

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 2, 2020

TITLE: 7050 Watts Road – PD, New Single-Story Restaurant Building. 1st Ald. Dist. (61867)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 2, 2020

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 2, 2020, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PD located at 7050 Watts Road.

Registered and speaking in support was Jennifer Mowen. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Daniel Stewart, representing At Home; Julie Wehmeyer, representing GreenbergFarrow; and Matthew Henry Budde. Mowen gave the presentation, noting an approved site plan the UDC saw earlier this year. The team is working closely with At Home and are aware of all the conditions of approval. They have maintained the landscape buffer along Watts Road and do not encroach upon greenspace in the buffer. They relocated the sidewalk along Watts Road 8-feet into the site per conditions of approval, added a bench pad at the bus stop and provided sidewalks along the northern and eastern side of their lot for pedestrian circulation around the property. They also provided an ADA accessible route from the front door to the south, crossing the parking field to the east and going down to Watts Road to the bus stop. They are maintaining as many trees as possible, and will put in a retaining wall. Materials include wood cedar with brick wainscoting and a standing seam metal roof.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The site plan we see is significantly better than what we saw previously. Appreciate the additional sidewalks and circulation, accessibility around the space, location of bike racks. The landscape buffer was a point of discussion – revisiting what’s currently there today, it is really nice and effective at screening views behind it. I’m sure the neighborhood will still feel a bit of that loss from removing some of those larger mature landscape species. An area of potential improvement is the landscape the corner, vision corner requirements notwithstanding, but something more than just lawn spaces. A new landscape buffer within the space you’re given that’s better than just lawn. Keep in mind safety if you do add more planting in that buffer space, keeping the 3-6 foot zone open, adding ornamental trees to occupy that space just above 6-feet but also be a visual screen.

- Is there any opportunity to add more windows at least on the front façade, anywhere where customers are on the inside?
 - It is a branded building, in part the décor and where the booths are on the inside dictates where those windows are located. We could put additional spandrel windows but those won't provide any additional view corridors for guests inside the building.
- I wouldn't encourage any more spandrel. There's a benefit to a transparency for buildings like this. It would help lighten the building. It would look much better, less heavy. It looks like a fortress.
 - We can take a look at that.
- Those pilasters on the back-of-house, what struck me were the words you used, "thrown on," I would question the need for them and the way they look. I wonder if there are other ways to break up that façade without putting up pilasters that are clearly not needed structurally. Extrude out and in to get more shadow play.
 - We'll look at that for other ideas to incorporate.
- More fundamental than a few adjustments to a brick here or shutter there. You basically have a dining room area, a pitched roof element and a flat roof element. I know this is modeled on something we see on the freeway, this is more of a neighborhood and we're asking that you make it more contextual and more responsive to the site.
- Is there programming for outdoor space? Not part of the franchise model?
 - Texas Roadhouse has never really engaged in an outdoor dining program. Up until COVID it's been all about the experience on the inside of the building. We'd have to see where they stand with that. Focused heavily on their to-go operations, pick-up.
- There is a neighborhood here without a lot of outdoor eating areas nearby.
- It would be nice to understand and maybe see more about illumination at night.
 - We can do that for the next submittal.
- Get acquainted with our Dark Sky ordinance.

ACTION:

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