

## **Hometown Neighborhood Working Session #4**

### **Building Design**

**November 12, 2008**

### **Questions & Answers**

**Q:** Will there be a full-service kitchen in the building?

**A:** Yes, our kitchens provide both pre-prepared foods delivered to the building as well as a full-service kitchen where meals are made from scratch.

**Q:** Does the building come up to the property line at the corner of North Avenue and Cambridge? Why?

**A:** In deciding how far a building should be set back from the property line, the accepted urban design practice in the architectural industry is that it should be set back an average distance from the street similar to neighboring buildings. Because the other buildings on the surrounding corners all come right up to the property line, we felt that the building would best blend in with the surrounding architecture this way. The western portion does step back because of existing easements related to the bridge and city utilities, by about 25 feet from the sidewalk.

**Q:** Will there be a charge for using the classrooms reserved for both student and neighborhood use?

**A:** A variety of neighborhood groups have already set up schedules for using the meeting rooms in Riverview residence hall at no charge and similar arrangements could be made at the new Hometown residence hall. There will be a limit on how much we can do this, however our policy at Riverview has worked out nicely with the immediate neighborhood and we would extend the same courtesy to the neighbors of the Hometown site.

**Q:** What is the size of the commercial space along North Avenue that will not be occupied by Grind Coffee?

**A:** It is about 5,700 to 5,800 square feet.

**Q:** How will trash be processed for the retail spaces?

**A:** We don't have the final solution yet, however we think that the best option is to have a trash chute connect to the basement below the retail space. From there the trash can be consolidated in the building's trash room.

**Q:** How will snow removal be dealt with?

**A:** UWM REF is the technical owner of the building and therefore would be responsible for snow removal. In all likelihood, the building's snow removal contractor (or UWM maintenance staff) will need to keep an eye on Cambridge as well given that it's a lower-priority street in the city's snow removal plan.

**Q:** Who would own the sidewalk along North Avenue and Cambridge?

**A:** The city would own that sidewalk up to the property line. For the plaza area immediately north of the North Avenue sidewalk, that would be owned by the UWMREF.

**Q:** Would the city require impervious concrete or would they be interested in pervious pavement options?

**A:** As far as we know, the city would likely require impervious concrete. The property is currently all impervious material and would largely be converted to pervious materials and surfaces, so there is a huge gain in terms of stormwater management and runoff quality. Other design aspects such as green roofs, rainwater collection to water the courtyard, rain gardens, etc., to ensure minimal runoff from the site to the river are incorporated into the plan. The amount of impervious area is really low given the size of the overall site, so pervious pavement is not as much of a focus for us.

**Q:** Are the open spaces indicated between the buildings walkways or patios?

**A:** Each of the three buildings is connected by glass enclosures that contain study areas.

**Q:** Where are the TV lounges? Will we see them like at the Riverview building?

**A:** The TV lounges are positioned in the center of the Cambridge wing, facing west into the courtyard. TVs will not be visible from the street, as is the case in the Riverview hall.

**Q:** Do the students' bedroom windows open? What measures are taken to make them soundproof from the North Avenue traffic as well as minimize noise from the students leaking into the neighborhood?

**A:** All rooms have windows that open for natural ventilation. Based on the building design, most students won't be in rooms facing North Avenue. One of the criteria we use when we select windows for buildings is the window's "STC", or sound transmission coefficient, rating. We search out windows that are not only energy efficient and durable but also very efficient at blocking sound from the outside.

**Q:** Will the green roofs be accessible to students?

**A:** At first, we were excited by the prospect of students having access to the green roofs. However, after considering operational challenges and to prevent accidental falls, we decided not

to provide access to the roofs. Given the large courtyard that's available, the green roofs are incorporated more for energy and stormwater reasons than for recreational space. In the future, students in the sciences may be allowed on the roofs for academic project purposes just as we're doing right now at Sandburg, where we just completed a large green roof project.

**Q:** What will the green roofs look like?

**A:** They will most likely consist of pre-grown trays of native, drought-resistant plants such as sedum that will be less than 12 inches tall. Rain water will collect within the planting trays and serve to water the plants' roots.

**Q:** As far as student safety goes, do you have concerns about students being on the river, drinking, etc?

**A:** All of the university's residence hall locations are carefully considered relative to student safety. A lot also goes into the training of on-site staff as well as orienting students to the point where we feel comfortable having them at the location or in any of our residence halls. There have been no issues with the students being on the river at RiverView residence hall.

**Q:** Have you considered motion-activated lighting for safety purposes near the river?

**A:** We do use on some sites cameras that record based on motion activity and are still looking into lighting options. We are considering both the safety aspect as well as the desire to keep lighting near the river dim in order to preserve the river's natural habitat.

**Q:** Will storm water be treated on site?

**A:** We have a number of stormwater management strategies in our plan already, such as the rain gardens that line the courtyard. Our civil engineer will address required quality treatment of any runoff that we don't capture in our rain gardens.

