



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 489 Commerce Dr. (District 9 – Ald. Skidmore)
Application Type: Final Approval
Legistar File ID # [44732](#) and [43951](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, Planning Division

The applicant is requesting FINAL APPROVAL of a PD-GDP amendment and a new PD-SIP for the construction of a four-story multi-family residential building on a vacant lot in the Ganser Heights Planned Development.

Pursuant to Section 33.24(4)(c), MGO, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) shall review the design of all proposed developments that are considered planned developments, and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission and Common Council.

Project Statistics

Site Area: 1.85-acre site
Zoning: Planned Development (PD-GDP)

Development Proposal

- Four-stories, multi-family residential, 80 units total
- Underground and surface parking (124 spaces total)
- Private decks and balconies, and a fourth floor community room and deck amenities

Key Issues:

The following design related key issues have been identified. Staff requests that UDC address the following items in their comments and recommendation.

- **Open Space.** Currently, the at-grade open space shown on the site plan is primarily comprised of small left-over landscape spaces. Consideration should be given to providing a shared, passive at-grade open space amenity.
 - Decreasing the overall onsite parking or providing a mix of compact stalls could result in the creation of additional open space area that would accommodate a passive amenity (Planned Development Standard (f) suitable open space).
 - As shown on the site plan a detention pond is located in the northeast corner of the project site along Homewood Way. Although this area cannot be considered useable open space, consideration should be given to the overall integration of the pond as a landscape feature.
- **Building Design.** While residential development was anticipated in the original PD-GDP zoning text, the general intent of the planned development was more commercial and mixed-use oriented. Given the intended mixed-use and commercial intent of the planned development, consideration should be given to providing a building design that is more reflective of a commercial building and activity, especially at the corner of Watts Road and Commerce Drive and to accommodate the possible future transition of the building to mixed-use, should there be demand.
 - Consideration should be given to locating an active lobby and/or leasing office at the corner in addition to the exercise room as well as utilizing floor plate heights that are more reflective of commercial development (Planned Development Standard (e) architectural styles and building forms).
 - Enhancing the overall landscape treatment of the site both in terms of increasing the overall number plantings and diversification of species, and in softening the remaining blank wall expanses, especially

along the north and east elevations (Planned Development Standard (e) architectural styles and building forms).

- It appears that the HVAC utilities are side loaded into the private balcony returns. The applicant shall confirm that HVAC louvers and grates are intended to remain in this location or as a roof mounted systems.