

## AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** March 5, 2014

**TITLE:** 17, 19 & 25 North Webster Street and 201 East Mifflin Street – Deconstruction of Four Homes and the Construction of a New 6-Story, 49-Unit Apartment Building, New Construction in the Proposed UMX District. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ald. Dist. (31341)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

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

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** March 5, 2014

**ID NUMBER:**

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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 **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** for the deconstruction of four homes and the construction of a new apartment building located at 17, 19 & 25 North Webster Street and 201 East Mifflin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were J. Randy Bruce, Jessica Thompson and Fred Rouse, representing Rouse Management. Bruce presented changes to the plans. Space in the back is being maintained with the property owner offering to create a permanent conservation easement; the Landmarks Commission suggested they work with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in this endeavor. Floor plans show the main entry at the south of the building. They have changed materials in certain areas to facilitate the articulation of the façade. Shadow studies were done in relation to the Lamp House and do not show this development negatively affecting the sun on the Lamp House. They have taken the masonry on the building and extended it to the fifth floor on the front and sides, the back is stepped back about 15-feet from the face and they suggest that remain siding (difficulties of supporting masonry at that location and to give a better break and emphasis on the four-story mass). On the northern half of the building the mass is being treated as one mass. They have added another entrance at the street. The first floor plan serves as multiple functions: a pedestrian connection between the two wings, it allows for pedestrian circulation through to the back, some visitor bicycle parking comes under that passageway. There is a 2-foot elevation grade change between the two buildings where we have a ramp risers that accommodate that grade change.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- How will people access the greenspace of the Lamp House?
    - I don’t know about that. The intent is to arrange for some tours. Certainly this is public space. If tours did come through here that is something we’d have to arrange.
- Those first four units there, the garden space is open to anybody?

- We want to limit the activities on the back side of this to give a quieter backdrop to the Lamp House, so this space here will be landscaped and would not be a space intended to actively use. There have been discussions for landscaping screening but I don't think there is a desire for any kind of fencing.
- I imagine anybody in those units, or anyone renting the Lamp House wouldn't want to use that space in some way. I would strongly suggest that Mr. Rouse think about how he's going to help program that space.
- I might argue that in some sense its conservancy importance is setting up the Lamp House rather than program use. There's an unresolved question of what kind of program use would the Lamp House have in the future, and until that is resolved I don't think you can draw a conclusion of how this space might be programmed. The fact that you're preserving that setting for the Lamp House is a big step forward.
- I agree but big open greenspace is going to want to be used. Dogs, a lot of people are moving into these places with kids.
- Do you have a shared drive easement with the property next door?
  - I have not seen their latest plans. We're not using that for any kind of access. We need that space for light and air but not for anything else.
- The center connector, what would stop the public from walking through there?
  - Right now, nothing. Whether we need some level of security there I don't know.

That little space feels congested right now. Am I walking through a service alley? Should I be there? Should I not be there? The staff report's comment that that become a glassier, lighter more narrow link, maybe that does something; requires address.
- What's the character of this building going to be? That's my big question. This building is going to have to work harder to establish its character. I'm thinking of Café Montmartre, that has a brick base with a simple modern top, kind of two eras, but this I don't know where it's at yet in terms of spirit.
- Address staff comments about activating that corner.
- Based on the Ad Hoc Lamp House recommendations, the neighboring properties will be roughly 3-stories, how does your Mifflin Street and your return façade really acknowledge that, you are the building that is going to handle the step from the downtown core down to those properties, particularly on Mifflin.
  - That's one of the reasons we kept the masonry at this level, it helps bring the scale of the building down here.

Maybe it's the piece in the corner and how far that different material at the top is setback from the masonry. I don't know that this is a "good neighbor."

That's way back. In the plan there's a 40-foot separation so that face you can see from Mifflin Street but I don't know that you'll necessarily see much at all. The retaining wall is for the parking.
- I don't know that carving away is a good way to treat that corner. If a member of the public is on the tour I imagine you would just stand on the sidewalk, I don't know that a depressed pave area will really be integrated. More as a pedestrian walking on Mifflin, so the building has more street presence with more first floor articulation.
  - Are you talking about this relationship between the building, we'd use this band as a way of supporting that transition. We do have the ability to perhaps open up this corner and create a corner that's open.

Maybe it's part of the material change and how much depth there is in that plane. Maybe on this face and kind of globally, is that going to feel like a 6-story vertical face against what we assume will be 3-4?
- Integration of mechanical louvers?

- Staff has asked that we have no walpaks. Right now we're looking at them being on the roof for the most part. I'm trying to keep all the condensers off this portion and some will be in the basement.
- The Mifflin Street façade, including the base, it goes up 6-stories without any material change. Only that top floor is setback?
  - That's correct.

The Attorney's Office has cautioned us that we shouldn't use the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations in evaluating this proposal because this project was submitted prior to that document being completed. As far as guidelines and standards, Randy has done a very good job of meeting those, but as far as policies and recommendations in that document shouldn't be part of your evaluation for this particular proposal. We do have some specific design conditions of approval. If this body does want to recommend something different to the Plan Commission please just be specific about what you recommend that is different from our comments and I'm happy to point those out. (Firchow)

- (Bruce) Right now staff is recommending masonry all the way to this upper level. I feel in terms of how the buildings relate to each other, and as far as how they work scale-wise around the corner, I'd like to see this one level dropped to give us more opportunity to help work in the scale.

Why were they recommending that that far up?

(Firchow) As far as the transition goes, a brick building has more prominence. Simplifying materials, especially on the Webster Street side where there really isn't a change in plane between the 5-6<sup>th</sup> stories. It steps back on the Lamp House side.

Part of the problem is if you change materials on these façades, what are you doing on the Lamp House façade side? That question would need some resolution too with all elevations provided.

- (Staff) I would have some concern where we have brick on two façades and then we return to siding and what does that look like without a change in plane. Normally we require some return of brick along with an emphasis on four sided architecture on all building elevations not affected by visibility.
- New and old are differently treated whereas here you're treating part of it as if it's old with brick and then with siding as if it's sort of old. I'm not sure the two materials work.
  - We've been struggling with that a little bit. The Lamp House certainly has a residential character and in my head I think "siding."

On a one-story house, but this scale is so much bigger.

- Initially we had metal paneling material. We're struggling with that.

The biggest thing is the change in scale, the change in depth where you change materials. The change in material on the north elevation may not be effective. The other thing I find curious is you have what essentially is a lifelong lake view from the entire Lamp House side based on the height guidelines. You could celebrate outdoor spaces more and integrate that façade more if you had more stepbacks and views to the lake.

- This side driveway, you don't really need that you're saying? I don't understand why the driveway goes into a wall.
  - I don't think we really need that. It's there for a staging area, we're getting access in another area.

Why not use some kind of porous grass pavement in there.

- I agree with the material but why is that there?
  - There's a retaining wall that sits back here right now. I don't think we're digging this piece out.

## **ACTION:**

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Goodhart, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1) with O’Kroley voting no. The motion was based on the drawings provided to the Commission at the meeting and the following:

- Resolve the northeast corner at Mifflin Street per comments made.
- Provide fully detailed and articulated building elevations (colored and rendered) including details of interior façade of the center connector.
- Resolve issue with the programming and design of the open space buffer between this project and the Lamp House.

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 5.5 and 6.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 17, 19 & 25 N. Webster St. & 201 E. Mifflin St.**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	6	6	4	-	-	-	7	6
	-	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	5.5

General Comments:

- Not distinguished, perhaps treat one mass as more clearly contemporary, one as traditional brick.