



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 3100 E Washington Avenue
Application Type: Second Informational Presentation for a New Multi-Family Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 5
UDC will be an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [77926](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Nick Orthmann, Bear Development | LLS Enterprises, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of one five-story building to be comprised of 192 apartment-style units. The project will also include 5,800 square-feet of amenity space and 142 parking stalls (55 surface stalls and 87 structured).

Approval Standards: The UDC will be an **approving body** on this request as the project site is located in Urban Design District 5 (“UDD 5”). Under those standards, the Urban Design Commission shall review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(9).

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T). Within the mixed-use and commercial zoning districts there are general provisions related to building and site design that are intended to foster high-quality building and site design. Such standards are outlined in [Section 28.060](#), including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials (see attached).

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the revised development plans and provide feedback based on the standards noted above as it relates to the following design considerations:

- **Building Siting and Massing.** As noted in the application materials, the building will be located fronting East Washington Avenue with setbacks ranging from 18-foot setback along the southwestern portion of the building and zero feet along the northeast portion of the building, closest to the Melvin Court intersection. Considering the scale of the building and the intensity of East Washington Avenue, while staff appreciate the deeper setback on portions of the building, staff continues to have concerns regarding the portions of the building being right up to the street/sidewalk, especially as it relates to the pedestrian environment. In addition, the portion of the building adjacent to E Washington Avenue remains a long façade. As such, consideration should be given to providing adequate articulation and modulation to breakdown the mass and scale of the building along the street.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback related to the building’s siting and massing, especially with regard to the site’s context, and the perceived mass and scale along the street.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Staff notes that while modifications have been made to the building design and composition, consideration should still be given to the overall modulation/articulation, proportions and rhythm of the building, especially as it relates breaking down the overall mass and scale

along long elevations, as well as the treatment of end walls and internally facing elevations. Staff continues to have concerns regarding the variations on the architectural design and detailing across the different building elevations.

In addition, staff notes that there appears to be discrepancies between the section drawings in the application materials (Sheet SD4.0) and the slopes noted on DCi Map. Additional information is needed to confirm the level of building foundation exposure and potentially resulting blank walls.

Generally, the UDD 5 Building Design requirements and guidelines speak to utilizing design elements and treatments that reflect compatibility with context, avoiding large unbroken facades, and incorporating the same level of design and details on all sides of a building. Staff requests UDC provide feedback on the overall building design and composition, especially as they relate to creating a cohesive and/or complementary architectural expression.

- **Building Materials.** As noted on the elevations, the materials palette is anticipated to be primarily comprised of cement board lap siding and panels, and masonry. UDD 5 Building Design requirements and guidelines state that, “...materials shall be low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the area.” While the material palette has not changed, staff notes that not all materials are clearly labeled on the drawings, including the accent panels. Staff requests the UDC provide feedback on the proposed building materials as it relates to consistency with context and UDD 5 guidelines and requirements.
- **Site Planning Considerations.** Staff requests the UDC provide feedback related to the overall site plan configuration, design of the shared access drive/surface parking area and pedestrian connectivity, building orientation, and landscaping as noted below:
 - Pedestrian Connectivity. As shown on the site plan, there is limited pedestrian connectivity internal through the site and around the proposed building. Consideration should be given to providing enhanced pedestrian connectivity both internally and externally to the site, including through buildings, to amenity spaces, and to adjacent streets, including from the parking area to Ridgeway, especially given the context and availability of transit immediately adjacent to the site.
 - Building Orientation. The primary street frontage of the site is East Washington Avenue, but only one primary pedestrian entrance is planned along this corridor. Consideration should be given to providing additional common building entry or individual unit entries along this frontage. Such design details/elements may also aid in creating pedestrian interest, increasing overall connectivity, and breaking down mass/scale.
 - Landscape. As part of the Commission’s review, consideration should be given to the overall landscape plan and plant list with regard to creating year-round texture and color, as well as softening hardscape areas, breaking up long building facades and blank walls, providing adequate screening, and providing shade and interest at the pedestrian level, particularly along East Washington Avenue.

