

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 26, 2020

TITLE: 36 West Towne Mall and 7301 Mineral
Point Road – New One-Story 83,000
Square Foot Retail Building at West
Towne Mall. 9th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 26, 2020

ID NUMBER: 59184

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 26, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new one-story 83,000 square foot retail building at 36 West Towne Mall. Appearing in support of the project were Ald. Paul Skidmore, District 9; Ken Wittler, Bill White, Justin Schueler, Kevin Spring and Matt Kocourek, all representing CBL; Sameer Kulkarni, representing Shive Hattery Architecture & Engineering; and David Burke, representing Von Maur.

The development team presented plans to turn the old Boston Store location into a Von Maur Department store. They are hoping to start construction in June and open in the fall of 2020. The Boston Store has a larger footprint than what is being proposed. A review of the site plan shows a pedestrian walkway at the north side of the site; they are requesting a waiver on providing a walkway on the ring road. Building materials include a combination of brick veneer and exposed cast stone bands on all three sides, EIFS cornices, a grand entry feature including another opening for a customer pick-up entry, fenestration on the corner and windows to provide some daylight and detail on the front façade. Most of the RTUs will be hidden.

Wittler noted that as the owner of the property with CBL who purchased West Towne Mall in 2001, they are very excited to have Von Maur coming to this location and that West Towne needs to attract new tenants.

Ald. Skidmore spoke to his familiarity with the site and layout, having worked with CBL through his 19 years as an Alder. He has strong opinions on the site and supports the Von Maur project. He does not share staff's opinion about sidewalks. He noted that this is a problematic site with the second highest calls to Police in this district. There are safety issues to address here and he wants to make sure that people feel as safe as possible. Putting sidewalks where they now end to the south and east would be a problem. This is increasing pedestrian and vehicular traffic. He would prefer to see people go inside and does not support sidewalks on the ring road.

The Commission discussed the following:

- How does the footprint differ from that of the Boston Store?
 - It is a smaller with a reduced footprint on the loading dock side.
- The site plan areas nearest the building where the end of the parking bays are hatched out versus landscaping islands. Overall these are great improvements by cleaning up the edges. I appreciate that, it makes sense to have hatched areas.
 - That's for truck movement. We would still need to stripe them out. They would only come in from the north to the south, just for truck in and out. It might be cleaned up and reduced, we'll work with staff on that.
- My gut reaction for the sidewalk along the ring road is it seems like good planning principles. You could provide a sidewalk even if dead ends on the south. City staff would look for future developments. Just because it dead ends, I don't know that we can justify not doing it.
- Overall I like the entryway. The horizontal banding accentuates the box that is part of the brand.
- The large area of landscaping north of the dock area, provide screening to the dock as much as possible.
- Will you be putting up brand imaging and lighting?
 - No not for a store of this size, we will put some at the entry but not on the building.
- In the perspectives and renderings I see just a couple little windows. It makes me want more windows along the walkway. It's an old fortress mall, everything is protected from the outside. Is there an opportunity for frosted glass or window boxes? At Target stores they use Kalwall in some special areas. West Towne Mall needs to open up.
- I second that. I'm surprised by the solid blank wall.
 - The main reason is we don't have a lot of interior walls in the middle. We put the service around the perimeter. Typically when we've tried the use of frosted glass it ends up looking fake and takes away from the building more than enhances it. It's hard to control sunlight when we're displaying merchandise.
- You'd want a sidewalk that provides a safe way to navigate to the store. I would advocate for keeping the sidewalk for safe connectivity coming across the site.
 - We are providing a sidewalk on the north part of the site. It's not appropriate on this side adjacent to the site as the perimeter of site is adjoining right-of-way. It doesn't make sense to put it on the outside of the stretch.
- Understood.
- What does CBL see in terms of how this will impact changes to the mall, perhaps a domino effect?
 - We're already seeing some of the fruits of their labor, we're in discussions with potential future tenants.
- Same footprint?
 - We don't know that yet.
- There should be more window space on the front side of the mall. That could lead to more fenestration.
 - There are other property owners involved. We don't oppose the sidewalk, but it should be on the outside of the ring.
- We're getting a two-sided mall with new light.
 - Malls are changing, becoming more of town place centers. That's our goal.
- What kind of shape is the parking lot in currently?
- Do you have sustainable practices?
 - We are constantly evolving the lighting. It's LED lighting, the heat loads are less. The efficiency of HVAS has been constantly updating. Our roofs are all white roofs.
- If you could afford it, be one of the stores that has bigger trees. I'm curious about the placement of trees, they don't necessarily have to be evenly spaced. You have that entrance, like a jewel, but it's fighting with the adjacent long walls. Be a little more organic with the landscaping.

- (Chair) We are advisory to the Plan Commission on this item. Let's speak to the five points, including the pedestrian road and community spaces.
- (Firchow) There are trees required for the islands in every 12 stalls, primarily shade trees. There is a formula for how they are distributed.
- I'd make a motion for initial approval with the caveats for sidewalk not being included, the landscaping as we've talked about.
- Including discussion on Item #2?
 - We are happy to work with staff to provide community spaces, and we could also provide more windows.
- When you come back address Item #2. The current layout for traffic design and circulation is acceptable, the landscaping we talked about. We talked about landscaping to screen the dock area, Jessica brought up more playful landscaping design. The signage does not appear to meet the signable area, it should meet code or require a separate variance. Other comments include adding more windows along the façade.
- I suggest when it comes to community areas that areas of lawn with trees to the north would be a spot to consider having something for public and/or employees.

ACTION:

On a motion by DeChant, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion provided for the following:

- Provide two *Central Features and Community Spaces* on the subject site as required by M.G.O. 33.24(4)(f)(8) – one potentially in the area to the north of the proposed loading dock.
- Provide additional landscaping to screen the loading dock area.
- Explore different ways to arrange the landscaping around the site and parking lot (especially the trees) and do so in a more playful manner.
- Add more windows to the building façade.
- Regarding the requirement of M.G.O. 33.24(4)(f)7.a., which requires the addition of a sidewalk along the inner ring road located at the western end of the site, the UDC was in support of the Plan Commission granting a waiver from this requirement.