

Urban Design Commission Meeting 7-28-2017 Agenda Item 7

1004 and 1032 South Park Street Redevelopment Plan Comments

First Thought

I like the look of the building at the flatiron tip of the proposed redevelopment more than any of the previous plans. However, with the slanted glass and the massive awning over the first floor, how is the glass exterior going to be cleaned on a regular basis without having to totally block one lane of traffic on both Fish Hatchery Road and Park Street as well as the public sidewalks in order to bring in a large cherry picker type vehicle that will have to set up in the blocked lane of traffic to be able to reach the upper floor windows? Also, this window area needs heavily tinted glass to obscure views of the inside of apartments that lack feng shui.

Building Setback

The current proposed plans show absolutely no setback of the buildings from the public sidewalk on Fish Hatchery Road. It appears that the public sidewalk has been moved closer to the buildings but the buildings are in the same location/footprint as the previously plans approved in 2015. This provides a wider street terrace, however, I have heard the city has plans to one day widen this section of Fish Hatchery Road by taking away some of the terrace area on the east side of the road. The parking ramp for the Wingra Clinic has about an 11 foot setback from the public sidewalk. The Wingra Point Apartments across the street have building setbacks of 5 or 6 feet from the public sidewalk along Fish Hatchery Road. The proposed buildings must have a setback from the public sidewalk to allow for appropriate green space along Fish Hatchery Road. Without an appropriate building setback along this street frontage the building will look like a stark wall along a narrow sidewalk with an occasional flower pot or two at the proposed stairwell areas cut into the building face.

Building Footprint and Greenspace

The footprint of the buildings except for the work/study building are closer to the public sidewalk than the Wingra Clinic building along Park Street. These buildings should be set back more from the sidewalk to allow for a wider greenspace buffer along Park Street that will support a larger tree canopy and more vegetation along the public sidewalk.

The landscaping plans show two huge trees 60 feet tall with a circular crown 50 feet in diameter in the terrace along Fish Hatchery Road. There is no way a tree that normally gets this large will fit at these locations. The canopy would have to be repetitively cut back to keep the tree from brushing against the building that is only about 10 feet away from the tree trunk. The landscaping renderings should be drawn to realistically show the mal-formed tree that will likely grow here if it is healthy enough to get that big. It will not be a perfectly circular canopy as shown on the plans. Even the smaller trees shown on the plans are shown with perfectly circular canopies that will never really exist. The architect is trying to make the Fish Hatchery Road side of the buildings look like it has more greenspace than it really will have.

The interior courtyard greenspace is also misleading. It has a lot of hardscape and I don't hold much hope for the sod or planting areas. This courtyard will not get much direct sunlight except mid-day during the summer and dearly none during the other seasons when the sun is lower in the sky and the four story southern building blocking the rays. Real, healthy, and happy greenery will be lacking here no matter how many times they re-sod or replace the plants with new ones.

Also, on the south side of the project site along the shared private road, the previously approved 2015 plans for this project had a building setback of 15 feet from the road, comprised of a 5 foot wide sidewalk and a 10 foot wide terrace area with real grass and trees shown growing there as landscaping. But the building now proposed is only five feet from the road, the width of the sidewalk, with the green terrace totally eliminated. This shared private road is only 21 feet wide and has no sidewalk at all on the other side, just a 3 foot wide landscaped space between Wingra Clinic and the road. This stark, narrow corridor will become the entrance to the secured parking area for this project for both vehicles and bicycles. It will be a difficult and often congested area to navigate through, especially when the trash and recycling trucks are blocking half of that road to empty the dumpsters.

There is only one trash and recycling collection point at the south end of the project. Residents of two of the three proposed buildings and all of the commercial spaces will have to carry their trash and recycling out of their buildings and outside down a sidewalk to enter the third building where the trash/recycling collection area is located. This is highly inconvenient and impractical for the majority of the project occupants.