**Q:** Will pesticides or herbicides be used on the residence hall's courtyard?

**A:** UWM has a new sustainability coordinator who will look into that. It's a great idea to focus on making our landscaping sustainable without needing pesticides and herbicides. We'll also make our landscape architect aware of this so that we can select plant species that are native and urban-tested.

**Q:** What kind of inside window treatments will there be?

**A:** UWM use moveable shades inside of every residence hall room.

**Q:** Is there anything in the plan to keep kids from cutting through the trees and vegetation on the river slope and to keep them using the proposed stairs down to the river?

**A:** Yes, there is a fairly large change in slope that is planted with native thorny bushes along the western edge of the courtyard. With the staircase right on the property, the steepness of the slope and the use of these plants, we think we'll be okay. However, we can also add this into the rules/regulations for our residents.

**Q:** Are you concerned about filling the commercial space, given the economy and the number of empty retail spaces on North Avenue already?

**A:** It will be a challenge given the current economy and the lack of parking directly in front of the space on North Avenue, however we're committed to making sure we attract high-quality users. This site has a lot of positives that would draw potential tenants. The commercial component was also something that the BID requested and supports, and we think it's the correct way to integrate this project into the neighborhood.

**Q:** Where would people who will come to the area for the new retail park?

**A:** The parking along Cambridge will be public, metered parking. There is also currently parking along the North Avenue bridge on both sides. East of us on North Avenue, a lot of work needs to be done to increase the amount of on-street parking for future retail patrons.

**Q:** Will the building's courtyard be open to the public?

**A:** It will not be fenced off, however the space is reserved for students and their activities. The building has too many points of access along the courtyard side to leave it open to the public.

**Q:** What would the total number of students be and how will they be housed?

**A:** There will be a total of 700 students in the building housed for the most part in 4-resident freshman suites or 4-resident sophomore suites or apartments. In addition there will be 16 or 17 Resident Assistants and several Live Learn Communities, in which students live with other students interested in a particular topic and take classes and participate in activities that explore that topic.

**Q:** You mentioned that there are only about 105 spaces for cars underneath the building. What will the other students do with their cars?

**A:** Most students are not allowed to bring cars, and the lack of parking on campus as well as the availability of free university shuttles to and from campus gives them incentive to leave their cars at home. We're also trying to get the building LEED certified and reduced parking spaces will earn us points in the certification process. From our experience at both Kenilworth and Riverview, our approach is working and we're experiencing fewer requests for on-site parking than we have planned for. This will actually open up some spots in our basement for parking that may be needed by retail employees and visitors.

**Q:** Will there be bike path access for students on site?

**A:** Students will have access at the Oakland Avenue ramp, which is a few blocks away.

**Q:** Will there be bike parking?

**A:** The basement of the building has a large bike room for students to park their bikes in. In addition, there is public bike parking on the street.

**Q:** Is the façade of the building actual brick?

**A:** Yes. The upper floors are a dark brown metal façade to complement the buff-colored brick. It's an historic palette that is seen all throughout Milwaukee, and will make for a really handsome, warm building.

**Q:** What is the cost for students to live there?

**A:** Approximately \$680 a month. Sophomores living in apartment style suites will pay more than that. Our rates are based on construction costs for the building as well as the campus-wide rates that we charge for housing.

**Q:** Given the cost, why would students choose this residence hall over living in an area duplex?

**A:** Parents request residence hall housing, especially for freshmen, because they know that their kids will be in a safe, supportive, supervised environment to give them a good start on their life away from home. We have had to turn down literally thousands of student housing requests because we don't have enough beds available. Students are also requesting to live in residence hall communities where they have access to the city around them. Given the experience we've had with Riverview, we expect this building to be in very high demand.

**Q:** Could students interested in the environmental sciences be selected to live in this residence hall over other students?

**A:** We have started talking to students about this residence hall and gauging interested groups of students. Our main goal is to be able to house all of our incoming freshman in residence halls, which we currently cannot do. We will have an environmentally-focused live-learn program in place at this site, so we expect to attract a lot of students who are environmentally-attuned and interested in pursuing activities both in school and in the community that are environmentally oriented.

**Q:** Do you foresee making residence hall housing mandatory for freshman?

**A:** While it may not be mandatory, we'd like to have the capacity to house all the freshman if they were to request housing and build on our ability to satisfy sophomore requests for housing. Currently we don't have the opportunity to meet the sophomore demand either. By building our housing stock incrementally as we're doing, our policy and appropriate number of beds can be reviewed after each project is complete.

**Q:** Is the building being built with the capacity to add floors in the future?

**A:** No, the building's infrastructure would not be able to handle more floors. What is being presented is the maximum size of the building.

**Q:** What percentage of freshman can you currently house in residence halls?

**A:** We can currently house 52%. One of our success stories that we point to as we look to house more freshman in residence halls is that, with the opening of Riverview, we've actually cut down on the number of underclassmen students who move into surrounding neighborhoods. That's one of the direct benefits we hope to realize – take kids out of unsupervised houses and flats and get them into supervised residence halls, where they have a chance to mature in a structured setting.