

## AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** July 14, 2021

**TITLE:** 1858-1890 E. Washington Avenue - New  
Development of a Six-Story Mixed-Use  
Building Located in Urban Design District  
(UDD) No. 8. 12th Ald. Dist. (64302)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Kevin Firchow, Acting Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** July 14, 2021

**ID NUMBER:**

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

\*Asad was recused on this item.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of July 14, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new mixed-use building located at 1858-1890 E. Washington Avenue in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 8. Registered and speaking in support were Steve Doran, representing Galway Companies; and Adam Fredendall, representing JLA Architects + Planners. Registered in support but not wishing to speak were Roger Simsiman and Jennifer Camp, representing JLA Architects + Planners.

Ald. Abbas, representing District 12 spoke, noting concerns expressed at a neighborhood meeting about design, traffic, and integration with First Street and E. Washington Avenue. He noted that the developer did good job engaging with the neighborhood. There has been substantial improvement in the design and accommodation of much of the feedback from UDC and the neighborhood. There was more positive feedback at the second neighborhood meeting. Some progress has been made regarding sustainability by reducing the building to 6-stories and lowering the unit count; construction costs were a factor. Beyond this project many Alders are working on the design of E. Washington Avenue itself, thinking about how to redesign it to create more safety and a more welcoming entry into the City.

Changes to the project include slightly increased parking underground and decreased surface parking for a more dramatic lobby entrance; a traffic study shows the project would not cause any issues to surrounding streets. They have reduced the building size by one floor, and reduced the number of units to 209. They substantially redesigned the E. Washington Avenue frontage by eliminating the switchback stair, engaging with the street as well as the sidewalk, keeping the building engaged with the street by incorporating permeable stairs, landscaping and seating areas. They are confident the commercial areas will be successful. The townhomes are now three-bedroom units with usable outdoor space and more glazing, all while keeping in scale with the houses across the street. In address of there being too much of a barrier to E. Washington Avenue, they now have a good balance of terraced landscaping as well as permeability. They have updated the material palette to address previous comments. The townhomes are now blended at the base, organized internally as a tri-level

with their positioning interfacing with the rest of the building. They provided a solar study analysis of both the summer and winter solstice and equinoxes.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Trouble reading some of the finer details on the landscape plans. I liked the density of the plantings and the terrace, the raised beds going up across the E. Washington face will be handsome. Nicer foundation plantings than we typically see. The courtyards – is that artificial turf?
  - It will be real grass with a portion of turf in the dog run area. It's designed for drainage and soil support.
- Nice presentation, excited about this project. The two covered parking areas don't appear to be connected. Is there an intent for one parking area to be used for one function and the other for another? My concern is people having to go through one, go around and enter the other parking area.
  - The lower level is solely for the residents, visitors and any customers won't know that lower level parking exists. The top floor will be shared between residential and commercial. As you enter you'll either park on the top floor or the minimal surface parking we have.
- That could make sense with good wayfinding.
- There's a design statement at the back with the mullions. What is the intent of that?
  - It helps people get excited about their common spaces. We wanted to do something dynamic there, interesting to see.
- Exciting project, the prospect of infill on this site is very nice. The site plan, the way the driveways enter from the street into the building and site, they appear to be more like roadways that interrupt the sidewalk. Assume it cannot be that, the sidewalk remains constant and there's a drive apron? Overall I like the landscape and plant selection. There is a piece of turf sod lawn on the corner of E. Washington and First Street; the sod lawn doesn't feel appropriate given the urban nature of the project and that intersection, would suggest you eliminate that swirl of sod and fill it in with some of the foundation plantings or hardscape, however that works best aesthetically and functionally.
- On the upper level terraces (Plan North terrace where there is a pool) there doesn't appear to be any hardscape in the center of the fire pit, no ADA accessible hardscape connecting to those elements. There needs to be some hardscape that provides accessibility to those features.
- Framing on the top floors – what is the purpose and material?
  - The intent is to help set up an armature to hang lighting. One of the design objectives is to capture the other brick forms, erode it at the top for nice rooftop areas, those are established to continue some nice rhythm and provide more of a dynamic space on the top.
- I'm appreciative of the improvement you made to the E. Washington Avenue area. I'm having trouble with the townhouse side, it's very dark and doesn't seem inviting. Is there any way to make it more inviting? There's a lot of brick without any windows, and the really dark panel.
- There are four units there and it's not expressed to me as four townhouses. The brick is almost like a pilaster, the brick between to help define those four distinctive units.
- It almost has a back-of-building vibe to me.
  - That certainly is not the intent. The shadow does not help on the north side of the building. We've been through a handful of iterations, some with a varied roofline, but I appreciate your comments. We could lighten it up with some other brick.
- There seems to be a lot of different sized windows there. One really nice townhouse elevation that could be repeated. It doesn't read as something special right there. The materials are good materials, just tweaking the design of them a little bit.
- The brick pilaster actually has a cap and above that is probably an aluminum finish edge that feels like an applique and not substantial.

- The crisscross curtain wall is such a modern expression that doesn't seem to fit on this design. I see nice wood tones and what look to be beautiful pergola structures, but I don't see how this curtain wall fits. Maybe that's what you're after to distinguish that area, but I do wonder if something with a wood tone, strong framing or has a depth to it coming out of that entry to flag that could be a lot more successful.
- I agree with you, I think that's the only part of the building with an eccentric idiosyncratic to it. It is internal to the site. Maybe a random vertical pattern of straight plumb mullions might be a less expensive way to get more bang out of the buck.
  - We could do something more vertical there.
- The overhang canopy as well.

**ACTION:**

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

- Relook at the back entrance vernacular.
- Relook at the townhouse elevation.