

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 11, 2015

TITLE: 516 & 530 Cottage Grove Road – Lots 2 & 3 of Royster Corners Plat for a 4-Story Mixed-Use Building with 89 Apartment Units and Approximately 41,200 Square Feet of Commercial Space, Including a Public Library. 15th Ald. Dist. (35627)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 11, 2015

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 11, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of Lots 2 and 3 of Royster Corners Plat located at 516 & 530 Cottage Grove Road. Appearing on behalf the project were Janine Glaeser and Randy Bruce, both representing Ruedebush Development. Since the project last visited the Urban Design Commission, the development team has met with Library staff, as well as Zoning and Planning staff. They have activated the street and looked at how to create entries on Cottage Grove Road as well as public space. They expanded the entry plaza and pulled the entry out to further engage the street. An entry plaza has been added to the corner of Dempsey and Cottage Grove Road, and on the far west side there will be a “terrace” with an entry door to be developed by the Library. The main library entrance on Cottage Grove Road will have an extended canopy over what will be a shared plaza. The biggest change in architecture is the massing materiality of the library. The space facing the parking lot will be activated with outdoor multi-use space/plaza area that could have some amenities for future tenants. Covered bicycle parking has been increased to 94 stalls with some wrapping around the side. A garden wall will be located behind the parking area that could be used for meditation and could engage with the community room in the library. Stormwater swales will include native grasses and trees and will connect with the pedestrian pathways. The library is envisioning the center area as a winter garden; they have added more glass and skylight elements primarily on the south side to really make it an inviting space year-round. Building materials will be similar while still differentiating the two buildings. Future development on the site could include commercial, townhomes, apartments, with the backside having potential for a 2-story parking structure.

Heather Stouder, Planning staff provided context for the Cottage Grove Road plans for 2016. There will be on-street parking in front of the library on Cottage Grove Road. The travel lanes will each be 10-foot wide, there are bicycle lanes on both sides of the street and parking on the north side adjacent to this development. Also there is the addition of a median that fluctuates between 8-16 feet wide in the middle of the roadway. She pointed out that at the intersection of Cottage Grove Road and Dempsey Street there will be a diagonal bicycle crossing that will be signalized to get through this intersection to the YMCA on the other side of the street.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- We've identified places where you could remove a light pole and put in a tree, a tree being much more impactful. I would like you to look at that. Tree islands should emphasize trees, not lights, in tree islands abutting the north side of the building.
 - We did try to work out the spacing of the trees and light poles.
- There are a couple of species you've noted that are questionable. The Ivory Silk Japanese tree usually end up looking so distorted, make sure they look at that again and that it's what they want. They get pruned to look like Bonsai in the air, it just doesn't do anything to the architecture. The low-grow fragrant Sumac gets to be a weed catcher but it is over-powerful and really aggressive. Make sure you know for sure how it's going to be in 5-10 years. I'd recommend finding a substitute for that.
- I really want to see is some shade trees in here (in tree islands abutting the north side of the building). It's more than just cosmetic.
- I really like this tree but I'm concerned about it being here (Chanticleer Callery Pear); reconsider. The American Hornbeam is not very salt tolerant. If there's any kind of run-off it won't tolerate it. But otherwise this is very nice.
- Use tree species with wider canopies for greater shade and cooling. Avoid columnar trees in parking areas.
- Question on the build-out: what is the net effect on surface parking there?
 - Right now we're at 185 surface stalls. Lot 1 plans to accommodate up to 10,000 square feet of space, which still gives us what we felt was just under what the Madison code allows for shared parking. In other words we're providing a total of 284 parking stalls for a peak demand of 303. We're just slightly under and I think it's workable and I think the library understands. We've also added parking with the proposed build-out, to compensate for that.
- So the parking is not just for the building's demand, but it would replace the surface parking?
 - Correct.
- It seems as though there is parking and hoping the buildings will follow, as opposed to building the amount of parking needed with the buildings in the future. I have concern with the amount of parking being excessive for the first phase, and considering what the treatment of Lot 1 would be in the interim, is that landscaped, or just a vacant lot?
 - This submittal doesn't really address Lot 1. Staff could put a condition that Lot 1 get seeded or maintained in some fashion in that way. This isn't necessarily a long-term plan, this is probably the next phase. I think this is not that far off. We thought let's get the parking in now, rather than disrupt this area with additional construction later.
- The building is elevated how many feet above the corner of Dempsey and Cottage Grove Road? What's your first floor elevation compared to that corner?
 - We're about 2-feet at this corner but there's fall across the site so we're flat at this point and the site slopes about 2-feet.
- Is there an accessible entrance from Cottage Grove Road or Dempsey?
 - Yes. There's a ramp that comes up the side and to the corner piece as well.
- That's unfortunate. We just reviewed a project on East Washington Avenue and the failure of that building to engage the street was because it was elevated on a plinth so I continue to have the same concern with this one. And the fact that parking is really the primary entry to the building. If one was to park their car in the parking lot there really isn't a clear route that would direct them to Dempsey and to Cottage Grove Road to enter that way. All of the activity and life on the street really is going to remain on the parking lot face, although it's nice to hear there will be street parking on Cottage Grove Road, that will help.

