



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 630 E Washington Avenue
Application Type: Redevelopment of the Salvation Army Campus Located in UDD No. 8 – Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID # [56474](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Major Andrew Shiels, Salvation Army | Marc Ott, JLA Architects

Project Description: The applicant is seeking Final Approval to construct a five-story building with a mission house, rooming house, counseling services, health services and place of worship, and a separate three-story, 40-unit apartment building.

Project Schedule:

- The Urban Design Commission received an Informational Presentation on July 17, 2019.
- The Urban Design Commission granted Initial Approval on October 16, 2019.
- The Plan Commission approved this proposal on November 11, 2019 (Legistar #[57108](#)).

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is within portions of **Blocks 1a and 1b in Urban Design District (UDD) 8**, 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(15).

In reviewing plans for development in the UDD 8, the Urban Design Commission shall apply the district requirements and guidelines as may be appropriate in order to implement the Core Development Principles of the [East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan](#). In order to approve, ordinance requires that the development is found to meet the requirements and conform as much as possible to the guidelines.

Summary of Design Related Plan Recommendations:

The East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan (the “Plan”) provides a framework for addressing significant land use and design issues for the area centered along East Washington Avenue, from East Mifflin to East Main Streets, one of the City’s most prominent corridors. As noted in the Plan, the project site is recommended for high-density residential (E Mifflin Street) and community mixed-use land uses (E Washington Avenue), and is identified as a possible shared parking structure site.

The Plan generally provides development principles and design guidelines that speak to maintaining Capitol views by establishing maximum and minimum heights, setbacks and stepbacks, encouraging building design, materials, and colors that are complementary to and consistent with surrounding development, providing a mix of land uses, and creating a vibrant streetscape along East Washington Avenue.

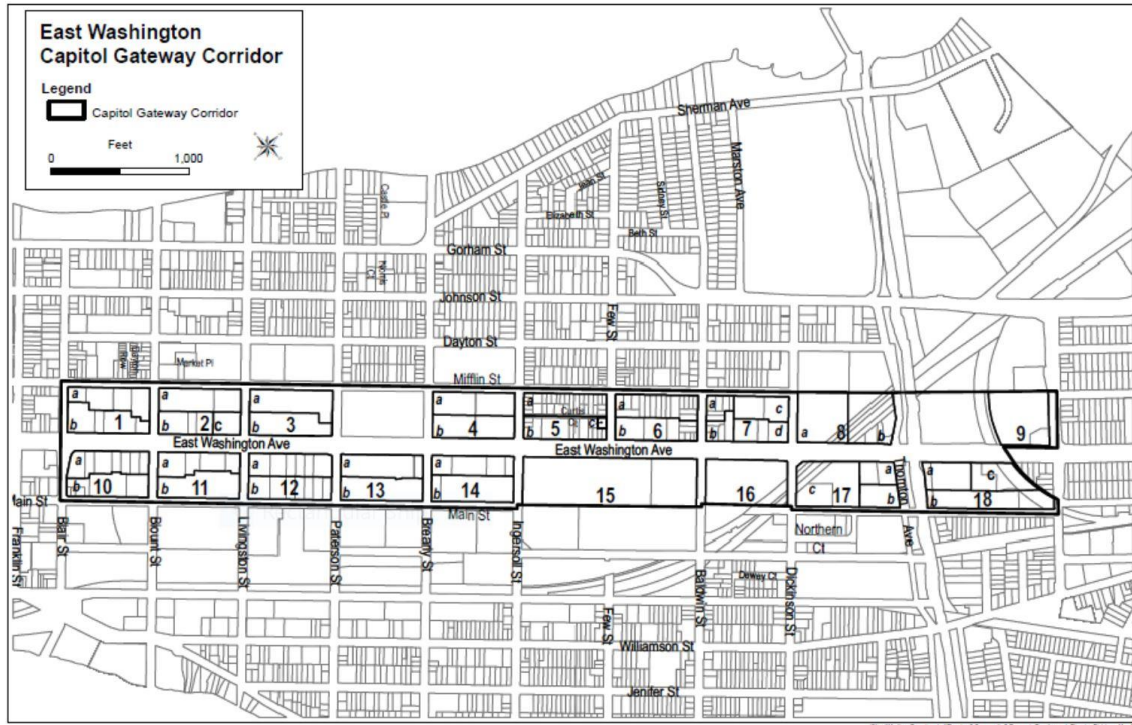
Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC make findings and base their decision regarding the aforementioned standards for UDD 8. As part of this review, staff recommends consideration be given to the following:

- **Roof Trellis Features.** While the smaller roof trellis detail on E Mifflin Street has been removed, a pitched roof trellis feature still remains adjacent to a mechanical screen on the E Washington Avenue penthouse element.

In addition, as part of the Initial Approval, the Commission adopted a condition of approval to scale back the trellis overhang on E Washington Avenue penthouse element. As noted on the plans, the dimensioned height to the top of the trellis feature is 77 feet from grade. Staff notes that while this feature appears to exceed the five story height limit, UDD 8 height specifies that “non-habitable space from architectural features shall not be included in the height calculation.” As such, staff believes the feature isn’t precluded by UDD 8 or the Zoning Code, though careful consideration should be given to this as part of the UDC’s action related to design of that corner and cohesiveness of roof configuration.

