

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** August 17, 2016

TITLE: 8102 Watts Road – 4-Story, 106 Guest **REFERRED:**

Room “Tru Hotel (by Hilton).” 9th Ald.
Dist. (43729)

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 17, 2016

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 17, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a 4-story hotel located at 8102 Watts Road. Appearing on behalf of the project were Josh Wilcox, representing North Central Group; Matt Breunig, representing Gary Brink & Associates; Andy Inman and Jennifer Koester. This will be one of the first “Tru Hotel” buildings in the country, which will eventually become their largest brand, targeting a mid-scale market. An existing private drive will be opened up and integrated into a parking area. Overall the building is tucked back into the site to maximize the amount of parking and gives them the best visibility from the West Beltline Highway, while maintaining visibility on Watts Road. The architecture and elevations reflect brand hallmarks. The Secretary remarked that Planning staff has expressed concerns about the profuse amount of EIFS, the lack of durable materials, the expression of architecture in the form of color banding as an extension of signage and the venting locations.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- What’s the comparable hotel in other brands?
 - Probably Moxy, it’s a new brand by Marriott. Same target audience, they’re a little edgier than Tru. It’s targeting the similar Millennial mind set.
- We’ve had issues in the past with projects that integrate the architecture and lighting as part of their branding.
- Are you building this on a plinth?
 - That is correct. It’s in a hole.
- You’re burying it.
- It’s already buried because the parking for Princeton Club overlooks it.
 - This will be a higher level and we’ve talked with staff about putting a screen wall here at the top of our wall both for safety and screening headlights. The lower level is all back of the house function.

- This is a real bad circulation plan. You need to protect the edge at the driveway but you'll have to lose some parking stalls. The trick is turning the drive aisle so you've got some queuing space.
- To carry on the greenspace at the Princeton Club, when I look at your site plan I see your dumpster; I would landscape the heck out of that back corner so you contribute to it.
- Staff noted that there is too much EIFS on the structure as a whole; introduce other materials, look at a more substantial base material.
- Definitely the comment about masonry at the base (beyond EIFS). A concrete-like material would seem to be in keeping with what you're looking for.
- The verticals on the west face, if they were shading elements or had more purpose that would be nice. Or if they were a larger feature that felt like they came through the building so there was some articulation on the Princeton Club side as well, rather than just three stripes applied on the one face.
- When I look at the aerials, it looks like the building is sited solely for the purpose of having visibility from the Beltline. If the building was pushed to the other side of the site then the transition from the Princeton Club would be better.
 - We actually did study that and tried hard to make that work. The circulation was the primary challenge, as well as grade issues. We had a hard time getting the right arrival experience.
- It seems that this area is chintzy, it feels like appliqué (multi-color EIFS vertical fins). If you make this whole element more colorful, make it stand out a little bit more rather than the bland gray. As far as the venting, the vents could go away if you use a banding color or a texture, maybe bring that across at those other levels or incorporate an extended window.
- The way the colors are being used just doesn't do anything. If you make that one vertical element and played with groupings of colors across that element, the tension you would get by using horizontal bands where the vents are playing against that vertical element might give you enough sense of something different, where this just looks like EIFS and punched openings.
- Maybe even framing it with the dark.
- In terms of your program functions, look at bigger gestures of bringing in colors and materials.

ACTION:

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