

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** June 10, 2015

TITLE: 2500 Winnebago Street – PD(SIP), Two 4-
Story, Mixed-Use Structures with **REFERRED:**
Underground Residential Parking in UDD **REREFERRED:**
No. 5. 6th Ald. Dist. (35780)

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 10, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Tom DeChant, John Harrington, Cliff Goodhart, Richard Slayton, Melissa Huggins and Sheri Carter.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 10, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of 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 were Marc Ott, representing Gorman & Company, Inc.; and Justin Frahm, representing JSD Professional Services, Inc. The project is now WHEDA sponsored and they hope to start construction this fall. The site plan and building positioning has not changed since their previous visit to the Commission in January. The community area and the commercial spaces will have entrances front and back. Ground floor level will contain three units as per the WHEDA requirements with underground parking. Architecturally they looked at individual details all around the building. They've changed some of the corner elements so that each building has all the same four corners. They played with the rooflines and simplified them, as well as color placements, deck posts and brick positions so the buildings are more consistent and less random.

Frahm discussed the landscape plan. The central space was looked at from a standpoint of serving those potential tenants in that space while also reinforcing the axial relationship to the central programs, East Washington Avenue and ultimately through Winnebago Street. They looked at providing shade (Hornbeams) and additional seating opportunities to activate that space. Additional screening, Evergreen seasonal treatment and canopy trees have all been added to the end treatments, which helps tie the central spine space down to the end cap of the building. Trees within the parking islands and throughout the development have been upscaled. Additional landscaping has been added to the foundation plantings to help the transition from building to sidewalk/streetscape.

The first SIP for the clinic and overall GDP for Union Corners, there was concern raised about how these common areas would be developed and when they would come through with their phasing. With this particular phase basically takes care of a lot of that common area, as well as coordinates what was approved on UW Health's property to be done in conjunction with this phase. That spine, at least the left-hand side, will be taken

care of because that's part of UW Health's plan, but will be done in conjunction with development of this, so we'll see these common areas be developed when development occurs.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- This tree, the center of it is essentially on that building, and this one isn't. I think the greater statement is symmetry.
- This node is strong, except that the path kind of goes through it; it doesn't go to it, it doesn't go around it, it cuts off one portion of it. You have the different pavements and that signals that that is the node, but the relationship of the node to the path, and this is real subtle so I'm not saying it has to change, but if you refine this consider if that's the relationship you want.
- How the raised area relates to what's going on here – spokes coming out from the center of your node create an edge for that raised area rather than their own structure.
- I don't see any mitigation of the fumes for cars backing in here.
 - That design will have to garner approval from Traffic and Planning. The original design was with the bike lane, angled parking and the widths of sidewalk terrace, as well as the parallel parking; this design was provided by Traffic.

Show them an image of a truck with a hitch, or an SUV with a bike rack that's going to block that pavement. Even a 2-3 foot buffer in there.

- Your rain garden mix really shouldn't be all the same number. It's going to self-seed.
- More canopy trees at the one end would help with the heat island effect. There's so much pavement with this angled parking.
- One of the things I struggle with in these mixed-use buildings is not having enough of an identity for the residents. The entryways should have as much presence from the outside as any of the retail, and the fact that you don't have any suggested gathering area, this just feels really uninviting from an apartment living standpoint. Now we've completely eliminated any sense of place without grand lobbies. If there's some place that people can stand and talk, a sense of arriving. Do something with the doorways and signage to make it pop.
 - I'm trying to beef up the entrances. I do agree that we need to make that prominent.
- Can you help your tenants design places that work with two entrances so they don't put the "back of the house" facing the street?
 - That's my goal as we start to get inquiries. We've told possible tenants and real estate agents about the set up.
- Look at it like we typically look at white box build-outs. You're showing this architecture for the commercial to give us the general impression of how it fits in context with the building as a whole, but when you get specific tenants that move in there's going to be a degree of customization that occurs. You can play with those relationships and try to apply that concept to what's going in there. You could build that language into your text and achieve those objectives as build-out occurs.
- In the elevation the solar panels seem quite prominent but here they disappear.
 - They're going to be seen, and I think in this neighborhood that's a good thing. We are committed to solar on both this building and again Building 1 (the grocer). We had a meeting with some solar companies so it's a matter of finding the right model. We've talked about community solar arrangements, where neighbors can actually buy the panels on our roof and get the subsidy for it. Kind of a solar co-op.
- I really think that you ought to take one more stab at the comments from last January. I'm pretty sure that Dawn would agree with me, there's still a lot of fun details that aren't fully resolved. There's lots of little verticals and we were talking about more compositions to make. These look more like townhouses where an entire unit would be expressed along the way. A lot of different colors, probably needlessly so.