- There's street parking, there's a bus stop there, bicycle traffic. The building engages both sides, it has to. That's one of the beauties of this winter garden that's the centerpiece, that allows for communication and pedestrian access through the building, allows for two front doors.
- We've also added a lot of bike parking around the front side, there's a whole bay right next to the entry.
- I think this building is really well composed and I appreciate the fact that it looks like you brought this entry feature out more from last time and that looks nice. I'm not so convinced about the composition of this building, I guess because you added all the metal panel to the library and it looks like you added it at the corner too. I'd like to see the entire building in metal panel, at this point. I see that this could really express themselves as separate buildings and I think it could integrate the nice design you have going on the library, the first floor portion of it and give it some visual interest.
 - One of the things that precipitated this was the idea of giving the library its own identity, separate from what's above. That was a way to integrate so we didn't completely ignore the architecture from the first floor to the upper levels. We've got this very strong statement that the library would like to see here, and then we turn it on its side and integrate it with the rest of the building and get a really strong corner piece and a little bit more activation of that corner. It also provided us a spot for perhaps locating some signage for the library. I think in the Heather's Planning staff report it talks about this material and either taking the brick up to the upper level, or using a metal panel here on the upper levels.
- The way I understood her comment was that she was concerned with changing material in the same plane.
 - To either change the plane or change the material.
- And I'm suggesting to change the material to keep it all in the same plane. You can still give the library its own identity, certainly you're doing it with all the glass, you're going to have balconies and residential scale windows so I don't think it would not read as apartments over a library. We just see a lot of buildings broken with some light material on top and I think it could really be a stunning counterpart to this more traditional warehouse aesthetic that you have.
- I'm not fond of putting that siding on top, I don't think that works at all.
- The east wing – it seemed to me you were getting this building with some horizontality now but the other building has some sense of vertical to it. But that verticality seemed to be broken when you got to the left end of it and I wondered whether all of that brick should be there. Maybe the brick tower but the two side pieces of it seem to take away from that sense that you were now having some verticality to this building.
- How your balconies read, that grouping of 3, that reads as a carve out of an overall mass, that when this horizontal with the brick comes through you can't really tell is it is a carve, it's less of a carve on this building which makes it less successful. Maybe there's a potential to eliminate this roofline the entire face above the balconies, that might help articulate it a bit.
- Given the fact that you're trying to encourage bicycle use here, can you tell me how the actual bike path really connects? Does it go right into the parking lot or how does that work?
 - Here's the bike path that comes along Dempsey, and connect here, here or here. As I understand it there will be a sidewalk and a bike path next to it. It won't connect from behind.
- This wall is there because of the parking beneath?
 - No, that wall is there so we can create this landscape edge for the patio without having a railing around it.
- My suggestion was going to be to move this back and put the plants along the sidewalk, but that would necessitate some type of a railing. That's how it would solve the problem with the street connection. Are there opportunities to set this back in places and provide...I don't know how you can incorporate that if you set this back in a few places along here. That planter becomes a bit of an attractive nuisance. Look at that and see if you can make it more sidewalk friendly and still accomplish what you're after.

- I love how the Royster element has come out, I love the winter garden. As much grass as you can get in there.

ACTION:

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1) with O’Kroley voting no. The motion required modifications to the landscape/lighting plans as noted and adjustments to the building’s façades and material according to comments made.

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 7, 7 and 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 516 & 530 Cottage Grove Road

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	6	7	6				7	7
	7	7	7				7	7
	7	5/7	7	7	-	7	8	7

General Comments:

- More large canopy, fewer columnar trees, move lamp positions to provide space for canopy trees.
- Much improved design, better connection to street, good parking lot landscape.
- Architecture Ratings: 5 for west building, 7 for east building.
- Excellent mixed-use program. Loading dock on Dempsey and first floor elevation have compromised public activity on the street with entry oriented to back parking lot. Doesn't meet LEED criteria to promote creating walkable streets.