

AGENDA # 8

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: January 29, 2020

TITLE: 414 E. Washington Avenue – New 8-10-Story Mixed-Use Building Containing 4,000 Square Feet of Commercial Space, 152 Dwelling Units and Underground Parking in UDD No. 4. 2nd Ald. Dist. (58980)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: January 29, 2020

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 29, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new mixed-use building located at 414 E. Washington Avenue. Registered and speaking in support was Randy Bruce, representing LZ Ventures. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Duane Johnson, representing LZ Ventures; and John Leja. Bruce reviewed the existing site conditions, context, and the proposed site plan. The site is within the Downtown Core as well as Urban Design District No. 4. This site was identified as an underutilized site with obsolete buildings and invites redevelopment. It is also within the “8 + 2 building height” district on the north side. Behind the site is set-up for six stories. The site is composed of six properties: two on Hancock Street, two on Franklin Street and two on E. Washington Avenue, with the piece on E. Washington having two structures, one of which is only accessed off of Hancock Street. They are evaluating those properties, many of which are turn of the century, to determine their history and significance, and have met with Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner to discuss their significance. The Klinke’s building on the east corner is on a contaminated site, and that contamination was found off-site as well. That building is closed and this team will clean up the contamination within those property boundaries. The team will be meeting with the neighborhood the day after this UDC meeting. They are proposing a U-shaped building that sits over a parking podium. There is a 13-foot fall from Franklin to Hancock, they’ve given a 10-foot setback on all streets for enough greenspace for residential feel. There are a series of individual entries on Hancock with the main residential entry on the corner of Hancock and E. Washington. The outdoor center area is for the commercial space with a planned seating area for a restaurant. The building steps in as you move from Hancock and Franklin inward, starting at 8 stories, stepping to 9 and then stepping to 10 allowing transition to the neighborhood to the north, as well as giving area for high quality outdoor spaces on the west side to include a pool, outdoor grilling and seating areas. When the team met with DAT, concerns were mentioned to minimize the amount of traffic that impacts the neighborhood to the north; they have worked out a parking arrangement as a one-way operation, coming in off of Franklin and exiting onto Hancock. This keeps all the vehicular traffic coming in and off of E. Washington Avenue. The 2 ½ levels of parking should not impact the surrounding neighborhood for off-street parking. Bruce reviewed the floor plans

and the roof deck plans over the parking garage. Apartment units are slightly larger than typical, an amenity space for residents will be partially hardscaped and contain a green roof over the parking deck. At the 9th floor two community spaces open onto terrace spaces, and there are three larger apartment units. On the 10th floor the stepback creates nice roof terraces for residents giving a good amount of outdoor space. A pitched roof form houses mechanical equipment on the west side of the building, which also creates a more classic architectural form. The building does not stepback on the E. Washington Avenue face, the 10 floors are linear with articulation of bays and recessed balconies. As you wrap around the corners you get to the 8-story look and from the streetside you won't see much of the upper levels because of the deep stepbacks. They have completed shadow studies.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I know it's early on, but the building on top of a building doesn't necessarily work for me. I personally don't like stepbacks, a big building is a big building. But this really looks like a 3-story building on top of a 7-8 story building and I think it's because of the pitched roofs, I don't think they're successful simply to screen mechanicals. It takes away from the overall massing and composition of the building; this building is too big for those types of roofs. I already struggle with it in the context, understanding it's E. Washington but it's right up against those houses. It's massive and square and takes up the whole block, which is different from the Constellation and Galaxie, maybe because this is so square. The roof forms don't help the massing at all.
 - We purposely worked on the roof as a design element and were able to include the mechanical space within that form. One of the goals within the Downtown Plan is to create an interesting skyline and roof forms so we thought do something different. I understand your concern with the stepbacks, part of it is how it reads and whether everything were more linear on the E. Washington face it would tie together more. In terms of materials we're looking at cast stone base, classic looking and the upper levels would be brick.
- One thing that I think kind of saves the overall composition from being overly busy is if it was all one material. Some of our comments are always about too many materials, too many angles, too many architectural forms. If it just had really delicate refined nod to historic form and a nice sleek modern material.
 - That was the impetus behind the original concept. Let's put a building that looks like an urban residential building. I started looking at New York or Chicago. I also think the viewshed coming up E. Washington, the building needs to be monochromatic and elegant but it also needs to be completely divorced from the modern forms a couple of blocks away.
- Or even metal panel. Something new and bright, clean and shiny if you're going to introduce those forms.
- I wanted to draw attention to, because Randy hit it on the head. The datum on the 8th floor is what really kills it for me, I like this image, it seems more vertical and that's way more successful.
 - One of my personal struggles with the 7, 8, 9, 10 story building is trying to read some verticality to it. When you look at classic forms you get that stretched gable to give it verticality to an otherwise difficult task to create. That's why I reverted to this more classical form instead of "snorkels" sticking up from the roof.
- It's really a heavy extrusion. You've got the E. Washington side but it seems like the two side streets are being treated very similarly with the massing going all the way back. I'll be curious to hear what the neighbors say, it feels like it turns its back on the neighbors. It's very close and a sheer wall up.
 - I'll admit we haven't looked at the rear as much as other sides.
- The transition coming down Hancock or Franklin. I don't mind the peak roofs at top, I don't think you will see them unless you live up there. I do want to see a bit of transition from those houses, those houses may be there for another 50 years and it's not fair to not address them.

