

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** June 8, 2011

TITLE: 5105-5117 University Avenue & 610-702 **REFERRED:**
 North Whitney Way – PUD(GDP-SIP) and **REREFERRED:**
 Demolition Permit for a Mixed-Use
 Development with Seven New Buildings
 and Three Parking Structures. 19th Ald. **REPORTED BACK:**
 Dist. (22701)

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

DATED: June 8, 2011 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Mark Smith, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, John Harrington, R. Richard Wagner, Melissa Huggins, Jay Handy and Henry Lufler, Jr.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 8, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 5105-5117 University Avenue and 610-702 North Whitney Way. Appearing on behalf of the project were Jaclyn Lawton and Paul Lenhart. Appearing in support and available to answer questions was Dan Day, representing Krupp Construction. Appearing and speaking in opposition was Helen Hartman. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak were Michael Kienitz, Amy Kinast, Jackie Csedo and Doug Hursh. Hursh presented the Commission with a new plan for this previously considered site as the Erdman Center Project. The intent is to have the main hospital-related campus with complementary uses to take about 2/3 of the site. This will be a sustainable and green development and will include LEEDS certification. The density is about ½ of the density of the previous development plans for this site. Hursh showed images of the boundaries of the site, as well as slopes and existing buildings with all of them to be demolished except for the PCS building. They have met with the neighborhood at an open meeting, have put on two neighborhood board meetings with another meeting scheduled prior to their next Commission meeting. Retail, restaurant and residential are also part of this phased project, as well as structured parking. UW Health will be the hospital tenant and could in the future add two more buildings and a parking structure. The tallest building would be 6-stories for a hotel, with the rest being a maximum of 4-stories. The neighborhood has expressed concerns about density and the viewshed so the buildings start to step down towards University Avenue. Shadow studies have been presented to the neighborhood. Street connections between the future clinic and residential would be a public street with a minimized width to reduce the speed of the traffic and keep a nice pedestrian atmosphere. They have not yet spent much time on the exterior materials as this is the first conceptual design, but do plan on using warm tones and residentially related materials. Lenhart stated that they are taking the neighborhood’s concerns very seriously and are working on a traffic management plan, as well as meeting with a noise consultant. They will comply with all of the wellhead protection zoning requirements. There is concern that the site contains toxic materials, but Brigham stated that Erdman shared with them their study of the site that was completed in November 2010 that shows through the 15-20 years they’ve been working on this site, they now have a clean site. They are fully supportive of a commuter rail station on the PCS site.

Helen Hartman lives one block from the site. She thinks this is a lot better than the previous proposal. She stated the applicant seems to be addressing a lot of the neighborhood's concerns. Her concern was that all the traffic noise would reflect back from the new buildings towards the residential neighborhood. The scale of the development is also of concern because it's surrounded by residential, but the fact that they are lower is much better. It will unfortunately block her view of most of the trees. She has concerns about the increased traffic and pedestrians crossing University for the bus stop. Since this is a healthcare facility she'd like to see some softness to the landscaping with possible prairie plantings, shrubs and trees. This might also buffer the noise.

Amy Kinast distributed a handout showing the adjacent neighborhood of Indian Hills and the Craig Avenue area. One concern is preservation of the neighborhood aesthetic and honoring the neighborhood's history. Because some of the homes in the Indian Hills neighborhood are Erdman-designed, they feel strongly that the Erdman building should be kept. The other historical site nearby on Craig Avenue has caught the eye of the State Historical Register as a post-war subdivision featuring over 140 single-family, one-story houses that are all intact.

Jaclyn Lawton lives in the adjacent neighborhood of Hill Farms and is very excited about this project. She hopes this works as an excellent infill development in a "blighted" area.

Michael Kienitz asked if this was a phased development; the applicant responded it is limited phase two development. He also said there were 15 borings but now they are saying 16; the applicant replied the last time they checked it was 16. He has enjoyed their architecture around town but has major concern with the protection of their well and the fact that this is entirely on a wellhead protected site. He stated prior to any construction a thorough site characterization should be done, and should also present the findings of a full level 2 environmental impact statement to the public, since over 17,000 Madisionians receive their daily drinking water from directly below the proposed development. By the applicant's own admission only a Limited Phase 2 site investigation has been done, with testing conducted by the same company that inspected the I-35 West bridge in St. Paul, Minneapolis and late paid out a \$5 Million contract for allegedly breaching its contract with the State of Minnesota and for being negligent in its study of the bridge's condition. He has concerns about plumes being exposed once excavation, demolition and construction begins. He feels at this point nobody has the evidence to say the site is either hazardous or it's safe.

