



Agenda Item #: 6

Project Title: 6728 Mader Drive - Planned Development (PD). 7th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 77465

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Christian Harper, Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Amanda Arnold, Marsha Rummel, and Russell Knudson

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of May 31, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a Planned Development (PD) located at 6728 Mader Drive. Registered and speaking in support were Brad Koning and Roman Ryan.

Koning presented plans for a proposed funeral home in this area surrounded by multi-family residential. This parcel is currently vacant and is part of a GDP that was approved earlier this year. The project site is located at the corner of Maple Gove and McKee. This lot has a major depression on it. The Walgreens is approximately 25 feet higher. This area is congested with multi-family and the intersection is a major intersection of this neighborhood. We are adjacent to Golden Circle. The building is placed to the north along McKee Road, as primarily a two-story structure with parking to the south. Because of the depression we will bring in significant amounts of fill to meet the elevation of McKee Road. Parking is located to the south with a stormwater detention pond at the southwest corner, a new sidewalk will be installed along Golden Copper Lane, with sidewalk connections to the building from McKee and Golden Copper as well as to the main entrances of the funeral home. Landscaping is planned to be generous. Funeral homes need to have length to have a receiving line; as you enter the space you have a lobby with seating, extending up to a registration area, and into the chapel. They are showing a cathedral ceiling for services, a social hall for potlucks and after service gatherings, as well as a small outdoor patio area connected to the social hall. There are some support functions and meeting space. The main entry is a two-story volume, and as a requirement of the GDP, with a portion of the interior being two stories with an open stairway to office space, although not required as part of the programming. From an architectural standpoint, this is more form follows function, as a funeral home, the architecture wants to follow a more residential theme. Building materials include cast stone, projecting piers, wood, and hand laid stucco, not EIFS, and a combination of shingles and standing seam metal roof to maintain the mountain-style architecture. Nine-foot windows will allow for lots of natural light, trying to maximize the glass along McKee Road and at the two-story height space at the corner. Because of the viewings in the chapel, the east façade has fewer windows and steps down in relation to the open space that may be part of the neighboring development. A few section views show the extent of what would be considered a two-story building, at the corner and then stepping down to the chapel. The two-story space aligns with the third floor of the building to the left. It's about arrival, supporting someone in their time of need, the celebration of life, and the aesthetic of a funeral home is more residential in nature.

Questions for staff and/or the development team:

- (Ald. Wehelie) If you could walk us through the project from when it was going through the UDC and Plan Commission as a GDP. There are some new alders. Wondering if you could share the recommendations of the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission approved this as two stories. There was a motion that was made for a

two-story appearance, which was not taken up by Plan Commission. Is this consistent with that intent of the Plan Commission action? Can you give some history on this project?

- (Secretary) The UDC saw this last in January, and made a recommendation on the PD-GDP that the commercial building be designed to appear as a two-story building with the thought that the design can be such that you present the mass and scale of a two story building versus providing a true to form two-story building. That was consistent with the adopted neighborhood plan and Comprehensive Plan recommendation for this area. The Plan Commission upped the ante and tweaked that condition of approval for a true to form two-story building. The UDC felt that that was consistent with the adopted plan recommendations. From there the application went to Plan Commission. The Plan Commission adopted a condition that requires the building to be a true to form two-story building. As proposed, in working with Zoning Administrator and how the building and zoning codes define stories, the building is a true to form two-story building. But that does not necessarily mean that the design is there; that there's a cohesive architectural form being proposed. Outlined in the staff report, there are some design considerations for the UDC to consider related to building height and massing especially as it relates to the PD district, review and approval criteria, and also the building design and composition that we are looking for the UDC to provide feedback on this evening. Ultimately this is an Informational Presentation so the Commission is not taking any action tonight. But staff would appreciate the comments on the design considerations noted in the memo. As we start morning through the SIP process the applicant team is clear on what design items they should be focusing on. Ultimately, as this moves forward ultimately the Plan Commission will be passing on a recommendation to Common Council who will have the final say of whether or not the intent of the adopted neighborhood plan and Comprehensive Plan recommendations are being met.
- (Ald. Wehelie) Do all the Commissioners have the staff recommendations based on previous UDC meeting and Plan Commission meeting? My concern is based on the address being presented currently and previously.
- (Secretary) Yes, the staff memo did provide a project schedule that included links to previous approvals and applications. Conditions of approval that were part of the PD-GDP initial approval were related to building height and that it shall be a full two-story building. The intent of that condition sits with the Plan Commission and Common Council. UDC can provide design-related recommendations related to mass and scale as well as design as it applies to that condition. Ultimately, the determination of whether that condition is being met will be decided by the Plan Commission and Common Council. Condition #61 talks about the larger site, the eastern side with a mixed-use primarily multi-family building with a small commercial component and parking, one of the conditions of the GDP required that the parking shown be reduced as much as possible and consideration be given for shared parking. That does not ultimately affect this site design but it will come forward as part of the rest of the SIP for the east side of the site. Also, all future buildings shall be oriented to adjoining streets and locating parking behind buildings. Primarily we are looking for active building entries, design elements to present an enhanced street design is that Condition No. 62 talks about. Those are the conditions that were part of the overall GDP proposal but that also apply to this site as well. Alder Wehelie, would like to provide an overview of the anticipated project schedule – there is an upcoming neighborhood meeting.
- (Ald. Wehelie) This is a project that was 6853 McKee Road GDP application for Livesey and Ryan Funeral Home. This was in progress for the last two years. Based on the neighborhood, when Livesey was looking for the whole site GDP approval, not individual sites, there was a neighborhood meeting where concerns about a funeral home in this area as not being consistent with the original GDP neighborhood recommendation. And also, based on what staff just talked about, the area has concerns about traffic and still holding another neighborhood meeting this coming month specifically for the Ryan Funeral Home and depends on what the neighborhood wants. Based on I have heard and read, this project is not consistent with the GDP neighborhood recommendation. What I feel is that the two-story doesn't meet the intent of the Plan Commission recommendation for a two-story building. If you watch the November Plan Commission meeting there was discussion for the building to look like a two story building. The other motion was to approve a two-story building. That was the motion that passed. Staff has worked hard on this project, but it's up to the neighborhood meeting that I am holding. I did recommended to the project developer to consider at least 70% two-story building so that it is more consistent with the design of the neighborhood. Like Brad indicated there is one side of townhomes and the other side will be the Livesey project, which is a three-story apartment building. That will

