



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 2165 Linden Avenue  
**Application Type:** Planned Development (PD) – Initial/Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #** [69208](#)  
**Prepared By:** Colin Punt, Planner  
Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC | Tyler Krupp, Threshold Development | Zion Lutheran Church

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking initial/final approval for the development of a three-story residential building containing 32 dwelling units and underground parking. The applicant will be seeking a rezoning from TR-V1 (Traditional Residential-Varied 1) District to the Planned Development (PD) District.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an informational presentation on January 26, 2022.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal at their meeting of April 25 2022.
- The Common Council is scheduled to review the proposed rezoning request at their meeting of May 10, 2022.

### Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on the PD request. As with any Planned Development, 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 (which are attached).

### Adopted Plan Recommendation:

The current Comprehensive Plan recommends “Low Residential” uses for the subject property, which generally include one and two story residential building forms, up to densities of 15 dwelling units per acre. The recommendation specifies single-family detached, two-unit, and civic/institutional as appropriate building forms. When already present or recommended in special-area plans, other larger building forms such as three-unit buildings, single-family attached, and small multi-family buildings are also recommended. In order to address plan consistency questions, the District Alder requested that the Planning Division draft of a neighborhood plan amendment for consideration by the Plan Commission and Common Council. An amendment to the neighborhood plan ([Legistar ID 69937](#)) is under consideration simultaneously with the land use application and recommends residential redevelopment of the site of no more than three stories and 70 dwelling units per acre. If approved, such an amendment is intended to provide policy support for a larger residential use at this location, similar in scale to the proposed development.

## Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC provide feedback based on the aforementioned standards and guidelines for Planned Developments.

## Summary of Design Considerations

- **Building Scale, Massing, Setbacks, and Modulation.** Staff requests that the UDC provides feedback on the building's overall placement, scale, massing, and modulation including comments related to the proposed building's relationship to surrounding structures and context. Among the relevant standards, Conditional Use Standard (e) states, *"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."*

With a length of approximately 204 feet, staff notes that the footprint of the building is similar to what was previously presented. More detailed site plan information is included in this submittal and there are some proposed modifications. Compared to the previously presented version, there is less variation along the Linden Avenue façade which previously had recessed balconies and corners. The lower two building levels are in the same plane and includes projecting balconies that extend entirely beyond the front of the building. Along Linden Avenue, the setback for the main building is just under eight feet. The redesigned projecting balconies further encroach into these setbacks. For a comparison standpoint, the existing building is set back roughly 5-6 feet though, is not as large along the setback. While PD districts do not have pre-determined setback requirements, conventional (non-PD) residential zoning districts require greater setbacks for purely residential buildings. For example, the required minimum setbacks for similar conventional districts, such as either Traditional Residential – Districts (TR-U1 or TR-U2) are 15 feet in front yards, 10 feet in side yards, and 20 feet in rear yards.

According to the applicant, the façade has been "squared off" in order to be a passive house-friendly design by maintaining a continuous plane of insulation. Per the applicant, the elimination of corners, cantilevers, and step-backs is strongly advised for passive house design and certification.

- **Exposed Lower Level.** Staff also requests that the UDC make specific findings related to the exposed lower level. Along the building's western side, sections of the building's lower parking level appear to be exposed approximately 8 feet above grade. A terraced retaining wall and landscaping is used to screen this wall and provide a transition to the sidewalk. Staff requests specific feedback on both the appropriateness of this parking-level exposure and the adequacy of the design solutions to screen and transition this level.
- **Façade Composition and Materials.** Staff next requests the UDC's feedback on the overall façade composition, articulation, and detailing. The end elevations have been simplified and have a more unified composition. The Linden elevation has also been simplified with the removal of certain details and modifications to the material organization. Staff does not object to the simplification of materials and design details, but requests that the UDC provides comments on how the resulting changes contribute to breaking down the scale of the 204-long foot building and commenting on the appropriateness of the material changes which appear to be occurring in the same plane.

