

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 16, 2023



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1609 S Park Street
Application Type: Renovation of an existing building in Urban Design District (UDD) 7
UDC is an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [78641](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Steve Doran, Galway Companies

Project Description: The applicant is proposing exterior renovations to an existing building and site, including removal of an existing atrium space, changes to exterior materials, relocate the existing drive-thru, and landscape and lighting improvements.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC reviewed and subsequently referred this item at its July 26, 2023, meeting, requesting additional information and modifications to the exterior of the building.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this item at its August 28, 2023, meeting.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 7 ("UDD 7"), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(14).

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T). Within the mixed-use and commercial zoning districts there are general provisions related to building and site design that are intended to foster high-quality building and site design. Such standards are outlined in [Section 28.060](#), including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials (see attached). Staff notes that while attached for reference, compliance with the design standards is not triggered by the proposed development as applicability of the ordinance is limited to new buildings and major expansion of 50 percent or more of the building floor area.

The Zoning Code also includes requirements for vehicle sales and service window uses (aka drive-thru uses) within the TOD Overlay ([Sec. 28.104\(8\)\(c\)](#)), as well as Supplemental Regulations ([Sec. 28.151](#)) for new drive-thru windows. The TOD Overlay requires the new vehicle sales and service windows "*...shall be located under the building in which they are located.*" The Supplemental Regulations require that the use not be located between the building and the street. As determined by the Zoning Administrator, the proposed vehicle sales and service window, as designed, is consistent with both the TOD Overlay requirements in that it is within the existing building structure as a result of the canopy roof addition, and the Supplemental Regulations because the vehicle sales and service window is screened from view by a wall.

Summary of Design Considerations

First, staff recognizes the applicant team for making design modifications to the building and site, many of which are consistent with the UDC's initial review comments, including making refinements to the street facing façade to be more consistent with the UDD 7 guidelines and requirements, and simplifying the building materials and articulation. In addition, the applicant has provided additional information as requested by the UDC, including a lighting plan and overall site plan showing the shared site access and circulation.

Staff requests that the UDC review the revised development proposal and make findings based on the UDD 7 standards and guidelines, as well as the Commission's previous comments related to the design considerations noted below.

- **Site Planning Considerations.** *Commission Comment: The applicant shall submit a site plan that shows all of the parcels in the row (aka planned multi-use site) and circulation.*

With regard to site access and circulation, the applicant has provided a "Site Access Diagram" supplement. The supplement was prepared working closely with Traffic Engineering staff and taking into consideration the surrounding context and infrastructure both located on site and shared with the adjacent parcels, the limited scope of the proposed site improvements, minimizing conflicts and disruptions in vehicular/pedestrian traffic flow, and the future BRT route.

The project site will have three points of access, one from S Park Street on the north and two from Beld Street on the east. In an effort to accommodate the anticipated demand for vehicle queueing in the drive-thru relocating the vehicle access sales and service window to the south side of the building was believed to be the best solution. While much of the existing site infrastructure is being maintained, including the access drive that currently exists in front of the building, the cross access between the project site and the adjacent property to the south has been eliminated from the plan. This will limit queueing and parking conflicts, disruptions in traffic flow, as well as the potential for queueing into the intersection of S Park and W Wingra Drive. Overall, Traffic Engineering staff is supportive of this revised site access and circulation plan.

- **Building Orientation.** *Commission Comment: The applicant shall revise the elevations to meet the UDD 7 requirements for entry orientation and window openings.*

The UDD 7 Windows and Entrances requirements state that, "...non-retail buildings should have at least 40 percent of the street wall devoted to windows." As proposed, staff have estimated the window coverage is roughly 32 percent. While this is undoubtedly an improvement from the previous iteration with 25 percent window coverage, the street facing elevation still **does not** appear to meet this requirement, which the UDC does not have the ability to waive.

UDD 7 Windows and Entrances and Building Setbacks and Orientation guidelines state that, "Building entrances should be designed as the focal point of the front façade" and "The front facade of the building and the primary entrance should face the primary street." As proposed these guidelines **appear to be met**.

Staff requests the Commission make findings related to the design of the building's street facing façade as it relates to the aforementioned UDD 7 guidelines and requirements.

- **Building Design and Materials.** *Commission Comment: The applicant shall refine the building design to simplify the material palette and articulation per comments, including letting materials express individual elements versus spreading materials across the façade, and limiting variations in roof heights, especially at the recessed northwest corner of the building.*

As noted in the UDD 7 Materials and Colors guidelines and requirements, "Exterior materials shall be durable, high-quality materials." In addition, UDD 7 Building Massing and Articulation requirements and guidelines generally speak to utilizing four sided architecture and consistent application of materials and details across all elevations.