Summary of May 31 Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission’s comments from the May 31, 2023, Informational Presentation are provided below:

- The footprint is interesting, it's not rectilinear, it has some slight angles which provides opportunity for push and pull in material areas, it will lend itself to some good elevations. As you refine it keep that in mind, you have these natural breaks but you can also break it up with various materials, especially the larger part of B1, not to suggest you need more materials. Once you start refining your materials and locations, there is potential for this to be a very dynamic project. Start to define your base and middle and maybe there is a crown. I would recommend it gets refined, what you have here is not what it ends up being in terms of location and one material, break that up more and start following some of the natural suggestions based on the footprint of the massing.
- I want to make sure the applicant sees in the Legistar file a letter the Commission received today about the location in relation to the coming of F35s. While the UDC has no role in that decision, certainly I would urge you to consider the location in terms of noise abatement. According to the letter, you're in a flight path where you'll get really high decibel levels, you should be aware and plan for that. And the location of the BRT station at Melvin Court may impact the circulation in and out of Melvin Court. I don't really know how to solve that, that's Traffic Engineering, but take a look at how that will work and how people will get in and out of this building to get to E Washington. I do share the staff concerns about the massing and how close it is to E Washington. Aside from the question of compatible location for housing. Putting that question aside you definitely need to work on setting it back from the street.
- There are some competing priorities here. Maybe to counter the need and suggestion about the proximity to E Washington, I'm struck by the interior experience between these two buildings as largely surface parking. I commend the amount of underground parking, however, I'm left wondering, without a solution to propose, about configuration of buildings and is there a way to get the buildings connected that frees up some green space/experience on the interior of the site.
- Another comment, the community room and the exercise room amenities are so far from Building 2, thinking about the experience of your residents to make that journey to use that amenity. I don't know that it affects urban design, maybe it's not an appropriate comment, but I do wonder if there are design changes, maybe these things are related.
- I'm struck by the building expression. At an informational level we are looking at massing and not the skin of the building, but it seems very broken up into small pieces and elements, and I don't like it. You're creating a building for what appears to be quite a bit of one-bedroom units and two bedroom units and not much else. What thoughts went into who your target residents would be? I see that area as more family oriented in many ways. Is there a relationship between looking at more opportunities for families, more bedroom units and whether that programmatic change expresses itself in less small elements, vertical lines on the building. Great to see more housing being built in Madison, looking forward to seeing how this progresses.
- That proximity to E Washington Avenue is so overwhelming, particularly because it seems like a small scale residential area. When you come around E Wash and take that exit to Highway 30, there is housing back there but there's a nice green buffer that is high speed. Those F35s are nothing compared to the drag racing on E Washington Avenue, that's what these residents are going to experience. That should be addressed in how you orient the building because it's going to be a brutalist exposure. I also agree that maybe the interior, if things could get pushed off, it becomes more of an insert facing more of the neighborhood, I feel like the amount of building site plus the parking leaves very little buffer. The architecture side is a nice articulation and color, but you're not going to overcome that mass, there's a lot going on and a lot of it. Breaking that up, not having that huge presence on E Washington would help the project.
- I commend you on utilizing a site that is largely surface parking, and echo what we've heard. As we look forward to future presentations I'll be paying particular attention to what that pedestrian environment is along E Washington Avenue. It's very much a vehicular corridor, especially in this area, how do we change that, how does your project contribute to a healthy, vibrant streetscape, and what does that mean functionally, tangibly? Does it mean there is more space for planting buffers? More landing spots for at-grade bike parking along that edge? Sensitivity to bicycles traveling up and down the street? What other things, low screen walls or fences, in addition to the plant material might help create a nice

atmosphere along E Washington? Are we getting enough big trees in that space, too? That will be very important given the scale of the building. We might not be able to rely just on street trees. All things to consider. Echo the comments on the interior usable open space, although it seems like your parking ratio is reasonable overall, it's a lot you're fitting into the site. A lot of that parking demand competes with the open space, but I'd like to see how the spaces you do have identified are connected to each other, that there are opportunities for residents to get outside and not just be in a parking realm or a busy vehicular corridor on the other side. There's also the BRT and that connectivity.

