

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: January 15, 2020
TITLE: 622 & 624 W. Washington Avenue (formerly 636) – New 5-Story, 50-Unit Apartment Building with Underground Parking and Ground Floor Commercial Space. 4 th Ald. Dist. (57114)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: January 15, 2020	ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 15, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new apartment building located at 622 & 624 W. Washington Avenue. Registered in support Michael Brush and Suzanne Vincent, representing Greenway Real Estate.

Brush and Vincent addressed the Commission’s previous concerns regarding landscaping, architecture and building materials. The landscape plan now shows more perennials being used, they adjusted the corner bed so it’s not so low, added ornamental grasses on the northeast, adjusted the plantings of Durvilla to create more of a mass rather than individual plantings. The patio hardscape areas along W. Washington Avenue have been expanded related to grading adjustments. They are showing some annuals in mixed beds at the corners of the building, in addition to movable planters. They have not made any adjustments on the front side of the building as they feel the base isn’t perfectly aligned with the façade. On the backside they did align the bottom windows with the ones above. The siding has changed to a lighter shade, and the balconies have spread out enough to express more clearly the black metal material below and in between the windows. Building material samples were shared. The rooftop terrace shows planters pulled back from the edge with a raised parapet to hide the railings.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I’m not crazy about the lighter color. The top level needs to recede more, make it match the darker trim so it will recede a bit further and be a bookend to that base.
 - The challenge to that is that it does recess on the north side but it becomes both the east and west side and the attic story on the south side, there’s no clean place to break.
- Doesn’t it step back at that point?
 - It comes around the corner and I suppose it could die into this.
- I’m talking about way at the top.
 - OK, that’s easy to do.

- I prefer the contrast.
- The lighter color will be coming up against the brick, not what you're seeing in the elevations. It's much lighter than previously presented.
- Thanks for swapping out the annuals for the perennials. On Plan East, I'm actually concerned that these are too sun loving than what would do well in that space because it's just picking up the morning sun. Maybe some of those species on the Plan North side carry through to there, or some perennials that are slightly more transitional in terms of their light requirements. Fern, maybe Ladies Mantel.
- Someone commented about the alignment of the windows, but you said you didn't want to do that?
 - We did it on the backside but felt it was appropriate to leave on the front side. If we were to completely align the bottom with the top we would have less glass and it was more important to keep the proportion of the glass. On that façade now we have 58% glass; we didn't think we could meet the 50% glass ordinance if we aligned that façade. Right now the windows are all the same size and it creates a nice rhythm.
- We've received responses on the comments; is the material color still unresolved or having concerns about that?
- I do, it's a lot going on. A lot of everything.
- I like the darker sample, it gave it an identity, a uniqueness that I find interesting. The renderings of the lighter material get a little too busy because of the contrast.
- I do too. It becomes kind of washed out otherwise. Of the two I prefer the darker, I don't like the color of the lighter one.
- We were trying to get some more character to this location, which didn't have enough detailing and now maybe the pendulum has swung the other way.
- We also commented it was a lot of lap siding on a building this size.
- What happens to the contrast panels if you go with the darker color?
 - I think it's still nice.
- But to Cliff's point it's a very large building for lap siding which is a smaller scale material. The two things of dark material don't really minimize that enough. Is it possible to make the whole center area by the patios with the metal? That way you just have four towers for black.
- We need to remind ourselves of the site and how the perspective of the building and pedestrian experience may not ever actually improve that to the common observer. It looks like the color elevations better represent what a darker would look like.
- With the infill below the windows, why was that not brought up to the fifth floor?
 - It could be.
- It's moving toward reducing the amount of lap siding and the areas especially where it has longer lines.
- We're talking about historic, we're trying to go for a certain area, which is what the front represents. It's indicative of a time period, and then for it to be 4 or 5 stories tall and have this era signified on one side, then go to lap siding...it's downtown, it's a five-story building, it's not common, is it the right move?
- Wasn't the concept a modern addition onto a historic building?
 - The simplicity of the back element is the modern addition. We wanted to create something very simple and minimalistic back there that contrasted strongly with the historic element. The back didn't want to draw a lot of attention to itself.
- Maybe more consistency in the details, treat all the space between the window head and sills consistent, and deemphasize the long expanse of lap siding, emphasizing that on the sides of the building rather than the back. A consistent approach.
- Is there any objection to giving final, does anybody want to see this again?
- I would definitely like to see it again. I would also like to see a quality rendering from a different perspective.

- The grade level entry to the apartments looks like it's darker large masonry, what is the wood-ish looking material on the wall?
 - It's wood siding.
- I struggle with that with the lap siding being residential and how it's detailed around the windows, as opposed to the larger base of masonry and the introduction of a wood panel. It feels like five different buildings trying to be one building and I'm struggling with the unified feel of it. I don't have a solution.
- I think the darker siding unifies it, and I would totally agree in that perspective that there's too much going on. If you simplify by removing the upper beige/brown color then I'm OK with the warm honey tone popping. But only if that siding becomes darker.
- Would you get rid of the white contrasting band then? I think the rendering is a very high contrast and I'm not sure if it would come out with that buff color.
- I recommend referring this because it will look like a striped building.
- That's why we asked for samples, to gauge the rendering versus the true colors.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-3) with DeChant, Klehr and Asad voting no. The motion provided for the following:

- Use of darker panel siding
- The addition of a few more of the inserts to go all the way up and down the building in the verticals (four locations on the back and two on the sides).
- Look at the plant species on the east and sun exposure.