

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: October 7, 2015

TITLE: 1801 East Washington Avenue – New Development, Two 4-Story Buildings Containing 232 Apartment Units and 8,900 Square Feet of Commercial Space in UDD No. 8. 6th Ald. Dist. (40143)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: October 7, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton, Cliff Goodhart, Sheri Carter and Lois Braun-Oddo.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 7, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for two 4-story buildings containing apartment units and commercial space in UDD No. 8 located at 1801 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Michael Campbell, Michael Poole, Jeff Vercauteren and Anne Walker, representing M-M Properties, Inc. and Campbell Capital Group, LLC.

They have designed a 2-4 story element with a four-story parking garage above ground. The above ground parking was necessitated from shielding tenants from the rail corridor, as well as the poor condition of the soil and high groundwater. It blends in with the building so it doesn’t look so much like parking. There are 3 courtyards proposed and an open plaza to the river. The buildings are 2-stories facing the neighborhood, 3-stories along the river, and 4-stories along East Washington Avenue. Some commercial along East Washington Avenue and wrapping around the river is proposed. One entrance will be off East Washington Avenue and one will be off Main Street. They are proposing 3 elevators. All units will open onto the residential courtyard and have private balconies. The landscaping plan is not yet fully formed. Building materials include buff brick, red brick, fiber cement panels with a reveal clip and metal panels. The Commission discussed the propensity for flooding in this area and the landmark status of the Yahara.

Anne Walker spoke to the importance of this space in the neighborhood and the importance of greenspace. The neighborhood is not needing another restaurant; it should be a calmer space, not a cocktail bar. The existing Marling building provides a green wall (The neighborhood is not needing another restaurant; it should be a calmer space, not a cocktail bar. The existing Marling building provides a green wall (Virginia creeper) between the neighborhood and East Washington Avenue. She would like to see the development relate to the river. Stormwater is also of concern. First Street already sees traffic back-ups and this would complicate that situation.

Alder Marsha Rummel held a neighborhood meeting and noted that most attendees were mostly OK with the plan, citing concerns with parking and treatment of the river. She mentioned the B.U.I.L.D. Plan and the Capitol Gateway Plan, which both concentrated the building heights more towards Ingersoll Street (The Constellation, The Galaxie). Those plans called for stepping down the heights of buildings towards the river.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The architecture should not be traditional.
- The Jamestown Apartments in Middleton on Allen Boulevard have a glorious open space surrounded by the apartments. I think this could be as important as that one.
- We need to understand what is happening with the parcels more towards First Street.
 - We were making the distinction on building heights in a very small area.I don't have a problem with the height on East Washington Avenue in lieu of other things like the courtyard and other amenities. I think height there is not an issue for most of the adjacent neighbors. We have a number of plans that have come through with higher than what's called for in the plans.
- I wonder how viable a commercial space is down there. Why would you have the prime units in there with no use of the river?
 - I don't know if we want to get into this. Planning staff asked us to tweak that and we actually have 20,000 square feet of commercial space and offices. We've done that on the first floor, we were told they wanted more depth.
- We don't object to having more commercial space but we're questioning the design of putting that right on the river. Maybe you have more commercial space but it's multiple stories further back in away from the river. Perhaps a rearrangement that still gets you the employment but doesn't sacrifice the river.
 - That's the interpretation as I've been told.
- If you have a one-story, with this being depressed, I almost see this as a building with a plinth at the river level with a second story glass block that is a viable commercial space.
 - We have to be cognizant of the parking, we'd get push back from the neighborhood if we had too much commercial and needed that parking.
- (Alder Rummel) For a somewhat downtown proposal, I think it's unusual that it's not a block of buildings, that is so rare. I'm kind of excited by that. I would also like you to consider East Main Street and how those townhomes work. I think there's some really interesting things about this plan. As far as the retail on the corner, I understand those concerns. I'm sure somebody will want to have boats and kayaks there, that could raise up that first story.
 - We haven't figured that out yet, in terms of how that would work with boats and kayaks.
- You technically have a front entrance on East Washington Avenue. Where does the pizza guy come and get into the units?
- The railroad parcel is your neighbor, it would be helpful if you showed what exists there, and at the end of Main Street, for context. What their setbacks are, what kind of a street front we're creating on Main Street because we're reinforcing an area that's single-family.
- When you abut a residential neighborhood with a taller structure you have to step it back.
 - We'll taper it back.
- Whether it's townhomes or stoops, it's something that's activated by people. Use those as the main entries, but in terms of architectural form: modern, modern, modern.
- It's not just one modern expression with materials, but they come off as separate buildings, as modern townhomes.
- Your building entrance, this is really the place to do something big, it could be your commercial entrance too.

- I kind of see this as a more horizontal site too. I see it go back towards the river, I realize that's a special space as an architectural feature, but the entrance is in another place.
- Part of that is how viable and feasible is the commercial. You put more commercial in there because staff has raised the point of our plans, but the building doesn't really focus on how that is significant, how public gets in there and how it presents itself. We're urging you to think about how it can really work as a commercial space with a viable entrance that gets you to the residential, but makes that significant commercial side work.
- You need to show the relationship of your parking ramp.
- If this commercial space works and is successful, it's going to help with the public market and Fiore Shopping Center as well. Treating this as a add-on commercial to the residential doesn't really get us to that further City goal of having this commercial corner there.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.