

LT McGRATH, LLC

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February 8, 2012

Mr. Brad Murphy
Director of Planning
Department of Planning and Development
City of Madison
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53701

**RE: LETTER OF INTENT – 640 WEST APARTMENTS
REZONING FROM R-4 and M-1 TO PUD-SIP**

Dear Mr. Murphy:

The following is submitted together with the plans, application and zoning text for Staff, Plan Commission and Common Council consideration and approval.

Project: 640 West Apartments
640 W. Wilson St. Madison, WI 53703

Owner/Developer: LT McGrath, LLC
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**Landscape Architect/
Civil Eng.** SAA Design Group
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LOCATION:

The project is located on a 29,844 sf site that is located where W. Doty and W. Wilson Streets dead-end at the bicycle path. The site includes an 18-foot wide easement for the bicycle path so the net useable space is approximately 21,900 sf. The site consists of three different parcels - a Certified Survey Map (CSM) will be prepared to combine these into one lot. The current street addresses are 636 W. Wilson and 633/639 W. Doty St. As part of this application we are requesting that the new address for the combined site be changed to 640 W. Wilson St. The site is relatively flat and is currently used as a gravel parking lot. There are no structures currently on the site. Vehicular access to the site is from the end of W. Wilson St.

PROJECT:

640 West Apartments will consist of 4 residential levels over 2 levels of parking. The lower level of parking will be below grade and the upper level will be at grade - so in effect it is a 5 story building. A total of 60 residential units will be created, consisting of 1 and 2 Bedroom units. 72 parking stalls will be created providing a parking ratio of 1.2 stalls per unit. The proposed use is consistent with the "Draft Downtown Plan" which calls out this site as a residential use and 5 story building height. There are several buildings of similar scale in close proximity to the proposed project (4th Ward Lofts, Findorff Office Headquarters, National Conference of Bar Examiners, etc...).

NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT:

The project is located in the Bassett Neighborhood District. The Alder and Neighborhood leaders have been notified of the project. A steering committee has been formed and to date several meetings have been held including one large public notice meeting.

ARCHITECTURE:

Site

The building site is significant in many respects as it marks the boundary of the City grid and Bassett Neighborhood as it meets the edge of the once active rail corridor, now energized as an active bicycle/pedestrian arterial. The building is taking advantage of its location along the bike path to provide access by bicycle to the building at both the north and south ends of the site. Within the grade level and lower levels of the building there are 90 bike parking stalls. The building establishes a "front door" condition on West Wilson Street but recognizes the through block condition requiring consideration of a pedestrian scale and character along West Doty Street.

Massing/Form

The building massing aligns itself with the predominant geometry of the rail corridor as one would expect with buildings of significant scale along a rail corridor in an urban setting. Elements of the mass are then either eroded to provide additional scale elements and character to the overall form or are projected to reinforce the predominant façade of Wilson Street in one instance and the bend of the rail corridor in the other condition. The Wilson Street condition is represented with a significant colored plane that is intended to signify the terminus of West Wilson Street as one approaches from the East while also reinforcing the buildings identity in the larger context. The colored plate form turns its edge to cap the building massing along the rail corridor, delineating a strong edge to the building against the city sky. This edge reinforces the interest and energy of the building and city edge as it meets the corridor boundary and is viewed from both Proudfit Street to the South and West Washington Avenue to the North. The articulation of the Basset Neighborhood side of the building is intended to be much more subdued and utilizes projected bays on levels 2-4 to reduce the scale of the long elevation and reference elements of the neighborhood vernacular. The north end of the building steps down to a two story form to further reduce the scale as the building abuts West Doty Street and the existing bike/pedestrian connection. Each unit has exterior space in the form of exterior porches and balconies. These elements vary in scale and are both projected and carved into the mass to further provide human scale, visual interest and identity for residents.

Materials

The building is proposed as predominantly masonry that is eroded to expose nested planes and solids rendered in either lap seam clapboard siding or standing seam metal panel. These materials are chosen both for their contextual reference to the neighborhood but also to what was historically consistent with significant buildings along rail corridors in an urban context. The materials are intended to be referential yet fresh or of today's vernacular while reinforcing scale, texture, light and shadow. The masonry proposed is a dark brick ranging from deep browns and grays to rich purple tones and vibrancy of iron spot. This dark color is compatible, complementary and sympathetic to the other more recent buildings on the East side of the rail corridor without being excessively homogeneous. The standing seam panel is proposed as a warm light gray with some modeling consistent with a galvalume finish. The seams are proposed in a vertical alignment to reinforce the vertical forms and assist in the juxtaposition of form in the predominantly horizontal massing of the overall structure. The colored elements of the building are proposed as a vibrant orange to copper color that introduces energy to the building while remaining compatible with adjacent building materials and forms. Clapboard siding is proposed as a dark warm grey cement board panel that is monochromatic with the primary building palette and is recessive in nature.

LANDSCAPE/SITE DESIGN:

The southeast portion of the site contains an entry plaza area that doubles as a fire access lane and loading area. Scored and colored concrete pavement, broken by planting areas, tie in with the planter wall and site walls near the building's main entry. An informal stone path provides access to the open space on the eastern portion of the site for residents without creating a "cut through" between Doty Street and Wilson Street.

A series of bands, composed of plant material and river stone, carry the rhythm started in the plaza through to the open space on the east side of the building. A band of river stone, shaded by an informal grouping of trees, conveys the building's roof water to a bio filtration area.

A combination of native and introduced varieties of plant material are used throughout the site and were chosen for adaptability, seasonal interest and a variety of textures to compliment the building and adjacent properties.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Sustainability is synonymous with infill development. Infill projects like 640 West create high quality housing opportunities close to work/educational centers and promote the use of mass-transit, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. This dramatically lessens sprawl and the impact on our infrastructure and municipal services.

Another project goal is to make this a very energy efficient building. We have been working with Focus on Energy to realize this goal. We will incorporate many energy star features and the mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems will be designed to meet a high level of energy efficiency not typically seen in apartment projects.

TRASH AND SNOW REMOVAL:

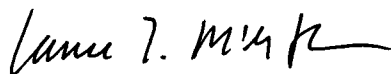
Trash and snow removal from the building will be privately contracted. A separate trash collection room with garbage and recycling containers will be located in the upper parking level directly adjacent to the garage entrance door for residents to dispose of their trash and recycling. The trash removal contractor will be able to collect these containers without impeding the flow of traffic.

SCHEDULE:

Our PUD-SIP application is being submitted on February 8, 2012 which will have us before City Council On April 17, 2012. We intend to start construction around June 1, 2012 with the intent of having the building ready for occupancy on June 1, 2013.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,



Lance T. McGrath, P.E.
LT McGrath, LLC