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City of Madison– Department of Planning
Department of Planning and Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite LL100
Madison, WI 53703

8/22/2022

Re Planning Commission Submittal – Letter of Intent
Butler Street Apartments– Reese and Blake Fisher

Dear Kevin and Committee Members,

Butler Street Apartments

Action Requested

Approval for Demolition, Rezoning & Conditional Use

Introduction

Butler Street Apartments is a new, multi-family housing project proposed at North Butler Street. Comprised of four contiguous properties located across North Butler Street from the City of Madison Capitol Square North Ramp parking garage. The project will combine the properties at 117, 119, 123, and 125 North Butler Street and will require the complete demolition of all existing structures on the sites. The existing structures include (3) existing buildings along Butler Street. The structures at 123 and 125 North Butler Street have been vacant for approximately 4 years, both properties also have a detached garage in the rear yard that will be demolished; the structure at 117 North Butler Street is partially occupied. 119 North Butler Street has no structures on its premises. The attached existing conditions report provides photos of the existing structures.

The proposed, new multi-family building is comprised of a single level of below grade parking, grade floor resident common space and leasing office, and 32 rental housing units on levels grade through 4th floor. The accessible roof provides outdoor common space for residents in addition to the at grade outdoor space within the rear yard of the property. The below grade parking holds 24 vehicle parking stalls along with resident bike and moped parking, trash/recycling room, and building utilities. On levels Grade through 4th floor units range in scale from Studios to 2 bedroom/2 bath. The common outdoor resident spaces allow for considerable outdoor usable space for tenants of the building while beginning to recapture the back yard for usable at grade space within this neighborhood. Currently the rear yards within this block are utilized for surface parking and trash collection and do not provide a safe or desirable area to gather.

The development of the building form, and its articulation along North Butler Street is working to break down the overall scale of the building along the street edge and to be sympathetic to the rhythm of the existing structures. The development of a court like setting of the building at the street edge works to mimic the overall articulation of building façades at the front yard setback that is in similar scale to the existing structures of the street edge. The incorporation of walk-up entries to the main lobby of the building as well as the at grade unit fronting the street edge continue to establish this rhythm and subtle articulation to the pedestrian on the sidewalk. This development in the articulation of the building form along with the utilization of change in materials from brick and cast stone veneer to cement board lap siding allows for the scale and rhythm of the building to complement the existing context and fabric of the neighborhood.

Re-Zoning

The re-zoning of the properties needs to be looked at in the context of the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan as well as the Downtown Plan to understand why we feel the request is in line with objectives and recommendations outlined by these two plans.

When looking at the Comprehensive Plan this area is identified as Medium Residential which suggests a density of 20-90 units/acre. A past approved project on this site have had a density of 112 units/acre and the current proposal is at a density of 90 units/acre. In addition, the site directly across North Butler Street is identified as Downtown Core which allows a density of the highest intensity. What this suggests is that this is a transition area within the downtown fabric of the city. The Comprehensive Plan identifies this as the “Missing Middle” and suggests the use of step backs and articulation of the building massing to address the contextual relationship of new structures to its surroundings. The proposed project looks to articulate the building form to relate the character and rhythm of the street edge and engage the street with a building and character that is sympathetic to all its existing context.

The Downtown Plan continues to build on the ideas of the Comprehensive Plan by purposely calling out objectives of encouraging higher density infill redevelopment that is innovative and sustainable, and complements and enhances the areas in which they are proposed (Objective 2.4.) Provide a dynamic and flexible mix of uses and densities that enable ample opportunities for jobs, housing, retail, entertainment, and recreation in a compact urban environment (Objective 3.2.) Related to transitions and district boundaries (Key 4) clearly states that the intent of the plan is not to strictly delineate Downtown’s neighborhoods and districts by drawing hard edges on a map, but generally define them and strengthen those qualities that make them unique places while promoting “permeable boundaries” that weave together to form a cohesive downtown. As we look at this site and understand the future high intensity use that will one day come at the parking garage site across North Butler Street we can begin to understand North Butler Street as an area that promotes this sense of a permeable boundary noted above.

Looking specifically at the objectives and recommendations for the James Madison Park neighborhood we see these above mentioned objectives continued to be refined within the neighborhood recommendations. (Objective 4.11) discusses, “The James Madison Park neighborhood should accommodate a mix of dwelling units, some of which are suitable for families with children. The renovation of existing houses coupled with the selective redevelopment that generally reflects the scale and rhythm of the existing structures...” The neighborhood plan continues with two recommendations that we feel clearly delineates the scale of redevelopment and its location through the overall neighborhood. (Recommendation 104) Allow relatively higher-density development that conforms to the maximum building heights map along North Hamilton, Butler, and Gorham Streets. (Recommendation 105) in contrast calls for infill and redevelopment along Hancock, Franklin, and Blair Streets generally compatible in scale and design with the predominantly “house like” neighborhood character.