not be consistent with the neighborhood design. This will not be consistent with the neighborhood design. That is a concern for the Ryan's to have up to 70% of the two story building. Based on the neighborhood plan recommendation, because of the proximity and the traffic this project was not recommended in this area because the neighborhood is growing and they need more housing.

- So, in thinking about the neighborhood plan, the use is allowed by zoning but is not consistent with an adopted plan?
- (Secretary) As part of the GDP approval there is a conditional use with criteria that also talks about consistency with adopted plans. This is not a by-right use.
- Can you describe more about the zoning finding that this a two-story building?
- (Secretary) The Zoning Administrator is bound by the definitions in the zoning code and building code when it comes to height and stories. The proposed second story on this building, even if only a portion, is consistent with how a story is defined and therefore the building is a true to form two-story building. The Zoning Administrator's findings are that this is a two-story building. The evaluation of the intent of the Plan Commission's recommendation and whether it's being met is up to the Plan Commission and their additional recommendation to Common Council when this comes forward as a formal SIP application.
- What other options have you looked at if that happens, is there an alternative plan?
 - We did look at some alternates. Ultimately the functional aspects of the building are important given our guests that are going to be there. If it needs to truly be 70% as the Alder requested, one option would be to stack the social hall, eliminate the extra office space, on top of the chapel for instance. We would reduce the desire to have a cathedral ceiling, we'd have to do something different, like a tray ceiling to accentuate that space. We'd be left with a 4,000 square-foot footprint on the corner. If you eliminated the single-story chapel that is what you would be left with a two-story building on the corner. That underutilizes the site and makes it a challenge for elderly, we would have to add elevators and exit stairs for accessibility. The nature of a funeral home is more of a single-story use.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I'm trying to wrap my head around all the various cross competing requirements and considerations for these projects that are part of a bigger GDP. As a general comment about the whole process for this project, the notion that we are making someone building something taller than they want it to be, zoning requirements notwithstanding; it's always the other way around. I don't think we should discount the fact that this is a particular type of business, trying to shoehorn them into a building configuration that doesn't really fit with the functionality of said business seems off. Though I can appreciate the zoning and regulatory conditions we are working under. I hope a reasonable compromise can be worked out. As far as the general look of the building, it's fine. I'm happy to see there seems to be plenty of landscaping, though it's put on the plans in very general terms, I hope they follow through on that and would encourage them to go for slightly bigger sized specimens of the trees and shrubs and not these tiny little saplings that take forever to turn into something. The extra cost on a project of this size is negligible and will give you a landscape that looks something like the nice renderings much faster.
- I was not here for the last presentation, so thank you. I agree, I don't see the objective of pretending or forcing a second floor on a building that has no programmatic necessity for it. There's an organization of the plan that when you look at the elevations, Sheet A201, you look at the north elevations there's really not much difference between the east and west sides of the building in terms of height. It's a waste of effort, materials, heating and cooling, and it also forces a acrobatics of rooflines and things that really detract from the building. That's my opinion about the second floor. As far as the building aesthetic, there's way too much going on here that could be simplified. The datum of the top of the stone that pops up over and over on the east side, you could simplify things a lot more. Some of the little brackets are unnecessary and it makes everything kind of pinched, particularly where you're trying to put signage. It is squished in there because you have the fake batons and windows underneath. Give a little bit more scale, more organization of the materials, and height, simplify some of the detailing, and pay really close attention to where your downspouts. Where they are too close to

