

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: December 15, 2010
TITLE: 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street – PUD(GDP-SIP) for a 45-Unit Apartment Building. 4 th Ald. Dist. (19953)	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 and Jay Handy.

*Slayton recused himself on this item.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 15, 2010, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD(GDP-SIP) located at 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were John Bieno, representing TJK Design Build; Scott Kolar, representing Mifflin West District, CNI; Robert Keller and Patrick McCaughey. Bieno provided a summary of alterations to the design of the building façade in response to the Commission’s previous review of September 22, 2010. He and the developer, Pat McCaughey noted that a request to reduce the height of the building from four stories to three was economically infeasible due to construction and land assembly costs. Bieno presented details of the revised building elevations noting that the interior floor plans for individual units have been modified to allow for windows within all bedrooms as evidenced by the consistent fenestration of windows on all elevations. The individual elevation emphasized an intended break up of the mass of the façade, in addition to utilizing recess balconies.

Ald. Verveer spoke on the issue of the lack of an opportunity for a full blown neighborhood meeting on the project because of scheduling and timing issues outside of meetings between the applicant and the neighborhood steering committee. He requested that this presentation be for informational purposes only. He further noted that the scheduling for both Plan Commission and Common Council consideration on this item would allow for the necessary delay with formal consideration by the Urban Design Commission in the future. Following the presentation the Commission noted:

- The proportions of brick on the front elevation need attention in contrast with the variety of other materials; need to pick one more over the others; much going on, not enough change in plane. Look at how change in plane correlates with change in color and materials.
- Look at shed roof element on bump out versus entry’s gabled end treatment; wants to be flat.
- Use another alternative material for base to be more pedestrian, not block.
- On front façade where roof crosses, change in materials; disconnect, need individual roof elements.
- Use of block around garage door; too massive, beyond base.
- Move staired entry further left; not to be next to the other at grade entry.

- Elements and treatment of the back elevation (west) are more successful than front elevation (east) which is too broken up. The front should be designed to be more in between.

ACTION:

On a motion by Barnett, seconded by O'Kroley, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of the project contingent on the applicant addressing the comments concerning architecture, roof discharge, garage and base materials not to be block and as a result of a future neighborhood meeting to be held by Ald. Verveer if any concerns with the bulk, mass and height of the project as proposed are raised the Plan Commission should refer the project back to the Urban Design Commission for further consideration. An initial motion by Handy to grant initial approval failed for lack of a second with another motion for referral by Rummel to allow for a neighborhood meeting prior to any consideration also failed for a lack of a second. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0-1) with Slayton abstaining.

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 5.5, 6 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 416, 420, 424 West Mifflin Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.5
	5	5.5	6	-	-	5	7	6

General Comments:

- Simplify architecture.
- Much improved – UDC's conditions should address neighbor's/Alder's concerns about lack of meeting with nearby residents.
- Much improved, could be better architecturally.

Stouder, Heather

From: Rachel Klaven [racheray424@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 10:57 PM
To: Verveer, Mike; Eagon, Bryon; Kerr, Julia; Stouder, Heather; info@capitolneighborhoods.org
Cc: Kate Roberston; Michael Stluka; Steve Klaven; Merija Eisen
Subject: Mifflin Street Apartmnet Proposal

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rachel Klaven and I am writing on behalf of myself, and my peers, Indy Stluka, and Kate Robertson. Kate and I live on West Mifflin now, and will be living there next year as well. Indy will be moving to West Mifflin next fall. We all were in attendance at the neighborhood meeting Monday, January 24th, to discuss the proposal of the new apartment building on West Mifflin. Upon leaving the meeting, we were extremely regretful that we had not asked more of our peers to come with us to the meeting. We as students felt outnumbered at the meeting, and although the other downtown residents would probably not like to admit it, they are actually the ones extremely outnumbered by students in the neighborhood.

That night, we thought we would try making an event on Facebook for the next meeting to generate student interest and add to the discussion of the proposal. We included a brief summary on the issue, and made it clear to invitees that even if they could not make it to the meeting, by clicking "attending" we knew that they were against this proposed plan, and that we had their support. We sent out the invites to a few of our friends to see if interest would catch on. As I write this email, our Facebook numbers are multiplying by the minute. In less than 24 hours, we have over 1,200 attendees, and over 3,200 awaiting reply (I can assure you these numbers will have grown by the time I'm done writing this email). If you would like, you can look it up on Facebook by searching for "Save Mifflin" (if there is any information on the page that is incorrect, please let us know). I know your time is valuable, so I will make this quick. We have a couple points we would like to address:

1. Kate and Indy are both majoring with business degrees, myself with economics. We are all for economic growth, increased business, increasing jobs, etc. We do not wish anything bad upon Patrick McCaughey or Jon Bieno (Developer and Architect). We understand the value of change and growth, we just believe that Mifflin Street deserves something more aesthetically suitable and marketed towards affordable student living.
2. Despite what was said at the community meeting, we are NOT against young professionals, grad students, post grads, middle aged, or elderly people. We just believe that the small area of housing on Mifflin should be kept affordable and accessible to students, while staying true to its character and tradition.
3. We recognize that we are only a couple students, and in 2 years we probably won't be living on Mifflin. We are not doing this for only us, we are doing this for UW alumni, current students, and students who will live in the Mifflin neighborhood after us.
4. Although some students choose to live on Mifflin Street for its party reputation, other students choose it for its location in the heart of downtown, while other students choose it for its affordability. We are not just defending the party life of Mifflin Street.
5. With our rapidly growing Facebook numbers, we are trying to start a solid plan of action for the upcoming meeting. Any details about the next meeting would be greatly appreciated.

