



**Project Address:** 535 W Johnson Street

**Application Type:** Approval of a Planned Development (PD) Alteration for Exterior Modifications to the Existing Building - Initial/Final Approval is Requested

**Legistar File ID #:** [74228](#)

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Chris Houden, Jr., Willow Partners | Carole Schaeffer, Freide and Associates

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking Initial/Final Approval of exterior modifications to an existing building in a Planned Development (PD). The proposed improvements include the expansion of the existing roof top amenity space by adding a pool, pergola, and installation of glass and metal railings.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC is an **advisory body** on the Planned Development request. For Planned Developments the Urban Design Commission is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections [28.098\(1\)](#), Statement of Purpose, and (2), Standards for Approval (PD Standards Attached).

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) (the "Plan") planning area in the Johnson Street Bend Neighborhood. As noted in the Plan's recommendations, this district should continue as a primarily higher density student housing areas mixed with some new neighborhood serving retail uses. The Plan also recommends building heights of 12-stories.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and provide findings and recommendations based on the aforementioned standards for planned developments, including comments related to the items noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** The existing building design and architectural style resembles that of art deco, with clear linear lines and geometric ornamentation and detailing. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback and make findings related to the successful integration of the proposed improvements with the existing building design, including the style, material, scale, and colors of the pergola structure, railing and wall details and extents, as well as the elimination of the recessed balconies on the upper floors.
- **Cohesion of Building Top and Long Views.** While renderings were provided that clearly depict the proposed improvements, long view perspectives were not included in the submittal materials. Due to the high visibility and viewsheds of the building along portions of W Johnson Street, consideration should be given to the composition and integration of the proposed improvements. Staff's primary concerns relate to maintaining a cohesive design, especially at the top of the building. As proposed, the lower roof-top pergola extends only towards the eastern half of the roof. Due to its design and location, this feature is believed to be very prominent from a design standpoint, visible from several points along West Johnson Street. In pre-application discussions, staff has requested the applicant look for ways that the modifications maintain a cohesive design at the top of the building.

Staff requests the Commission provide feedback and make findings on the proposed improvements, especially as it relates creating a positive termination at the top of the building, maintaining a cohesive architectural style, visual interest, etc. consistent with the PD standards to create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability.

- **Lighting.** The photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 29.36, MGO) for low level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 2.5 footcandles in pedestrian areas. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets, consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback and make findings related to the further review and approval of the lighting plan.
- **Landscape.** Consideration should be given to the incorporation of landscape materials on the amenity deck to provide interest, soften the hardscape, as well as provide shade and screening. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback and make findings related to the incorporation of landscape elements into the overall programming for the rooftop amenity space.

**ATTACHMENT**  
**PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards**

**28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.**

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

**28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project**

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
  - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
  - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.

- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.
- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.
- (h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map, except as provided for in Section 28.071(2)(a)1. and Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
  - 1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.
  - 2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
  - 3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
  - 4. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.
- (i) When applying the above standards to an application to reduce or eliminate setbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Stepback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate setbacks may be granted unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
  - 1. The lot is a corner parcel.
  - 2. The lot is not part of a larger assemblage of properties.
  - 3. The entire lot is vacant or improved with only a surface parking lot.
  - 4. No principal buildings on the lot have been demolished or removed since the effective date of this ordinance.