

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 24, 2016
TITLE: 121 North Butler Street – Restoration of Two Existing Buildings, Demolition of Two Buildings and Three Garage Structures, and Development of a New 4-Story Apartment Building with Underground Parking. 2 nd Ald. Dist.	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: February 24, 2016	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, Richard Slayton, Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, John Harrington and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 24, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for the restoration of two existing buildings, demolition of two buildings and three garage structures, and development of a new 4-story apartment building with underground parking located at 121 North Butler Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was James McFadden, representing Butler St., LLC. Registered and speaking in opposition were Patty Prime and Patrick Heck.

The proposal includes five existing properties; two of which will be renovated, one has been renovated and relocated, and the other two will be demolished. The site slopes approximately 9-feet. Four surface parking stalls are proposed, with below grade parking in the new building. A main formal entry will front on Butler Street with a second entry with additional bicycle parking. This project is trying to address the need for smaller apartment buildings as the property will not have any amenities other than laundry. Buildings materials will consist of a mix of brick, masonry and fiber cement panels.

Kevin Firchow spoke to the Commission about staff’s memo regarding the project, noting that this will return to the UDC at a later date for a formal recommendation to the Plan Commission. He asked the UDC to give feedback on the Planning Division’s four point memo:

- Depth of the structure.
- Width of the structure.
- Building materials.
- Open space and balconies.

Patty Prime spoke to concerns about the mass of the building and how it fits in the neighborhood. She also spoke to concerns about changing the character of a neighborhood, which sets up a financial incentive to have

people make that investment. The zoning in terms of the density changes the overall formula and doesn't feel like a good fit.

Patrick Heck spoke to concerns about the infill density and scale of this project and how out of scale it is with the current neighborhood. He worries this will provide incentives to other developers to consider tearing down more homes that will change the fabric of the neighborhood in a way that many residents don't want to see, while fully recognizing that some homes aren't worth saving.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- There is an idiom of these red brick apartment buildings, 3 flats, and if you could bring some information on what their width is it would help our decision. Drawing on an idiom that you're referencing already I'd like to see how that works. It also struck me that your little side balconies are much smaller than that idiom is addressed in these traditional flats. They tend to have bigger side elements rather than these narrow tower elements. Your rooflines capture that large mass for the side widths but then the balconies don't. If that whole element were stronger it might work better.
- You show the pavement leading right up to the building, no one is going to be able to pass here. I wouldn't go any wider than 9-feet through here so you can have at least 1.5-feet on either side so it looks more like a residence and less like a parking structure.
- There's not a lot of other opportunity to do much on the site, landscape-wise.
- I agree pretty much with the staff memo.
- The massing isn't compatible with what's there now. If this were a corner lot or near one of the commercial streets on the block it would be more appropriate. Being right in the center is less appropriate, particularly with the adjacent parking ramp across the street creating this four-story plus hip roof structure across from the four-story parking structure; it weakens the already tenuous texture of the contiguous residential block that exists. The architecture only has one access from the front street when traditionally there would be more. Walk-up houses, more activity on the street. The balconies on very tenuous vertical elements don't seem in character with the other structures that you referenced, and the scale of the hip roof.
- I agree with the analysis of the report, the reference to the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and the recommendations about established neighborhoods. Until some of those concerns can be addressed, the whole character of the design would significantly change. I'm not in support of the proposal as presented.
- I have never seen an apartment layout where you walk through the kitchen to get to the living space. Do you know that that works?
 - It's something we've seen in Chicago.I don't think we've seen that here.

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 2.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 121 North Butler Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	1	4	-	-	-	-	3	2

General Comments:

- Inappropriate for the site. The Planning Division report's four issues are right on.