

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 10, 2021	
TITLE: 341 State Street, 315-319 W. Gorham Street, 321 W. Gorham Street, 322 W. Johnson Street - New Mixed-Use Building for Student Housing, Retail, Affordable/Workforce Housing and Incubator Space. 4th Ald. Dist.(63798)	REFERRED:	
	REREFERRED:	
	REPORTED BACK:	
AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary	ADOPTED:	POF:
DATED: February 10, 2021	ID NUMBER:	

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

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 10, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new mixed-use building for student housing, retail, affordable/workforce housing and incubator space located at 341 State Street, 315-319 W. Gorham Street, 321 W. Gorham Street and 322 W. Johnson Street. Registered and speaking in support was Brian Munson, representing Core Campus Manager, LLC. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Jeff Zelisko and Mark Goehausen, representing Core Campus Manager, LLC. Registered neither in support nor opposition was Narik Riak.

This project anticipates creating roughly 1,100 beds split between student apartments and affordable housing units distributed throughout with retail on all frontages. The building steps down to State Street and some of the existing buildings on the State Street frontages will remain. They are requesting bonus height for this, justified by compatibility with adjoining buildings; given the context the State Street frontage will be set back 130-feet and have a 3-story element with that square footage shifted up higher. Higher quality building components is the trade-off for affordable housing without asking for assistance. Significant setbacks and insets create a rhythm, different expressions and fits within the rhythm of State Street and beyond. They are working through exploration of green building standards to incorporate energy efficiency throughout the building. The team sees a real opportunity to have this read as a collection of elegant buildings on all four sides of the block. A large residential lobby will mimic a boutique hotel lobby. A typical residential floor was presented showing those affordable units distributed throughout the entire residential project. Having 10-stories allows them to keep the mass and height off of State Street, this is lower than surrounding buildings even with the additional floors. The massing model reinforces the idea of a series of buildings with significant setbacks. They are pursuing a sustainable rating system for this building (NGBS).

The Commission discussed the following:

- We had a lengthy staff report that spelled out a number of things that are going to be important for us to make findings on ultimately, not the least of which is the request to exceed the Downtown Height Map limitations by two stories. Excess height has to meet four conditions, and the PD standards talk about the criteria for rezoning to a Planned Development. The excess height needs to be consistent with the existing and planned character, allow for demonstrated higher quality architecture that could not be achieved without. How this will work with the existing context and planned character of the neighborhood, and the demonstration of higher quality design that could be achieved with an 8-story building. Right now the property is in two different zoning districts, but an 8-story building could be zoned Downtown Core. Affordable units could factor into our decision to allow additional height.
- It's so early on it's hard to give substantial comments. I hate stepbacks but this massing is done well by creating architectural opportunities that could potentially qualify this for the additional height.
- I'm troubled by the geometry, especially where you created that courtyard. It feels like all the apartments around that are going to feel like second class citizens in a way, they won't be very attractive units looking down into a canyon. The geometries you created to make one building, maybe that's it. I can't figure out how you're going to trick this into not looking like one giant mass. As we add buildings around this end of Gorham and Johnson, it's starting to become really canyon-like there, you don't get a sense of scale of anything, it's just a wall of buildings. Some have addressed that better than others, you're going to have to be creative in how you pull that back and create a lightness. Right now it looks like one big mass, it'll be interesting to see how you define these different pieces of it.
- Some of the criteria is what additional features or architecture are you doing to put this above and beyond a building that doesn't have those additional stories? Given the location and prominence of this project there is a certain expectation of what it shall be from the baseline. We'd be looking for what the demonstrated above and beyond is to justify those additional stories, given the profile of this building that needs to be explicitly demonstrated when you come back. It's a high hurdle.
- Keeping the State Street frontage at 3 stories could be something. Those are the kind of things we really want to see in terms of what we're getting back.
- Getting light would make those courtyard units more appealing, it's too narrow.
- My reaction is in attempting to break up the mass and make it look like multiple buildings, you could move towards a jumbled appearance. How the architecture of this plays out will be very challenging. Maybe sometimes a big building should look like a big building. This is going to be exceedingly challenging. Components need to stand alone while relating.
- People have mentioned that this is broken up to look less massive. Why is it one building then with a site that big? I'd be curious about shadows being cast in that courtyard and onto State Street. Even though it has a stepback the southern sun hits that façade. It has such a footprint it's hard to understand where all the exits would be and where people are moving around the base of this building, inside and outside.
- The move to 3-stories on State Street is a good move and has me seriously considering the trade-offs and benefits of that. I would like to know about the existing buildings and what you're proposing to remove for this project. I'm sure not all of them are in great condition, but knowing if they have any sort of status, there's some really wonderful articulation in some of the smaller storefronts, specifically on Gorham, but Johnson also. Despite all the traffic it's kind of a nice streetscape with trees on that edge. State Street is often the focus of the pedestrian scale but Gorham and Johnson are just as important. My concern is we're removing some charming small buildings in the name of progress and I want to know more about those structures proposed for demolition.
- If it's going to be a big building and a big mass, there are additional challenges with the recesses. We talk about the simplicity of larger buildings, with the longer elevations and turning corners, it's still a large building no matter what. If that's the case then I think there are other ways you can approach it, maybe separating as it moves away from the podium. Otherwise you're going to be locked in.