- The proximity to E Washington is concerning. We see this on a lot of projects, developments that maybe comply with the letter of setbacks, whether or not that runs up against the realities of what that means. While I think this is a good place for much needed housing, I'm glad to see this going here but it is a tough location. I can appreciate the complexities of squeezing this development of this size onto this footprint, but at this place here it isn't just E Washington, it is Highway 30 too. This is the most urban interchange along E Washington, the idea of living in an apartment pushed up to this intersection as opposed to other intersections, is a really different experience. People really accelerate over this stretch, it is not a great place to be that close to the street. I'm concerned about where the greenspace is, where are the opportunities to have your dog go? There doesn't seem to be much space for landscaping or anything. Given the size and, if not requirements, the need for parking both underground and surface, it seems to be driving the design in a weird way. The tucked in parking goes slightly under the building being held up by pillars of Building B2. I grew up in south Florida where you see that on hotels, motels and apartment buildings. It's a weird look to have the cars pull up partially under the building, and not particularly a good look. To have that drive the design of a building seems strange to me. It seems to be needed, given the property lines, but it seems like a really bad approach to take, talk about auto-centric. The building colors and patterning are favorable, but it needs some work but I don't get a bad feeling about it. A whole neighborhood exists over here that has been living with the airport and such, going forward any buildings that are built as close to the runways as this is doesn't mean that's something to be ignored. Having a slightly higher quality of windows and insulation might be prudent. One and two-bedroom apartments exclusively that this is not going to be a development that will have very many kids in it. The concerns about having children living in proximity to that noise.
- Design is subjective, but are some things are not. We are looking at urban design, we are on a major thoroughfare. There is going to be noise. I live on E Washington Avenue. In urban environments, you expect density, people, movement, lights, and noise. Being off the BRT calls for higher density, smaller parking and more density along this corridor. Keep those things in mind when we make suggestions. Urban spaces won't have all that open green space, sometimes we have to look at where we're developing and work within that, not make every space less dense and less tall. Especially E Washington Avenue, it's a different atmosphere from everything else, we have tall buildings, vehicular traffic, and density. It's not like some of the other streets in other places. I don't have a problem with the building being close to E Wash. You will have a streetscape and street trees; you're not going to have a 30-foot setback in front of your building because that is not what this area dictates. It's also a very highly travelled vehicular thoroughfare and you building responds to it, the siting of the building on this site is not bad.
- My gripe would be those poor residents on the first floor on E Washington, we've approved projects at Union Corners and Ella's Deli, and most of those had commercial on the ground floor. I don't know where you live on E Washington, but I bet you don't live right on the sidewalk on E Washington. I don't know that this is a viable commercial area, I doubt it, but I would say get as much of that common space exercise rooms, and bike storage whatever you can along that first floor on E Washington because that is where everyone is going to be looking right in apartments. You're not going to escape the hustle and bustle of the city, but you're not looking at people at the stoplight looking into your living room as well.
- I agree 100 percent.
- With regard to building materials, the big slabs of cement board siding mixed with ship lap/lap siding and other wood look cement board siding; it's tricky, you have to look really closely at how you articulate all that so it's a really clean, modern look and so it is not a cheap look with big pieces of siding

held on with reveal strips. Really how all that is detailed and whether or not you can afford to bring some masonry in there to give it a look of an enduring quality.

- I was going to offer a suggestion that would help both us on the commission and maybe the application to come prepared with precedent examples and cross sections of some of these streetscape, so we can see your vision for what that interface is. That would be helpful to me. Somewhere further up E Washington or a completely different city, both might be beneficial to look at. What they use, what's in their kit of elements and tools that they use to create a pleasant interface between the building, the sidewalk, and the street.
- I wanted to offer on small counter point to the proximity to E Washington, this is affordable housing, and one of the things that is not equitable with affordable housing is the amount of greenspace, the areas that can have canopy trees. Those are not only visual buffers but they are something that as urban design it is more pleasant to drive up a street that has larger trees alongside it and not just buildings right up against it. Adding some relief with some thoughtful landscaping that is actually going to grow. In order to have equitable housing we have to not be packing people in on a dense site without any kind of buffer or access to nice landscaping that is going to live. That there are going to be some tall trees and add to the pleasantness of the landscape.

28.060 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR MIXED-USE AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

(1) Statement of Purpose .

Mixed-use and commercial districts are established to provide a range of district types, from the small neighborhood center to regional-level retail centers, while fostering high-quality building and site design and pedestrian, bicycle and transit as well as automobile circulation.

(2) Design Standards. The following design standards are applicable after the effective date of this code to all new buildings and major expansions (fifty percent (50%) or more of building floor area). Design standards shall apply only to the portion of the building or site that is undergoing alteration.



Figure D1: Entrance Orientation

- (a) Entrance Orientation (See Figure D1). All new buildings shall have a functional entrance oriented to an abutting public street. Additional entrances may be oriented to a private street or parking area. For buildings with multiple non-residential tenants, a minimum of one (1) tenant space shall have a functional entrance oriented towards an abutting public street. Other tenant spaces shall be connected to the public street with a private sidewalk connection. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features. Barrier-free entrances are encouraged. (Am. by ORD-13-00113, 6-26-13)

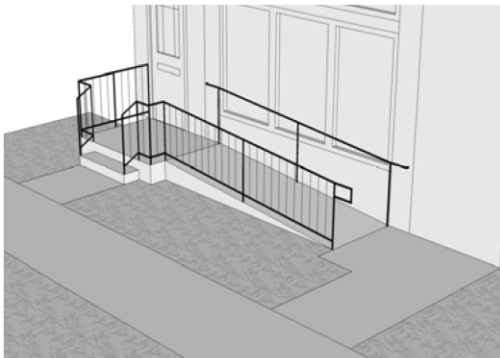


Figure D2: Barrier-Free Entrance Example

- (b) Facade Articulation. Consistent with the design of traditional storefront buildings, new buildings of more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller increments, through articulation of the facade. This can be achieved through combinations of including but not limited to the following:
1. Facade Modulation (See Figure D3). Stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade.
 2. Vertical divisions using different textures or materials (although materials shall be drawn from a common palette).
 3. Division into storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.