While it appears that the applicant has made several modifications to the building design and materials which appear to be consistent with the Commission's previous comments, including minimizing roof transitions, using a singular material to express architectural features, and simplifying the material palette, which is primarily comprised of a brick veneer and EIFS materials with metal accents, staff requests the Commission's findings related to the proposed material palette, especially as it pertains to the UDD 7 Materials and Colors guidelines and requirements as noted above.

- **Knee Wall along S Park Street.** *Commission Comment: The applicant shall update the plans to correct the material call-out for the knee wall along S Park Street (from concrete to masonry).*

As shown on the plans, there is an 18" knee wall along S Park Street frontage at the edge of the patio area. While the architectural elevations show this wall as masonry, the civil plans' note indicates that this wall is still concrete. Staff recommends that this comment be carried forward as a condition of approval.

- **Lighting.** *Commission Comment: The applicant shall submit photometric plan and fixture cutsheets for review and approval, which can be completed administratively by the UDC Secretary.*

Staff notes that while a photometric plan and fixture cutsheets have been provided, upon review of the materials there are inconsistencies with MGO 29.36, Outdoor Lighting. The applicant is advised that the photometric plan will need to be revised to be consistent with outdoor lighting requirements pursuant to MGO 29.36 and the UDD 7 Lighting guidelines and requirements, which generally speak to providing adequate, but not excessive lighting and utilizing full cut-off fixtures. Staff recommends that this comment be carried forward as a condition of approval.

Summary of July 26, 2023 UDC Discussion and Action

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the July 26, 2023, meeting are provided below.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- Could you describe the project limits, where parking is on-site and adjacent, and focus on the accessibility stalls in the vicinity.
 - There are two adjacent properties, it is a very heavily congested street, the drive-thru comes off the back side to avoid conflict with pedestrians on Park Street. Parking is shared along with the neighboring security company. It is mostly a drive-thru due to parking limitations on the site. There is also additional parking on the side for pick-up orders. There is no internal seating.
- If someone misses the side street to get in here, what happens while they're driving through neighboring properties? Did anyone ask the neighborhood how they feel about this?
 - Yes, Steve had a neighborhood meeting. There are four-way lights at the corner.
- Do you think cars will cut through the existing business (Bob's Copy Shop) to get here?
 - Yes, Starbucks is particular about their queuing, so as not to back up onto the street. The signage package will include directional and wayfinding.
- I'm trying to get an understanding of how wayfinding might work. Where would signage first initiate a car pulling off of Park Street?
 - There might a shared sign that says 'mobile parking' and 'pick-up orders.' Also a 'drive-thru' only sign.
- For people picking up the mobile app order, how do they enter the site?
 - Through here off the shared parking, and there's additional over here.
- Was there a drive-thru existing here?

- Correct. People were coming in the same exact way. We're just moving the drive-thru to be covered for the extra queuing, that way they don't disrupt the street.
- That prevents an entrance off of Park Street. What drove the relocation of the drive-thru? Is that moved to conceal the drive-thru to comply with the UDD requirements?
 - The drive-thru was moved for queuing. It must be covered per the guidelines. This allows us to build a structure to hide the drive-thru window.
- The building materials, I see brick and EIFS. What's at the base?
 - We do have brick and could expand farther along the base if needed. We do have some existing EIFS, a metal wrap throughout the building, columns, cement siding, and a precast band above the brick.
- If the Commission says we don't really like this, going in front of the building, have you looked at other options?
 - Yes, we worked with Planning staff and Starbucks, there isn't another option without moving the drive-thru window. The current drive-thru location is not acceptable to Starbucks.
- What were the other options?
 - They were shot down very quickly by Starbucks, they wouldn't develop here without the needed queuing space.
- Are customers leaving through the back to Beld Street?
 - Yes, they can leave that way.
- Did Arby's use the Beld Street entrance before?
 - Yes, I believe so. They had to come in and make a loop around.
- I'm not concerned about the queuing, the UDD 7 guidelines are more about building design in terms of glazing.
 - We are limited on the existing structure, we thought it was linear square-footage. We've added about 3-5 feet of parapet to make more interesting architecture per the guidelines, and to hide rooftop equipment.
- What about the punched one under the canopy?
 - Yes, and we are open to adding more glazing.
- That would help your percentage get to 40. It's tough when you're using an existing structure, and then a new ordinance placed on top of it. The queuing is what it is. As far as the materials it's a cohesive design but UDD 7 elements should be met or be closer to being met.
- The requirements about having a dedicated front entrance on a primary street, has that impacted in any way that there is not in essence an interior business here? An entrance to what?
- (Secretary) It does not, the interior design does not play into the exterior guidelines. An entrance needs to be oriented towards the primary street, that is the UDD 7 requirement.
- It seems to me losing the driveway on Park Street would be a benefit to the detriment of forcing traffic onto Beld Street. Does the City take a position on that?
- (Secretary) I do believe the applicant team has worked with Traffic Engineering in working out queuing on the site and knowing that the additional queuing would be necessary. This was the plan that made the most sense.
- Is Starbucks asked to provide numbers for daily visits?
- (Secretary) I do not know. I would add that the closure of the entrance on S Park Street is also factored into the site circulation, especially since it is a BRT corridor.
- The addition of windows under the sign is handsome and presents a nice storefront, but the other windows are not in alignment with those. It looks like you shrunk the window sizes at another location. Why are the windows so different on this elevation, different proportions?
 - They tend to come up with the interior design later, this is where they want transom windows as it is where staff will be working. We've added more glass inside and an entrance here for pick up orders.
- There are multiple roofs, how are they planned to drain, especially at the pick-up window?

