

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 9, 2022

TITLE: 317-323 E. Wilson Street - Redevelopment of Existing Buildings into a New Independent Extended Stay Hotel Located in UMX Zoning. 4th Ald. Dist. (69918)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 9, 2022

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 9, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of redevelopment of existing buildings located at 317-323 E. Wilson Street. Registered and speaking in support were Andy Inman, A.J. Robitschek, representing North Central Group. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Josh Wilcox.

The team presented plans for an adaptive reuse of the buildings for a future independent hotel utilizing historic tax credit to bring the building back to life. The existing four-story masonry structure was originally built in 1907 as a saddlery. The existing two-story buildings constructed in the 1970s are the main focus, with their current state being roughly 12" block CMU wall with EIFS in a diamond pattern. The proposed design will bring the building back to its original configuration by opening up previously infilled openings. The proposed massing appears simplistic and modern, but adds interest by inseting areas shown in darker EIFS. This allows for larger areas without a lot of jointing while giving a modern feel. The base of the two-story building will be painted to match. There is an opportunity to reuse the existing EIFS, keeping in mind the reuse of these two structures is good from an environmental standpoint.

The Commission discussed the following:

- It's refreshing to see the reuse of some buildings downtown. We often say minimize EIFS, maybe it's worth revisiting the reasoning for that for everyone on the Commission.
- For an informal prohibition of EIFS? It goes way back before my time on the Commission. It has to do with some of the buildings during the post-modern boom that were lacking detail with material that was not very durable in certain locations, it was just a cheap and inexpensive way to mimic historic details that were a little clunky because they didn't have the precision that the originals might have had. The staff report gives us a little guidance as to the building being existing, if we're patching and infilling that's a different case than something coming from the ground up. At some point we should revisit and clarify our directives on the use of that material.

- Right now it's EIFS, it's the maintenance and how you detail it originally. In this instance, I think because the building is already EIFS, if they're going to reuse some of it I would be in support because it's "grandfathered in" somewhat, and also is more conducive, they're not trying to make it look like a Neo-Classical building.
- The EIFS of yesterday is not the same, it's more durable and can do more quality of detailing. I don't know that I love this, I'm almost indifferent. I love the approach of maintaining the four story building, I support that design move, but I don't know that it ends here, that this is the right design. Something about the whiteness in contrast to the other building, or just the vertical portions, not sure but something is fighting a little bit. The connector piece, is that flush or inset?
 - It may want to be flush, we're working with the existing wall and finish, it is relatively in line with that red brick building currently.
 - The connector piece would be more or less flush. Heather Bailey, the City's Preservation Planner did review this, and she really liked how that detail broke up the two buildings. I do believe the white will stand slightly proud of the dark.
- It looks like the white is proud of the dark between the two buildings. The EIFS or the white should definitely be proud by a couple inches just to show that separation.
- You show a regular rhythm of the glazing on the four-story building, except on one side at the top, is that on purpose?
 - Yes, as it relates to the historic tax credit process to not have a new additional opening; that was not there during original construction of the building.
- I agree with the contrast on the building between the dark vertical window bands and the EIFS. We see sleek modern buildings that are typically metal panel, but wonder if it should be a little more toned down between the EIFS and the window bands. Less striking, less contrast to take attention away from the Rubin's building, which is the centerpiece of the project.
- Appreciate the historic care to the building. What's the thickness of the EIFS now vs. future?
 - It is currently a 12" CMU wall and a 1" EIFs outboard. Given current codes we will have to average 3-inches or so.
- It's successful with the different surfaces being proud, but I do wonder the practicality of reusing any existing, removing the cross hatch pattern and getting down to the reveals. EIFS does provide some value for energy efficiency, I'd hate to see any removed.
- The rooftop patio is an exciting amenity and feature, I hope you take it farther.
- The north elevation on E. Wilson Street, the new EIFS vertical lines and joints themselves make sense, but seem unrelated to the base of what is along the street. If you're putting in new windows where there's stone right now, I question if it could relate more to what's going on up above. Having strong vertical lines coming down with darker EIFS and some glazing could relate to what's happening at the base more. Right now there's so much detail at human scale, to go past the stone with the horizontal rectangular windows, there's so little human scale and a bit of a disconnect between top and bottom.
- I'd echo that the rhythm established on top doesn't relate to the base at all.
- Congratulations for tackling the adaptive reuse. That piece of the Rubin's building and reusing that makes me very happy.
- I would recommend you look at the backside of the two-story building and keep in mind that this is lake view property, prime real estate. There's a railroad and kind of back-of-house of a lot of buildings along this stretch, that's an incredible view and opportunity, but it seems like what you're doing is relatively modest compared to the opportunity you have. Hopefully a someday redesigned Law Park and lakefront could be the premier stretch in our City, this would have a front row seat to that. Maybe there's a missed opportunity happening, not necessarily suggesting it all needs to be glazing.
- The EIFS would look lighter if the darker form came down and went across the base all the way around the building, it would help resolve the punched opening differences between the base and the top.

- The tenant signage needs a bit of resolution, maybe there's something that can be more integral to the forms than just a horizontal rectangle on both sides.
- The base to top relation along E. Wilson Street bothered me too. A white box floating on a dark base, or realigning those windows? It's jarring.
- I did wonder about the long vertical EIFS panels and was hoping the front façade broken up by dark strips could be a different material. I worry about two stories of unbroken EIFS, to look clean, crisp and modern in that long vertical application. Would it make sense to give some horizontal reveals to those long panels? The view to the lake, it feels like a missed opportunity on the backside of the building.
- The inset dark lines of the vertical EIFS panels, is that achieved with paint or a darker EIFS material?
 - It's intended to be grooves, to cast shadow and provide a darker break in the material.
- It's awkward looking in several subtle but very notable ways. Happy to see the Rubin's building being maintained and rehabbed, but the building next door...a large part of it is a color issue. It presents as very bright white and starkly modern, you can't get past it when you look at the Rubin's building. You said you don't want to compete with the Rubin's rehab but that's exactly what you're doing. Really detracts from the rehab.
- Several years back we approved the building across the street, then Planning came back and said it was a brick district. Any reaction internally about that related to this building?
 - This is one building, so as far as the brick restoring it is quite an enhancement. The two-story building, we are reducing the amount of EIFS there now. Those base/top related comments, whether we wrap it or the punched openings are modified to relate to the top, we can work with staff on that. The color of the white, as I look at this image I think the material image does a better job of presenting an off-off white than the rendering does.
- Even if it turns out that saving that one inch isn't practical, there's still a provision in the ordinance that we can with authority approve this material on that two-story building.

ACTION:

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Klehr, the Urban Design Commission **INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).

The motion provided for the following:

- Consider an alternate color to the bright white.
- Relook at the top-to-bottom cohesiveness.
- Consideration of the back of the building treatment.
- The Commission agrees with the basic premise of reusing the materials and design of the existing buildings.