Demolition and Relocation of an
Existing House to the Site. 4th Ald. Dist.
(25979) **REFERRED:**
REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: April 18, 2012 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Henry Lufler, Acting Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Marsha Rummel, Melissa Huggins, Richard Slayton and John Harrington.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 18, 2012, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a PUD(SIP) located at 531 West Mifflin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Matt Aro and Brandon Cook. Appearing and speaking in opposition was Rosemary Lee. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Scott Kolar, representing Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. The proposed building to be moved is an existing 3-flat on Johnson Street and would be incorporated into the new basement plan. The site is largely not landscaped and this will create a more attractive environment for this development. Three parking stalls are included with access through a joint easement. They will be giving more breathing room to the neighbor by increasing the setback on the eastern side of the building. Stairs will be installed for entrance to the basement. They are also providing 15 stalls for bicycles and mopeds, which is higher than required.

Scott Kolar spoke representing Capitol Neighborhoods. The proposal as a whole is acceptable but they are concerned about the developer’s capacity to complete the project based on experience with previous projects he has done in this area. He noted that with the move, this will change the smallest house on the block to the largest house on the block; the footprint of the existing house is significantly smaller than what is shown. As far as the setback on the east side of the property, questions were raised about windows on that side and what kind of venting would be on that side that might affect the next door neighbors. A major concern will be the current dirt parking area; going to a much larger footprint on the house and a concrete patio, the easement and the parking will also be going to concrete, making stormwater runoff then becomes a concern. According to Cook there is a storm drain there but it is not shown on the plan. The paving of the easement is of concern if only Cook’s half would be paved.

Rosemary Lee spoke in opposition to the project, stating the Bassett Neighborhood where she lives has had many unfortunate experiences with projects of Mr. Cook (115 and 117 South Bassett were specifically referenced). She did not know if those outstanding violations have been cleared up. She also stated that Mr. Cook has rent abatement issues against him and she seriously wonders if this monumental project could be fully completed.

The Secretary stated that he met with Mr. Cook and Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator. The issue of Cook's prior record came up with Tucker stating his concerns about going forward with yet another project and the Department's ability to support that project. He stated that there is serious concern about this project as an expansion of other on-going unfinished similar projects by Cook, but these issues would be dealt with at the Plan Commission level, therefore the Urban Design Commission needs to only look at the design components.

Ald. Verveer spoke to the grandeur of a house move, the fact that the project is within the area of one of the most controversial and contentious aspects of the Downtown Plan, and the issue of the applicant's track record and code violations. He stated they are very cognizant of that issue and they have not followed their usual pattern of meetings between the neighborhood and the developer because they would prefer Cook deal with his outstanding issues first. They have met but they are concentrating on the issue of being able to complete the project in a reasonable amount of time. He would normally hold neighborhood meetings on a project but for this project he did not because, in part, of the current owner of the house in question (financing has not been secured for their project at this location). In terms of the Downtown Plan, it seems to him that this is a reasonable halfway point; the majority of the Plan Commission supports higher density in this neighborhood. He did bring up the issue of other houses that have been moved on the Isthmus where the basements have not been finished.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Look at making the basement unit windows larger.
- This is bigger than what's there but not as big as what we've talked about in terms of Mifflin Street in City plans.
- While the photographs are helpful they really don't show the scale of how this is going to fit in. I need to see a massing model/sketch where you show the entire block face and explain how this building is going to fit into that space. What we have is not adequate.
- The issue of stormwater is really important and needs to be addressed. You cannot just have impervious surface all over.
- Adjust bike storage/patio area conflicts.
- Correct labeling on landscape plan relevant to "Red bud;" it is "Cercis" not "Carpinus."
- The garbage needs to be put somewhere else.
- I would like to see a neighborhood association meeting take place, prior to returning for further consideration.
- At the south end of the lot, the tree might not be as healthy with car doors. It would be nice to have a taller tree that would provide some shade for the parking area.
- Look into pervious concrete as part of your solution to stormwater management. You still need to store it somewhere.
- I appreciate trying to save a grand old building but I don't want us to forget that the building that ULI just demolished is probably one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood.

ACTION:

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Slayton, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this project. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion required address of the above stated concerns and the following:

- Need massing model to show how building fits in scale with entire block face; existing and proposed sketch-up modeling.
- Issue of stormwater requires address, on-site management and relocation of garage storage area.
- Meet with neighborhood association on project before returning.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5 and 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 531 West Mifflin Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	4	-	5	-	-	5	6	5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

General Comments:

- Need stormwater plan and more comfort that house “fits.”
- No.