

**Notes from 1 June 2017 TLNA Steering Committee Meeting for Houden  
Development Proposal for 700 block (south-side) E. Johnson  
Festival Foods Conference Room**

**Attendees**

City of Madison:

Kevin Firchow (Planning Division of the Department of Planning and Community and Economic)

Development Team:

Melissa Huggins and Katie Fadelli (Urban Assets), Tom Miller (Kahler Slater, architect), Chris Houden, Pat McCabe (Palisades Property)

TLNA Council Members:

Patrick Heck, Mark Bennett, Bob Klebba, Patty Prime, Richard Linster, Karla Handel

Neighbors and Interested Parties:

Tim Meisenheimer, Greg Stroupe, Ross Kelley, Beth Kubly, David Waugh, Joe Lusson, Keith Wessel, Joey Hoey, Jean Anderson, Lori Wessel, Liz Avenius, Joe Harper, Lentie ??

TLNA Development Committee Chair Patrick Heck brought the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves.

**Presentation of Updated Proposal:**

Proposal architect Tom Miller presented updated slides ([available on TLNA Development website](#)) that he said were informed by results from the survey of committee members ([see website](#)). He noted several changes, including that the density for the proposal site was now down to 63 dwelling units/acre and that they were now saving more than 50% of the existing buildings (by keeping 2, moving 1 to another lot on the site, and moving 3 offsite). A slide was shown showing the previously proposed new buildings' roofline compared to the new version; they have reduced the height by 5 feet by stepping back the mezzanine level from the front façade. From the streetscape, the reduction will be 12' since the former front area that was part of the mezzanine level is now a flat roof. He said you won't be able to see the mezzanine level from the sidewalk and from the nearest traffic lane, although you will see a small corner. Tom added that City Zoning agrees that it truly is a mezzanine level (as opposed to a fourth floor). He said they have significantly reduced height and massing by lowering and reducing the mezzanine level. He said that the overall building height is now lower than 751 E. Johnson and RPG's building that will be next to the Caribou building. They think they are now headed in the right direction.

Tom reviewed the materials palette adding that they are still playing with colors and which materials will go where. They remain open to suggestions.

They added more green-space on top of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor apartments in the rear so the rear yard design presence has been reduced. The front of new buildings now have more of a row home appearance with warmer materials, including a wood tone fiber cement product with a multi-grain texture – the palette is similar to the previous version, but the cream-colored masonry now goes up vertically more. They are open to lighter grey colors where they are now darker, if desired.

Tom showed a plan view. The front of the new buildings is 10' from the property line (city property). There is a 6' public sidewalk, a 10' sidewalk/patio area. The site plan now shows the 2 retained and 1 moved building that will be on the N. Livingston end of the block are no longer connected – they are individual buildings. They feel the entire proposal now better relates better scale-wise to the historic buildings.

Other changes can be seen in the presentation slides.

Tom discussed the current T-L Neighborhood Plan and their implementation of the language concerning about how mixed-use buildings manifest themselves with residential atop 1 floor of retail. In many current older buildings, there are 2 levels of residential above 1 floor of retail, so their proposal maintains that view from streetscape – their stepping back the mezzanine keeps that.

The unit mix has changed, although total number of units remains at 80. Useable open space has gone up.

**Discussion:**

Joe Lusson asked if the reduction in the mezzanine level impacts the number of 3-bdrm units. Tom said yes, they reduced the number of 3-bdrm units and increased the number of 2-bedroom units.

Bob Klebba asked if the footprint of the new buildings had changed. Tom said that the footprint has not been reduced, but they did reduce the footprint of the mezzanine level and increased open space in the rear with 3<sup>rd</sup> floor patio/balconies. The mezzanine levels will not have direct access to that new open space. The apartment tenants on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (which have the mezzanines as lofts) will go up an interior hallway staircase to access the balconies atop the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the rear. Patrick Heck asked if these rooftop areas would be accessible to all residents. Yes, all first and second floor apartments will also have access to the rear rooftop patio areas via these staircases, but they will need to limit the quantity of residents up there at one time to 49 for capacity reasons. This is based on amount of area provided and due to having only one stairwell access/exit point – they will have to post this limitation on a sign. Alder Zellers asked if the 3 saved houses will have access to these new open space patios. Yes, they will have a key fob to get into the new building's common areas. Bob Klebba asked if the rear patio areas atop the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor will have ADA access. No, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> level patios will – that is what is required.

Tim Meisenheimer asked if they changed the retail suite location from 751's first floor to one of the other saved houses. No, the plan view slide's color-coding is inaccurate, so they still plan to have 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail in the corner building rather than in 745 as shown. Joe Lusson asked which houses will not be saved. 717, 719, 725, 731, and 733 would be demolished. Joe said he was concerned about their plans to move 3 houses to off-block locations – what is the guarantee that it will happen? Tom said that the lot at 827 E. Gorham is now controlled by the developer, so the only question is if the 2 houses they plan to move there are an allowable use from the City's perspective. Tom added that City Zoning Administrator Matt Tucker says it is permissible, but there might need to be some reworking of the structures. Melissa Huggins said that it may be that they will need to

convert both house to single-family, but that depends on open space requirements for the various possible configurations. They will do what is necessary. As for the lot at 943 E. Dayton where one house could be moved, they are still working through that with the property owner. They plan to give the demolition cost to the owner of 943 E. Dayton if they agree to take the house. Joe Lusson says that we should talk to the 943 E. Dayton property owners to get an assurance that this is actually going to happen.

Richard Linster asked if they considered reducing the size of the new buildings and maintaining more houses. Tom Miller said that yes, they did think about that. It has been reduced in footprint and size since they started – they are now at 80 units, down considerably from their earlier proposals; they are now reducing density and height, although the footprint is the same. They are also saving 6 houses, up from saving 2 in their initial proposal. They feel these are dramatic changes.

Bob Klebba said that he sees some changes since the survey after previous meeting, but the footprint hasn't changed. He feels the changes are not significant. There were other survey issues, e.g., the demolition of buildings, that haven't been addressed. They want us to approve a major transition to our neighborhood – he says no. He will vote no on the change to the Neighborhood Plan.

Joe Harper thinks they have responded to the survey where there was strong consensus that something needed to be fixed. He felt that survey results concerning the gables was ambivalent, so what drove that change since feelings weren't strong? Tom Miller said he wanted to reference existing architecture and wanted to reduced height and mass. They tried several ways, including making the mezzanine less prominent from the street, and that is what they thought was best for addressing this. Melissa Huggins said that in Goal #3 Design Guidelines in the Neighborhood Plan, flat roofs are called for in some places, so that was one rationale for having flat roofs on the front. Bob Klebba said that they are pushing for 4 stories – that's why it is too tall.

Richard Linster said he agreed with Bob's earlier summary of his thoughts - he is inclined to go along with Bob. However, he thinks there have been some significant changes, so it is ridiculous to think we can think them over; write a steering committee report, and go the TLNA Council by the next TLNA Council meeting on June 8. There is not enough time.

Joe Lusson agreed that a week is too soon to absorb the details. He appreciates the reduction of the mezzanine level's footprint, but is sad to see the gables go. He would rather see 2-story buildings with a gabled 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. He said that 731 and 733 and other houses like 725 are savable; he is still hoping for fewer teardowns – he wishes they would lose one of the new buildings and save a couple more of the houses. Also, the depth of the building is a massing factor and their not shrinking the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors still results in a massive change to neighborhood.

Ross Kelley thinks that the reduction in the mezzanine is a loss because it resulted in fewer 3-bedroom units. He wants more large units that support a neighborhood where families will want to sleep and live. He commends their work, but liked the gables. Mostly, though these changes make it more likely that it will cater to single people instead of families - this not what the community wants.

Joey Hoey said their reduction of units from the original 112 to 80 is a significant reduction, but how many units are on the site now? Pat McCabe said 35. Joey said that in terms of what the proposal would do to neighborhood, going to 80 from 35 tells you where are we today and where we are going; that is what is important Bob Klebba said that Pat Kelly couldn't make the meeting tonight, but she would bring up affordability. All the apartments are affordable now, but they are proposing self-funding 10% of the 80 units, i.e., 8 units. That is a significant reduction in affordable units from what is there now, regardless of their commitment. It includes the demolition of beautiful housing too.

Mark Bennett thanked everyone for attending on an evening with such perfect June weather. He agrees with the last 2 comments – more bedrooms being maintained would be better even though it could be less financially attractive to the developer. He asked if there had been articulation changes in the front. Tom said that the width of most prominent component is narrower and that the vertical black components read more vertical, similar to townhome-style design. He added that the number of units that appeal to couples/individuals could be revisited if it is critical to obtaining approval – they could maintain the number of units and could shift bedrooms accordingly.

Ross Kelley asked about other articulation changes. Tom said there was now more articulation at ends of building too – more windows and detail have been added between buildings.

Jean Anderson asked if the stairs coming up from the public sidewalk between the buildings are meant to be public or for residents. Tom said they are intended for residents

Joe Harper said that he appreciates that with no City help they have been able to commit to the 10% affordable housing units, but he would like to see that raised it a bit. The 10% is a good step though.

Beth Kubly asked about parking for the commercial space. Tom said there is none planned for and the City does not require it.

Patty Prime said her reaction to the updated proposal is along with what Joe Lusson said – she appreciates that they addressed some survey questions, but was hoping for something that addressed the footprint size and would save more houses - something more modest. She is looking for more dramatic changes to the proposal.

David Waugh said he likes the architecture changes, but is disappointed that the overall footprint wasn't reduced. He was involved with City Row when it was approved, which was tough because of there being so many teardowns. It went forward because of tax credits for affordable housing. He appreciates this proposal's affordable component, but he also knows you can't build new affordable housing without tax credits – he doesn't feel the neighborhood can support something without a tax credit subsidy to create more affordable units. The developer could also change the affordable to market rate in year two, unlike with subsidized affordable developments. He is disappointed – he also wants to see modern architecture on the site, but has a hard time supporting what is still a proposal with massive scale that is an intrusion into hood – it is not the right place for this. Melissa

Huggins answered that they have consulted with the City Attorney – they can deed restrict the property to 10% affordable – that commitment can't just go away. David asked if that is a new approach to obtaining a guarantee that it remains affordable. Melissa said it is new, but the attorneys say it is okay. Ledell added that a private agreement can't be a condition of approval, so this approach could get around that. Kevin Firchow from City Planning agreed that this approach seems to be applicable and would guarantee that the affordable units stayed that way.

Keith Wessel said that he cannot get behind the loss/demolition of this many houses.

Joe Lusson asked what criteria would make the affordable units affordable. Melissa said income would be restricted to 80% of Dane County Median Income. She added that the rents for the existing houses are effectively at the same level – 80% CMI. Joe said he doesn't want to be critical of their offer on the affordable units, but he thinks the neighborhood shouldn't have to monitor compliance. Melissa said that the deed restriction is enforceable - it just can't be a condition of approval. The developer can choose to enter into the deed. Melissa added that even if the property were to sell in the future, the deed restrictions would remain in place. Joe said that the owner would have to be sued if they did not uphold their end of the bargain, which would be a big undertaking for the neighborhood. He thinks we would need to hear a lot more about this issue. On other stuff, he likes that the 4<sup>th</sup> floor is getting smaller and likes that the 1-bedroom units were reduced by only 1, but maybe they could reduce the number of some of the smaller units to get another 3-bdrm. Tom Miller said that adjustments could be made. Joe added that the biggest thing for him is that the new buildings' footprints haven't changed and that too many houses were being demoed. He would like to see more retained and restored and that they lose one of the new buildings. Tom said he appreciates Joe's input and good work in the neighborhood (house restorations, etc.), but they feel that their offer to move 3 of the homes and keep them in the neighborhood is important too. They should get some recognition that they are restoring those. Joe says that moving them is better than tearing them down, but 5 are still being torn down.

