

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: January 9, 2013

TITLE: 210 Langdon Street – PUD-GDP-SIP for
the Construction of a New Fraternity
House. 2nd Ald. Dist. (28428)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: January 9, 2013

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Henry Lufler, Melissa Huggins, Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart and Marsha Rummel.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 9, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of the site plan and building massing only of a PUD-GDP-SIP for the construction of a new fraternity house located at 210 Langdon Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was J. Randy Bruce, the project architect. Bruce presented context photos and discussed the Landmarks Commission review of the project; the building is not of a mass and scale that is overpowering for the adjacent building. In addition, they had four architectural suggestions. A sidewalk has been added along Lakelawn and the parking has been reduced which also accommodates more landscaping with more of a buffer on the east and west property lines. He is trying to work out arrangements with the Fire Department as to whether parking will be single-loaded or double-loaded. Some of the mass has been reduced and some detailing has been eliminated to simplify the design of the building. The arched openings have been either eliminated or reduced in size on the front elevation. A horizontal tie to the building has been added that would wrap the building to help tie those elements together. Heavy window timberhead with a cantered cut to it would have a bearing dimension on either side; with an architectural head built-out as part of the stucco or EIFS system. The window sills would be the same material with mesh on those sills that makes them durable at that location. They tried a couple of different options for building materials and feel they are better off using stone; the brick diminishes the perceived impact. The building will be in front of the adjacent building next door but will have an approximately 40-foot setback from the street.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The porch entry seems heavy in stone. Have you considered other material? I like how the second story was simplified without all those piers.
 - No I haven’t. This is an area we’re not quite satisfied with yet but I haven’t looked at taking that stone to something else.

It feels like you’re using the stone to complement the building next door but on the other hand it really doesn’t complement; I wonder if it’s falsely competing and not helping.

We're not really trying to complement the building next door. There is a lot of stone in the neighborhood and is predominant and appropriate. The owners want it to be appropriate to this location while having a little bit of a "ski chalet" motif. We've given them a little bit of that with a lot of restraint.

- I like the treatment to the area above the balcony, it looks great and puts the attention back on the main entry. I'm tempted to say "let's see something that would look more like the wood around the windows." The main entry starts to look more like a porch and less active like a fraternity would be. I think the top of the entry needs more detailing; not more stone to relate to the doorway.
- I'd like to see the bike/moped parking get shoved to the top by about 4-feet so you have 4 more feet of planting along the edge because it would still sit back behind the two stalls that are there. It's an invitation to park a car in there.
- No vinyl edging, and the hedge on the top of the page along the parking, they show Spirea and it should be something more substantial if it's a hedge. The grasses on the downside of the parking lot, that's fine but should be a little tighter space and ornamental grass becomes more substantial than the Spirea because of the height. If a heavier shrub is not possible go with ornamental grasses rather than Spirea.
- I would look again at staff's comments, especially about the arched windows when you look at the perspective from the right. By keeping the smaller openings arched they don't really relate to the side perspective; look again at the front elevation.
- Some of the detailing with EIFS is going to feel like a larger, less expensive replica of something historic so look a bit more in trying to have accuracy in some of the details or some depth in some of the details. The EIFS still concerns me; they're going to get dirty and dirt will stick on them. Details like that will make the building look run-down.
 - There are a number of stucco buildings in the neighborhood.
But using it for window trim doesn't strike me as the same genre of academic buildings.
- Something about the wood header sits funny to me. I don't know if it's not extended far enough to give the perception of bearing the weight from above, or if it's because they're cut inwards versus outward when you would traditionally anticipate them to be cut outwards to catch more weight at the top and bring it down. They feel less stable to me.
 - We saw this detail on an older building and thought it was pretty slick. I think our problem is the top part of this is maybe at the edge of the window; we just have to get a little bit more bearing on it.
- Are you using applied muttons? I would just avoid using the applied mutton altogether; just a new double-hung, modern window.
 - I'm totally fine with that.
I would strive for as deep a profile as possible on windows.
- There's something about bringing that porch further forward that feels a little awkward. Something about how it integrates back in is a challenge.
 - We can take a look at different materials and details for this.
- The shed roof dormer seems unusual for this district.
 - We've got that situation that occurs in a couple of places in here. We could look at flattening that roof out just a little bit to reduce the size of it some.
Maybe tying it down with the first and second floors will make it more integrated.
- The body of the house beyond the green is fighting with the mass of that porch and I wonder if the railings would help bring them together, instead of making the stone so thick on top.
- A tree would give the entryway more prominence.
- I really appreciate you struggling to work out these details and trying to simplify things. When I look at this perspective I see this little sliver of a pilaster and a flat lentil. Those kind of details, as you simplify,

you can avoid some of these goofy little details that come up when you try to turn corners and where you have openings.

ACTION:

On a motion by Slayton, seconded by Huggins, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0). The motion provided for approval of the site plan and building massing only, and the following:

- Modify the porch to integrate with the house which may need to be modified in terms of mass, location and extent.
- Address of architectural comments made including staff comments by Scanlon.

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, 6 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 210 Langdon Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	6	6	5	-	-	6	6	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	7	6	7	7	-	6	8	7

General Comments:

- Look at massing of porch and entryway. Handsome building that is good addition to the historic neighborhood.
- Good progress made on simplification of details.