We are finding that it is much more challenging to fight *against* a cause, than it is to fight *for* something. We hope that we can work through our differences and construct a plan that would be beneficial not only to students, but a plan that would be profitable to developers and would align with the goals and mindsets of the

older non-students in the neighborhood. We are open to discuss our ideas and concerns over the current proposal or to be a part of a new one. Any information you might have on this current proposal, or others would be greatly appreciated. We will present any information in a non-biased manner on our Facebook page.

We would like to communicate with you either through email, or by setting up a meeting.

Thank you so much for your time,

Indy Stluka
Kate Robertson
Rachel Klaven

“Save Mifflin” Group Proposal

Written by Rachel Klaven, Indy Stluka, Sam Brylski, Kate Robertson and Adam Milch

Introduction

We are writing on behalf of neighbors and student residents living on Mifflin Street who are concerned about the proposed 4-story multi-unit building at 416-424 West Mifflin. After attending the Neighborhood meeting on January 24th, we decided to make a Facebook event (“Save Mifflin”) to see if the issue would interest other students. In two short days we received well over two thousand (now over five thousand) responses from fellow students and neighbors expressing concern over the proposed development. After seeing we were not alone in our concern, we realized that we had an obligation to further address this issue. Since the initial Neighborhood meeting we have met with Alderman Mike Verveer, Sam Polstein (Chair of Legislative Affairs for ASM), City Planners (Heather Stouder, Rebecca Cnare, and others), ASM Legislative Affairs Committee, West Mifflin District Steering Committee (meeting for their draft proposal), and Pat Mcaughey, John Bieno, and others to discuss the current project. After talking with many people, who represented all points of view, we have arrived at this position:

History and Characteristics of Mifflin

Mifflin is more than a street or place to live. It is a one-of-a-kind neighborhood that fosters a unique social atmosphere and academic experience. In addition to the strong tradition and history of Mifflin Street, dating back to the Sixties, the anti-war protests and Mifflin Street Co-op exemplify the neighborhood feeling that continues to this day. We do not want future individuals pushed out of the area due to prohibitive rent costs. The social atmosphere that we wish to preserve is cultivated by the unique physical characteristics of the 400 and 500 blocks listed below.

- 2 – 3 story houses
- 2 – 5 bedrooms per unit, 1 – 3 units per house
- Large first and second floor porches, specifically on the face of the house
- Houses ranging from \$400 – 600 per bedroom (with Ambassador ranging from \$539 for an efficiency up to \$2999 for a 5 bedroom)
- Driveways next to the majority of houses facilitate comfortable spacing between houses
- Gabled roofs provide scenic open sky and sunlight
- Large setback from the sidewalk to the front door
- Open space for socialization
- Majority of residents tend to be students
- Attractive alternative for those wanting to be close to campus, yet not wanting to pay the steep price of living in a high-rise

Here is why the current building does not fit these standards:

- Large four-story apartment building is dissimilar to the other houses
- Unit options (efficiencies – 2 bedrooms) not in line with Mifflin-style units
- Porches” seem to be balconies, not porches. A porch should be a welcoming entrance to the unit, not just an afterthought.
- Rent prices not in context with the other prices leased on Mifflin

- Pricing structure is catered to consumers that may be socially isolated from existing Mifflin residents
- Design seems imposing and would decrease sky and sunlight visibility
- Current building is practically pushed to the sidewalk, leaving hardly any setback, the added fourth story lends to this imposing illusion
- The building design is not compatible with the predominant single family neighborhood homes

Other Concerns:

- We recognize the goal of economic, age, and professional diversity in the downtown area. However, with decreasing low-cost housing near campus, we feel that this spot could be better utilized to continue Mifflin's reputation of affordability.
- Although general consensus *was* majority of approval at the neighborhood meeting on January 24th, we would like to point out the proportional representation was extremely lacking. There were only a few students and a disproportionate amount of Mr. McCaughey's tenants at the meeting.
- When referencing "affordability", we do not mean the economic viability of the current project (i.e. whether or not there will be a demand for these units), but rather the relative affordability to residents living on Mifflin.
- It has been argued that students will leave during the summer, and that the new development would help steady downtown business during the summer. However, a large portion of students (specifically those staying in affordable off-campus housing) stays during the summers to work or intern and to stay amongst their peers. Thus, they still contribute to downtown businesses.
- We recognize that some houses on Mifflin need renovations, cosmetic work, or may need to be replaced. However, we don't see this project as a good standard for new development in this unique area.
- While Mr. McCaughey did technically follow the overview process, we believe he did not follow the spirit intended, specifically point 2 in the process for "Demolition: Land Development" (as outlined by the City of Madison Planning Officials) in regards to "interested parties/nearby property owners". Although we are not the property owners, we do reside in these properties and have a vested interest in the development process in our neighborhood. More importantly, due to Mifflin's unique student history, it should be viewed that students would have large interest in this project. We became aware of this project only by our Alderman, Mike Verveer, and not by the developer himself, therefore we believe this did not follow the proposed guidelines.

To summarize our position – we have outlined the above concerns of thousands of students, neighbors, and community members following our cause who do not feel the proposed 4-story development is compatible with its surroundings. Although physically the student population will come and go, the spirit of the student body will always be invested in wanting what is best for West Mifflin.