



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 6701 McKee Road/6702 Mader Drive (formerly addressed as 6853 McKee Road)
Application Type: Planned Development-Specific Implementation Plan (PD-SIP) for a New Mixed-Use Development
UDC is an Advisory Body
Legistar File ID #: [84960](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Mad Grove LLC | Alex Weis, Livesey Company LLC/Mad Grove LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing a two-building development containing 125-residential units, 2,500 square feet of commercial space, and lower-level parking garage for 107 vehicles.

Project Schedule:

- UDC received an Information Presentation on October 22, 2022, on the General Development Plan.
- UDC Made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to grant Final Approval of the Planned Development – General Development Plan (PD-GDP) on January 11, 2023 (Legistar File ID No. [73955](#)).
- Plan Commission conditionally approved the PD-GDP on January 23, 2023 (Legistar File ID No. [75171](#)).
- The Common Council conditionally approved the PD-GDP on February 7, 2023.
- UDC received an Informational Presentation on September 25, 2024, on the Specific Implementation Plan.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on the Planned Development request. For Planned Developments the UDC 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 (PD Standards Attached), including, more specifically:

PD Standard (e), which generally speaks to coordinating “...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.”

As noted above, the Common Council conditionally approved the PD-GDP, which included conditions of approval, including a condition to “Reduce the on-site parking to create more green space, especially adjacent to the Building A2 on the northwest side of the building.” As part of the Commission’s evaluation of this proposal, staff recommends the Commission provide feedback related to whether this condition has been met.

Planned Development Zoning: The project site is located within the Maple Grove Commons General Development Plan Planned Development (est. 2010). As noted in the recently approved amended General Development Plan, development of the project site is anticipated to be “A three-story mixed use apartment building with up to 120 dwelling units and approximately 2,500 square-feet of retail space. There will be approximately 201 parking stalls for this portion of the development (approximately 1.67 stalls per dwelling unit), with 107 of the parking stalls being located under the building.”

As noted in the Zoning Text, permitted uses are all uses as allowed in the Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T) District, which states that a Conditional Use is required for dwelling units in mixed-use buildings (>60 units).

Staff notes that while the proposed development generally appears to be consistent with the approved General Development Plan as amended, ultimately the Zoning Administrator will determine zoning compliance.

Adopted Plans: The City's most contemporary adopted plan for the area is the [Comprehensive Plan](#) that recommends the project site for Neighborhood Mixed-Use development. The Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use recommendation includes more prescriptive development objectives, including those related to building form and type, which in this case is 2-4 stories, and where free-standing commercial buildings would be appropriate.

Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC review the proposed Specific Implementation Plan and provide feedback and findings based on the standards for Planned Developments and PD-GDP conditions of approval as noted above as it pertains to the design considerations noted below.

- **Exposed Building Base – Internal Elevations.** While improvements have been made to the grading plan that resulted in the amount of building exposure along the street frontages being decreased, exposed base walls are still present along the internal facades oriented towards the central parking area. These areas are largely clad in board formed concrete sandwich panels versus the primary building materials being brought down to the ground. While these areas are internally focused, they are the primary views of the residents. As such, consideration should be given to utilizing the same level of design and detailing across all elevations.

As noted by the Commission in their Informational Presentation comments further refinements were necessary to screen or articulate blank wall exposures with landscape or materials.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on possible building modifications to improve the character and design of these portions of the building.

- **Building Orientation.** As noted above, although there have been adjustments in the site grading to reduce the building exposure along street frontages, it remains that only main building entries appear to be well-connected to the street. Consideration should be given to improving the overall building orientation to the street, including providing direct connectivity for the individual unit entries to the street.

As noted by the UDC in their Informational Presentation comments, options for providing a better building orientation to the street should be explored, including opportunities for individual unit patios being extended towards the street and garden walls framing them, as well as providing walk-up units and anchoring the building corner at McKee and Maple Grove Road.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings regarding building orientation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition as it relates to PD Standard (e), which speaks to creating "*...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...*" Consideration should be given to maintaining a similar level of design and architectural detailing, as well as maintaining a consistent application of materials across all elevations (i.e., rhythm and undulation in the application of masonry materials), incorporating relief in materials transitions, minimizing blank walls, etc.

Staff notes that while the applicant has indicated that VTAC/PTAC units will be used, the applicant has indicated that VTAC/PTAC units will be located on the inside of balconies, and not on the main facades; they will be visible but obscure. Consideration should continue to be given to the finish treatment of these units to further limit visibility.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition.