- We'll have internal drains hidden behind the pillars connecting to the storm sewer. The roof is currently pitching down and in, we'll have roof drains here also. Right now they just come out the back of the building and down the driveway.
- The staff memo notes there is a wall, can you show us the wall that faces the street and is somehow a screening wall?
 - The wall protects the view of the drive-thru.
- It blocks the view of the drive-thru, not the street, okay.
- The staff report mentions cohesive architecture, and simplification of roof height. I don't have a problem with the roof heights. This is a great improvement to what was there. The varying levels give it some architectural character and interest. Nobody talked about the landscape plan, but it is mentioned in the staff report. What about the lighting?
 - That's still being worked on.
- Do you need that for final approval?
- (Secretary) That's up to the Commission, if you want to see lighting and photometrics, or if you think it's an administrative approval. Lighting does get reviewed at site plan review process.
- I agree, I think you can handle the lighting.
- I'm thoroughly confused about why there would be an entrance. Can pedestrians come in and order coffee?
 - People can walk up and order. It's meant for walk up orders and drive-thru only. There will be outdoor patio space in the summer.
- (Secretary) I was confused by that in the letter of intent. Are you suggesting people will walk through the drive-thru?
 - People will walk up to an order space inside, make an order, grab their coffee and be on their way.
- (Secretary) And they can go inside the building?
 - Yes they can go in and place their order, then come outside with their coffee.
- Is it normal to just predict that people would enter the site from an adjacent property to get to these parking spots?
- (Secretary) This is a planned multi-use site that shares access, there are cross-access easements for all three of the parcels here.
- The business being closed for 18 months, can you tell us whether or not the drive-in front is grandfathered in or not?
- (Secretary) There was a conditional use for the Arby's drive-thru, which was good for one year after the business closed. That's why Starbucks will be in front of the Plan Commission. We're looking at site design, building design, and landscape design, but we don't get to make a call on drive-thru use.
- What is the screen enclosure material?
 - Comparable to the building, a masonry enclosure that will match the brick on the building. Wood or Cedar siding stained to match the building.
- Staff or Traffic Engineering does not have significant problems with circulation for automobiles?
- (Secretary) That's correct, not that I am aware of. I would add that when we're looking at the site from a zoning perspective, we're reusing an existing site and much of its infrastructure is already there. The ability to push for full compliance with the TOD, the zoning code does not require them to meet all those requirements because it is reusing an existing site.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Given the TOD and everything being existing, being reused, I think it meets a lot of things with exception of UDD 7 windows, those need to be addressed.

A motion was made by Asad, seconded by Klehr, for Final Approval with conditions, including:

- The applicant shall submit a photometric plan and fixture cutsheets for review and approval, which can be completed administratively by the UDC Secretary,
- The applicant shall revise the elevations to meet the UDD 7 requirements for entry orientation and window openings,
- The applicant shall update the plans to correct the material call-out for the knee wall along S Park Street (from concrete to masonry), and
- The applicant shall refine the building design to simplify the material palette and articulation per comments.

