

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 19, 2014

TITLE: 501, 509 & 517 Commerce Drive -
Amended PD(GDP-SIP) for Sixty-
Units of Assisted Living, Revised
Plans. 9th Ald. Dist. (31146)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 19, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart and John Harrington.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 19, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for an Amended PD(GDP-SIP) for 60-units of assisted living located at 501, 509 and 517 Commerce Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project was David Baum, representing All Saint’s. Baum presented updated plans for a four-story building with two levels of parking, and a 2-story CBRF. A drive-thru component for parking and access will mean less congestion on Commerce Drive and access to Watts Road. The previous bridge crossings have been eliminated. A bridge across Commerce Drive connecting their facility to the existing 144-unit apartment is still being proposed. Baum stated that at the DAT meeting they were instructed to make sure this bridge is completed. They have allowed for ingress and egress to some retail space on Commerce Drive and a wellness center that will be accessible to the public. There is also a potential for outdoor seating. Access is available at grade to the underground parking level, with no parking on Watts Road. In trying to create something more contemporary, Baum stated that All Saint’s Charities were not in favor of that, preferring instead that the new buildings match identically the existing ones across the street; this contradicts the direction the Urban Design Commission would want the project to go in (based on previous review). Main elevations show a balcony connecting the commons area of the building which will help to activate the street.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I appreciate the difficult circumstance you’re in, trying to appease this body as well as All Saint’s. It does look compromised. Trying to force a traditional residential form on a building like this, must be really difficult. I’m not convinced this is the direction to go.
- I agree with the rooftop issue (flat roofs).
- I’d like to see this retail component somehow better integrated.
- I’d find somewhere else for the handicapped parking stalls; you can’t go from here to the building without crossing the street.

- We can put them over here.

Yes, and make this something really special. Let's celebrate that.

- I think you've made some great progress. The roofline is really going to be an issue.
 - How do we come to terms with that? I've got a client who wants to go one way, and we're going to butt heads.

(Secretary): You're going to get a recommendation from staff, you're going to get a recommendation from this body, and the Plan Commission and Common Council have to make that decision. The buildings are a tall form and a large roofline like that makes it even taller, especially with the existing topography.

- Maybe it would help your clients if you showed some perspectives from grade.
 - We brought the 3-D model and we walked around the entire site with them. Looked at it from every angle. They want us to match all materials from across the street.

(Secretary): When they originally developed, what 20 years ago, they were the only thing out there. They're not the only ones out there anymore, so more of the same may not be appropriate now.

- Vinyl siding on such a tall building...Internally the building is not at all in the same character. I see a real progressive plan, a sophisticated building type, a really good solution to a difficult to program site, and wrapping this skin that makes it look like a house. Is the market driving it?
 - They believe their clientele is comfortable with this. When we presented a contemporary building to some of the residents, they had no interest in it.

To the residents?

- Yes.

You said the development team was in support.

- The development team was listening to the input that we're getting. They said go ahead with the contemporary image. But when we got in front of the board of directors, they said no.
- I want to assist in this. They just don't want the flat roof. Your Planning Department wants a flat roof, our client doesn't want the flat roof, that's basically what it comes down to. I disagree with you, this is a residential building, it should look residential. This is only a 40-unit apartment building, it is a residential building. It's not an institutional building, it's not a hospital, it's not a university, it's not an office building. It's a residential building on a residential campus. Our clients want it to look like a residential building on a residential campus. So we're responding to our clients. Our clients are Gary Gorman, Tom Klein, Jerry Ring, these are people who've done hundreds of millions of dollars of development in the City of Madison and the State of Wisconsin, who we're responding to who feel that they know what they want on their campus and what their clients want (Thode).

Well you are a PD and design is what it's all about.

- I'm expressing what our clients' needs are. This isn't exactly what's across the street. What's across the street is tan and brown. This is moving towards a more contemporary structure. Also our clients may be developing the land above here in the future, and the land above here is about 40-feet above this in grade, there isn't necessarily a concept plan for that at this point in time. But at some point in time they will be looking down at this building and they'd prefer not to look down at flat roofs. They'd prefer to look down onto pitched roofs. This is in response to exactly what our clients want.

You're entitled to it but you've got to go through the process.

- I'm not sure why every building has to have a flat roof now.

Because there's too many buildings like this already that have been developed in the last 25 years and building forms change over time. You don't create the same building and rubber stamp it throughout time and say this is fine. What's appropriate 25 years ago versus today are two different things.

- I think this is improved from what we've seen earlier.

- I think the landscaping could be stronger. Particularly given the site base you have. Some of this just needs to be programmed a bit better with the building. It seems like it doesn't quite work with the building. You could do some really nice stuff here. This could be a powerful space.
- I would reinforce your landscape beyond just your courtyard, to really start to draw that connection.
- If you want to have a further discussion about roof types, there needs to be much more information about the context of the whole area, the topography of the whole area and how those kinds of heights and site lines are going to impact the various areas. What is presented here does not persuade us that this kind of a profile for this site is what is required, so you need something better if you want to make this argument.
 - Aerial views looking down?
I don't know what it is, the way this is presented it's not convincing, and if you want to follow this you're going to need something different.
- On your massing too, the repetitive forms don't feel like a cohesive solution.
- I would say particularly where the bridge might want to engage the building, it doesn't seem any different than this element here.
- And how does it connect to the adjacent building?
 - In a gable end. Our second floor ties into their third floor.
So the building across the street that we're trying to relate to is how many stories, 3? So you essentially have what feels like a 3-story base of masonry, that's what's going to connect to your adjacent building and how you treat that setback to the upper units. The gabled roof is not what will create a strong connection to that form.
 - What came out of the DAT was bring that masonry up higher on the building.
- DAT has nothing to do with that. It's the design body. They really don't have anything to do with particular design features of the building.
- If you brought in the neighboring context and the height of those gabled roofs, then show this building and how high those are and really out of context with the pedestrian scale, I think it may help form a solution to a flat roof.

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 2, 4 and 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 501 Commerce Drive

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	6	5	5	-	-	-	4	5
	5	4	4	-	-	-	6	4

General Comments:

- Site layout much improved. Adjust building footprint to enhance entry courtyard.