- It would be helpful to see the cross-section through State Street and how it compares to the Hub cross-section. That's a space we can visualize.
- The design precedence that has your team inspired, there's a broad spectrum of buildings there, frankly it's quite different between the pages. We would want to see some context with the other buildings around it. My sense is that it's mostly masonry type buildings around there.
- The first floor plan, I'm wondering if you would consider or have considered bringing the residential lobby to Johnson Street and bringing retail over to Gorham? There are already a number of apartment buildings along Johnson Street. The residences exiting on Johnson Street would be that much closer to the grocery store a block away.
 - The location of the lobby, we need a certain size and depth so there's shape to that. Core Spaces wanted the lobby as close to campus as possible.
 - We have set back the building from the property line so there are 15-foot sidewalks on Gorham, Broom and Johnson Streets. We will definitely provide shadow studies, 130-feet from State Street will have a huge impact. The articulation of three floors on State Street is a trade of area, and we have setbacks on almost all of the elements. The courtyards are very common in this sort of a building, and in Madison. I know it feels like it may be a penalty box but they rent out very well, and there's a lot of reflective light in those courtyards. There will be a continuousness that runs through it but we're making a huge effort to break down the massing.
- The subtle things like increasing the sidewalk widths, anything else you can do to demonstrate what we as a City are getting back in return for those two stories will go a long way for this Commission. The last thing we want is for the building to look like you took a laser cutter to shave off setback and stepback areas. We do look forward to seeing how that design and articulation gets expressed.
- The retail areas, especially on State and Gorham will be really important to design those in a way that retains some kind of character of what's up and down the street. The nice storefronts we're going to lose there, the Community Pharmacy and A Room of One's Own, I'm surprised there hasn't been more comment from the public on historic or landmark status. They have character that is obviously going to disappear but I hope a real effort is made to put something back in its place that speaks to the history and design of the area. I've always admired the fire house building on the corner, I'm feeling sad for them on all these designs that this project looks to me like its abutting tight against them, I would encourage you to also put some effort into giving that nice building a little room to breathe.
- (Secretary) Some of the late comments we're received may speak to that topic, I'd encourage you to go back to Legistar and revisit those. This will go before the Landmarks Commission because there is a demolition request, so there will be a public forum for people to speak to the removal of those buildings.
- The retail space is shown as one large block, is the intent to break that up into smaller pieces based on tenant requirements?
 - Correct.
- Something that big on State Street would end up being a national chain.
- The pursuit of sustainability certification, I encourage you to continue that process. I don't know that it's going to apply or help alleviate some of the other challenges mentioned, just a nod of encouragement.

ACTION:

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