

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION		<b>PRESENTED:</b> May 5, 2014	
TITLE:	702-706 Williamson Street – Third Lake Ridge Historic District – Demolish current commercial building and construct a new six-story commercial/multi-family housing development. 6 <sup>th</sup> Ald. District. Contact: Martin Rifken (32584)	<b>REFERRED:</b>	
		<b>REREFERRED:</b>	
		<b>REPORTED BACK:</b>	
AUTHOR:	Amy Scanlon, Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>POF:</b>
DATED:	May 5, 2014	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>	

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Fox Gehrig, Vice Chair; Christina Slattery, Jason Fowler, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, and Michael Rosenblum. Gehrig left at 8:10 p.m. during discussion of Item #7.

### **SUMMARY:**

Levitan opened the public hearing.

Mark Ernst, registering in support and wishing to speak. Ernst explained that the project is similar to the one that was reviewed during a recent Informational Presentation to the Landmarks Commission. Ernst explained that the changes include the exterior material on the side and the rear elevation and the increase in the amount of glass at the corner and the regularization of the window openings. Ernst explained that masonry will wrap the corners and then the fiber cement panels will continue on the sides.

Jim Brown, registering in support and wishing to speak. Brown explained the proposed materials and that the rendering color on paper is not correct.

Rummel requested information about the articulation of the height. Ernst explained that the economics of the project require a 6 story building and that the sixth story is stepped back to express 5 stories on Williamson Street.

Slattery asked how the design team had designed the building to be compatible with other buildings in the VRA. Brown explained the windows are set in from the face of the masonry, the upper story is stepped back, a base-middle-top was created, and the proposed brick materials all combine to make the building visually compatible.

Ernst explained that the storefront glass system will sit on a low wall instead of going to the floor and that the taller windows of the top story will match the height of the other windows of the lower levels.

Brown explained that the volume of the proposed building is 770,000 cubic feet compared to neighboring buildings (Harvester Building 420,000 cubic feet and Olds Seed 806,000 cubic feet). Brown also explained that the footprint of the proposed building and the Harvester are 10,000 square feet and the Olds Seed Building is 15,000 square feet.

Brown explained the proposed materials and Ernst explained the fiber panel are flat, not beveled like siding.

Brown also explained how the building planes sit in relation to the property lines (upper balcony railings are on the property line and stories 2-5 are set back 5 feet from the property line).

Peter Wolff, registering in opposition and available to answer questions. Wolff explained that the Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) unanimously opposed the demolition of the existing building because the proposed building did not meet the BUILD II plan. The neighborhood is most concerned about the height. The heights discussed in the BUILD II plan show the neighborhood preference and retain the view of the capitol dome down Williamson Street.

David Lohrentz registering in support and wishing to speak. Lohrentz explained that he feels the design is compatible with the historic district because of the use of high quality materials, the improvement of the visibility at the corner, and the step back of the upper story.

Joy Newman, registered in opposition and available to answer questions, but also chose to speak. Newman explained that this is a historic district and a beautiful building could be built here, but that this building has not been designed to reference its location in a historic district. Newman requested that the capitol view be maintained. The desire to have apartments with views of the lake is costly to all residents of the city.

Lindsey Lee, registering in support and wishing to speak. Lee explained that he is a business owner and a property owner in this block. Lee explained that his family is committed to the neighborhood and ways to strengthen the corridor. He believes this proposal will be a positive change. He explained that he wishes the review was less quantitative and more qualitative meaning the review would be based on aesthetics.

Joan Hart, registering in opposition and available to answer questions.

Leslie Schroeder, registering in opposition and not wishing to speak.

Levitan closed the public hearing.

Levitan asked that staff provide clarification about the interface between the BUILD II plan, the TSS zoning district and the Third Lake Ridge historic district. Staff explained that the historic district was established in 1979 based on a historic preservation plan that is referenced in the Ordinance. The BUILD II plan was completed after the historic district was created. The Landmarks Commission, as part of a larger development review process, is aware of the neighborhood plan, but is only charged with interpreting the words of the Ordinance. The Plan Commission will review this project against the BUILD II plan. Staff explained that in the TSS zoning district there is a 3 story height limit with the option to request a conditional use for more height.

Levitan asked if a parcel zoned TSS relates to the Landmarks Ordinance as a residential, employment, or commercial use. Staff explained that it is a commercial use.

Rummel explained that there is an important capitol view from Jenifer Street and she is concerned that this building may affect that view. Rummel explained that a greater upper story step back would be helpful in creating visually compatibility. She explained that this project will set the tone for future projects and how they relate to the neighborhood plan. Rummel also explained that the opposition by MNA is an important factor to consider.

Gehrig explained that MNA is generally supportive of projects and that having them oppose this project has given her reason to reconsider. Gehrig explained that this corner could support a dense project that relates to the neighboring buildings.

McLean explained that the capitol view is a significant feature that is unique to our city and to specific points within our city. McLean also explained that the Williamson Street façade is compatible, but a 5 story building would be a better fit for the context.

Leviton asked if a 13 foot difference in building height will affect the historic district and if the volume and height are compatible. Staff noted that the Ordinance language says “visually compatible” not mathematically compatible.

Rosenblum explained that the Williamson Street façade relates to Williamson Street and that 5 stories would be better than the proposed 6 stories.

There was general discussion about the order of the Commission reviews and the possibility that the Landmarks Commission could approve a 6 story building and that the Plan Commission could deny the conditional use request for additional height.

Rummel asked for clarification on the staff report recommendations. Staff explained that the top element of the building is very minimal and may be made larger as a way to make this building more compatible with the other buildings in the VRA. Staff explained that the strong corner element holds the corner and has a presence and that the sides of the building could step down to the neighboring buildings. The 6<sup>th</sup> story of the Blount Street elevation could be stepped back to help transition to the neighboring buildings.

Slattery explained that the height is a concern for the neighborhood, but it seems to work with the VRA and the corner element is successful. Rummel explained that this development has no other green space and is using balconies to meet that requirement. She asked if the balconies should be further recessed to improve the compatibility.

McLean explained that the Williamson Street elevation is successful and that the addition of masonry instead of fiber cement panels would be an improvement. Mc Lean suggested that the stepped back upper story of the Williamson Street elevation be repeated on the Blount Street elevation. The corner element seems fine.

Gehrig explained that this historic district has a history of requesting demolition.

There was general discussion about the proposed materials, the staff report recommendations, and the visual compatibility of the height.

Ernst described the design elements that they used to create visual compatibility.

Rosenblum explained that the Blount Street side feels large and less compatible. He explained that the design could be modified to reduce the feeling of incompatibility on the Blount Street elevation. There was general discussion about the visual compatibility of the Williamson Street elevation.

Gehrig explained that the other review bodies should review the BUILD II plan and note that the MNA opposes the project since the Landmarks Commission has a different charge. She requested that this language be reflected in the motion. Slattery suggested that the 54 foot height of the BUILD plan be in the motion also.

### **ACTION:**

A motion was made by Rosenblum, seconded by Slattery, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 702 Williamson Street contingent on the land use approvals for the new construction. The motion passed on a 5:1 voice vote. Gehrig voted no. Levitan does not vote.

A motion was made by Slattery, seconded by Fowler, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction at 702 Williamson Street with the recommendations in the staff report and the discussions of the Commission as conditions of approval. The Commission discussed the importance of the review of the BUILD II plan including the 54 foot prescribed height and the MNA opposition in the approval process by bodies other than the Landmarks Commission. The motion passed on a 5:1 voice vote. Rummel voted no. Levitan does not vote.