- I like the treatment at the top and the gables because it's different than all these other high rises going up along E. Washington, I think that's a good thing. I don't want to see another Galaxie or Constellation. There's no denying that given the block it's on and what's surrounding it, all the sides, it's a massive piece of architecture. There are certain spots along E. Washington where it's inevitable that these are the kinds of projects that will fill these spaces. But I also have concerns about how it plays with the neighbors, particularly the immediately adjacent buildings. You still have to be a neighbor to them, especially that one on Franklin, I don't think I'd want to be in either that house or in your building facing that house. It looks like it's 10-feet away and really smooshed in there. As far as the extra two floors on there, that's a grand total of 8 more apartments for two extra floors? Granted you have the outdoor amenities and pool but it's a lot of extra height and mass for only 8 more apartments. Something about that is kind of rubbing me the wrong way, I'm not sure what it is about it.
 - I appreciate those comments. We actually like the verticality of 10 stories, it actually helps the building architecture. Maybe there are only 8 apartments up there, but we're creating quality spaces that get more difficult to do when we cut back on those stories.
- I'm glad you mentioned that because it is kind of your burden to prove that the bonus stories allows you to provide a form and design that is improved that could otherwise not be provided. Integrating, if it's vertical or gabled, whichever you choose, maybe show us how it would look without it.
- But, you're thinking just chop those off but if you're saying just bring them down two stories.
- We would have to see is it more elegant with more height versus a shorter building? That's the condition to giving them the bonuses, it gives you a better design.
- I hear the stories allow you to have rooftop amenities, you could have all those things without the two stories, you have more space and footprint. I'm not for or against either way but you could have a top, middle and base with fewer stories. Just saying that it allows for these amenities doesn't make it a valid reason, you have to think about what it really does for the overall project.
 - It's a much more elaborate explanation, but one thing we've found going through the push/pull of the approval process, one of the things that gets squeezed out of the buildings is the non-revenue generating space. One of the things the additional floors and those high-end units allow for is to carve out some community space up there in what I think is going to be an extraordinary living environment. It allows for the economics to have rooftop amenities and some of the other things in the building. Those high-end units generate revenue to have those amenities.
- I'm going to push back and say if you design an apartment building downtown, regardless of how those extra stories, you need those amenities, period. Community space, every building downtown has community space or rooftop space or exercise room or dog walk. I don't think that's a validation to grant extra stories because you want rooftop access.
- We can only judge the building by what the general public and view and appreciate as good design, and what that gives back, and fosters civic pride for a better overall composition.
- I like the gable roof, but it's only successful if you pay attention to the details. Vent stacks coming through is going to ruin that gable. Planning where those are going to be because they have to extend over the rooftop. University of North Carolina Dental School is a good example, the stacks come through a faux chimney. Be very specific on how you detail that.
- It's an interesting time in Madison seeing a project like this proposed. Along the E. Washington façade, great, but the back is just brutal what it's doing to the neighbors size-wise. I don't know if UDC has any say in that, I don't know what our guidelines are on that but that's a tough relationship between the houses and the building. Our City's changing on that, so that's just part of the discussion. Can you build 10 stories next to 2 stories?
- That's up to Zoning.
- We do have a say in the bonus story request.

- Floors 2-7, there's a one room bedroom that seems landlocked and has too small an amount of glazing. Just curious about it, the one right at the corner by the stair on the east side.
 - We can look at that. There's actually two walls to work with there.
- The pool is shown going right to edge. How's that work?
 - It's an infinity edge pool.
- How do you handle the water above residential units?
 - Carefully.
- That two-bedroom on the 10th floor of 2,300 square feet, that's huge! With a building this size does the City require any standards as to affordability on a unit this big in the Downtown Core?
 - The City wouldn't have the ability to set rent as part of zoning. We have that in the City's funding as more of an incentive but as far as regulation, no.
- Can you talk about the parking and traffic flow. How does that affect the neighborhood?
 - The entry is one-way on Franklin. When you exit onto Hancock it's one-way the other direction. You'll come in off E. Washington either east or west, take Franklin in and take Hancock out. Neither of these are signaled. The traffic volumes are really not that significant.
- At 8:00 a.m. on E. Washington? If you're coming out and heading to American Family, good luck getting out.
- Has Traffic Engineering reviewed your proposal?
 - Not thoroughly but the suggestion came via Traffic and Planning.
 - There was talk about making N. Franklin two-way just to our entrance.
- This drawing really illustrates the proximity between your building and the houses. None of the other drawings give us dimensions, what is the dimension?
 - Ten feet.
- Have you talked to the neighbors?
 - Tomorrow is our neighborhood meeting.
- We'll want to see those views and how you treat it in the side yard there.

ACTION:

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