As a specific consideration, staff further notes that along the Dunning Street elevation, a different balcony style is proposed only along the Southern-most entrance. As presented, it appears that the signage may be covering architectural details. While signage is not part of this application, consideration should be given to its location.

- **Sustainability Features.** The PD Zoning Statement of Purpose includes the following objective, *"Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development."* The applicant's letter of intent

references Passive House Design and low impact stormwater design. Staff requests that the UDC's advisory comments provide feedback regarding these features and their relationship to the applicable standards.

- **Adequacy of Useable Open Space.** Finally, staff requests the UDC's feedback on the adequacy of the development's open space. Plans show balconies comprising approximately 1,920 sf of open space with an additional 1,411 sf of unstructured open space, designated along the western and southern facades. Standard (f) states, *"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."*

Finally, as a reference, staff refers the Commission to their comments from the 1/26 informational presentation:

- I like it a lot. My only concern is the public entries, those don't read as public entries. I like the character of the building, going from a pitched roof system to this massing is appropriate. I think the stepback is appropriate.
- The setback doesn't look adequate enough for the building to have a layered effect. It doesn't read as a townhouse type building but as one building trying to have separate identities that aren't cohesive. It's too much in too small of an area, I would expect to see more entrances along that townhouse façade.
- Too many materials, needs more cohesive repetition.
- I'd like to see some trees in the front. City Row was successful in planting some larger trees right in that easement area, that helps buffer the scale of the building to the neighborhood at large.
- This is a very appropriate scale for the neighborhood. The Victorian Italianate detail could be more streamlined by avoiding the historical reference. Agree with the public entry needing more.
- The scale feels right, the streetscape and rhythm with landscape and building articulation is pretty nice. It's an improvement to living across from a parking lot.
- The project is replacing a significant piece of surface parking, and it appears to be handling stormwater, capturing and delaying release of that is a benefit to the community.
- The planting plan actually does have a handful of small scale trees tucked within the pocket of the building: Serviceberry, Dogwood, Muscledwood, absolutely the right scale and type of selection for trees in that space.
- The south driveway headed towards Atwood, are people walking back here, any access point on that south side? Make sure the lighting is right and that it's intuitive and safe.
- The roofline where it hits the sky feels long and continuous. A little bit more in and out on that upper line where you start to read it as one big building would help perception.
- I wasn't a huge fan of the blue and red together, maybe a different color brick would suit my taste better. Better than all beige and neutral though.
- You showed design proposals that went from interesting contemporary, to City Row, to this so called traditional option. We're seeing building technology changes and advancements, and improvements to energy efficiency. Then we see this detailing that emulates design cues from 100 years ago, all these brackets and bays, Craftsman style windows. This building should have an overall cohesive expression. It's a concept album, not a greatest hits album. It is expressed as a design that was built through consensus and it looks that way. There's a lot that can be done to make this a building that belongs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- I have concerns about the PD standards that the neighborhood folks mentioned. We do have to consider those standards and I believe the PD standards aren't there just because the underlying zoning inconveniently doesn't fit the proposed design and density of the development. The present zoning calls for about 500 square feet of usable open space per dwelling unit and you're showing about 1/5 of that.

It is under our purview to review this project under the PD standards and of all the public comment, the concern for usable open space is the one I share most personally.

