

City of Madison, Wisconsin

**REPORT OF:** URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** July 1, 2020

**TITLE:** 502-508 W. Washington Avenue – PD in the Mifflin Planning Area. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (60100)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Janine Glaeser, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** July 1, 2020

**ID NUMBER:**

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

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of July 1, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new PD located at 502-508 W. Washington Avenue in the Mifflin Planning Area. Registered and speaking in support were Dave Keller, Doug Hursh, representing Keller Real Estate Group; Brian Reed, representing Potter Lawson; Jordan Teichen, representing Keller Real Estate Group; Ron Luskin, and Robert Lewin. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Thomas Keller and Dan Keller. Registered neither in support nor opposition and not wishing to speak were Tim Kamps, representing Capitol Neighborhoods-Mifflin District; and Ed Freer. Registered and speaking in opposition was Marissa Adams.

Keller introduced the project, noting Keller Real Estate has been a local business for over 70 years. They live, play and work here. An overview of site shows 9 lots being combined; they were reviewed by the Landmarks Commission. Three substantial street trees will remain on W. Washington and one on N. Bassett Street. Context views were shown. The unit count is at 94, with some reconfigured units particularly in the corners to provide more daylighting. Two vehicular entries are proposed, one on Bassett and one on W. Washington to lessen the need for on-street loading and unloading. Move-in/move-out could be staged in the parking garage. Trash is interior to the building. They have split visitor bike stalls to 4 at the main entry off W. Washington and 6 off of N. Bassett Street at the secondary residential entry. Floor plans were reviewed. Spacious roof terraces and tray system green roof are proposed. They took into account commentary from steering committee members regarding balcony sizes to be adequate size for usability.

Teichen reviewed the landscape design, which aimed to follow the Mifflandia guidelines, public to private transition from street terrace and public sidewalk up to entry points of the building. At the southwest corner of site the driveway won't damage existing street trees. The driveway will be composed of permeable pavers and will extend all the way to West Washington. Perennials, shrubs and upright trees will line the public sidewalk along West Washington to enhance the pedestrian experience. The driveway leading to the garage entrance off of North Bassett and ramp just to the north will be used for trash removal. All public entrances will be handicap accessible.

Hursh discussed the exterior design, with references to historic buildings but in a very subtle way. They don't use a lot of materials so the base is all brick. They've added a secondary gray brick in the reveals. The garage doors on W. Washington are recessed, high speed coiling doors so cars won't idle and will have glass for transparency. The Bassett Street view is modulated, all the balconies are recessed with the upper volume balconies modified by moving one to the north, and one that is partially recessed and extends 3-feet into the stepback area. They have gone to a horizontal siding on the upper floors. The entry to retail will be at the corner. Walk up units have grouped windows closer together to create a townhouse look with a lot of light coming in, with a small canopy over the entry and wood opaque doors for a more residential look. Building materials include white brick used in a nod to West Washington and the Capitol building, reflecting more light onto the street, smooth gray brick, recessed black panels and gray siding with gray precast at the very base.

Marissa Adams in opposition, noting concerns about the ongoing loss of affordable housing replaced by more luxury buildings. Many people in the neighborhood love it just the way it is, they can afford it, they see history, craftsmanship, opportunities for working class people to live in the heart of the city, knowing it's viewed differently by City officials and developers. They want their neighborhood to be left alone, but the Mifflandia Plan and possible revenue make it desirable. This proposal doesn't seem to complement or acknowledge the context of this neighborhood. Where is there any compatibility here? Many of these homes need fixing up but many others are well taken care of and contribute to the charm, detail and flavor of the neighborhood. She appreciates the use of brick and the horizontal siding is an improvement. Overall the design sticks out like a big drab 21<sup>st</sup> Century big thumb. Consider doing more to honor the context and rhythm of this neighborhood. Don't turn West Washington into East Washington.

Robert Lewin in support, having sat on the steering committee for this project. This proposal follows the Mifflandia Plan, and we do need more density downtown, especially on major thoroughfares and rapid transit sites. He like the design amenities and how it does fit on the block.

Staff noted that the Zoning Administrator determined an issue on the West Washington façade at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> levels, with canopy projection into the stepback area. This does not meet the Zoning Code and requires Zoning Board of Appeals approval to pursue that.

The Commission discussed the following:

- A PD writes their own zoning text. Did the Council approve that?
- It's part of the Downtown Plan Design Guidelines.
- (Prusak) This proposal does not meet those conditions for a waiver.
- And the driveway entrance off of West Washington is non-conforming. We really do not have the authority to approve balconies in the stepback.
- We have very engaged neighborhoods, I applaud you for your patience to make sure your voices are heard. We care, please know we take this charge very seriously and we strive to keep Madison the best Madison as possible.
- I appreciate the attention to the green roof aspects, it's nice to see and we don't see it as often as we should. I do have some concerns on some aspects – some look flush with areas where people will be walking; is there concern? They're not meant to be walked on. Would love to see solar panels there too.
- I really like the project, it's very attractive in many respects. It looks like the sidewalks along West Washington are 5'6" in width and I wonder if there was discussion or consideration for those being wider? With the amount of traffic there it would be beneficial to have wider sidewalks. Appreciate you protecting those trees, and excited to see you use permeable pavers.

- (Prusak) The sidewalks are something that was discussed. That could be added with your recommendation to have Traffic look at that.
- I really like the design of this building. Love the attention to detail with the herringbone insets. The ADA access to the commercial area, is it that ramp to the west? I want folks to see that more readily than the way it is now. Is there a way to make that more prominent and less hidden?
  - We can look at ways to make that more visible.
- We have to comment on the driveway on West Washington.
- I agree with Craig’s initial comments in response to residents. This project does not support any of the context around it but it’s very appropriate for its location. It’s a very well done project, appropriate for West Washington but it doesn’t support the context.
- (Prusak) Per conditions of approval for the Certified Survey Map: “Construct a sidewalk on West Washington to a plan and profile approved by the City Engineer.” So you should add that to your recommendation.
- I agree the design is well done, it’s unique which adds to the diversity. I would like the team to comment on what it would look like if the drive aisle was not acceptable onto West Washington and what options were looked at using just Bassett itself.
- We’ve developed other properties on this block. We always try to look how the building is going to work for residents in the building, residents in the neighborhood and the general public as they traverse the site. How is the building going to function with no parking on Bassett? There is limited parking on West Washington due to a bus stop and fire hydrant. Having two points of access is an advantage to do indoor staged move in while everyone else can still get in and out of the building without being blocked. It also benefits how people access the site depending on where people are coming from in the City. The Mifflandia Plan calls for making these intersections more pedestrian friendly, keeping traffic on West Washington and not forcing it into the neighborhood, and keeping the West Washington terrace.
- Reducing traffic back into Mifflin Street would be the justification to make it more pedestrian friendly.
- I do like what you’ve done with the balconies, they’re less obtrusive. The West Washington driveway, will that be right turn only when you’re exiting? Making a left would be an issue.
  - There’s probably 30 driveways up and down West Washington, it works. We’re looking if its left turn only coming out of the site, it’s going to be better than it is today because it’ll be less driveways.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Weisensel, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0). The motion noted that the West Washington Avenue entry drive is acceptable.