

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 28, 2014

TITLE: 9 Straubel Court – Public Project/Conditional Use for the Construction of 48 Apartment Units in 3 Buildings Including the Demolition of 4 Buildings with 7 Units. 15<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (34223)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: May 28, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Melissa Huggins, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant, Richard Slayton and John Harrington.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of May 28, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a public project/conditional use located at 9 Straubel Court. Appearing on behalf of the project were Randy Bruce, Ken Saiki and Natalie Erdman, representing the Community Development Authority of the City of Madison. Phase one consisted of 151 federally subsidized housing units, with phase two consisting of the construction of 48 apartments for families primarily that live on site now. The proposed development includes 24-unit building that is essentially back-to-back townhomes with underground parking, a main entrance with a central corridor, with all units having individual entries. An existing parking lot will be extended into the existing circular drive to lead to the center community facility. A 16-unit building is proposed consisting of 1-bedrooms, but placement has yet to be determined due to playground equipment the neighborhood wants to keep and lot line issues. An 8-unit building is also proposed for persons who were previously homeless to be operated by Porchlight. Building materials will tie into the overall campus look and feel.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- What do you plan to do with the area you called functionally obsolete?
    - We have one or two options, we haven't decided at this time. Ultimately it's our expectation that those buildings will come down. We may choose in the mean time to continue to operate them until such time as we have a plan for redevelopment of the site, because 3, 4 and 5-bedroom apartments are so hard to come by.
    - To operate them as lower income?
      - As affordable, but without federal subsidy.
- (Ald. Ahrens) In terms of having the 16-unit moved over to the side, that's certainly the preference there. My view is that the drawing here, the houses behind it at street view appear much closer and there's a much more confined sense based on that. Just more bunched together. And also the

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problem of the playground. The density is all being pushed down to 2/3 of the overall property. People who were in those older units are being moved down to the 24-unit and it's just a lot denser than it currently is and that's an issue. We also need to get some clarity of how this additional street would work, people don't want it as a through street.

- I'm not sure why traffic would circulate through this way. Guest parking is provided, but rather than have a dead-end, we seem to have a much better sense of connectivity if we allow both vehicles and pedestrians to be able to circulate to the center area.

Is it a Fire Department issue, the open street there?

- It might be. From a planning perspective I think this is better to have the connection.
- A little background – the East Madison Community Center is a full sized gymnasium and provides a lot of amenities. It was somewhat our intention to get the EMCC traffic off this corridor and into this corridor, in terms of drop-off. But the connections with the Fire Department, I don't think we've looked at that.

- They just don't want it to become a larger traffic circle.
  - We're looking at reconfiguring some of the parking in the circle too, depending upon how we end up with the 16-unit building.
- Was there any thought about taking the 24-unit and splitting it into two 12s?
  - We started this process with one 40-unit building, so we thought we made great progress when we took this from 3-stories and 40-units to this current configuration. We are honestly struggling with budget, I just don't economically know if we can get to 3 buildings.
  - We're also attempting to get shop space for our maintenance staff in the lower level, as well as large storage lockers for these families. When you start splitting this into 12 and 12, to get the parking, the elevator, the mechanical room, the bike storage, the storage locker and at least 1 ½ per unit of parking it becomes very difficult. One of the things that's great about these designs is the townhomes, people come and go from their front door. They're sharing a wall but there's nobody over them. People didn't want single living in the same building with larger families.
- This is kind of a sore thumb at the end. Ten or twenty years from now when this is an established neighborhood is this what you want?
  - We struggled with that. I see your point.
  - The master plan approved in 2009 has a road that comes through which got very negative response from the neighborhood. These are four-story buildings and this total site calls for 327 housing units, and I think it's our intent to do something that's less dense than that.
- You could have a great open space in here. Maybe more needs to be made of the centerpiece that creates the focal point, rather than closing in.
  - Ken Saiki has been looking at some options for that site. One option takes that circle and really makes this more of a connection with a semi-circular drive wrapping around it with parallel parking.
  - We've heard that the drop-off function is underserved by that current circle because a good share of that is occupied by parked cars. This plan cleans up the circulation, allows traffic that's moving to and from the site to bypass that drop-off and the drop-off can work independently from parking.
- I don't think the architecture or landscaping really play with that circle. I understand why, I'd like to take that building and play with it.
- Getting away from this formal circle starts to speak to a more naturalistic approach where the lines aren't as geometric. To get the 16-unit building away from it works better with that because you do have a greenspace that flows.
- I was looking at the floor plan for the 4-unit, they don't match on either floor. Is there an opportunity to open that up? If you're visiting you have to go through the whole building. Some kind of a courtyard

that opens up that wall and gives anybody over here the ability to go through here, even for security to walk through here and look down either way.

- o The elevator is the motivator behind that.
- o I'm a little worried about that space in terms of security.

I'm worried about the space inside.

**ACTION:**

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

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall rating for this project is 5.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 9 Straubel Court**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	5	5	-	-	-	6	5	5

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