



**Agenda Item #:** 3

**Project Title:** 1601-1617 Sherman Avenue - Residential Building Complex. 12th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** 74227

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Christian Harper, Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Amanda Arnold, Marsha Rummel, and Russell Knudson

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

## Summary

At its meeting of May 31, 2023, the Urban Design Commission made an **ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION** to the Plan Commission to grant Final Approval of a Residential Building Complex located at 1601-1617 Sherman Avenue. Registered and speaking in support was Doug Hursh. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Darrin Jolas, Kirk Biodrowski, and Joe Porter.

Updates include providing some privacy for the patios on the ground floor facing Sherman Avenue with the addition of low (24-inches) brick privacy walls along those units. In investigating some of the soils, it was necessary to raise Buildings C, B1 and B3 approximately one-foot. The entrance to Building C has been shifted to the corner across from the entrance to Building A for a stronger entrance that is closer to crosswalks at the intersection, and provides visitor parking off the street. They have created a bay at the windows, incorporated more residential sized window, stepped back the entries, and used different corner elements than the townhomes in the center. The patios for the end units have been turned to the side yards. The palette is still monochromatic but they have increased the contrast and are no longer using taupe and beige; they now have off-white, iron gray, and black for contrast.

Questions for staff and/or the development team:

- The townhomes work now, they look like modern townhomes, a huge improvement from what we saw before. Looking at Building A, the two-foot privacy wall gives no privacy whatsoever. Is there a reason the same strategy for the townhomes wasn't applied here? You get much more of a defined and private space with the landscape and rail height than you do with a two-foot wall that does nothing but define your space.
  - We felt the brick wall worked with the building more in this location. We didn't want to screen the view too much since the view is quite nice to the lake. I think we could add some additional landscaping here that might get taller.
- I'm not necessarily saying a railing needs to go here, but the height of that barrier is what gives the privacy. You have a railing and shrubs and trees on the townhouses that offers some type of privacy. If I was here I would still feel exposed regardless of whether it is 18 inches or two-feet of wall. Incorporating something else to give it more privacy is probably appropriate.
- Good revisions, moving the entry to the corner directly adjacent to the other corner, the townhomes is great improvement.
- (Ald. Amani) This project started before I became an Alder. I was only able to follow it through the news with regard to its historical value or not. The history was detailed, was there any consideration for making sure, even if this is not the right arena to ask, in the design that an ode to the history is paid attention to? Would that happen in this phase of things?
- We're very far along and we are really concentrating on a few follow-up details with this.

- (Secretary) At this point in the Commission’s design review, our purview is really limited to the two remaining conditions of approval. The Plan Commission approved conditions for the UDC to sign off on related to design details. All the conditions the Plan Commission referred back to the UDC have been addressed with exception of conditions 1 and 2 that were outlined in the staff memo, which speak to the design of the townhomes and design and orientation of Buildings A and C along the new street and Sherman Avenue.
- (Ald. Amani) We get a lot of information, there are a lot of projects happening, I just want to make sure I’m asking the right questions, covering what people are concerned about, and getting up to speed. I used to work in the State Senate, so it’s not like I haven’t had any experience in anything.
- I agree the brick wall could be taller or a railing or something, from a safety perspective.
- The townhouses are greatly improved and I appreciate the effort that went into those. The way the entries are split up looks much more scalable as a home versus a business. I agree that the walls in front of the Sherman patios could be a little taller, they don’t offer much of a screen. Not as high as 42 inches, but just enough that if you’re seated you can see but you’re not as exposed. It could conceal some of your belongings up there and would be a nice feature for occupants.
- I thought there was a plaque or acknowledgment of the previously founding tenant of the building?
  - Yes, it was discussed at Plan Commission. The idea is to work with local community members that are interested in identifying the historic value of the credit union movement that was on the site, and help to design it. We didn’t want to do it in a vacuum, we want it to be more of a community involvement.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I concur with comments about these walls being a little bit too low to get the effect we were looking for. Wondering if the motion is prescribing another eight inches, a foot, are we being that prescriptive? I want to make sure they know what we want since we’re at the end game here.
- Certainly not so high so you can’t see over it if you’re sitting down. We don’t have to prescribe inches or feet.
- (Secretary) I have a number of things written down as a list of conditions including the incorporation of additional vertical elements, including but not limited to landscape additional height on proposed wall or railing for patio screening for those patios associated with Building A along Sherman Avenue.
- I’m not here to dictate design but something more appropriate is in order, your list works.
- It should be a permanent feature, landscaping could die off or be different amount of screening during varying seasons.
- Yes, I agree.

## Action

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission made an **ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION** to the Plan Commission to grant Final Approval. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).

The motion for Final Approval included the condition that a permanent vertical element, including but not limited to additional wall height, or a railing be incorporated into the patio design for those patios associated with Building A along Sherman Avenue.