Jackie Csedo spoke as a resident of the Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association, specifically their transportation committee. They had formed a committee specifically for dealing with the Erdman proposal. However, since this proposal is moving rather quickly, because as the applicant stated UW Health wants to get into the building as quickly as possible, they have not had time to re-form that committee. Access to University Avenue is of great concern to this group.

Rummel inquired about the structured parking. The UW Health aspects of the project will each have their own structured parking. Once they pull the development plan together, specific what that is and implement the SIP, then they can build the parking deck. She asked what would happen if the area wasn't developed right away and the applicant responded it would be seeded and become temporary greenspace. Wagner inquired about ownership of the parcels; Lenhart replied that the developer will own Lot 1 and lease it to the hospital; the second building, the ground underneath that building will be owned by the hospital, and they have not yet decided if they will build or have the applicant build and lease back to them. Rummel inquired about green roofs and ice impacts on the shading study because of the changes in grade. She asked if the hotel would have access on University Avenue. Hursh replied that their intent is to possibly have entrances on either side that connect to one big lobby, and possibly have a restaurant component as well.

Harrington stated that he finds this development much better but he feels they are missing big opportunities for street frontages; his question being do they need to have street parking? If they could create outdoor nooks of trees it would be much more attractive. Hursh replied that both roadways coming in off University and Whitney Way are going to be publicly dedicated so they have to be careful about what they do in the right-of-way. He suggested looking at grass plantings as well. He is anxious to see the traffic management plan, and encourages them to consider giving the street trees enough room to grow.

Slayton inquired about the traffic patterns and the ingress/egress of the development. Hursh replied that University Avenue is slated for reconstruction in 2012; they intent is to develop in conjunction with that, and with their traffic study show how they could gain access and amend those plans. Slayton asked if the Fire Department has a problem with the widths of their roads; they have not spoken to the Fire Department as of yet but they plan on meeting those requirements. Because this will be a major employment center Slayton would like to see more pocket parks included in the plans.

O'Kroley wondered about residential against structured parking, or is it appropriate for hospitality uses to abut residential backyards. She reiterated the need for pocket parks and better pedestrian connectivity.

Wagner sees this as much too auto-oriented without good pedestrian connections or bicycle connections. How this will function as an urban space is not addressed. It does not have the same sense as a walkable neighborhood.

Huggins echoed O'Kroley's residential comment. A medical campus is a dead zone at night and she is concerned about the lots farther away from the medical lots. It almost feels like two different developments. She suggested residential above retail rather than office components, and flip some of the residential over so they are creating a center. She sees their uses as being in conflict. She sees it as very important to make this seem open and part of the neighborhood fabric rather than a destination and somewhere you are driving to and parking. She asked for clarification on addressing the streetscape and how it integrates.

Smith agreed with most comments, further emphasizing the idea of the interior streets being much more of a pedestrian spot than anything that will happen along University Avenue or Whitney Way. Both of these stretches are seas of cars that are almost always busy that will continue to carry a lot of cars and noise. He sees this as a destination as opposed to a reweaving into the neighborhood. He appreciated their address of the wellhead protection and stormwater. One or two of the parking structures look like they could use a façade, somewhat like the St. Mary's parking structure. That will further reinforce all the Commission's comments. He asked that they try to find a way to capture or control the run-off from those structures on the top floor. He wants an actual height of the building in feet rather than how many stories the building will be; leaving it as stories leaves too much flexibility. There has to be enough residents to make the residential component its own neighborhood that fits in between the other existing neighborhoods.

Handy liked the heights and mass of the proposal and finds it relates well to the neighborhood. He echoed the comments of Slayton and Harrington on the plantings. If this is a future bike path it should somehow join in the connectivity. Harrington could not conceive of this as a residential neighborhood. Barnett agreed and questioned parking ratios. He inquired about retaining walls, suggested wrapping the lower buildings to get a third story that's actually a building and suggested amplifying the greenspace.

ACTION:

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

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 6 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 5105-5117 University Avenue & 601-702 North Whitney Way

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	7	-	-	-	-	5	7	6
	7	-	-	-	-	6	7	7

General Comments:

- Plan more open spaces, pocket parks; pedestrian circulation will be critical to site use.
- Great start – ideas. Develop streets – “alleys” for pedestrian scale. Use these to develop “pocket parks.”
- Excellent concept plan. Suggest facing east side of 224 stall garage with programmed spaces (e.g. housing, live-work, retail, etc.). Parking ratios comparison between proposed project and UW Hospital? TMP (Transportation Management Plan).
- List specific building heights vs. number of stories. Green roofs on all parking structures. Is residential really possible on this site? Keep material palette local, natural and high quality.
- Good start!
- Study edges and connectivity of uses with 2-sided street frontages and continuity of greenspace. Study relationship of greenspace and non-profit hospitality and residential to create a comfortable space. Encourage pedestrian activity at active spaces. Can you park below your private streets?