Figure D3: Facade Modulation

4. Variation in roof lines by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval (See Figure D4).
5. Arcades, awnings, and window bays at intervals equal to the articulation interval.

(c) Design of Street-Facing Facades.

No blank walls shall be permitted to face the public street, sidewalks, or other public spaces such as plazas. Elements such as windows, doors, columns, changes in material, and similar details shall be used to add visual interest.



Figure D4: Variation in Roof Lines

- (d) Door and/or Window Openings. For nonresidential uses at ground floor level, windows and doors or other openings shall comprise at least sixty percent (60%) of the length and at least forty percent (40%) of the area of the ground floor of the primary street facade. At least fifty percent (50%) of windows on the primary street facade shall have the lower sill within three (3) feet of grade.

For residential uses at ground level, a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the ground level of residential facades or side and rear facades not fronting a public street shall consist of windows and door openings. On upper stories, window or balcony openings shall occupy a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the upper-story wall area.

1. Glass on windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass that mimics the appearance of windows may be used for up to twenty percent (20%) of the required area of the openings. (Am. by ORD-13-00205, 12-10-13)
2. Displays may be placed within windows. Equipment within buildings shall be placed a minimum of five (5) feet behind windows. To preserve views, within three (3) feet of any window, not more than thirty percent (30%) of the view through the windows shall be blocked by merchandise, displays, shelving, or other obstructions.
3. Window shape, size and patterns shall emphasize the intended organization of the facade and the definition of the building.

- (e) Equipment and Service Area Screening. If an outdoor storage, service or loading area is visible from adjacent residential uses or an abutting public street or public walkway, it shall be screened by a

decorative fence, wall or screen of plant material at least six (6) feet in height. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the primary structure.

- (f) Screening of Rooftop Equipment. All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible.
 - 1. The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street.
 - a. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials.
 - b. Screening shall be constructed to a height of at least one (1) foot above the height of the equipment.
 - 2. Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork shall not be located on primary building facades.
- (g) Materials. Nonresidential or mixed-use buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials such as brick, stone, textured cast stone, or tinted masonry units. Table 28D-1 below lists allowable building materials. When applying these requirements, consideration shall be given to the use, amount, placement and relationship of each material as part of a comprehensive palette of building materials. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway should employ materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

Table 28D-1.

Building Materials	Allowable for use as/at:				Standards (see footnotes)
	Trim/Accent Material	Top of Building	Middle of Building	Base/Bottom of Building	
Brick (Face/Veneer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Wood/ Wood Composite	✓	✓	✓		
Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Concrete Panels, Tilt-up or Precast	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
EIFS/Synthetic Stucco	✓	✓			C
Stone/Stone Veneer	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Metal Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	D
Hand-Laid Stucco	✓	✓			C
Vinyl Siding	✓				E
Glass Curtain Wall System	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reflective Glass/Spandrel	✓				F
Glass (Storefront)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than 33% of any building wall adjacent to a public street or walkway.

B - Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials.

C - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used in heavily trafficked pedestrian areas or where high pedestrian traffic is anticipated.

D - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge metal, and; shall be non-reflective.

E - Shall be used in limited quantities due to its limited durability.

F - Shall be used in limited quantities as an accent material.



Figure D5: Compatibility with Traditional Buildings

- (h) Compatibility with Traditional Buildings. (See Figure D5.) New development shall relate to the design of traditional buildings adjacent to the site, where present, in scale and character. This can be achieved by maintaining similar, facade divisions, roof lines, rhythm and proportions of openings, building materials and colors. Historic architectural styles need not be replicated.



Figure D6: Building Alignment

- (i) Building Alignment. (See Figure D6.) Buildings shall be aligned with facades parallel with the street to create a well-defined street edge.
- (j) Building Articulation. (See Figure D7.) Buildings shall have horizontal and vertical articulation, which may include dormers, cornice detailing, recesses and projections, stepbacks of upper stories, changes in roof types and planes, building materials, and window patterns. The base of the building shall relate to the human scale, including doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings, canopies, and similar features.



Figure D7: Building Articulation

- (k) Ground-Floor Residential Uses. (See Figure D8.) Ground-floor residential uses fronting a public street or walkway, where present, shall be separated from the street by landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls in order to create a private yard area between the sidewalk and the front door.



Figure D8: Ground Floor Residential Uses