

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: January 13, 2021
TITLE: 522 S. Gammon Road & 53 West Towne Mall – Planned Multi-Use Site. 9 th Ald. Dist. (62270)	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 a Planned Multi-Use Site located at 522 S. Gammon Road and 53 West Towne Mall. Registered and speaking in support were Melanie Bagley, representing Portillo’s; and Todd Mosher, representing Seritage SRC Finance, LLC. Registered neither in support nor opposition and not wishing to speak was Robert Stoklosa, representing WD Partners. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Andrew Glassman.

The site plan has remained generally consistent, with separation between the ring road and parking area. Some landscaping was proposed previously, now they are showing somewhere in the neighborhood of 15 trees. They removed the sidewalk which allows a 9-10 foot landscaping area, allowing over-story trees in those areas and to use some of that area for infiltration for stormwater management. The team shared existing and proposed pedestrian connections, with sidewalk on the north and west side of the development, and a sidewalk connection within to the storefront itself. To the south of that they show a future crosswalk connection across the ring road at a safer area to cross. Conceptually a sidewalk connection would run on the south side as well as connecting to the proposed future bike path along the south edge of the property. Sidewalk connections are shown to the mall storefronts, and to the bus stop on Gammon Road. The sidewalk along the ring road would be redundant as it does not provide any additional connections to areas of development. The additional landscaping is a good replacement for having just a sidewalk there. The 1950’s diner building incorporated four-sided architecture with the custom created architectural features that give the appearance of a taller building. Artistic features are in keeping with elements of the City, signage or some sort of artwork on the building that speaks to the character of the City of Madison. The building will use high quality brick materials, with a patio in the front. Newer build-outs at West Towne have incorporated color and this will be a nice addition to the remodel of the mall.

The Commission discussed the following:

- At the last meeting we had concern about the curb cut in the south corner with regard to how quickly traffic comes around that corner. You may have moved it a little to the west, but there are still concerns when folks are coming from the northeast, are they going to be able to decelerate enough to go into that entry? Are they going to be queued fast enough to turn, and conversely people coming out. It seems like a recipe for disaster for that location.
 - We have moved it as far west as possible, this was also brought up by staff. With the drive-thru and exiting it has to be beyond the southwest corner of the building. The idea of jumping out into that side road at that intersection isn't so desirable either. I believe Traffic is satisfied with where we have it at this point.
 - The site as it stands has three curb cuts along the ring road. We asked to keep all three, and TE looked at them and the positioning of our building and felt that this curb cut here made the most sense. Once the patrons have come to the site, over 75% of Portillo's business in non-COVID times is drive-thru.
- It seems like that curve would be an ideal location for traffic calming measures.
 - We'd be happy to accommodate any signage, we are also concerned with the safety of our patrons.
- Echoing and sharing that concern, technically that ring road is four lanes, although most of us locals don't drive that curve that way. My thought is along with traffic calming to have it restriped, and maybe a slow curb lane particularly for the entrance. There's almost no visible striping on that curve now.
- Quite a bit has been done to the landscaping. The last discussion touched on using greenery to separate this site from the rest of the mall proper. The key elements that do that are the four existing trees along the drive-thru. I'm curious about the confidence level of preserving those with the proximity of the drive shown. Should this plan add some new trees in the event that those aren't able to be saved, or the plan modified to give them some more breathing room?
- A few new trees certainly might make a difference.
- So much great work has been done to all the other corners, that might make it lopsided if it doesn't hold up.

ACTION:

On a motion by Weisensel, seconded by Klehr, 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:

- Provide additional trees on the northwest side of the site between drive through and access road. Confirm preservation of existing trees.
- UDC supports maintaining landscaping and greenery along curved edge of ring road in lieu of a sidewalk route. UDC supports current pedestrians route shown without sidewalk on inside of ring road.
- Provide additional landscape island peninsula in lieu of paved striping area on right side (east) of site southwest vehicle entry.