

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** July 29, 2020

TITLE: 6003, 6019, 6035, 6015 Gemini Drive – PD. 3rd Ald. Dist. (60544) **REFERRED:**

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: July 29, 2020 **ID NUMBER:**

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

*Asad recused himself on this item.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of July 29, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PD located at 6003, 609, 6035, 6015 Gemini Drive. Registered and speaking in support was Brian Munson, representing Greyrock at Grandview Commons, LLC. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Daniel Brinkman, representing DSI Real Estate Group, Inc.; and Adam Fredendall, representing JLA Architects.

Munson noted that this development completes the Town Center and brings activity and vibrancy with this piece. The first floor walk-ups now have individual entrances. He gave more details on the covered plaza area under the building and showed how it will be activated and used by retail uses and residents. The upper level open space is enhanced with landscaping, and a full landscape plan addresses how some softer areas will be treated. The two commercial bookends will have a total of 5,800 square feet, and both will have direct access from the plaza, the garage entrances are in the upper right and the patio area is to the south.

The Secretary read a letter from Ald. Lemmer. The two main themes of the feedback she has received are concerns about number of floors and a preference for four stories, and concerns about blocking the view of the park on Sharpsburg. It would be meaningful to keep that at least partially visible.

The Commission discussed the following:

- This is still labeled original, have there been changes to the elevations and façade of the building?
 - Changes include increased transparency along Sharpsburg with walk-ups and windows, the corner between Sharpsburg and the North Star building form changed a bit so the top two floors have stronger entry elements and the wood tone calls attention to the entrance.
- The staff report referenced the height of the building and the Comprehensive Plan for this area referenced a four-story limit. I'm fine with the height as it is but I'm wondering about what is allowed or specified in this area.

- Firchow: Four-stories is a recommendation in Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Mixed-Use, 2-4 stories; it's not an ordinance requirement. They're writing their own zoning text so there is flexibility. The Common Council would need to decide if it's consistent. It's the same recommendation as across the street which was approved as a 5-story building.
- Interesting spaces being created. Maybe not ideal at the north drive lane, directly adjacent to the building without much of a buffer. The species *Liatris Picata* is listed as Purple Loosestrife, which is massively invasive. From the parking lot side there wants to be more separation between the parking stalls and the plaza space itself. Most of that space might be under structure and difficult to have a landscape edge, but give consideration to maybe a raised planter that's irrigated or some other element as a separator.
- The proposal does a good job of taking the residential away from Cottage Grove Road while giving enough greenspace so it's not such a dominant structure. With the parking to the north and providing that buffer I think the park will benefit from acoustical and visual privacy from Cottage Grove Road, that would make a better neighborhood feel.
- Consider the material palette, number of materials, breaking up the long façades.
- As depicted in the renderings I find them very attractive, it's a nice rhythm and flow. The trees that border the walkway going through the parking lot, the landscape design seemed to indicate there was already 6 Callery Pears and 6 more to come to match it. I don't know if those Pears they say are existing are actually in there yet. If they aren't planted yet that is a tree that we are trying to dissuade people from planting, it is a tree that was just recently banned in Ohio and on its way to being banned in Indiana. It's a problematic plant.
- The quantity of materials and colors, the wide band at mid-height, neither have been addressed. This design does not work for me, it's incoherent, looks like a checkerboard.
- I didn't see any specific material call-outs. A 2-20 and 2-21 look significantly different than A-22-27. Which one is more representative? Do you have material palette samples?
 - We do have material palette pictures. The elevations on 201 and 200 call out the siding colors and the stone, there was a photo in the last presentation.
- We see siding, stone and brick.
- Is there a rendering the design team feels is more representative?
 - 223 has good lighting on it.
- The colors there, especially the darker at the top looks a lot less dominant and more appealing but there still is a lot of materials.
- One is monolithic and one is more residential lap siding, the light gray brick and light buff is a stone, maybe is what staff was getting to in asking for our feedback and addressing it specifically in our motion.
- It's a lot going on in some of these elevations.
- I don't disagree with anything he just said, but I do like the natural stone as an element in the horizontal bands, but maybe simplifying some of the other colors.

ACTION:

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

- If not already planted, replace the Callery Pear trees with another ornamental species.
- Organize some of the color blocks in a more cohesive manner, simplify the materials, possibly reducing the palette by one. It would be beneficial to not use some of the horizontal elements in a vertical fashion.
- Consider landscaping in the buffer area under the covered plaza.

- The Commission would like to see high quality pictures of building materials, as well as before and after renderings highlighting updates.