

## AGENDA # 9

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** April 6, 2016

TITLE: 4525 Secret Garden Drive – Multi-Family Residential Development Consisting of Twelve Multi-Family Buildings with 102 Dwelling Units. 16<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (36751)

**REFERRED:**  
**REREFERRED:**  
**REPORTED BACK:**

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

DATED: April 6, 2016      **ID NUMBER:**

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

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of April 6, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a multi-family residential development consisting of twelve multi-family buildings with 102 dwelling units. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson and Joseph Lee, representing Decker Properties; and Matt Saltzberry, representing D’Onofrio Kottke & Associates. Registered and speaking in opposition was Mike Pfohl, representing Secret Places Neighborhood Association. Registered in opposition and available to answer questions were Wendy Gottschalk and Michael Tierney. Munson reviewed changes to the project in response to Planning staff and Urban Design Commission concerns and comments. The unit type is now more diverse with a mixture of townhomes and stacked flats. The site itself has a lot of constraints including a gas line, and an overhead electric easement, which affects grading and elevations. The intent of the unit design is to create a cohesive townhouse expression along the entire building. The sidewalks will be raised, closer to the curb to move them from the fronts of the buildings, but could be changed to terraces. The revised landscaping plan does include more plant materials along townhomes on the interior of the site plan. They are looking to do this project in 2-3 phases as they bring in amenities and City services. A mix of stone and fiber cement siding is proposed at the base. The amount of landscape screening has increased and foundation plantings are now shown around all the buildings to highlight the entry spaces and the transition from ground level up the vertical wall. The playground area has been reduced in size to 1,700 square feet located in the central green of the site. This allows for more non-programmed open space.

Mike Pfohl spoke in “soft” opposition, noting that changes have been made at the request of the neighborhood. They appreciate the project being more integrated with their existing neighborhood. Their biggest concern remains traffic; there is a traffic study being done. The townhome appearances are continuing to move in the right direction. They want to be included in discussions with the management plan of the development. The overall discussion has been the more that the front end of the townhomes can look like the surrounding houses, the better, using different colors and shapes.

Ald. DeMarb spoke to the history of this development and noted that it has changed a lot. She noted changes made including moving the 3-bedroom units to the center of the development to overlook the play area, and the circulation of the roadways. This development is helping to build a community. Concerns remain with the lack of a lighting plan and signage plan.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I don't think you're getting the powerful impact you could get if changed even the color so it looks like individual buildings. It looks like a big building that has this roofline.
  - In the developer's view, he wanted to have this collection of buildings have some commonality, which led the designs. Joe's done a good job of breaking that up but it really is a design preference by the clients.
- What are restrictions on parking in the gas easement?
  - They won't allow anything above the ground plane flat; they don't like shrubs or trees. Unfortunately the pipeline is very restrictive. They said we could plant grass. They survey from the air and if they see anything of varying color, that's a red flag.
- I love that you've got the spines, that has a very traditional look. Symmetry is important, and a certain level of lushness. On the plans we're seeing tonight it's a good Phase 1, but remember that Phases 5 or 6 should be as impactful. It's got to fill in nicely, that's what you're setting up with the formality of that.
- There's something to be said about similar character and architecture, you're showing us an image at the top, then multiply that by four. This thing is going to go on forever, and it's repetitive and it's not at all appropriate to the scale of a single-family neighborhood, having the same exact building over and over and over again. You need to work with the architectural character more, how these buildings relate to each other, as well as how they're going to relate to across the street.
- What if you took the entire grouping of buildings and split it to the north (up), then you could actually allow your front face to have some relief and imply that they're following that curve of Catalina, to have a more implied relationship with the street, rather than having this flat line that parts off from the curve, and I don't quite understand if it's its own development or part of the street. Back away from the pipeline to allow yourself some character.
  - It would be very difficult. One of the challenges we face, go back to where we started; back lots around a central green. In developing an alternative we had to go back and look at the economics, incorporating the different unit types with these configurations has led us to a point where there's not a lot of movement without starting to reduce the ability to have an east-west sidewalk, or start to reduce some of the spacing in the north. There's trade-offs with all of that. We can't follow the curve, but it does allow us an opportunity to bring landscaping on the other side to break up that curve. A series of decisions led us to this layout. The stormwater management is also very impactful on the design.
- The street is mainly straight where the pipeline is straight. This end, if you could just shift that one townhome back a little, rotate it slightly because that's where the curve is and give it more of a sense of relationship to the street.
  - I can appreciate the comments of switching it up as you go along that building frontage, but I think just angling one building causes more problems than it might solve.
- The six-foot sidewalks are good.
- This straight line makes it look like it's intended to be a very manicured lawn. Is there enough room on the south side of the easement to create this line through there?
  - There's another easement up here too. We tried to bring landscaping as close to the street as we could and that is what you see here. We can look at that easement language, maybe it's less restrictive and we can get more landscaping in there.
- Create a composition with this mass you're building.

- If you look at the two end caps, they have nice variation.
- And the repetitive roofline.
- Is it possible to ask MG&E what is tolerable for plantings?
- I think the site layout is fine, the landscape plan is coming along nicely but needs more species.

(Wendt) One of the concerns Planning Division staff had was when you draw a cross section through the gas line and look at back of curb to finished floor elevation, some of those grade changes are 12-19-feet. Maybe part of the solution would be looking at cross sections through there so we know how that relates and what's possible across the gas lines, maybe it can't be answered tonight. In terms of the streetscape, from a landscape perspective, street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, along with that sidewalk and what you guys might think of those.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0).