Tim Meisenheimer said that he's a fan of the project. He likes this design better than the previous one. It is still a little big in the front, but better than what is there now – he is still onboard. He likes the fact that they are willing to make changes and he likes this direction for Johnson Street. He wants to see something like this even if this proposal isn't approved.

Liz Avenius is in favor of the project. It is commendable they are saving 6 houses. Their reduction in the mezzanine height and front façade shows that they are listening. The new open space in the rear (atop 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) is a potential great amenity. One critique – she liked the previous proposal design but we need to touch base with the neighborhood's current design. The previous version had more variation and you could pick out different units – this design seems heavier. Tom said that the proposal will continue to develop. He wants the projecting components to articulate better, but these designs are new so need more work. They will do more with color too – he doesn't want the design to get in the way of the project moving forward.

Richard Linster said that the height reduction is good, but the result is uninteresting – the front looks like tissue boxes on end. He agrees some with Liz, that the previous front

design was more attractive. Tom mentioned that better usage of the materials and color palettes could help with the front design. He added that bringing back the gables would be difficult if it meant keeping the current mass – it would be difficult to keep it viable for the developer. He reiterated that many survey concerns were addressed.

Tim Meisenheimer asked if they can have a different color of brick for the retail spaces so they look like separate units – so that there is some street level differentiation. Tom said that it was possible. Joe Lusson said he wants a warmer color for the white brick - it looks 1950s - like a ranch house and a little cold. Tom said it was a cream city brick color and modular. Joe asked if the brick rows can be staggered – he thinks it doesn't look real. Tom said staggered brick could be explored.

David Waugh said he doesn't like the vertical lines in the materials palette – he would like corrugated metal panels with horizontal features rather than vertical. Could they also emphasize the fiber panels' horizontal lines too? Tom said they could do that and that there is stacked bond brick available. He added that actually, the light grey panels in the images will be the corrugated metal panels with the horizontal lines as in the material palette close-ups rather than what is hinted at in the renderings, so that should be fine.

Patrick Heck suggested that the group focus on the Tier I issues from the survey rather than the finer design issues. While input on the design is important, Tom is saying that they will work on that – they will do whatever the neighborhood wants if the bigger issues allow them to move forward.

Jean Anderson said that she is concerned about the brick color. She's lived a lot of places and we have some lovely sandstone buildings rather than this cold yellow. Could the brick be a warm sunny yellow? Tom appreciates that – they can change the brick if approval is conditional on that.

Greg Stroupe said that by 2022 or 2025 the US is expected to lose 25% of its malls. The direction of economy is Internet sales, but he thinks the plan should be creating a real viable retail space from Willy St. to E. Wash to E. Johnson – this proposal supports that. For them to do this much retail space, he thinks it is the residential space that will support that aspect of the proposal. Retail will be a tough gig for 10 years. Existing retail also needs residential density. We need a shopping district and that will come with increased residential density.

Beth Kubly asked for more details on the revised plan's architecture. Could they bring back the gables, but on the top of the new flat roof sections that are grey boxes? She also asked if the mezzanine level will have access to open spaces in front, atop the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Tom said no, they won't have access because the City would then classify them as a 4<sup>th</sup> floor rather than a mezzanine. Beth thinks there is wasted space above 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – couldn't a lower gable go there? Tom said that any gables will increase the mass and height, both things they wanted to reduce in response to the committee survey. Beth thinks gables could slope down over edges instead and wouldn't have to be very tall. Tom thinks low gables would read suburban.

Joey Hoey said that he hasn't been at other committee meetings, but when he wanted to

rebuild his garage, no one changed the Neighborhood Plan. We are talking about changing the Plan and he would caution against that. Unless there is something in it for the neighborhood, other than the retail spaces or increased density, we shouldn't change the Plan just because someone wants to make a lot of money on a piece of property - he finds the proposal unfortunate. Melissa Huggins responded that this change is included in the Plan. Tom showed the slide that details Note #1 from Map #5 in the Plan – they are following the Plan's vision.