With this as a backdrop the project is requesting to rezone the 4 parcels from DR-1 to DR-2. These four parcels are depicted as Lot 1 on the attached CSM that will be submitted in conjunction with the land-use application. Though very similar in language, the DR-1 zoning has a provision that only allows for up to a 60’ wide building along the main street façade. As we have described above, and is depicted in the attached drawings, we have created a building form and façade along North Butler Street that develops a court like setting to the building at the street edge that works to mimic the overall articulation of building façades at the front yard setback that is in similar scale to the existing structures of the street edge. This approach is innovative and sustainable in its use of building form to allow for a transition type building and create “The Missing Middle” at the edge of a neighborhood.

This project works to provide greater density, while paying respect to the existing context in which it sits with the understanding of the goals and vision of the city plans that look to move the city forward and provide much needed quality housing to a portion of our vibrant downtown. We feel that this type of infill project provides a precedent for quality infill re-development that works towards the overall goals of city plans while paying respect to the character and rhythms of the existing street conditions and future developments to come within this “permeable boundary” of transition at a neighborhood edge.

Conditional Use

The conditional use for the project is required because we are proposing a multi-family building with greater than 8 units.

Parking

The project is located within the Central Area, as defined in City of Madison zoning, and establishes that there is no minimum parking required for this project. There are 24 parking spaces for autos and 3 for mopeds in the below grade structure. This provides an equivalent of 25 parking spaces. We feel this is an appropriate amount of on-site vehicle parking based on several factors. First, the projects’ location is 1-2 blocks from multiple bus routes and 1/2 block from the Mifflin Street bicycle corridor. Second, James Madison Park and the Capital Square are 1-2 blocks from the site providing close proximity to recreation, dining and employment opportunities. Third, there are two neighborhood markets within less then1 block from this site and Festival foods is only 8 1/2 blocks away. And finally, there is structured parking in a City of Madison ramp available immediately across the street with both long and short term parking options available.

Project Team

Owner	Reese and Blake Fisher	
Architect	Cās4 Architecture, LLC	Marc Schellpfeffer
Contractor	TBD	TBD

Existing Conditions

- See attached Photos
- A Re-use and Recycling Plan will be submitted by the contractor prior to a demolition permit being granted

Proposed Uses

Leasing Office	515	Net Square Feet
Parking & Storage	11,518	Gross Square Feet
Residential & General Use	32,015	Gross Square Feet

Hours of Operation

Typical hours of operation are:

Leasing Office	8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Monday – Friday
Residential	24 / 7	

Building Square Footage

44,048 Gross Square Feet

21005.00 – North Butler Street Development – Plan Comm. Letter of Intent

Number of Dwelling Units

Thirty two (32)	Residential Points – 40pts/32units = 1.25 average
4 – Studios	.75*4 = 3pts
19 – One Bedroom Units	1*19 = 19pts
9 – Two Bedroom Units	2*9 = 18pts

Auto & Bike Parking Stalls

Bicycle Parking	32 interior
Guest Bicycle Parking	4 at grade
Moped Parking	4
Auto Parking	(24 Total)
Accessible	1
Non-Accessible	23

Lot Coverage and Usable Open Space:

Lot Size	15,368 sf
Lot Coverage	9,100 sf
Percent Lot Coverage	59% (max allowed in DR-2 = 80%)
Usable Open Space at grade	5,431 sf
Usable Open Space (30 balconies)	2,153 sf
Usable Open Space (roof terrace)	2,250 sf
Total Usable Open Space	9,834 sf
Usable Open Space/40 Bedrooms	246 sf/bedroom (20 sf/bedroom required in DR-2)

Value of Land

\$600,000-\$750,000

Estimated Project Cost

\$9,000,000

Number of Construction & Full-Time Equivalent Jobs Created

Leasing Office	2	FTE's
Construction Jobs	15-30	FTE's

Public Subsidy Requested

None.

Marc Schellpfeffer, AIA
Partner

MDS/pmc

Attachments:

- 21005.00 – Butler Street Apartments – Existing Conditions Photos (8 pages)
- Certified Survey Map (Information Only; CSM is being filed separately 6 pages)
- Exterior Material Palette (1 page)

Copied File