Discussion on the motion:

- I'm sympathetic with neighbors' concerns about aspects of this and how it seems in conflict with some of the City's goals for this area. A building that is premised on being pretty much strictly a drive-thru, I'd be curious how much is walk-up and how much is drive-up. We are trying to get away from an auto-centric culture and drive-thrus are incompatible on their face. They've done some good things, the landscaping in particular is such a vast improvement over what is there right now. A great improvement visually for this stretch. There's something to be said for losing that entry on Park Street and the traffic that would be on Beld Street.
- I won't be supporting this, I really don't believe it meets the guidelines of urbanism on Park Street. Sharing these easements, there could be planning on how to get in and out of this property, I'd prefer that on Park Street rather than circulating through the neighborhood. For me having the drive aisle in front of the building right on the street is a no-go.
- I still don't understand the elevation of the concrete wall facing Park Street.
 - It's a brick knee wall that matches the building.
- As much as the design is aesthetically an improvement, there are some fundamental issues with the use of this building that are manifesting itself in the design. That signals that something is fundamentally wrong with what is proposed here.
- Those issues will be solved in the conditions of approval. The door will be in alignment of UDD 7. The things that don't fit, we're making sure they do fit.
- The proposal to move the door to Park Street in my opinion is not an improvement. The overhang is nice, I'm struggling to see what that will look like with a door rather than storefront glazing. I like the effort from the design team on the covering over the drive-thru, but that has now absorbed more of an already constrained site. These are all signals of something fundamentally problematic with this proposal.
- I would agree with a lot of the positive improvements, including the landscaping. Removing the drive on Park Street is nice, but not nice as we've discussed. I just don't think the site plan works, you have a lot of pedestrian crossings, vehicular merging/crossings, not to mention what will likely become the primary route into queuing through Bob's Copy Shop parking lot. I can't see the site plan working, if you're increasing traffic on Beld Street, there's going to be a wayfinding problem with all of that circulation and long distances of where you come in and where you want to end up.
- For a business that is primarily a drive-thru coffee shop, the site plan stinks. The site plan for cars and circulation is really pretty bad. With regard to the building I sympathize with Rafeeq, it's an existing building, they're actually giving more volume to the building to screen HVAC units and adding more windows. The only other solution is to keep the roof low with individual screening around units. The entrance to the building is on Park Street, whether the door is here or there. The landscaping is a huge improvement too. With regard to building design there may be too many materials. Instead of stratifying materials and spreading them around, have different materials express different elements, like what you're doing with the overhangs; one material and one element. I agree with the staff report that there may be an opportunity to minimize the variation of roof heights, you have a lot going on, especially at the recessed northwest corner. I think the dumpster material question has been answered. The façade articulation and entrance.

- (Secretary) The wall is noted as concrete, although the testimony noted masonry.
 - Starbucks is getting away from the concrete, it's just a knee wall to protect pedestrians.
- (Secretary) Since there is a conflict between the testimony and the plans, I would recommend the Commission include a condition on that.
- The motion also includes the condition that the knee wall be brick, per the applicant testimony.

The motion failed on a roll call vote of (3-4-0) with Asad, Von Below, and Harper voting yes; Rummel, Knudson, Bernau, and Klehr voting no; and Chair Goodhart non-voting.

- The motion failed, so we are looking for another motion on the project.

A motion was made by Rummel, seconded by Knudson, for Referral requesting a site plan that shows all of the parcels in the row (aka planned multi-use site) and circulation.

Discussion on the motion:

- If they went to Traffic Engineering and TE approved this site plan, I don't think we are getting away from the drive aisle in the front. If TE is suggesting this site plan, kicking the can down the road is not going to get us what we want. TE is who works with the applicant to develop this plan, and they approve this queuing or this route, I don't know that a site plan will change. Just wanted the Commission to consider that as we continue to want that to go away.
- I can appreciate that. It is also the insistence of such a large queuing that forces a lot of that turning and confusion in the back of the site versus being able to come in and maybe place your order in a different spot and queue around the back of the building. We are not here to design it. I didn't hear there was opposition for the drive-thru so swing around the front of the building as there was concern for the overall site design for car circulation.
- I just want to add that the conditions are still relevant as far as seeing those kind of improvements, including the window percentage, and the others. Just want to make sure those also come back as part of our review.
- I would also like to see some simplification in use of materials as well per previous comments.

UDC Action

On a motion by Rummel, seconded by Knudson, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-3), with Rummel, Knudson, Bernau, and Klehr voting yes; Asad, Harper and Von Below voting no; and Chair Goodhart voting yes to pass the motion.

Discussion on the motion:

- The applicant shall submit a site plan that shows all of the parcels in the row (aka planned multi-use site) and circulation,
- The applicant shall submit photometric plan and fixture cutsheets for review and approval, which can be completed administratively by the UDC Secretary,
- The applicant shall revise the elevations to meet the UDD 7 requirements for entry orientation and window openings,
- The applicant shall update the plans to correct the material call-out for the knee wall along S Park Street (from concrete to masonry), and
- The applicant shall refine the building design to simplify the material palette and articulation per comments.