Parking and Building Access

The math does not realistically add up with the ratio of one parking stall per residential unit. There are 157 units and 157 parking stalls however, there are 205 bedrooms, many of which will be occupied by one or more adults with transportation needs. Also, there are only 154 bicycle parking stalls yet with 205 bedrooms one would expect there should be at least 205 bike stalls. A previous version of this project approved by the UDC in 2015 had a total of 173 vehicle parking stalls and 207 bicycle stalls. The developer has previously indicated he may consider putting in additional hanging bicycle storage. However, most hanging bicycle storage areas are located within a vehicle stall area and may require moving the vehicle out of the way each time the bicycle needs to go up or come down. Also, even with a multiple pulley system, raising and lowering the bike is cumbersome and time consuming compared to the convenience of a lockable bike stall or locker at ground level.

The dual entrance/exit ramp for automobiles and bicycles is problematic due to the 90 degree turn required for all vehicles at the bottom and the 270 degree turn at street level for vehicles entering or exiting the ramp to or from Park Street. A suggestion would be to install motion activated flashing warning lights to let vehicles know that someone is coming from the other direction. Also, I believe that it would be safer for bicyclists to have the bicycle ramp on the opposite wall of the ramp to give them a safer route on the outside of the 90 degree turn at the bottom of the ramp.

There is no area devoted to street level bicycle parking anywhere. None on the property and none on adjacent street ROW. Sometimes building residents might want to park their bikes at this level during the day rather than take them to the lower parking level every time they need to park them. Where will commercial space customers park their bikes? Can't imagine a coffee cafe or ice cream shop in one of the commercial spaces without the need for bicycle parking nearby.

This project needs to have a large commercial presence at street level to help create a vibrant and pedestrian friendly corridor. However, there is zero off street parking provided for employees and visitors to the commercial areas of this redevelopment project. All of the provided parking is in the basement secured parking facility and is reserved for tenants of the residential units. The previously approved 2015 plans had 10 visitor parking stalls and 54 shared parking stalls at ground level that were available for use by employees and

customers of the proposed 11,000 square feet of commercial and live-work space during the day. The current plans show 12,287 SF of commercial space and 11,301 SF of live-work space with NO off street parking provided at all. The developer has indicated that some of the secure parking in the basement level will be available for customers of the commercial areas during the day. However, I find difficult to believe this concept will be adequate or even doable. First, the secure garage door at the ramp entrance would have to be programmed to open during the day for anyone, not just apartment tenants. This will cause security problems for the parking area. Also, how will the commercial space customers find their way walking out of the parking area in the basement to the commercial areas? The elevators and stairwells need to be secure for apartment tenants at all times. People won't want to walk up the entrance ramp and around the buildings to get to their destination. I just don't see how this concept can be doable without causing security and safety concerns.

Other Plan Details

There are no brows or canopies along Fish Hatchery road that might protect someone on the public sidewalk below from being injured by an object falling from one of the apartment balconies above. Something would have to be light as a feather not to hurt falling from 4 or 5 floors to someone's noggin below. The same issue exists for the sidewalk along the south side of the property.

The colored perspective drawings do not seem to correlate with the plans in depicting the apartment stairwells and porches along the public sidewalk on Fish Hatchery Road. Also, the various perspectives of the courtyard and the various plans seem to differ as to whether or not there are stairs to the first floor apartments in the western building along Fish Hatchery Road leading from the interior courtyard to the apartments.

Where will the exhaust fans be located for the parking exhaust? These fans tend to be quite noisy as they usually have one speed (fast). Hopefully the fans will be located away from any first floor apartments as otherwise the drone of the fans and the exhausted stale air will make it impossible to open the apartment windows. I suggest variable speed fans that are programmed to react to carbon monoxide sensors in the parking area. The higher the carbon monoxide reading, the faster the fans will exhaust the air.

I like the use of the top floor for commercial space, perhaps a restaurant and use of rooftop space for an outdoor space with a fantastic view. But where will these patrons park their vehicles? Bay Creek residents don't want them filling the nearby residential streets lined with single family homes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

I strongly believe the developer and the city need to rethink what is wanted and what is necessary to make a large multi-use building or set of buildings work at this location.

- There needs to be significant commercial space at the pedestrian level to help create a vibrant and walkable Park Street corridor.
- There needs to be adequate off street parking for residents of the proposed residential units and visitors to this area coming by personal vehicle or bicycle. The commercial space proposed in these plans must have reasonable off street parking provided. On street parking is very limited in this area and commuter and commercial customer parking is already imposing on many of the streets of the nearby residential areas.

