

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: January 13, 2021

TITLE: 701 Gardener Road – PD, Madison Yards
Block 2 in UDD No. 6. 11th Ald. Dist.
(62271)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: January 13, 2021

ID NUMBER:

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 13, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL** of Madison Yards Block 2 located at 701 Gardener Road in UDD No. 6. Registered and speaking in support were Sean Roberts, representing Summit Smith Development; Ethan Skeels and Craig Pryde. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Kevin Yeska, representing JSD Professional Services, Inc.; Shawn Zimny, representing Gilbane Development Co.; and Aaron Ebent, representing Kahler Slater. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Barry Orton.

Roberts gave context of the Madison Yards development with 3D images and renderings; it remains generally unchanged with what was presented last fall. The Whole Foods loading is accessed off of University Avenue and all truck movements are contained within that area. They have added back the entry point on Madison Yards Way into the main entrance vestibule along the south. The elevations are unchanged with wood, cast stone and panels. A small storefront will serve as the development office to activate that corner of University and Gardener. Seating, accent lighting and a shade trellis gives a pedestrian grade façade. Integrated planters are located along Madison Yards Way and Gardener Road. The revised building plan for the tower on Block 2 remains a combination of metal panel and glass wall system. They significantly enhanced the landscaping with the lower level of the residential building. A bus stop is provided as part of the transportation plan, as well as seating and landscaping. The elevation has changed to accent the northeast and southeast corner of the residential building with a glass window wall, but changed and revised the grid on the west façade, moving away from the dark gray color to a blue color for the frame and a light gray color for the metal infill panel. The percentage of solid wall has increased by about 20%. An exterior outdoor patio activates the Segoe and Madison Yards Way corner adjacent to the residential lobby. The landscape plan has been modified and adjusted to increase the connectivity on the northeast corner, the transformer area is appropriately screened, and additional plantings were added adjacent to the outdoor patio space.

The Commission discussed the following:

- On the Whole Foods building the rooftop units are not shown as being screened, that is something that will be required.
- On the Whole Foods block, curious about the corner at University and if that is a public entry? If so it wants to be more urban with bike parking, etc.
 - That was an add-on, it's a small management office for Madison Yards. It is not a public entrance, more a sparsely used management office.
- For people grocery shopping arriving on foot or bike, everyone is kind of funneled to the Madison Yards Way entry?
 - That is correct. There is a walkway on Gardener Road, you could walk in and take the escalator up.
- I like the stepped planters and the way it breaks down the mass of the building, the downlights around the Whole Foods building. Jumping to the other corner at Segoe and University, I can't help but feel that is a lot of building mass right on that corner, even with setbacks. I'm not sure how the vision triangle works there. Why the push into that corner and is it still outside of the vision triangle?
 - The entire façade, our GDP allows 80% to be zero setback and that is consistent. We have pulled the corner out and then stepped in after three glass levels to activate it and make it consistent with what is across the street. We added benches and stepped planters.
 - We are outside of the vision triangle, there's a nice generous radius to that corner.
 - Architecturally the lower three levels of the building at this corner are pulled out to align with the face of Whole Foods and the parking garage. We changed the material to brick to provide a base to this end, but visually it also aligns and creates that urban edge. I think we are in compliance with the GDP text that was approved. We are asking for two extra floors above that GDP.
- The seating area on the south side of the building looks like it would benefit from some landscaping, or if the canopy could provide some shade. Right now it looks like it might be a big shiny spot not so desirable to sit. More detailing, protection.
 - We do have our 10-foot sidewalk in Block 6, there are some street trees, there's a limited amenity zone along the building that Whole Foods will program.
- On the University Avenue side, is that a slope up to the sidewalk to the bottom base of the building, or is it flat?
 - The property is at 21-feet from the curb line, which is what I think the staff report may be referring to. There is a big hill there, we will be taking that hill out and bringing the building down to that. Part of our GDP approval was to rebuild the sidewalks wider along University Avenue.
- The side wall of the parking deck over Whole Foods, it appears to be a concrete wall?
 - Correct, a portion where it's textured would be different and we'd paint to match. That's a structural precast wall that holds up the parking and the wall of the eastern side of Whole Foods.
- It seems like it might be an awkward transition. I think peoples' eyes will be drawn to the wonderful materials of Whole Foods, wondering if there's an opportunity to carry that nicer material further back? Or whether you've done studies to show where you've terminated it there is not going to be seen.
 - What's not shown here, we are aware the rooftop mechanicals need to be screened, that will be screened. We wrapped the corner, we believe by painting that concrete, the majority of that wall will not be visible.
- I think that will be visible.
- We had a frank discussion about the amount of glass on the residential tower, where it is at for a window to wall ratio perspective calculation?
 - Originally it had striation, ribs intended to be spandrel glass. This revised elevation has a significantly reduced portion of that type of glass, we currently are approximately 51% glass and

49% solid wall material, we were probably closer to 70/30 on the original design, maybe even higher. It's window wall vs. metal panel with a punched opening.

