

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: November 20, 2019

TITLE: 902 E. Main Street – New 5-Story, 92,000 Square Foot Office Building with 5-Story Above Grade Parking Structure for The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) in UDD No. 8. 6th Ald. Dist. (58116)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: November 20, 2019

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Craig Weisensel, Jessica Klehr, Syed Abbas, Tom DeChant, Christian Harper and Shane Bernau.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of November 20, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new office building for WHEDA located at 902 E. Main Street in UDD No. 8. Registered in support were Doug Hursh, Curt Brink and Andy Laufenberg, all representing Archipelago Village.

Hursh presented the concept plans for a new 5-story, 92,000 square foot building with retail or office on the first two floors, and offices for WHEDA on the top three floors. The building does meet the stepback requirement of 15-feet at the upper floors. This would be potentially the first phase before the 929 building, unless a tenant is secured and they go at the same time. They are proposing three floors of parking above the retail in the 929 building to accommodate the increased office needs, which will change the glass to something fritted or frosted to hide the vehicles and be more bird friendly. The intent is to eventually have an apartment building on E. Main Street and small lofts above the telephone building to screen the parking ramp. Having a mix of uses on the block ensures that it is activated all week at all times of day and night. It makes for a better environment to have residents in addition to employers. The loading will be accessed through an internal drive on the backside of the building, although designed to be pedestrian friendly, almost like a plaza space. The mechanical functions occur in this corner of the building to keep the glass wrapping around the rest of the building on the ground floor. Laufenberg described the industrial architecture and window patterning to give it a more modern interpretation. Materials are primarily red and black brick, metal panels and glass, and a proposed art mural wall.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The staff memo notes that Block 13b, the front buildings’ setback must be 15-feet. Is that a no less, no more?

- (Secretary) The UDC does have the ability to grant an exception for greater setbacks than the required 15-feet if the developer is creating a larger open space that is an amenity for the public and/or building tenants.
- Exceeding 63-feet would also be a conditional approval we would have to grant? They're at 78-feet or so, it says 63 is the maximum at street level.
 - Currently the building form fits just within the setback requirements.
- So you're not exceeding the 63-feet?
 - I don't believe so. We did have to adjust after the flooding, there is a new standard.
- We need to be clear on the nuts and bolts of things.
- What is the timeline for this apartment building next to the parking lot?
 - We'll move forward with the office buildings. Then I have to work with the neighborhood for the approval. We're proposing that 20% of the units would be median income. The apartments would activate the street and create activity. We'd like to start that at the same time.
- Is there any way to continue an arcade along there, step it back? Is there a plan to make that commercial space to activate that side of the building on Main Street?
 - We do have an outside seating area where we tie that level. The neighborhood didn't really want retail there competing with Williamson Street. I really want to carry the brick all the way around.
 - It's a valid discussion point. We've played with a lot of concepts, right now the difference is minimally treated. There's been discussion of how to change the brick at the base.
- Somehow to activate the first floor.
- It wasn't the recommendation of this commission to maintain that garage façade.
- The WHEDA building is lovely, I like the site plan. I'm excited to see the landscaping develop. I like the parking structure too.
- I agree, my only caution is where you peeled back and you've got an occupiable area in all of those exposed beams, ice fall, you're going to have bird remediation there or something. The birds are going to love it. How those beams come across, you're going to have to be careful they don't look to spindly.
- We're talking WHEDA and the parking garage? I have some concerns about the timeline right off the bat. We went through so much to approve the E. Washington part of this, now it seems like this is making admittedly fairly subtle changes to a preapproved project. Seems like the process is a little backwards. It is a handsome building, the atrium, I appreciate the effort you're putting into the parking structure, but if it plays out like you want it to, putting housing in front of it, it seems like a lot of well-intentioned but wasted effort in making that side of the parking garage look nice and have artwork on it, only to almost immediately cover it up with an apartment building. Along those same lines, having housing right against it, the windows on floors 1-3 will look into the side of the parking garage.
 - Everything on the lower levels faces front. As we get up above we use the green roof for more of an amenity and the corridor becomes central for the rest of the building. It's up to the Plan Commission, hopefully we've met the requirement of the employment side and I'd like to build it at the same time. I can create a lot of activity there.
- I'd hate to see a lot of effort put into something that will only be there for a temporary time.
- The 924 façade, that thing is going to be an impediment, it seems silly to have that little thing driving the design and apartment building. I'm a fan of repurposing, but it looks like a sticker, an architectural sticker.
- This is the way you do old and new. On the parking garage, if you can't do everything at once, is the same system used here as on the Exact Sciences parking garage?
 - No the system used here is a corrugated flat metal panel, and every once in a while it's canted out.

ACTION:

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