

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: July 13, 2016
TITLE: 425 West Washington Avenue – Modifications to Previously Approved Plans for a Mixed-Unit Development in the UMX District Known as “The Washington Plaza.” 4 th Ald. Dist. (29495)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: July 13, 2016	ID NUMBER:

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

Wagner recused himself on this item. Slayton acted as Chair.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 13, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of three design changes for “The Washington Plaza” located at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project was John Sutton, architect. Registered and speaking in opposition were Peter Ostlind and Jonathan Cooper, representing 425 West Washington Neighborhood Steering Committee. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak was Stefanie Moritz. Sutton reviewed the four items that the Urban Design Commission requested be looked at. The trellis on the rooftop garden will be removed; the rooftop rail for the garden was of concern because of its visibility while the developer was worried about safety. The rail is in the same location but the planting is inside rather than in between, and the rail is lowered with a single pipe above the main parapet. During construction this building was pushed back which resulted in smaller back open space, which the developer used pavers on and does not exceed 90% coverage. A fence and retaining wall were removed during construction, with an agreement with the neighbor that they would be replaced. When the original fence was put back, he put the same fence on the other side as the dividing partition between units. City staff and the neighborhood felt it looked too suburban and didn’t tie in with the building architecture. The new fence would be in a dark bronze to match all their trims.

Peter Ostlind spoke in opposition as a member of the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee. He reminded the Commission that the standard under which this was originally approved was that it was a demonstrated higher quality building and could be achieved without the additional fifth floor allowed in this area. The railing doesn’t meet that standard. Both the upper railing and the fence are not designs that would have been initially included, this is trying to limit the expenses of meeting what was approved in the first place. This is totally incompatible with anything else that has been built in the Bassett Neighborhood. These requests should not be approved, including the upper railing because portions of the wood frame would still be visible across the street. A portion of landscaping that has been removed is not reflected on the updated plans. Solid metal or vegetative 4-foot fences on the property line are sufficient to shield headlights.

Jonathan Cooper spoke in opposition as a member of the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee. He commented on the process from a neighborhood perspective. Contrary to what the applicant's submission says, these changes have not been reviewed by the neighborhood. When we don't talk, we don't review. It's been very difficult for neighborhood residents to really tell what's happening and what is suggested. As Mr. Ostlind stated, this is an issue of quality. This building was approved at a higher standard; whatever remedies are ultimately approved by the UDC, make sure you know what you are approving and that it is of a quality that this building deserves. It's hard for us to tell what is being proposed.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Does that solution of steel mesh on top of wood actually work? It seems odd.
- Is there an option for masonry that matches the brick?
 - I did want to tie into the architecture. The fence was additional cost, we can just tear it out. But the people on the ground floor feel very vulnerable, they look out onto a parking structure. But I agree that this wasn't something I designed. But I did meet with the steering committee to talk about a solution, then the City wanted me to show it on context of the building. It's not an insignificant cost, these aren't "off the shelf." The significant change is more cost. He's had a lot of experience working with rooftops and people living here love the space.
- Is there wood on the building now?
 - No, other than the fence and what you see here.
- As built, but not as approved.
- Not even the floors of the balcony?
 - No, that's composite.
- I can't see the fence from the ground. If we don't see it from the street I don't think that should affect our decision.
- There is wood fencing on the west side of the subject property.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1) with Harrington voting no. The motion approved the lowering of the fence on the rooftop and the fence detail as proposed, the pavers in the rear of the building and the removal of the rooftop trellis. The applicant shall remove the fence or work with the neighbors on an acceptable ground level fence, and return to the Commission for approval.

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** June 1, 2016

TITLE: 425 West Washington Avenue –
 Modifications to Previously Approved
 Plans for a Mixed-Unit Development in the
 UMX District Known as “The Washington
 Plaza.” 4th Ald. Dist. (29495)

REFERRED:
REREFERRED:
REPORTED BACK:

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

DATED: June 1, 2016 **ID NUMBER:**

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

Wagner recused himself; Slayton acted as Chair.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 1, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **MADE AN ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLAN COMMISSION** on modifications to an existing development located at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Erik Minton, John Sutton, Bob Downing and John Bonsett-Veal. Registered and speaking in opposition was Jonathan Cooper, representing the Bassett District Steering Committee for 425 West Washington Avenue. Four items changed during construction on this project.

1. They have agreed to remove the wood pergola on top of the fourth floor rooftop garden.
2. The green roof. There was an approved railing that was to be 5-feet from the parapet. At the Urban Design Commission’s urging, more green and a seating area were added; the railing was pushed to 3-feet from the parapet in negotiating with City staff. Subsequently, the 42-inch off the planter railing was installed. When they discussed a green roof (sedum), they would not have required any gardening. Now a heavily landscaped rooftop garden, it makes more sense for a gardener not to work on the outside of the rail, but to be on the inside.
3. Concern with safety for the ground floor apartments (because of the relationship to abutting parking) necessitated installation of a 6-foot fence that was not in the original plan.
4. Pavers were installed in the backyard area.

Sutton noted that City staff have issue with the fence being too tall and not matching the architecture. He proposes to take the top 2-feet of the fence and replacing it with metal lattice to match the existing decks already on the building. Everything would be dark bronze to match all the trim on the building.

Kevin Firchow noted that there were 15 alterations that were requested in the packet with staff noting the few they were most concerned about. The 6-foot fence is too suburban for this location and staff is concerned about how combining materials to modify the fence will be viewed from the street and be integrated. The changes to the landscape plan and pavers does not increase the impervious surface as most of it is already over a structure.

Jonathan Cooper spoke in opposition to the modifications. The advisory statement provided from the neighborhood has a number of significant items with which they have issue. When this building was approved, it was approved as an exceptional design and given bonus stories. None of the things they have done to the project since its original approval would never have been approved by this Commission. Secondly, the March 23, 2016 letter of intent from the developers that stated "all items have been reviewed by the steering committee and modified to satisfy their concerns" is not true.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- My concern is that we granted bonus stories based on the finding of a higher quality building being provided, and there appears to have alterations to it that are in conflict.

Erik Minton commented that the opposition to this building is unbelievable. He stated that Jonathan Cooper had an opportunity to have a meeting last summer, and read from a note: "I for one have no intention of discussing or agreeing to any item larger or small without consideration of the issues." Three notices have been sent to this neighborhood group when only one is required. There isn't any decision that wasn't done with an intention to excellence. One of our fences actually protects the neighboring parking lot. This steering committee that has offered so much assistance has not accepted one invitation to view my gym. It's not the hysteria that shows up at the Plan Commission. Mr. Verveer was furious and upset that we gave no notice; I have that notice here. This is the way we use our rooftops and you can see the level of green, we invested nearly \$200,000 on this roof. He reminded the group that he worked hard on this building and garden and is proud of it.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **GAVE AN ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLAN COMMISSION:**

- Need more information and details to recommend approval of the rooftop and ground level fencing.
- Provide more context on the fence appearance, primarily from the street view.
- Reduce the height of the rooftop fence

The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0).