

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: September 4, 2019	
TITLE: 9702 Watts Road – New Development of 118 Dwelling Units in a Mix of Apartment Buildings and Townhomes. 9 th Ald. Dist. (56729)	REFERRED:	
	REREFERRED:	
	REPORTED BACK:	
AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary	ADOPTED:	POF:
DATED: September 4, 2019	ID NUMBER:	

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Cliff Goodhart, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad, Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Craig Weisensel and Syed Abbas.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 4, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new development located at 9702 Watts Road. Registered in support were Randy Bruce, representing The McKenzie 300 Company, and Kevin Burow, representing Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC. Bruce reviewed the site location and context, adjacent to another development by the same owner and substantially complete, with a substantial amenities center with a pool, exercise room, community room, yoga and offices. They are maintaining a similar style with other duplexes and existing apartments by the same developer, while trying to create a strong residential presence on the street. While this is one project they are trying to create diversity between the two types of building forms with varying colors in the same palette, while maintaining the same roof, trim, railings, precast and stone. Building materials were shown and include horizontal siding, shingle, timber elements as accents and rough-cut base stone. First floor entrances will have their own individual porches. The landscape plan shows adequate streetscape and tree scape along Watts Road, and a good amount of foundation plantings. The open areas are relatively free for active recreation. The curved walkway that runs across the north side of the site is pinched at the outdoor grilling areas to make it more convenient to reach; moving the pathway north would increase the size of the open spaces as suggested by Planning Division staff. A large volleyball sand court, grilling areas and two dog exercise areas are proposed (small dogs/large dogs). LED lighting fixtures will be used.

Comments from the Commission were as follows:

- Did you look at accessing from the side so you could minimize traffic through there as well as paving?
 - We did think about that. We have single loaded parking, most of that paving is for Fire Department access, so we decided to hide the parking access.

- Have you considered rotating Building #3 90 degrees?
 - We looked at multiple layouts. Our overriding concern was to keep the mass of the building as visibly shielded from the duplexes across the street.
- I like your thought of bringing the walk to the south to bring attention to the active areas. On the flip side maybe a more augmented planting area on the north side.
- The stone base has an awful lot of business to it. Did you test running below the sills as a baseline?
 - We did. This is fairly consistent except for at porch elevations. We do more of that up and down on the townhouse buildings. I'd like to see those columns stay with the stone.
- The pedestrian probably won't notice that. I like the palette, it ties in nicely with the other colors.
- The timber in the gables, that doesn't do anything for me.
- We talk about simplifying so many other projects, the top of this is so busy with the wood that intersects.
 - We've got some of the same detailing on this project to tie it across with the other development. We can look at simplifying it.
- I like the street experience from your renderings. It's an appropriate scale, the driveways are well spaced. On Buildings #2 and #4 you have little alleys between the garages that are very deep but nothing going on in there. There's no windows or landscaping, it seems like a place for garbage to swirl around. Nothing will grow in there.
 - We'll take a look and see what value we can get out of that space.
- You mentioned 18' light poles, 12' poles are more appropriate.
- Think about sustainability, charging stations or at least the conduit.
- These are handsome buildings, I like the palette. Of all the multi-family projects that want to look single-family this one seems quite successful. I wonder about that single post in the dormer seeming out of place.
- Building #4 floor plans, have you considered putting a man door into the unit on that side?
 - Yes we can look at a door into the garage.
- The Harvest Moon elevation of Building #1, the central units that have the biggest gables, the third floor has a partial wall on their patio with a handrail?
 - Yes it's a low wall with a handrail on top of it to create the massing of the building.
- What it does is make that third floor look cheated on height. The proportions are all consistent until you get to that third floor. It caught my attention.
- It feels like a lot of vehicular circulation that's cutting things off. Maybe Buildings #2 and #4 are on islands surrounded by pavement. They have no real connection to the outdoor spaces. At a minimum some sort of crosswalks or connection circulation to get people there safety would be good.
- Bend out the trail in areas around the volleyball court and greenspace to the left, we don't want to see a linear path but more strategic bends in the path.

ACTION:

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by Klehr, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (9-0). The motion provided for modifications to the crossings between Buildings #2 and #4, and the following items for consideration:

- Parking lot light poles – consider 12-foot height in lieu of 18-foot height.
- Consider EV charging stations or at least providing the conduit for future installation.
- Add a pedestrian door and consider reducing the depth of the inset alley at the back of Building #4.
- Add a crosswalk from the townhouse building across parking/vehicle circulation to the back outdoor recreation area.

- Study the recreation area trail at the back of the lot. Maximize the outdoor usable space and design more strategic bends in the path.