Maybe look at an “a, b, c” composition or an “a, b, a, b.” I don’t think this gets there yet and it’s going to be a very long building. I don’t understand why this turret comes back at an angle and this porch element just kind of sneaks in. If you’re going to have a corner balcony like that, maybe it’s expressed as something more significant. If that’s one unit, express it as a unit, less early 20th Century historic styles.

- I get it, but I’m going to address the fact that, again as in the notes from last time, this is 6 months of meeting with the neighbors and going through the details that they want to see. I have to design it as much for the people that are going to use it, these are the people coming to the meetings, involved, have made us start over 3 times to get to this version.
- But I don’t think we’re being inconsistent with our comments here.
 - This is a very active neighborhood, more than more in the City of Madison. I feel very comfortable with this version and I understand a few details here and there...
- Well I think it’s more than that.
 - That’s your opinion. I have mine, the neighbors have theirs.
- You are experiencing something that every architect experiences. I’ve had conversations with some of the neighbors, and the responsibility of the Urban Design Commission is the overall look of the entire City. While neighbors opinions are great, they’re not design professionals, and that is our job. That said, this building, I don’t want someone driving down the road saying “What the hell did the UDC do?” They listened to the neighbors.
- I don’t know that we’ve seen anything that we would say we would approve that has been shown to them, it’s always the other way around, this is what they want to see. You haven’t actually brought anything to the neighbors that we would wholeheartedly support and endorse.
- I feel like this is a big policy issue about how the neighbors get engaged, when they get engaged and whose vote counts. This is a commission style of government: we’re appointed by the Mayor to make decisions about design, that’s our job. Ultimately you’ve got extremely talented design professionals sitting around this table, do we roll over and say well the neighbors like it? Because the whole point of having an urban design commission is to create high quality design. If the two architects on this committee say “this isn’t there yet” then I don’t think it’s there yet.
 - I understand and I hear all of what you’re saying. I agree with the fundamentals of the whole process, I’m just as an architect in town, I’m confused by some of the stuff I do see approved, that I don’t think are nearly the quality of this product, even though there are still some details I agree that have to be worked out, and that’s part of the design process. But what I’m hearing here is “we don’t like that building.” I see buildings going up all the time that I know are approved by the City of Madison that I don’t feel are anywhere near the quality of this building.
- Not all of them went through here (Urban Design Commission).
- Some of them don’t come here at all.
- You know the process, you know that we need to vote on it, we’ve been consistent with our comments. I don’t know that the neighbors would necessarily object to something that we would support because they haven’t seen that yet.
- I’m struggling because I also think a building of that scale has to be broken up in some way. Color is one way to do it, plenty of in and out.
- I have a whole different reaction. I don’t think a building like this needs to be broken up. We get to much of this in and out. We talk about the reality of buildings expressing really what they are in some cases, and all of these things attempt to mask and fit in. I don’t find this great architecture in any sense, yet I know this neighborhood and I know that the kind of building I would really like to see they are never going to buy. This project has been guided by the neighbors from day one. They feel like they own this site and you’re not going to wrestle it out of them.
- We’re not looking for a Bauhaus building, but some rhythm, some composition.

- I think this is all doable. If we ignore the issues about architecture and go straight to minimize the amount of verticals, the amount of color, the old simplification thing! It would still be a product that the neighborhood would like.
- You see some consistency along the first floor level where the live-work units and retail units are located, there's more of a composition there, with the exception of the apartment entrance. That's something else that really needs to be articulated. We gave initial approval based on the idea that this was, in terms of its height, the use, the massing of it, it could work.

ACTION:

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Goodhart, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion provided for address of the reiterated concerns relative to building architecture and landscape modifications. The architecture should be less reliant on early 20th Century architecture; and revisit the compositional comments relative to the building's façade.

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 6.

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 | - | 6 | 6 | - | - | 4.5 | 7 | 6 |
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