



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 5402 Mineral Point Road
Application Type: Referral from the Plan Commission
Legistar File ID # [55382](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Steve Harms; Tri-North Builders; 2625 Research Park Drive; Fitchburg, WI 53711

Project Description: The applicant proposes to demolish two 2-story office buildings and construct a new three-story, 48-unit building with underground parking. The proposed dwelling unit mix consists of three efficiency units, 25 one-bedroom, and 20 two-bedroom units. One existing building will remain.

Project History: On April 8, 2019, a rezoning request, two demolition permits, and the following conditional uses were before the Plan Commission: 1) Multi-family dwelling with eight (8) or more units in the CC-T District, 2) Site includes a multi-tenant building exceeding 40,000 square feet of floor area in the CC-T District, and 3) for development adjacent to a park (Garner Park).

At that meeting, the **Plan Commission** referred the conditional use requests to allow the UDC to provide additional comment and recommendation.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an advisory body on the development request. This request was referred to the UDC under Conditional Use Standard #9, which states:

“When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation.”

Summary of Design Considerations

Requested Format of Recommendation

The Plan Commission has requested an advisory recommendation from the UDC, which staff recommends should be a formal recommendation from the Commission, not just individual member comments. Staff suggest that the recommendation be structured as one of the following:

1. Recommend Plan Commission approval of the plans, as submitted;
2. Recommend Plan Commission approval of the plans, with specified modifications; or
3. Recommend that the Plan Commission not approve the request, specifying the reasons for that recommendation.

Summary of Design Comments

The April 8, 2019 Planning Division Staff Report to the Plan Commission noted the following general design considerations. These are provided as a reference to the UDC. **The UDC may address these or any other design-related considerations, including any comments on the overall site plan, as part of their recommendation.**

- **Façade Composition.** Explore improvements to the highly visible Mineral Point and Whitney Way façades in terms of composition, proportions, materials, material treatment of adjacent planes, and modulation (horizontal as well as vertical). Facades should relate to one another and have a more consistent rhythm and patterning across the building.
- **Improve Street Orientation.** In regards to the Mineral Point façade, Staff have concerns that it does not read as a street-oriented façade and modifications should be explored to better orient this façade to and engage with the adjacent sidewalk and street.

The original staff report suggested that the applicant consider a variety of possible modifications including relocating the main pedestrian entrance to the corner of the building (effectively swapping the location of the office/lounge and entry vestibule). In addition to giving it more prominence in the composition, a recessed entrance at this corner would serve both the Mineral Point Road sidewalk as well as the surface parking lot located to the east of the building. An awning, like the one currently proposed above the main entrance, could wrap around the corner helping call out the entrance's location. Staff also request that the UDC review the proportion (width) of the stone columns at the building's primary corner and consider reducing it.

- **Improve Exposed Parking Level.** Staff believe that there is insufficient articulation along the exposed lower parking level (basement) of the Whitney Way façade. Staff ask that the Commission to give consideration to 1) whether the modulation should continue down through the parking area – especially if the parking level is fully exposed (as is currently shown in the submitted materials) and 2) whether additional articulation (including exploring the addition of windows) should be added in this area of the façade.