

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 27, 2020

TITLE: 2902 E. Washington Avenue/2812 E. Johnson Street/401 North Lawn Avenue – New Mixed-Use Building Located in UDD No. 5. 12<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (60546)

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 **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new mixed-use building located at 2902 E. Washington Avenue/401 North Lawn Avenue in UDD No. 5. Registered and speaking in support were Anne Morrison, representing 2902 E. Washington Avenue, LLC; and Jacob Morrison, representing Morrison Tills Studio. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Brian Reed, representing Potter Lawson, Inc. Morrison discussed the development plans, showing two buildings connected by a one-story connector (not visible from any street) housing common space, a screened porch and roof deck for residents of the building. She discussed balancing a residential building that sits in a commercial corridor. Building architecture and materials were discussed, noting a rhythm of horizontals. The proposed mural has not yet been designed, they are currently requesting proposals. The mural would be painted right onto the brick.

The Secretary noted a memo stating concerns from Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator:

*At this point, the design does not appear to comply with entrance orientation requirements (minor, easy fix) and the façade articulation requirements (that is a bigger issue). Anne and I are talking tomorrow about it, there is plenty of time to make design changes.*

*The mural: The mural seems to conflict with the zoning ordinance articulation requirement. Specifically, the zoning ordinance specifically describes what articulation measures can be incorporated, and I think the painted mural across the vertically articulated surfaces will affect compliance.*

*The mural just looks like a coating or applied feature, I see it simply being in addition to any design or building form requirements. This mural idea is not an accent feature on the façade or ancillary/secondary component, like we commonly find on murals in the City. It dominates the façade, which is unusual. And does not fit into the typical zoning scenario. I can't see how the current building*

*design works from a zoning compliance perspective, regardless of the mural (for clarification, façade articulation of street-facing facades). I do not have any consideration to offer relative to the mural design, color or any other subjective perspective. A mural itself is not a zoning ordinance matter, but definitely within the boundaries of a UDD approval. This building is taller than any building in the area, and will be very visual/prominent from the perspective of surrounding properties and longer vistas.*

The Commission discussed the following:

- What has been the neighborhood reaction?
  - So far, it's been positive. It's zoned for 5-stories with up to 6 on East Washington Avenue. We downsized it and used setbacks, and maximized the site. So far we haven't gotten a ton of negative comments, the neighborhood meeting we had recently was really gratifying that people thought we were responsive to their comments. People really love the mural concept.
- Ald. Abbas: This is in my district. We have a very good robust neighborhood meeting and did not hear any major concerns. People really liked the mural. Eken Park is moving more into art features. There's quite a bit of investment to activate that neighborhood with art. They also really liked sustainability, there's a green roof factor in this project. Overall this is also on a BRT route so we want people to use public transportation rather than having more parking. It's pushing people to use public transportation.
- I really do like this project. I wish we saw this kind of attention to details more often, around the windows, how masonry can be used. I love the rhythm of everything, especially as it comes around to the residential street. Regarding the mural, it's not the mural you're faced with, you're speeding past it so there's no way to have a nice look at it. I'm wondering if there's a way to make it less intense on the one side and bring it around to the other faces somehow. I'd like to see it as I approach the building, have it wrap around somehow.

### **ACTION:**

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

## UDC Informational Review Comments

<p>Site Plan</p>	<p>Clever plan that manages to more or less successfully wrap around the unfortunately placed CarX building. Larger, taller E. Wash building seems to fit that corridor better while the N. Lawn building, I think, blends into the residential neighborhood really nicely.</p> <p>It's difficult to understand the one-story connection between the 2 buildings at this point.</p> <p>8</p> <p>Splitting building into two masses creatively addresses a difficult site that faces two very different urban contexts.</p>
<p>Architecture</p>	<p>Contrast of mural side of building on E. Wash and the side facing Moka is pretty stark. Could some of that color be added to this side?</p> <p>I like the restrained material palette and horizontal rhythm of the N. Lawn Bldg.</p> <p>The mural is a great idea. In contrast, the brick detailing and the cement fiber board currently looks like commercial space more than residential. The size and the way the windows are framed in the cement board, which is then set in voids in the brick without the detailing of sills and headers is more of a commercial look. It looks harsh in comparison to the playfulness of the mural.</p> <p>Very handsome buildings with especially nice articulation of the masonry around the windows and between floors. Appreciate the strong commitment to the mural, but curious about details. Stepbacks and setbacks from what is allowed are a pleasant change from most developers desire to max out their dimensions.</p> <p>8 – Mural dominates East Washington elevation and should be designed &amp; reviewed by UDC. It's the one element of this design that might feel dated in 15 years. Consider mural theme that recalls Ella's.</p> <p>Like simplicity of design, substantial use of masonry with cement board as <i>detail</i>, not primary surfacing on E. Wash. building.</p>
<p>Landscape Plan</p>	<p>Not a lot of detail yet but would like to see ambitious foundation plantings, courtyard details. Glad to see fence (make it a nice one) and landscaping on N. Lawn border with single family home.</p> <p>No landscape plan submitted at this time. Graphics show street trees on E. Wash., and that will be important to confirm.</p>
<p>Site Amenities/Lighting</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Lighting on N. Lawn Ave. building must be sensitive to residential character of that street.</p>
<p>Signs– if shown, do they complement the architecture? <i>(sign approvals will be a separate application.)</i></p>	<p>Signage not reviewed here, but details of mural will be important to review in future since it is a significant visual component of the larger building. Mural permanence and maintenance will be questions.</p>
<p>Pedestrian/Vehicle Circulation</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Façade set-back on N. Lawn maintains residential street 'feel' and should encourage pedestrian use. Garage access off N. Lawn seems appropriate, assuming cars turning right from west-bound Johnson aren't an issue.</p>

<p><b>Urban Context</b></p>	<p>As mentioned in site plan comments, I think this project works well in the tricky area where desired density, high traffic, compatibility with existing developments all have to find some kind of sweet spot.</p> <p>The reduction in scale and allowance for deeper setback are appreciated.</p> <p>10</p> <p>See site comments.</p>
<p><b>Overall Rating (1-10)</b></p>	<p>8, 5, 8 &amp; 8</p>

\*Individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10. The scale is: 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding.