



Legistar I.D. #15586
1300 Linden Drive
Demolition and Conditional Use

Report Prepared By:
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Planning Division Staff

Requested Action: Approval of the demolition of two buildings and a conditional use request for the construction of an addition to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Human Ecology Building including a daycare facility in the R5 (General Residence) District.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: Section 28.12(12) provides the guidelines and regulations for the approval of demolition requests. Section 28.12(11) provides the guidelines and regulations for the approval of conditional uses. Colleges and universities and university buildings over three stories in this area are conditional uses in the R5 (General Residence) District per Section 28.08(6)(c)3. Daycare facilities are conditional uses in the R5 District per Section 28.08(2)(c)4

Summary Recommendation: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the conditional use standards can be met and **approve** the conditional use request subject to input at the public hearing, all conditions (Nos. 1-16) included in the August 17, 2009 staff report, and any additional conditions discussed at the September 14 meeting of Plan Commission that will reduce or mitigate the degradation of the historic cultural landscape along the north side of Linden Drive and conditions from reviewing agencies.

NOTE: All items from the August 17, 2009 Plan Commission meeting pertaining to this request, beginning with the staff report dated August 17, are attached for reference.

Update to Plan Commission

Previous Action

At the Plan Commission meeting of August 17, opposition to the project was expressed which focused largely on the impact of the proposed addition, especially the new access driveways and related grade changes, on an historic cultural landscape running in front of Agricultural Hall and the proposed addition along the north side of Linden Drive. This landscape, originally implemented from Elm Street to Charter Street along Linden Drive, was designed by O.C. Simonds and is the oldest designed landscape on the west side of the UW Campus.

Access to the underground parking area and the new access driveway from Linden Drive running parallel to the addition would further interrupt this landscape, which has been fragmented over the decades. Underground parking is considered to be integral to the overall project, and changes to the design of the new access driveway are limited by accessibility and fire codes. Thus, there is general agreement that the degradation of the historic cultural landscape is impossible to mitigate without major changes to the proposal, which would significantly affect the long established programming and construction plans for the building.

After hearing the information regarding an historic cultural landscape on August 17, the Plan Commission voted unanimously to refer this request to the Urban Design Commission for an advisory recommendation.

Urban Design Commission Advisory Recommendation

On September 2, 2009, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) carefully considered the project and recommended **approval**, after members provided informal suggestions to mitigate impact on the historic cultural landscape (the draft UDC report is unavailable at the time of this report, but will be distributed to the Plan Commission as soon as possible).

At the UDC meeting, the applicant distributed a School of Human Ecology fact sheet, a timeline for review of this proposed addition dating back to 1999, and letters of support from a professor of Human Development and Family Studies and the UW-Madison Chancellor noting that the proposal has been thoroughly vetted by campus entities. Three professors of Landscape Architecture submitted written comments opposing the impacts of the project on the historic cultural landscape with supporting photos. Also submitted were copies of maps from the 2005 UW-Madison Campus Master Plan which demonstrate support for the proposed addition, but also the conversion of Linden Drive into a pedestrian and transit mall with open space immediately to the north.

All materials submitted to the Urban Design Commission are attached for review. At the time of this writing, the applicant has not had adequate time to suggest revisions to the plans in response to suggestions by Urban Design Commission members. Based on communication from the applicant, major revisions are not anticipated in any case, but minor changes may be presented at the September 14 Plan Commission meeting for consideration.

Conclusion

As noted by the applicant, the proposal has been developed and discussed for years by UW campus factions, some of which disagree with the approval of the project by campus boards and committees. While the building itself is supported in UW plans, the provision of underground parking and the access to it conflict with recommendations to transition Linden Drive to a transit and pedestrian mall and maintain open space along the north side of the street.

The proposed access driveway meets accessibility and fire codes, and the underground parking access from Linden Drive is a more efficient way to accommodate parking than any alternative save removal of parking altogether, which has not been presented as a viable option. When taken together, these two entrances from Linden Drive further degrade a remaining fragment of an important historic cultural landscape. However, the proposed improvements on this parcel in the heart of the UW campus do not affect buildings, natural or archaeological features, legally protected by the City, as they would if this were a designated landmark or in a local historic district. Further, since it is surrounded by University property, this project only affects other university properties.

Planning Division staff believe that the proposal meets City of Madison standards related to demolitions and conditional uses. Despite some concerns, both the Landmarks Commission and Urban Design Commission provided advisory recommendations to approve the project. While it is clear that consensus among all UW-Madison entities does not exist, the UW Campus Planning Committee and the UW Design Review Board have approved the project.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the demolition and conditional use standards are met with this request, and recommends that the Plan Commission **approve** it subject to input at the public hearing, all conditions (Nos. 1-16) included in the August 17, 2009 staff report, and any additional conditions discussed at the September 14 meeting of Plan Commission that will reduce or mitigate the degradation of the historic cultural landscape along the north side of Linden Drive.
