

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 5, 2014

TITLE: 626 Langdon Street – Renovation and Addition to the “Roundhouse Apartments.” 8th Ald. Dist. (33108)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 5, 2014

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 5, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for the renovation and addition to the “Roundhouse Apartments” located at 626 Langdon Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Wilcox, Angela Black, both representing Roundhouse Apartments, LLC; Curtis Brink, Abbie Moilien, Joe Korb and Dave Martin, representing Charter Apartments. Registered in opposition was Patrick Corcoran. Wilcox presented changes since the Commission’s previous review of the proposal. Bicycle parking has been relocated, raised landscape beds and smaller plantings/trees have been added, and they expanded the patio through the entrance area. Fixed outdoor furniture will be available with additional seating available for certain times of the year. Building materials were shown on slides. Some balconies have been eliminated and replaced with punched openings to create a more horizontal rhythm to that space.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I think this is a nice feature (pergola). I wonder why you need this (triangular corner planer), it seems very heavy and also uninviting to people walking down the sidewalk. I wonder if you could get by without that corner planter? This raised edge is to keep people from coming in from the sidewalk?
 - It is.

Is this to enhance that or could it be open so you come in on the end?

- We like the idea of the raised planters (between the sidewalk and pergola) to block the views of people sitting there. It provides a little bit of separation as you’re walking down Langdon Street. Make sure it narrows the public sidewalk and stays narrow and doesn’t allow a lot of in and out. It’s just a different way of looking at it. When it’s open it invites people in but if you’re trying to create a barrier, you’ve done that. This is more for the residents?
 - It is overall. It’s not a controlled space with a fence so it is a public space to some degree but we want to create the idea that it is still somewhat private.

- If the approach is to have landscape elements in the front, that 626 banner, this development to me is opposite geometrically so if you're adding a banner I would suggest that be thin added along the front most forward face. I wouldn't do anything that curves back with the building. I would make anything you build parallel to Langdon Street.
- I thought the separateness of the two buildings ought to be have maintained in our comments, and this attempt to try and link them on this two-story element was going different than how we were suggesting that they ought to have each of their own integrities. We do like the activation of the Langdon Street part but I'm not sure putting the false brow on the Roundhouse part does anything for that and it takes away from the integrity that the Roundhouse has of its own period. The other thing I'm struggling with is if you want a commercial space in there to help activate, what is it about the zoning that prevents that from being available to anybody to enter?

- The way the Zoning Code was written, coming in off the lobby, but because it's not mixed-use zoning you can't come in off the street.

But in all these changes could that be incorporated? They're not changing zoning to build this whole new thing?

No they're not.

In some ways if you actually had a true commercial space rather than something just for the tenants it would do a lot more to activate it.

- Right now that parking is hinging right up to Langdon. If that greenspace could carry forward on one or two of those parking spaces that would let you do a front presentation on Langdon, not something that tries to carry the other building across but in its own way.
 - Those are existing parking stalls that are very important to be maintained with the office component.

The addition is very important to get too.

- Yes it is.

- I agree with the comments about banding or adding brackets to the tower but I think eliminating those balconies on the first floor is an improvement. On the sidewalk structure I'm wondering, it looks like you're using stack bond brick, maybe you could lighten it at the top, just make that a masonry base with a steel or something lighter top. Or maybe even some freeform elements that are a little bit more freeform palette, the building is this weird funky shape.
 - We did explore that quite a bit. With the form of the existing Roundhouse it felt awkward and just forced. The shape of the Roundhouse is so strong when you look at it, anything you do to add articulation just feels out of balance.

It's just a heaviness. I don't want it to look like those old bus shelters (pergola).

- What if the balcony material were metal instead of brick masonry?
- Yes. And then on the lake where you have it really bright I think a darker color would recede more than if it was bright.
- Where the buildings touch are you going to retain the masonry of the Roundhouse?
- The entry is a little tight to the footprint.
- Do you think the entrance ought to relate to the new building or the Roundhouse?
- If the Roundhouse is staying and a new building is coming in, then you have a new base that's part of the new building that is forward of the Roundhouse so it's almost a glass screen in front of the Roundhouse, and then you see the brick pillars of the Roundhouse continuing through.
- Have more glass so it's not of either building but you see through it and you see the still brick of the Roundhouse through the glass, so the Roundhouse still has integrity through that glass entrance.
- I really want you to look at taking those three parking stalls out and seeing what you can do with that landscape and make that seating area something that's really special. Explore it.

ACTION:

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