- I second the concern about usable open space. I tend to agree that the scale and massing might be appropriate or comfortable for a residential location. I will however question and push back on whether it is appropriate for this particular site and the given space this site affords the project. Do we have an appropriate amount of open space?
- It is a benefit to this project and site to share that drive.
- We were presented with other building design options but we didn't receive that documentation. I second the comment that some of those other buildings flashed in front of us did have some appeal and I understand there's a working session and consensus building done, but it's unfortunate we got a taste of some other options.
- That church is one of the cooler structures in town and kind of iconic.
- The renderings show the building on Linden Avenue low down at a human scale, but on Division Street the first floor is raised ½ way up the house next to it. It feels really close to the street with a very steep rise, which could use some attention. The pedestrian experience is important.
- Commendation that a pursuit like Passive House achieves some of the PD notions we are all concerned with.
- Certainly there are opportunities to achieve a more contemporary design while giving the building some elegance and articulation. We've seen other Passive House buildings before this Commission where the massing was maybe more simple, but not displeasing.
- I'm still stuck on the open space topic. The PD establishes your own requirements, but if we're framing the context of the conversation on the current zoning and those open space requirements, I don't want to send the wrong message. I'm personally not interested in a proposal that's creating more yard space and less density to do it, that's not appropriate for an infill like this. If it meant more porches that would be beneficial. I don't think this project needs a pocket park or at grade open space to make it successful. There are other opportunities for getting outside, to sacrifice density for a token gesture of outdoor space seems inappropriate.
- The Passive House subject as it relates to modern building systems and materials, I would challenge the team to do something ecologically friendly, highly efficient and a building for future Madison, start thinking in those terms. A modern building doesn't have to look commercial or cold, or not have any greenspace. Take all those components and make a pedestrian friendly, neighborhood friendly building with a townhouse like feel repetition. Try to marry some of these 21<sup>st</sup> Century building systems, do the passive thing, and still make it respectful in scale and detail to the neighborhood.
- Under approval standards 28.098(2)(a): a PD shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing density or allowing development. I support density and height but have concerns about rezoning for the purposes of this particular development, given that the geometry and topography of the site could support development under the base zoning. The Plan Commission will make the ultimate decision but I ask my fellow Commissioners to think about that when it returns for a formal recommendation by this Commission. We give the Plan Commission a motion that addresses the increased density and our feeling of whether or not we believe a project could be successful under the base zoning.
- Regarding the historic vs. contemporary feel of the building, the images we saw were very intriguing, it would be great to see some of those design moves applied to this. Now that it's fitting in, we're looking for some modernism to be applied, I don't know that it would actually match the character of the neighborhood, which is fine. If the design team and development team are going back to the drawing board for revisions, maybe getting rid of some of that historic references, bracketing and added fenestrations might help. Hardboard is not the only siding out there, there are many more contemporary options that are also sustainable. I do like the massing, all sides of the building do not need to look the same. Some of the materiality can enhance this project moving forward.

- Style aside, it lacks a cohesive design statement from back to the front. The third story completely belies the fact it's a big building, vs. the first two stories that have brick, siding, and hardboard, and something completely different on the back. It's not the back because it's a front face for whoever is living on that side.
- If you pursue a deeper Passive House performance, it's not a very big step to go towards net zero energy. There are roof opportunities for solar panels, making this building generate some of its own energy.
- The overall look of the building is a pretty handsome design. I read all of the comments from the neighbors, when it concerns views of the "back" of the building, we need to be realistic about where our sight lines are and where people are viewing these from. These snapshots are one static point in one particular place. I consider this to be a reasonable compromise. I share some of the feelings of neighbors, it is sad that these aren't owner occupied but that's not the UDC's bone to pick. You did a pretty good job making these look like individual units. The particular decorative elements I find fairly understated and would be palatable to most of the average citizenry.
- I would like to see more columnar varieties of trees tucked in to some of these spaces. I also imagine the City will get involved and possibly be putting trees on the median between the sidewalk and the street. Perhaps that would allay some of the concerns.
- It seems they went a long way to minimize the parking and traffic issues, which are a problem in this neighborhood. The ratio is pretty high compared to what we've seen, there shouldn't be much on-street parking involved with these residents. As to concerns about the appropriateness of this type of building here, the look and design is very nice and would be welcomed in a lot of neighborhoods.
- Every time I went by this church building I just thought it looked exactly like the salt barns on the Chicago turnpike.
- They are proposing to keep some Kentucky Coffee trees and Honey Locusts in the terrace on Linden Avenue.
- Because of the rendering I think the trees would block the image we're seeing. I think the tree and shady street will be maintained.

**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 stepbacks 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 stepbacks 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