- Every effort must be made to create adequate green space at the first floor pedestrian level. I am talking about real green space here not some planters or pots with plastic plants and wood chips in them. I do not believe this is possible with the currently proposed building footprints.
- Pedestrian/bicycle safety must be the top priority here and along the entire South Park Street corridor. Both Park Street and Fish Hatchery Road are extremely difficult to cross as there is a lack of safe pedestrian crossings. Even the few intersections controlled by traffic lights are dangerous during the rush hours. The Park Street/Fish Hatchery Road intersection is dangerous all the time because south bound Park Street traffic veering right onto Fish Hatchery Road often fails to stop for pedestrians waiting to cross even when the flashing pedestrian light has been activated by pedestrians waiting to cross the street. The [2006 Wingra BUILD Plan](#) called for safer east-west pedestrian and bicycle connections across these major arterial roadways. The Wingra BUILD Plan also called for better internal pedestrian-bicycle connections within the Wingra BUILD Plan boundaries. These priorities are being ignored with the current proposed project plans.

I believe that the developer is trying to put too much into the limited land area of this triangle of property facing two of the most heavily traveled streets in Madison. I do not believe this density is doable with the current proposed 3 to 6 story set of buildings. To accomplish the density the developer is proposing, a portion of this land area needs to be devoted to higher buildings as high as 7 to 10 stories. This would free up land area at street level for more parking. The pedestrian level needs to provide a safe environment for pedestrians with plenty of green space.

The city wants to have an iconic building at the tip of this flatiron parcel but this building does not quite do it, especially when just down the street a few hundred feet the city is proposing to change land use zoning to allow 4 to 12 story buildings. We need a taller building that has a smaller footprint and more greenspace at this location.

I propose that the developer and the city scrap these plans entirely and start over. Why not separate the pedestrian-bike level from street level by ramping up the sidewalks on Park Street and Fish Hatchery Road along this property to create a pedestrian level high enough to connect with the other side of Park Street and Fish Hatchery Road with pedestrian/bike overpasses at the tip of the flatiron property that would connect to new redevelopment on the nearby properties on the other side of these streets, also accessing those new redevelopment projects at the overpass level rather than street level thereby eliminating the dangerous street level crossings at this busy intersection. These elevated pedestrian levels would then ramp down to street level on the other side of the road. There is room to do this on the SSM parcel at 999 South Park Street and along the West side of Park Street in the 1000 and 900 blocks. Much of the 1000 and 900 blocks of the west side of Park Street are in blighted condition and could be acquired under a single ownership to create a similar multi story mixed use structure on that side of Park Street. This would allow for additional room for parking at street level in this entire area. The elevated commercial/pedestrian/bike level would be an inviting environment above the hustle and bustle of the busy roads below, with plenty of greenspace and views of Monona Bay and Madison's isthmus. I believe tiered multi-story structures interconnected by ped/bike overpasses in this area would be the best way to solve the existing issues of lack of vehicle parking and the lack of a safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle corridor through this area.

I look at the entire land area within the Wingra BUILD triangle and see the potential for something more. The new Cannonball ped/bike corridor is planned to extend through parkland behind Bowman Field; cross Wingra

Creek; and connect to the Wingra Creek ped/bike trail. Why not make plans to extend a new ped/bike trail from that point through the middle of the Wingra BUILD triangle and then around the south side of the Wingra Clinic parking ramp and continue north along the east side of Fish Hatchery Road ramping up as it continues north to the tip of the flatiron parcel. From there the two overpasses would divide and carry this corridor across Fish Hatchery Road and Park Street. From these locations the two corridors would ramp back down to street level to continue at grade to the St. Mary's Hospital area and the South and West Shore Drive areas.

I think the best way to accomplish a multi parcel master planned concept like I am proposing is for the city to purchase the subject properties at 1004 and 1032 South Parks Street as well as all the other properties needed and master plan the entire area as a unified redevelopment project. This area is within the boundaries of TID #42 and TIF funding could be utilized to help fund a large multi-parcel master-planned redevelopment like I am proposing. And the newly approved [Connect Madison economic development strategy](#) calls for projects like I am proposing here. The Madison Department of Planning, Community, and Economic Development needs to do a better job of planning for the future of this city as it continues to grow. Less piecemeal redevelopment and more master planning of larger blocks of properties for redevelopment is sadly needed.

Ron Shutvet