

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: December 17, 2014
TITLE: 2500 Winnebago Street – PD(SIP), Two 4-Story, Mixed-Use Structures with Underground Residential Parking in UDD No. 5. 6 th Ald. Dist. (35780)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: December 17, 2014	ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 17, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PD(SIP) for two 4-story mixed-use structures with underground residential parking in UDD No. 5 located at 2500 Winnebago Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was Marc Ott, representing Gorman & Company. Registered and speaking neither in support nor opposition were Kim Lund, John Steines and Satya Rhodes-Conway, representing the Union Corners Steering Committee.

The development consists of one underground foundation with two surface buildings that creates a plaza in the center. There will be a phasing of building styles as they work their way from East Washington Avenue back into the neighborhood. Most of the building will be fiber cement, lap siding, corrugated metal and brick all mixed throughout.

Satya Rhodes-Conway spoke as a representative of the Union Corners Steering Committee. The committee has 100% support for the spirit of the project, they support the mixed-use nature of the buildings, the affordable housing component, they like the mix of unit sizes and underground parking, however, they are “sorely disappointed in and opposed to the design.” They want it to be less boring, less Soviet and less like a dorm. The conversation about the East Washington Avenue frontages being primary architectural elements with the co-housing being the residential section is an excuse to do poor design in the middle. Every piece of the site needs to be well designed. Some suggestions from the neighborhood included evoking the French Battery building, or other iconic elements of the neighborhood. That doesn’t mean copy the houses by any stretch of the imagination. They are just asking for something that looks more interesting. The courtyard that is referred to in the middle of the two buildings and stretching back to the intersection of the two paths they see as a very critical element in the design of this property and should be fantastic. The design of it should activate it accordingly and draw people in, inviting them to use it rather than deferring programming to the neighborhood and the tenants; the design can play a role in making this a very special place. The path also needs to react to whatever is on that frontage of the buildings, which is right now very unclear. The neighborhood feels that Winnebago Street is not a commercial street, it’s a residential street and the neighborhood encourages the team to activate the retail on

the other side of the buildings to have more of a retail center as you move toward East Washington Avenue. The landscaping should reflect that these are four-sided buildings. They are doing the minimum they can do for stormwater management; we've had some positive discussions about capturing stormwater for on-site use, and this could be productively integrated into the design. The neighborhood would like to see more LEED certification and more green amenities.

Were you requesting that the retail be on this side? How's that going to work with the clinic parking?

(Rhodes-Conway) The corner more towards North and East Washington will all be retail, so the idea is that you have on the site an energy of retail that is more towards East Washington. The other side of Winnebago is going to be completely residential and this is not a unanimous feeling amongst the neighborhood, but the discussions at the steering committee very much centered around the idea of the path being an active retail space and that the retail would connect towards the East Wash frontage and Winnebago would have a more residential feel to it. I'd be concerned about the viability of retail along there.

(Ott) The retailers will be able to decide which frontage they want. The residential will be the last element, we can't make this project work financially without the retail tenants.

John Steines spoke to the importance of the pathway. Perhaps the ends of the buildings could be retail to have frontage on both sides with the housing in the middle. If all the residential faces the pathway then that area becomes private back space and doesn't function as public space.

Kim Lund noted that this is a very pedestrian and bicycle friendly neighborhood. If the residential housing front doors face the path it's not going to draw people in. This was changed at the last meeting they had and was a complete departure from what was discussed. This should be a neighborhood gathering space.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Do you need all of that retail space?
 - The market sets the price and where the retail will be and they can pick where they want to be.
- It doesn't always work that way. If you really want to have residential spaces on the first floor, their relationship with outdoor spaces has to work. Putting them at the ends of the building in some ways seems to activate the central walkway, but then the ends of the building aren't really set up for residential uses. You need to think more about solutions rather than "wait and see."
- Does the non-residential use have to be retail? It could be office use.
 - It definitely could but the WHEDA program is set on a certain number of dwelling units.
- You might want to show us several options with different floor plates that appeals to all parties.
- I find it hard to believe that staff is letting this go through with so much fiber cement board.
 - The comment from staff was, again the hard part of this project is Section 42, the programming and the monies, but again trying to juggle the numbers. We have to keep the cost per unit at a certain level which of course precludes too much masonry, so staff's comment was "we understand and maybe more masonry if it's done in the right way."
- The Stonehouse project was able to integrate a nice amount of bricks. Even though this body has called for color, I would like to see more brick and masonry. The color now seems overwhelming to me.
- Rigidity alone does not make a composition. If these were black and white drawings, it needs an overall composition for the first step, and then a second dialogue about the materials and what they are. This is very much repetitive and that cannot be the sole feature, including changes in the parapet height. The biggest comment you're getting is that it feels like one mass on one street and you are essentially creating two blocks of street frontage, and character and different businesses; people who want to have a sense of identity of which unit might be theirs. I really think this is a composition discussion.

- That's exactly what I was going to say. I don't see an overall composition of the ends, the middle, the base, a rhythm of columns. It needs to go back to more of the diagram and then work out the details. Even how the solar panels are evenly spaced, maybe they could be concentrated to add some visual interest there. The materials will depend too on how you use them.
- I agree with the architecture comments. I also don't think there's a lot of rhythm in your planting plan. And when you come back you need to bring landscaping plans that we can read. I can't read this so I don't really know what you have.
- (Ald. Rummel) In our neighborhood discussions it came out that Marc has designed many of the areas that the neighborhood referenced. So we know you can do it.
- Too much cement board on the building's façade; integrate more brick and masonry along with splashes of color.
- Rigidity alone doesn't make a composition; look at varying the parapet and other alternatives or ways to break up the building mass.
- Break up building mass and make building more interesting.

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 rating for this project is 5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2500 Winnebago Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	5	4	4.5	-	-	5	5	5
	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	-

General Comments:

- Need planting plan of scale one can read. Landscape needs to encompass more of site.
- Design could/should stay “modern,” but should show more coherence, less block and repetitive, less asphalt on Winnebago Street.