

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 15, 2010

TITLE: 2500 University Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP), Mixed-Use Development. 5th Ald. Dist. (19392)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 15, 2010

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Mark Smith, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, R. Richard Wagner, Jay Handy.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 15, 2010, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 2500 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson, Chris Gallagher, Steve Holzhauer, Susan Springman, Brian Mullins, and Brad Mullins, all representing Mullins Development Group; John Schlaefer, Saul Glazer, and Alder Robbie Webber. Registered neither in support nor opposition were Alder Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, Darsi Foss and Sarah Canon, representing the Regent Neighborhood Association. Appearing in opposition to the project were John Jacobs and Sweet William. Brian Munson stated they have been meeting with the neighborhood for over one year, with what he feels is a strong support for the project, except for the height. They have stepped the project down, with 6 stories on Campus Drive, 5 stories on the west end and 3 stories on University Avenue to fit it into the context of its surroundings. Some of the site changes since the last review include lower level parking, four commercial spaces on the first floor and three residential units. The commercial spaces have been paired with outdoor spaces. A patio space has been created for the first floor residential units for private space, as well as elevating them up from the sidewalk. Plaza spaces are planned for the second and sixth floors with usable open space for the residents. Landscape plans show a path for the courtyard with green landscaping area and amenities for the residents to use. The live-work units have been eliminated in favor of residential units with 10-foot setbacks, the entrance to the parking lot off University Avenue has been eliminated which creates outdoor space adjacent to the commercial space. The parking entrance at Highland has been maintained, recessed 20-feet from the property line. Munson noted that the signage package would come back for separate approvals.

John Schlaefer spoke to reservations with the mass and height of this project.

Darsi Foss spoke on behalf of the Regent Neighborhood Association. She feels that after this building is completed the neighborhood will have to live with something that is much too tall and imposing in comparison with the rest of the neighborhood.

Saul Glazer spoke to view blocking issues, as well as the significant transformation this project will bring about to the neighborhood. He feels it will completely change the character of the neighborhood. There is also significant concern about the levels of affordable student housing and availability of parking.

John Jacobs stated they are glad to see the new development here, but feel strongly it is too big. He pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan calls for half the density of what Mullins is proposing at this location. He thinks Mullins can do better for the neighborhood, much like The Depot on West Washington Avenue. His major concern is the lack of parking for the commercial aspect of the building. He also expressed concern about the effect this development will have on the existing trees.

Brian Mullins spoke to their goal of providing professional housing. They are interested in a very high quality building. The primary reason they cannot drop a floor is because the cost of the project becomes over \$200,000 per unit, which pushes the rental cost of each unit too high.

Alder Bidar-Sielaff summarized the process, stating the entire neighborhood wants development at this corner but feels it is too out of scale with the rest of the neighborhood. She stated that work on the University Avenue Corridor Plan has not been completed, and she and the neighborhood asked The Mullins Group not to develop on this corner until this plan was completed. The balance of unit parking ratio has not been solved in this situation. She would like to see bigger setbacks on the University Avenue façade for the pedestrian feel of the avenue. She would like to see improvements to the architecture on the south/courtyard side of the building; she feels it looks too institutional. The neighborhood would still like to see more information on signage, landscaping on the street side and lighting of the exterior. She would like the Commission to vote for initial approval only based on the still unanswered concerns.

Comments from the Commission were as follows:

- Question use of spirea and potentilla in the mid-layer of the landscape; it is decorative and not complementary in this context with this architecture
- Like the way it steps back, like the way you're shielding the neighborhood from the harsh realities of Campus Drive.
- The building is so level across the back. I wonder if there is an opportunity to lower a portion of it.
 - We can't have the middle high and ends low because of exiting. These are code issues.
- In terms of the scale of the overall neighborhood, Campus Drive is a very severe edge to the neighborhood. I support this location for density.
- In terms of wrapping Lombardino's, there's enough breathing room with the open space surrounding Lombardino's to create a relationship.
- Support the location for density against Campus Drive. The stair tower on the Highland side of the building gives you an opportunity to articulate things differently; maybe the treatment of the windows on the lower two levels as a nod to Lombardino's.
- The upper level terrace creates an interest to that side of the street. If you can see the actual plant material from the street, that's the best thing you can do as a neighbor.
- On the University side, the individual entrances to the upper level townhomes creates closet size spaces; don't seem visible or safe.
- Do something to relieve flatness of courtyard façade; if there is a way to break the cornice at the courtyard element it would break the continuous façade.
- I really like the materials. The quality and variety is there. The palette is very well considered. Design is site appropriate.
- I'm very impressed with the rendering; you've obviously spent a lot of time on this.
- It has a nice fit, a nice sense of scale, it is unabashedly contemporary.
- I think this is much more appropriate to this site than The Depot development.
- I like the expression you have on the east end of the building.

- If nothing else, this project creates a strong edge for the neighborhood that is very much missing right now.
- By shifting the square footage around and focusing it on four commercial areas, they seem much more viable from a lease standpoint now.
- You may want to go with a larger brick size on the 5th and 6th levels (economy).
- The courtyard façade, I wonder if the composite panels couldn't be broken where you have the balcony features; maybe that is a bit of the visual stopper and adjust cornice.
- I am in full support of livening up what is essentially a dead corner.
- This brings vitality to this block.
- I think this will add to the neighborhood.
- I think it's a fine project.
- You've done a really terrific job with designing the 5-story piece and the 3-story piece, in a manner that works together but isn't duplicative.
- It has a sense of modern and I do like that.
- Relative to the cap treatment (altar) atop stair tower; should consider the use as a loft on Highland Avenue elevation; integrate its treatment with the whole six-story façade.
- Relief on center courtyard façade needs to be more bold, add more character and give vitality to the courtyard elevation would be sunshade devices at each level that faces south. You could reinforce the vertical and actual serve a purpose.
- I think it's a well done project.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Slayton, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-3). O'Kroley, Handy, Slayton voted yes; Barnett, Smith, Rummel voted no; Chair Wagner broke the tie. The motion provided for staff approval of all modifications noted below and that if the response by the applicant is dramatic, staff has the discretion to refer back any issue(s) to the Commission for consideration. The motion provided for the following:

- Continue to study the landscape plan to address comments.
- Encourage the ability to view plantings from Highland on the upper level terrace.
- Study the entry alcoves on University to the townhouses to make them more comfortable.
- Study the courtyard elevation to break down the scale through sun-shading, breaking the vertical read at the balconies or treatment of the cornice.
- Study the ability to use loft units or taller units to break the cornice line on Campus Drive.
- Study the scale of the masonry.
- Continue the development of the "altar."
- Resolve the zoning requirements.

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 ratings for this project are 7, 7, 7, 8 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2500 University Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	9	8	7	8	-	8	8	8
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
	5	7	-	-	-	6	7	7
	6	7	6	6	-	7	8	7

General Comments:

- Wonderful but some details should have returned.
- Very much like the Old University solutions. Would like to have developer study stepbacks of height on Highland Avenue. Overall think good infill location and will add a lot of vitality for neighborhood.
- Appropriately improved since August. This version seems comfortable to me. Parking will always be an issue.
- Very vibrant, appropriate neighborhood edge.