

126 Steering Committee Meeting 2 December 2019

We reviewed the Core Spaces' proposed development at our meeting. Following are the chair's (Bob Klebba's) notes from the meeting. Notes have been arranged by general topic or issue rather than chronologically.

Review of meeting at Pyle Center

- Massing is significant
- Security is an issue
- Swimming pool is an issue
- Zoning allows front of building to have no more than 5 stories
- Back of building is allowed 5+2 stories (2 bonus stories) if proposed development meets design criteria
- More than 8 units in this zoning requires a conditional use permit (CUP)
- Swimming pool may require CUP

Discussion Points

Site Plan

There is no defined access for food delivery, package delivery, taxi/Uber/Lyft pick-up and drop-off. There is concern that these vehicles will block Langdon St since the street parking on Langdon is public. It is important that increased off-street surface area be provided for this traffic, more than the driveway on the west for refuse and recycling pick up.

Under no circumstances can the use of the fire lane on the west side of the property be used by the residents of the proposed development and by their services. The site plan should be modified to discourage these abuses.

Make sure to minimize storm water runoff from the proposed development. No runoff would be ideal. There is concern from downhill neighbors about prospective impact from future runoff.

Added greenspace is welcome and will contribute to a more welcoming environment.

Lighting that enhances pedestrian safety and experience is required around the proposed development.

Management

Some felt that 24/7 security must be professional and not a building resident. Others felt that an "adult presence" is required to promote civility.

Amplified sound and other outdoor noise

Most attendees expressed concern about the proposed outdoor amplified sound on the roof deck. Most felt that promoting a collegiate environment in an historically important residential community strongly linked to the UW-Madison was paramount. Many felt that no amplified sound should be a condition of permitting the proposal. The thinking is that any amplified sound would distract from near neighbors' ability to perform academically and would discourage studying at home. Other neighbors related their experience with amplified sound at the Edgewater, and how unpleasant it made their living environment.

Some attendees felt that outdoor ambient sound could discourage residents' use of their own sound systems, thus preventing disturbances from excessive amplified sound. The example of the development at 633 N Henry was cited, where one attendee stated that the outdoor amplified sound does not impose on the neighbors.

With or without outdoor amplified sound, activity on the roof deck may generate excessive noise. Some felt that the proposed pool would contribute substantially to deleterious activity and sound, given the history at the James and the Hub. Beyond not building a pool, some suggested that no alcohol on the roof deck would help to prevent unwanted noise.

Overall, it was agreed that a formal condition on the development should promote an informed and proactive strategy not to add to environmental noise.

Building design

It was felt that the proposed building design should reflect the dignity and integrity of the historically collegiate neighborhood. Superior architectural design encourages respect and civility, thus mitigating many of the concerns for bad behavior.

Most worried that the commercial appearance of the building was out of place for a residential neighborhood. The existing example developments in the developer's proposal were all mixed-use. These examples do not comply with the proposed site's zoning and do not fit in the Langdon Street neighborhood. While the committee does not reject a modern design, the use of warmer, more residential design features would be more welcoming and better integrated into the neighborhood.

While a 5-story façade is allowed by code, 3-stories or the appearance of 3 stories would match buildings in the neighborhood.

More frequent and deeper articulation would help reduce the perception of the massing of the building..

Some felt that more brickwork would help integrate the proposed design; others felt that a Victorian design like that of the adjacent buildings would help.

One feature of the current design that was perceived as particularly harsh was the white panels on the different elevations. This design element makes the proposed building appear out of place and more commercial.

While Langdon Street has intense pedestrian traffic, it should be noted that there is significant pedestrian (and minor vehicular) traffic on all 4 borders of this property. As such, the front façade is of course important to passing traffic, but the other 3 elevations of this proposed development should also have the same degree of detail and residential integration. This “all-sided” degree of architectural detail is seen in all adjacent properties and should be included in the proposed design.

Another design feature that would promote more civility is a different mix of living spaces. The current proposal has 4 to 5 bedrooms with 8 to 10 beds per unit. This design promotes residency for those moving directly from dorms to another dorm-like residence. Units with one to two bedrooms attract older residents and young professionals. It was suggested that a mixed population with older residents would promote more discipline and respect.

There was a brief discussion about adding study spaces on each floor. It was stated that these spaces may not be desired in the future.

Many felt that the outdoor pool is feature that will likely generate disturbance in the neighborhood. Most felt that it should be removed from the design, citing history at the James and the Hub. It was suggested that an indoor pool would address this concern.