

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** April 8, 2015

TITLE: 1200-1212 East Washington Avenue & 9-13 North Few Street – Four-Story Mixed-Use, Multi-Family Residential Development and Renovation of an Existing Building in UDD No. 8. 2nd Ald. Dist. (36899)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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

DATED: April 8, 2015 **ID NUMBER:**

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 8, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a four-story mixed-use, multi-family residential development located at 1200-1212 East Washington Avenue and 9-13 North Few Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Joseph Lee, representing McGrath Property Group; Patty Prime and Jacob Blue. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak were Karen Banaszak and Jeff Reinke. The development consists of retail/commercial along East Washington Avenue with residential on the top 3 floors. The residential entry is off East Washington Avenue. The architecture is more contemporary warehouse style with punched openings and big windows, simple material palette and massing, red utility-sized brick, precast lintels and where it steps back on the third floor there would be fiber cement siding. Blue discussed the landscape plan for an “ecological urbanity.” The idea is to create a space with pocket plantings in diverse species with the entire front having complete permeability. They focused on making sure the species near the driveway are salt tolerant and in the back space where it is pretty narrow, they intentionally went with an experimental Zen-like space where it’s very shaded, using a mix of planters in a raw metal look to match the building, some with ferns and some with gravel. They did look at different types of walls and screening methods, but because this area is so narrow it felt like residents would be caged in. On the backside they are trying to screen some of what’s happening with a fence that would include a dog run.

Patty Prime spoke in support of the project. The Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association Council voted to support this development. This is much closer to the scale they want for their neighborhood. There have been a number of changes in the design that have brought down the height, the breaking up the façade and extension of retail. Overall it is very well liked; one concern is the driveway that comes out near a residential home that may shine lights on that resident. Lance McGrath stated he would work with the resident on possible landscaping to solve that issue. He has also been in dialogue with the neighbors to preserve existing trees.

Karen Banaszak spoke. She is not opposed to having a project built here, but has always hoped it would be something that would enhance the neighborhood. Something really quality. She is one of the dissenters on the neighborhood association and she is inviting Lance McGrath to create a better project for people to come and live and be part of the neighborhood. There are existing business neighbors here and they have been very responsive to the residents' concerns by planting more trees and burying optic cables. This project will impact their neighborhood visually, the air, the water, the greenspace. This is a 100-year decision, according to Mr. McGrath, and there are issues that cannot be overlooked:

- The driveway. It's not fair, it's not my house but it's not fair and we would like entrance only and exit onto East Washington Avenue. This is early in the process because we started talking about this in January.
- The size of the project, he wants 76 units. If it were smaller there would be more "real" greenspace and less "virtual" greenspace. She appreciates when a landscape architect comes to the site and really takes care with what gets planted.
- The color. It's a high quality building, but it's a warehouse. We're a neighborhood, we have houses. It's stark, the color is dark, it's just getting "dropped" into our neighborhood.

Jeff Reinke spoke and encouraged the developer to save the mature trees. There is some concern with the proposed plantings being shade appropriate. The driveway as it's currently proposed will cause headlights to go directly into the adjacent neighbor's second story bedroom window. The suggestion from the last neighborhood meeting was to have cars enter and park underneath but come out onto East Washington Avenue.

Comments and questions from Commission members were as follows:

- I'm assuming that the driveway is placed where it is due to Traffic Engineering?
 - They're not going to allow anything on East Washington Avenue.
- Right. Just so the neighbors understand, unless it's a current curb cut on East Washington Avenue...
 - There are several on this property.
- The Design District does not allow the continued use of that curb cut.
- My understanding was that if there is an existing curb cut with an existing use...
- But this is in UDD No. 8, it restricts driveway openings on East Washington Avenue.
- We asked before for dimensions on sidewalks and terraces because there's an implication per the Design District requirements how much should be on the private property in the way of canopy trees if sidewalks and terraces are not sufficient.
 - I think we're pretty close.
- We have to make a finding that these are met, and without dimensions I can't tell.
- As you know we're concerned about the plinth. What does the Few Street elevation look like? There should be features that engage the pedestrians on any streetscape in the district.
- I would say if dimensions are correct the planting plan is pretty nice. Large scale trees, my only two concerns would be what are those large trees they're talking about on Few Street?
 - Along the front of East Washington Avenue are Ash trees, those will be gone. We'd like to remove those, and redo the soil in here with an appropriate compaction level so the new trees can be successful.
- I think the canopy would make a nice street sense. I do have a real concern about the Birch survival. But you've done a nice job.
- The design is much improved over the version we had before.
- Your lowering the floor elevation to meet East Washington Avenue is a huge improvement.

- Could you study the comments about the vehicles and the adjacent properties. Study your ramp elevations and sight lines and if you can get up to grade sooner so at least the lights aren't shining the entire face.
 - We're at maximum.
- So study your first floor plan to see if you can find some more space for head room in the ramp to alleviate at least the change in grade and the approach.
- The aesthetic, the general massing seems comfortable but the historic reference to the kitschy-ness I would try to avoid.
- Is everyone OK with utility brick in this location?
 - It's East Washington, it's not Mifflin.
 - My building has a mixture and I find it really interesting.
- It's been traditionally an issue for architecture downtown.
- This is really clean and it almost has a warehouse feel to me, but on the East Washington Avenue side I'm just wondering if you don't bring that horizontal across like you do in other areas, you seem to have this breaking up to make it look like individual storefronts which doesn't remind me of a warehouse building. I think that would help clean it up a little bit and help distinguish the residential from a commercial.

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 7.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 1200-1212 East Washington Avenue & 9-13 North Few Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	7	6	7	6	-	7	9	7

General Comments:

- Work on East Washington façade horizontal commercial expression.
- Nice project.