- This remains a nice project, I am hearing my colleagues talk about the massing and some setbacks. One consideration that we look at as part of our job is whether there is green sustainability benefits that might sway us. With the information provided I still do see quite a bit more glass on this building than I would normally see for a building considered sustainable or green.
 - The building is designed to perform exceptionally well from a sustainability standpoint.
 - It's not in our presentation but we have committed to be putting solar on top of the residential tower. Where is says spandrel would be a solid behind it.
- The transformers appear to be flush with the façade of the parking garage, you've screened it, is there a way to recess that a little bit? The access panels will need clear space in front of them. It doesn't look like there's enough space for plantings, I would prefer if they were tucked back a little further.
 - MG&E requires it to be as close to the right-of-way as possible. We've tried to shield it from view from both directions and keep it back to the building as close as possible. MG&E still has to be able to access them. The property line is 21-feet from the curb, they are right on the property line.
- If there's a way to be creative with the design of the gates, that would be appreciated. Or conversely maybe try to make it as plain as possible and maybe it would receded on its own. It needs attention.
- The height of the building – it seems out of place to me. Fifteen stories seems excessive, it's almost like a big wall or barrier between views and sunlight for the rest of the properties. Especially views to the downtown area.
 - The State building was maxed out in height. When we went through the GDP process we got minimums and maximums approved. Our Block 2 was approved higher, the concept was an office building and hotel up to 12-stories high. Our residential building is at 15-stories, across the street is taller than 12-stories. We're trying to capture some of that density here on Block 2.
- I know there are other tall buildings, maybe the narrowness accentuates that.
- I appreciate the thought on sustainability, this design is a little better than the previous. Still the windows look very dominant at 51%. From a City policy point of view we are looking into reducing building carbon emissions, but it's really important to see new construction projects considering sustainability. You mentioned this building performance is above code, what does this really provide to the community?
 - We don't have our full energy model completed at this point. My comments were aimed at the exterior wall components. Frequently when we make our final selections on materials and manufacturers we exceed requirements for the building envelope.
- Usually the density bonus for best design, part of that is how the building reacts to the environment in terms of sustainability.
- (Firchow) The final recorded document for the zoning text shows a series of setback standards: along Segoe setback minimum of 8-feet, maximum of 20-feet; along University a maximum of 30-feet, minimum distance of base of building to existing back of curb is 21-feet; Madison Yards Way minimum of 8-feet, maximum of 15-feet with upper story setbacks. The change to the underlying GDP would be in height.

Ald. Martin spoke in support of this project. This block in particular is really important to the rest of the project as a whole. The height and density are things we really need to think about given what's going to be happening with our City's population as we go forward. Environmentally, increasing density in a place that's infill, on potentially the east-west BRT line, this is a good place to have that kind of density. The developers are continuing to look at ways to reduce carbon footprints, etc., they have solar on the roof. This is a great place for a grocery store, there are so many apartments in this immediate area. Take a look at what this project provides in terms of density, the use of solar, access to food and transportation.

- I appreciate Ald. Martin's comments relative to density. This height feels a bit uncomfortable, it's somewhat new to our City and we're seeing more of it. It's not shadowing anything and there is other height around it. It's good urban design, and the density in this area is appropriate.
- The vision triangle still strikes me as odd. My understanding is that it's usually 25-feet from the property line.
- (Firchow) I don't know what discussions have happened at the staff level with Traffic Engineering.
- This would be the one place where shadowing isn't an issue.
- I agree density is important and buildings of this height, this project is a prime example to make real some of these opportunities and promises made related to green and sustainability. We need to consider real details related to solar, understand the impact of the glass and design of the building, and the window to wall ratio.
- (Chair) We're bound by the conditions and text in the GDP, but also to the requirements of UDD No. 6. Although sustainability is important and the points are well taken, I don't know that this body has the authority to go ahead and insist that certain sustainability features outside of those in the documents are requirements and conditions of approval.
- Is it fair though that green design is a secondary consideration with the bonus stories?
- I don't think so because this is not a zoning district in the City that permits bonus stories. This is a PD and the PD is asking for an amendment. Unless staff would correct me, we judge by the UDD guidelines.
 - That is correct.
- I think you're absolutely right. There is work to be done, with ordinances, to add green language. It's a pity if we can't discuss green building. We can always as a committee provide a recommendation for a developer to present solar and other information.
- Certainly the discussion is welcome.

ACTION:

On a motion by Weisensel, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (9-0). The motion provided for the following:

- Look at ways to hide the transformer or simplify the design to let it disappear.
- The UDC notes that it is approving the increased height for 15 stories for the PD.