

# CAPITOL

NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

May 6, 2024

Urban Design Commission  
City of Madison

Re: 519-521 W. Main St.

UDC Commissioners,

The Bassett District of Capital Neighborhoods has assembled a Steering Committee to meet with the Neutral Project in considering this proposal and to provide input to City decision making bodies. The neighborhood has had several productive meetings with the Neutral Project. The Development team has been receptive to the feedback from the neighborhood.

The most recent meeting occurred April 29. The plans submitted to UDC are a work in progress and do not appear to include some revisions discussed at that recent meeting. The comments provided below were topics for the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. We believe these are relevant for UDC consideration under the review standards for this proposal.

## **Overhead Garage Door**

The plans continue to show the original 16' wide overhead garage door and driveway. With a height of 16' the door becomes an overpowering feature of the street façade. Traffic Engineering has agreed that a 12' wide door and driveway are adequate for the limited parking in the garage and the straight sightlines from the street to the garage.

A narrower door at the same 16' will also look out of place on the street façade. We ask that UDC provide feedback on this condition. One possible design alteration might be a pair of opaque transom windows above a shorter door that align with the adjacent windows including the wood panel header detail. A horizontal style canopy above the door was another suggestion.

The door panel style is not defined and is inconsistent on several drawings.

## **Perimeter Brick Wall Fence**

The plans call for a 6' high solid brick wall along the perimeter of the property on three sides of the building. (Sheet A105) The elevation and section drawings do not consistently reflect this wall.

Portions of the proposed wall in the front yard beyond the face of the building are not consistent with the zoning code.

The property to the west of the proposal has a 2-3' high retaining wall topped with a 4' high wooden fence along its sidewalk. The proposed sidewalk along this side of the new building would be 5.5 – 6' above the base of the existing retaining wall. Adding a 6' high brick wall above the sidewalk would create an overbearing condition. (Sheet A202)

At the east side of the property an accessible ramp returns out to the edge of the public sidewalk. (Sheet A108) The elevation of this landing combined with the height of the brick wall fence results in a 7-8' high solid wall directly adjacent to the public sidewalk. (Northwest Elevation page 35 of submittal) This is not a desirable aesthetic or pedestrian friendly environment.

### **Entry Plaza**

Details of how the steps, patios and planters come together in front of the building feels stark. (A105 & A901) A significant portion of the landscaping appears to be in the street terrace in the perspective drawing (A901), which is atypical for downtown locations and obstructs sightlines at the driveway. These street terrace plantings are not part of the Landscape Plan L101.

### **HVAC Exterior Wall Penetrations**

The plan elevations do not show any details for HVAC penetrations or how they might be incorporated into the design. Given that there are very few deep articulations at any building elevation vent penetrations will be highly visible. The location and type of vent need to be specified and none should be located on the front façade.

The garage intake and exhaust locations are shown on Sheet A106. The intake penetration is located adjacent to the garage overhead door but does not appear on any of the applicable elevation drawings. Vents should not be located on a street façade and should be incorporated into the design of the building.

We encourage the Commission to discuss each of the items above and provide their feedback and specific recommendations to the Plan Commission.

Thank you,

Peter Ostlind  
Bassett District of Capitol Neighborhoods  
Steering Committee Chair