

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 27, 2020

TITLE: 825 E. Washington Avenue – New 8-Story,
81,232 Square Foot Hotel with 151 Guest
Rooms in UDD No. 8. 6th Ald. Dist.
(59850)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: May 27, 2020

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 27, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new hotel located at 825 E. Washington Avenue in UDD No. 8. Registered in support of the project were Ryan Burton, Andy Inman, Josh Wilcox and Dustin Dresen, representing North Central Group/GBA. Registered in support but not wishing to speak were Aaron Koch, Dale Bunderson, Jeff Lenz and AJ Robitschek, representing GBA. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak were Amelia Brichford, Sofia Brichford and Rymii Kaio. Inman spoke to the context of the site along East Washington Avenue. They are currently working on a parking lease agreement for the Livingston Street ramp with the City and two property owners for off-site parking. They were intentional on how to handle the E. Main Street mechanical and other facilities at street level with an enhanced landscape area that fronts along E. Main Street to make it a stylistic aesthetic of the hotel. Wilcox highlighted updates to the plans based on the Commission's previous feedback. It's a challenging, tight urban infill project with three forms: E. Washington Avenue shows a historic dark form with transparency that transitions with a stepback at the deck to the middle part of building, forming a long structure broken up with vertical accents in variegated forms that will provide an optical illusion from difficult angles. The top cap is dark with a lot of transparency showing similarities between the top and bottom. They have activated the E. Washington Avenue façade to be respectful to vehicles and pedestrians, while paying homage to the industrial nature of the neighborhood. A 15-foot setback is shown to be utilized for patio space that flows into their lounge function at the primary pedestrian entry point. EIFS examples were shown, complementary to the other Cortend and industrial finishes in the neighborhood in a timeless façade palette. Burton spoke about the mural and its motivation and intention as a landmark or beacon that would draw people to the neighborhood and reflect the neighborhood, referencing E. Main Street rather than just E. Washington Avenue. They are currently looking for a local artist.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The adjustments made are good. That sign is not going to be that orientation is it?
 - The team will be back before the UDC with a separate signage and mural submittal.

- Keep it as horizontal as possible, it doesn't work well with that type. Otherwise it's a really good job. I would make a motion for final approval.
- The concrete on the front elevation where you have a form around a seating area at the sidewalk – what is the finish? It's a little stark so far out from the building. As you're approaching it you're not going to see the detail.
 - That is intended to be concrete with the Moxy logo recessed and painted or printed into it. Engineering is requiring our floor to be raised in that area, so we have some accessibility challenges to get in there. Rather than having a ramp and exposed railing on the street we looked at it as an opportunity to shield from the traffic for the guests on that patio space.
- I find that raw concrete to be very unattractive and not in keeping with what I find otherwise a pretty handsome design of the front of the building. The freestanding building in the back I kind of like that as a functional means of getting extra space. You have upright Evergreens there which is better than low spreading, it works better with your materials in softening that concrete base. I'd encourage you to stick with the plantings in the renderings as opposed to the landscape design you included with the building plans.
- The front elevation – 849 E. Washington was going to be higher, so I question this one at that height, right at the sidewalk. Could it be more transparent? Just five buildings away we felt it was too high and close to the street. I also wondered if you could provide more information about that drive between the buildings.
 - We feel comfortable with ambient light as well as what's coming from the building.
 - The wall in front, there are challenges from a flooding perspective that creates the need for some type of barrier. It does align with the wall adjacent for Robinia Courtyard so it doesn't protrude out. I agree with the landscaping along E. Main Street, we will resolve that inconsistency to include taller vegetation on the rendering.
- What is that up on the 5th floor with all that glazing?
 - Guest rooms that have a small patio associated with them.
- The very top floor?
 - We wanted to preserve the best spaces and views in the hotel for the public. Also there is an event space on the E. Main Street side.
- Ald. Rummel: The Moxy is a really attractive building overall, I don't really have concerns. I will pile on about the concrete patio front. I think it's a graffiti target. As we go down E. Washington and E. Main and redevelop it, I'm always going to focus on E. Main so it's as pedestrian friendly as it can be. I missed the point of the accessory building.
 - Vibrant redevelopment districts were the inspiration where they use large shipping containers for retail or other. We didn't want a cold look addressing E. Main Street so we dressed it up and treated it like it's its own element.
- What is the purpose? Is it the back way in?
 - The lower level will contain trash receptacles and above that are mechanical units.
- I do like the idea of a mural and tying it with the art lab.
- I think it's a great project. Regarding the concrete wall I actually like concrete as the material but maybe it's a little tall or out of proportion for an ideal pedestrian experience. To Jessica's point with the previous patio project, I think the difference is the patio itself was perched up higher and reached a certain threshold above the sidewalk, maybe twice the height of what we're looking at here. Ald. Rummel makes a good point about the potential for graffiti. Maybe we could work with staff on the wall and the material of the wall. To stay in proportion it needs to be at least 12 inches shorter.
- What is the background material for the mural?
 - We call it out as a smooth stucco. We're looking for this mural to be something that can stand the test of time.

ACTION:

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0). The motion noted the following:

- The Commission is comfortable with the use of EIFS.
- The Commission will approve the mural when it's designed.
- The front concrete wall could be worked out with staff and committee members if needed.