entryways that water will migrate to the front entrance walks and you'll struggle with that all winter long. Simplify window expressions, there are a lot of different proportions, some that have clearstory areas and some that don't, some horizontal expression and clean that up a little bit. Separate the trellis from the building and make it its own thing, it doesn't serve the building by being attached to it.

- Could I ask the business owner what was he wanting to tell us?
 - Roman Ryan spoke, not previously knowing where the Alder stood on this project. He expressed disappointment with her, noting this as a missed opportunity with the offering of a community room that could be used for voting, luncheons, birthdays, celebrations, etc. The second floor has taken five years off his life. This project has been on-going for three years at multiple sites. He wants to build a state of the art funeral home, but the Alder doesn't want a funeral home. Funeral homes celebrate life. During a public meeting two people spoke about not wanting to walk by a funeral home. A funeral home is an asset to a community and a neighborhood icon. Please give us the opportunity to serve the people of Madison.
- Let's focus on what the Urban Design Commission can and cannot do. The two-story issue goes back to the adopted GDP. This commission made a recommendation that was not accepted by the Plan Commission. We are beholden to the Plan Commission to make an advisory recommendation ultimately on a building that is consistent with the approved GDP. Whether you call it a funeral home, what the neighbors want, if it's 70% or 30%, right now this is an Informational Presentation, and if we could be consistent with our comments regarding the design before us. The Plan Commission and the neighborhood and the Alder will all have to deal with the larger issues of whether or not this conditional use for a funeral home in this location at this height can be approved. Some of the concern is that they wanted to have an urban edge along McKee Road that is the whole two-story option. If we go to a much smaller footprint and have big gaps between buildings doesn't do much for the urban edge either. But right now we have to look at a building that is legally considered a two-story building, staff said that it is. There are other things we could contribute that could help the designer with the kind of comments that Christian and Lois gave earlier. Hopefully we can get through some building and site design things.
- Building on what Lois was saying, if the building had consistent roof pitches, this cross gable is a little steeper than the side elevations, that always helps to have consistent roof pitches. You have that eyebrow popping up which is different for a second story.
- Also, your top of masonry on one story versus two story and its different in the middle, I would go for a consistent top of masonry elevation, infill it with a lighter material. You have stucco, it could be siding since you are trying to emulate a residential feel, which is what you're saying that funeral homes gravitate toward. That might also be appropriate. Finally, I believe it's the east blank wall needs some openings, some articulation, that's looking almost too agricultural right there. I would encourage you to improve on that, and maybe study the covered entry a little bit, it looks awfully narrow compared to its width.
- Thank you for helping us focus on the design issues. I do echo Lois' take and believe that we can't force programming. It's a decent use of the site, and we have to take into account the market and what else could possibly fit the demand for two-stories in this area, and I have concerns that there isn't anything else.
- The location of the patio and pergola on the west side is fine and could be a nice amenity to the program and people using the building, being able to spill out in that way. Although the landscape is generic right now, if it's adequately screened from traffic and the nearby apartments. I don't have a strong opinion on whether the trellis is attached to the building or not. Its fine either way. On the landscape plan, the whole foundation planting that is facing the parking lot right now just says 'annuals by owner.' It would be good to have some of that should be more permanent so that throughout the seasons there is always something there throughout the seasons. If it means having another foot of space there, it might be necessary to hold something more substantial for planting along that front door edge, while still leaving some space for annuals near the entry, just not the whole elevation. Very small but lastly, one of the landscape details showed bark mulch or stone and we always look for and require that planting beds have that organic shredded hardwood bark mulch and not the stone; we don't want to see the stone mulch used.

- Looking at the entryways, it seems to me from the different renderings that the two different sides have a different depth of roof projection from the gabled roof coming toward us. If there's no functional reason for that, I wonder if some consistency there would be good. What I'm assuming is a faux structure bothers me a little bit and it could render as a little bit artificial and maybe not be overall helpful. Regarding mechanical equipment, in later meetings we'd like to understand where significant mechanical equipment is located and how it is screened, that would be some additional information we'd like to see that in future meetings. In addition to that, energy utility metering, some forethought about that, because you do have a building with lots of different sides and not necessarily a 'back,' some thoughtfulness to how those are treated and where they are located.

Action

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