Joe Lusson further discussed the rezoning request, along with the Plan amendment – these are two big things. The developer wants to win over the neighborhood with amenities - to sway us from parts of Plan that say we should respect neighborhood character and focus on spot infill. To Greg's point, Joe is worried about the existing retail on E. Johnson with or without new retail being added. He thinks new retail will struggle for the same reasons current retail does – E. Johnson is one-way and retail is mostly on one side of the street. Unless you are one of the iconic neighborhood businesses, it will be tough for new retail. He disagrees with Greg – he thinks we need to draw retail customers from across the City, like Forequarter – not just the neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods. He hasn't been won over.

Tom Miller said that the proposal is at its economic limit – the retail is a loss leader, but it is a specific reaction to requests of the steering committee. Where does the steering committee stand on retail? Patrick read results from the survey concerning the amount of commercial space – the results showed a mix of opinions, but mostly supportive of the 4 retail spaces. Joe reiterated that he is not won over by the commercial component and that the rezoning and change to the Plan are not for him.

Bob Klebba said that he's said it before, but the development team has cherry-picked aspects of the plan. He counts 17 key points in the Plan that apply and do not support their proposal with about 8 points in the Plan that agree with this project. Those 17 points are about preserving neighborhood character and not tearing down building, so even though we have Plan quotations on the screen that support the proposal we need to look at all the issues. His opinion is that the Plan does not agree with the issues this project touches on. Tom Miller responded that there are more than 8 points that this proposal agrees with. Patrick reiterates that he doesn't find the Plan scorecard a very useful way of evaluating the proposal.

### **Wrapping Up the Committee's Work:**

Patrick says that the process seems to be winding down and is pointing to the Committee issuing a summary report to TLNA Council.

Richard Linster says that he would like more time to digest the updated proposal and give input before the summary proposal is issued – we are just seeing these slides today for the first time. Patrick says he does not believe there is sufficient time to write a summary report and get input/edits from the Committee prior to the June 8 TLNA Council meeting, so he suggests the developer aim towards the July TLNA Council meeting. This would also allow time for people to give more comments on the proposal, per Linster's request.

Jean Anderson mentioned the potential loss of canopy trees on the street – will they

underground the utility lines? It was mentioned that undergrounding will be part of the City's approval process. Any street trees that are removed will have to be replaced and they can't be removed unless necessary. Patrick mentions that the survey question about canopy trees was not very clear – he wanted to get opinions about the inability to have canopy trees other than along the street because the parking plinth will be so large that no canopy trees will be possible in the rear or on the sides. Tom said that the top of the parking plinth will have small trees in containers and that it will have a green roof system. The size of the plinth will support having scooter, bike and car parking underneath, but won't allow side or rear canopy trees.

Tim Meisenheimer asked about the changes they will ask for in the zoning and Neighborhood Plan. Will the NMX zoning and Plan changes be limited to the south-side of the street? Tom said they will do whatever we want. Patrick says that he thought this had been discussed earlier and that they had said they would keep it to the south-side. Tom said that the City could have a different opinion about how the changes should be made, but at this point they will try for the south-side changes only. Kevin Firchow from City Planning added that it would be highly unusual for a rezoning request to cover an area that is bigger than the project site. Joe Lusson said that it is desirable to make only the site change. On the north side, the houses are smaller and in better shape - they back up to E. Gorham where there are already owner-occupied, so he wouldn't want the north-side changed. Tom Miller agreed that they will support the changes just for the limits of the development.

Patrick summarized and said that he would be issuing a draft summary report to all committee members. He will also establish a deadline for input on this proposal version and will send that out via email. All committee members will have a chance to review and provide input to the summary report before it is finalized and sent to TLNA Council, hopefully well before their July meeting. He thanked all for their diligence and input to the process.