- **Building Materials.** As noted on the elevation drawings, the exterior materials are primarily comprised of several different types of fiber cement material applications (board and batten, panels, lap siding) and colors, as well as multiple types of masonry veneer materials. Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the overall material palette as it relates to the PD Standard (e), "*...creating an environment of aesthetic desirability.*"
- **Landscape and Screening.** As noted in the renderings, there appears to be a fair amount blank exposure of blank walls, especially on those elevations that are internal to the site. In addition, the project includes two surface parking lots, to which units will be oriented. As such, consideration should be given to providing adequate year-round screening and buffers to soften these elements and mitigate adverse impacts, including head-light glare into units.

In summary and generally, the UDC's Informational Presentation comments noted that:

- Additional landscape is needed on both sides of the pool terrace screen to soften the hardscape area and tie the element into the overall site/landscape, including ornamental trees or a mass planting of grasses,
- The "dog run" amenity space also needed planting along the base of the fence,
- Selecting a more decorative fence or wall versus chain-link,
- There are opportunities for more planting beds and materials in the elevated amenity space; and
- Adjusting the parking lot landscape islands and trees to be consistent across both development sites in the PD.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the proposed landscape plan and plant list, especially in terms of screening blank walls and softening hardscape areas.

- **Surface Parking – Condition of Approval.** As noted above, a PD-GDP condition of approval requires that the on-site surface parking be reduced to create more open space, especially adjacent to the Building A2 on the northwest side of the building. Staff notes that the current GDP-SIP site plan shows 43, which equates to a total of 12 parking stalls being removed for the creation of a "fenced dog run".

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings as it pertains to whether the condition of approval has been adequately addressed, including as it relates to the PD Standards that speak to open space:

PD Standard (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.*"

Summary of Informational Presentation Discussion and Comments

As a reference, the Commission's discussion and comments from the September 25, 2024, Informational Presentation are provided below.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission inquired about the intent of the pilasters, wrapped columns and their placement related to the siding. The applicant responded that they will likely go up against the siding and that the intent was to break-up the upper floor of the building and to create a more human scale; without them the design gets pretty massive. The applicant team felt that the columns did a better job create an accent.

The Commission asked about the future locations of louvers and wall packs. The applicant replied that unit louvers will be located on the inside of balconies, and not on the main façades; they will be visible, but obscure.

The Commission inquired about the solar exposure of the pool, and whether consideration had been given to shifting it eastward for more afternoon sun. The applicant responded that they did do a solar study, which showed sun in this area for most of the day. The pool was shifted to get more pool area – it is possible to shift it north, but the pool size would like be reduced. The pool renderings show one or two hours within midday.

The Commission discussed the street side of pool terrace, noting the architectural screen is a nice touch, but it is lacking in how it fits in with the landscape. Both sides should have some sort of softscape to help anchor the screen; ornamental trees or mass planting of ornamental grasses to help reinforce it as a filtered screen. The commission noted that the dog run area also needs plantings at the base of the fence. There are opportunities for more planting beds and material to soften the elevated terrace.

The Commission inquired about the location of the dog run, noting that it will be highly visible. The applicant replied that this location gives good access from both buildings, allows for a reduction in parking on the A2 building. The Commission noted that there will need to be some design efforts made in what that looks like as it is very visible.

The Commission noted that the exposed building base is quite a large amount of exposure without any landscape or other architectural tools to soften or modulate it. The Commission noted that they would expect to see some improvements there. The Commission also suggested that exploring if the entries could be connected to the street is necessary, as well as making the pilasters functional as well as decorative.

The Commission also noted that exploring the idea of making the surface parking area and where the dog run is more of a courtyard type experience rather than just exposed to the street. The dog run could be defined better than with just a chain link fence along McKee; maybe a low masonry wall or some other architectural elements to give it that courtyard effect. Bringing some of the building elements out into the public realm a little bit for more connection with the two main streets.

The Commission further commented on the building orientation towards the street, especially at the corner of McKee and Maple Grove. The setback of the building doesn't preclude first floor patios and garden walls. First floor patios could come out further into the green area and denote privacy with a small gate, fence or garden wall, or all three of them. The expanse of walls without openings could be helped with a terraced wall could help minimize the height of that wall without having to change the function of the building.

The Commission noted the building corner is really not anchored in the landscape, it needs hardscape improvements to hold the edge and connect to the corner. Low site walls or terrace walls, hardscape patio and additional landscaping.

The Commission noted that the rhythm of the parking lot trees and spacing, as well as islands should be consistent across the two developments, from west to east.

The Commission suggested looking at how residents re-enter the building where there is only a single stair door with no glazing. There should be more of an entrance that ties to the sidewalk for pedestrians.

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