

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 19, 2014

TITLE: 330 East Wilson Street – 6-Story, 35-Unit Residential Apartment with 878 Square Feet of Commercial Space. 6<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (33110)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 19, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; John Harrington, Lauren Cnare, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart and Tom DeChant.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of February 19, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a 6-story, 35-unit residential apartment located at 330 East Wilson Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Wilcox, Mark Landgraf and John Kothe, all representing Palladia, LLC; and Jim Skrentny, representing the neighborhood steering committee. The site currently houses a two-story concrete block building that has been vacant for about 3 ½ years. This mixed-use project will include office and retail on the first floor and residences above. They have held a neighborhood meeting, with the neighborhood putting together a committee to review the plans and meet again in two weeks. The mass fits the Downtown Plan and Planning Division staff have yet to comment on the scale of the project. Permeable paving will handle on-site drainage. The primary entry for tenants will be through the lobby space. The units will have built-in amenities to make the most of limited square footage. A green roof/patio space is being considered.

The Secretary noted that Planning Division staff does have concerns with the lack of activation of the Wilson Street façade, especially being used for parking. It’s a full wall of surface parking being exposed; look at that more in depth and look at doing something that provides for more exposure of the lower level. Wilcox responded that it is something they are working on.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The wood panels, we’ve seen them used but it is a fake wood grain. With that amount of it I don’t see it as an accent and I’m concerned with having it as the main “skin” of the building.
  - That’s one of the unique ideas though, usually you see it as an accent or a vertical element going up the building. Here we’re trying to expand that thought and use it as the feel, with the accents being the light. Trying to flip the script here a little and use it in a more unique way. I think maybe you could help communicate that with some images of other buildings that might have that, because I know it’s going to be really hard to render. Maybe some photos.
- The windows should be a little more vertical and larger.
- Yes, the proportion of glass to solid. It’s too close, I look for more glass. More vertical.

- A lot of those are bedrooms so we try to keep the sill about 30-inches for beds being pushed against that wall.
- The simple composition is nice and I agree they don't need to embellish it with a lot of material. In keeping with the clean simple lines will you have a lot of penetrations for ducts, etc.?
  - No it would be the same split system here with parts on the roof and furnaces inside. That will all get rendered in the elevations.
- There's a lot of interesting stuff going on but I think you can do more. You need to make it a high quality example of what's going on on this street. Right now that first floor is not activated. Somehow with landscape, or refining the base, something that creates that activation.
- The balconies, I'm not real keen on those balconies that you can't use.
- I would encourage you to make that green roof and gardens on top. It's the right way to go and we're seeing more of them in Madison. But if you're going to do it you have to do it so it really means something. Make it a substantial size that really has some meaning.
- The acute corner with the base projecting, but then the window retreating as a curve feels awkward to me. I wonder if it would be stronger if the glass held that corner.
  - That is non-negotiable with Traffic Engineering.
 First that's crazy. Second if that's the case, the architecture needs to be studied because it feels like you were forced to retreat your glass.
- The French balconies can work if you get a pair of doors that can open and your room actually feels like an outdoor room. Keep looking at that.
- The Wilson Street elevation overall feels comfortably balanced with that recessed opening that's playful and starts to have some interest.
- What if you somehow found a way to share that space as an artistic space, as well as becoming your lobby entrance, which could potentially be narrow. Then you'd have a bigger commercial space.
  - We would really start to impact those units on the upper levels.
 If you figure out a way to egress then that bottom landing becomes part of your lobby. I think you're sacrificing Wilson Street to have a couple more cars. You need to get rid of a couple more cars or tighten up how the car circulation moves through.
 

One of the neighbor's comments was that we don't have enough parking.  
You'll never have enough parking.

Ald. Marsha Rummel spoke, noting that neighbors do not see 6 parking stalls as enough for 35 units. There was concern that the first floor commercial be retail and not office space. There was concern with the view corridors from Hancock Street being blocked. It was also mentioned that the small landscaping area might be a security concern.

Jim Skrentny, Chair of the First Settlement District spoke on behalf of the newly formed steering committee. Concerns include the proportion and relationship of the proposed building in context with neighboring buildings, the building's effect on the viewshed down Hancock Street, and the building's visual interest, palette and materials on this highly visible corner. He cited the Downtown Design Guidelines and how the building is affected by those. This is an area that is going to be 2-3 stories in height so to the neighborhood it's very important that the building fits within the site and those surroundings. The mass of a building should not negatively impact views, and Hancock Street is identified as an important view, cited when First Settlement was recognized as one of Madison's historic neighborhoods. The corner building should define the street intersection with distinct architecture; that corner kind of fans out and as was pointed out, it's a very visible location. If it does stand 6-stories tall it will be above those existing buildings on that corner, also making it highly visible.

**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 6.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 330 East Wilson Street**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

General Comments:

- Nice building. Concerned about wood grain metal panels. 6-stories fine at this location.
- Good start, but some way to go.