



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 519-521 W Main Street

**Application Type:** Alder Referral for an Advisory Recommendation to the Plan Commission for a New Multi-Family Building  
**UDC is an Advisory Body**

**Legistar File ID #:** [83099](#)

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

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Fed Novikov, The Neutral Project, LLC | Vanilla 301, LLC

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing a four-story, mixed-use building comprised of 30 residential units, and an 850 square-foot commercial space. The building will be served by one level of underground parking.

**Approval Standards:** This application is before the UDC at the request of Alder Verveer who is specifically requesting the UDC's feedback on the overall design, composition, and garage door facing W Main Street. The Conditional Use Section of the Zoning Code allows an applicant to seek an advisory recommendation from the UDC prior to Plan Commission upon the direction of the Planning Director or District Alder. Additionally, Section 33.24(4)(a) MGO states that the Urban Design Commission ("UDC") shall make recommendations to the City Plan Commission, Common Council and any other concerned commission on all matters referred or assigned to it under the provision of this ordinance and other City ordinances.

As such, the UDC will be an **advisory body** to the Plan Commission. As a reference, the Plan Commission must consider the following Conditional Use Standard (MGO 28.183(6)a.9) when evaluating this request:

*"When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building the Plan Commission shall find that **the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district.** In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation."*

**Related Zoning Information:** The project site is zoned Downtown Residential 2 (DR2). As noted in the development standards, buildings within the 500 block of W Main Street, the maximum height is four stories. As proposed, the development **appears to be consistent** with the maximum height limitations.

The DR2 zone district also outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings in the DR2 district, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the DR2 zone district are included as an attachment to this report. The Zoning Administrator is responsible for determining these standards are met.

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area in the Bassett Neighborhood, with a neighborhood plan objective noting that "the Bassett neighborhood should continue its predominately residential nature with an evolving mix of new higher-density buildings carefully integrated with existing older structures that are compatible in scale and character." The plan also notes that neighborhood-serving commercial uses in mixed-use developments would be appropriate at certain locations, including at intersections.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC review the development proposal and provide comment and recommendation based on the aforementioned standard related to the items requested to District Alder. As an Alder referral, the UDC is acting in an advisory capacity to the Plan Commission. Staff recommends that the UDC's action be structured as a singular, final motion of the body. The UDC has the option to recommend to approve and/or to provide specific design recommendations. Staff further advise that the UDC should not utilize a two part "initial and final" recommendation nor should the UDC refer this item back to itself back for further consideration.

As part of the UDC's review staff notes the following design-related considerations:

- **Building Design and Composition.** Based on the Alder's request, staff requests that the UDC provide feedback related to the building's design and composition. As part of this consideration, staff request feedback on the brick detailing. Staff notes that while the building material palette is fairly simple and limited to masonry and wood panels, there is a significant level of detail and variation reflected in the masonry applications, including both vertical and horizontal oriented bonds, as well as brick sizes. While staff appreciate the desire to provide such façade detailing, staff request the UDC's feedback on the amount of variation between the different floors.
- **Garage Door Considerations.** In addition, there is a roughly 17-foot wide garage door fronting on W Main Street. As the building's and site's front door, consideration should be given to minimizing this opening as much as possible to limit the void along the street, but also the successful design and integration of this element into the overall building composition. Staff notes that in coordination with Traffic Engineering staff, a door width range of 12-14 feet would be acceptable.

**APPENDIX – Sec. 28.071, “General Provisions for Downtown and Urban Districts,” MGO**

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. 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.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
  - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
  - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
  - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
  - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.
3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.

4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

**Table 28E-1:** Building Materials in Downtown and Urban Districts.

Building Materials	Trim/Accent Material	Top of Building	Middle of Building	Base/Bottom of Building	Standards (see footnotes)
Brick (Face/Veneer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Wood/Wood Composite	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Concrete Panels (Tilt-up or Precast)	✓	✓	✓	✓	C
EIFS/Synthetic Stucco	✓	✓			D
Stone/Stone Veneer	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Metal Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	E
Hand-Laid Stucco	✓	✓			D
Reflective Glass/Spandrel	✓				F
Glass (Transparent)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than thirty-three percent (33%) of any building.

B - Wood and fiber cement panels shall not be used on the ground story except between the sidewalk and the bottom of storefront windows or as an accent material.

C - 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.

D - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used on building facades facing State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

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

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

(g) Equipment and Service Area Screening.

1. Outdoor loading areas or mechanical equipment are not permitted in the front yard. When visible from an abutting public street or walkway, they shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall, or screen of plant material.
2. No doors or openings providing access to parking or loading facilities shall abut the Capitol Square, State Street or King Street.
3. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.

(h) Screening of Rooftop Equipment.

1. 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.
2. 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. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. (Am. by ORD-15-00104, 10-15-15)