- **Building Materials and Detailing.** As noted in the Commission’s previous comments and conditions, several building elements and details were identified for which design consideration should be given and/or refined, including:
 - Continuity of window fenestration, size, and location across all building facades,
 - The location of building vents and flues, minimizing impacts on surrounding residential development, and
 - Composition of building materials and transitions, including panel siding and horizontal siding materials, as well as detailing.
- **Signage.** Potential sign areas and sign types are noted on the building elevations. Staff requests UDC review and comment on the proposed sign locations and types. Please note that separate review and approval will be required for all new signage.
- **Block 1a and b Transition along N Blount Street.** The project site is located within UDD 8, Block 1. The subject block is divided into Blocks 1a and 1b, with each district containing different building height requirements. While the dividing line between sub-districts is typically mid-block in most parts of UDD 8, the dividing line in the subject blocks follows existing property lines as shown in the image below.



UDD 8 has a building maximum street level façade height of five stories for Block 1b and three stories for Block 1a. Block 1b extends roughly 90 feet from E Washington Avenue, north along N Blount Street, where Block 1b begins. As shown on the floor plans, the proposed shelter building extends approximately 111 feet from E Washington Avenue north along N Blount Street. Based on the current UDD 8 street façade height restrictions, a stepdown to 2-3 stories would be required 90 feet into the site to meet the Block 1a height requirements. Staff estimates that this impacts roughly 20 feet of the façade along N Blount Street.

Staff notes that this aspect of the building has not changed since the original submittal and initial approvals. While not previously identified, the UDC’s previous Initial Approval does not waive the underlying code standard and plans must either be revised to meet the current code, or the ordinance changed to shift the location of this boundary. Staff is supportive of the code change as it would create consistency with other blocks and would allow for the development to proceed as previously approved by the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission. At the time of report writing, staff has discussed the change with the District Alder and a formal amendment to the code is being prepared for consideration. The code amendment will require separate review by the UDC and action by the Common Council. Staff has discussed the timing consideration with the City Attorney’s Office, and has been advised that the UDC has the option to conditionally approve the item. If the Commission wishes to do so, staff has recommended **Condition 1, below**.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Staff recommends the following conditions be considered as part of the Commission’s formal motion:

1. Prior to final sign-off and the issuance of permits, plans shall be found to comply relevant height and bulk standards for Blocks 1a and 1b. Based on the current plans, the building shall be revised or a subsequent adjustment to the boundary between Blocks 1a and 1b in UDD 8 shall be approved by

the Common Council prior to sign-off. This information shall be approved by the UDC Secretary.

Summary of UDC Initial Approval Comments and Conditions of Approval

Staff refers the Commission to their comments from the October 16, 2019, Initial Approval:

- We heard a number of comments about security. Please go over elements of the building that enhance security.
- When somebody is coming, how do they get to that underground parking, with a key card? When they're queuing up where are the cars waiting before they can park?
- Is there a possibility of having the first floor units face the courtyard with some outdoor space?
- You'll probably have pretty substantial security lighting. Make sure it's effective but not directed at your neighbors. The entrance to the Mifflin common entry doesn't look like it has much of a definition different than the other private entrances. There's no other queuing that it's a public entrance.
- Why is the setback for the apartments larger than required, because it makes for more unusable space? Why not push it closer to the street? You could increase the courtyard.
- Depending on how you do that you could make the stairs more hidden so it's not so inviting to others.
- On the elevation along E Washington, I'm concerned because that looks like your top elevation but when you read it from the street it seems separated.
- Be consistent with the coping or branding along the top. On that same elevation there's a lot of vertical glass, then horizontal glass. It's separate from your entry which is strong, but why horizontal on the corner?
- The rest is simple and elegant and I'm concerned you're adding more to it. And have continuity to the other corner all the way around.
- There's a requirement for double rows of trees along E Washington Avenue, it looks like you're mostly hitting that with the landscape plan.
- The species selection is intentionally low or tall and not middle, that looks good. One exception was the Witch Hazel in the back corner near the ramp, there are only two of them, they would be easy to swap out.
- The corner perspective of Mifflin and Blount, the little cap that projects off the corner is mirroring the larger big brother, but to me it feels weird and out of place. Where it's important to convey timelessness that reads awkward.
- It has sort of a stuck on element. It's not offensive as much as it seems a little out of place.
- It's a single element, it doesn't tie in.
- Can you speak to what you're doing for run off, particularly with the surface parking lots? Have you considered permeable pavers?
- The notion of underground parking here given what I've personally seen and driven through here is scary, I'm glad to hear you're taking that into consideration and building in redundancy. I still have some issues but it sounds like you're on the right track.
- The issue of those entrances to the apartment building on Mifflin Street, with those open steps or stoops, in certain places that would be wonderful but in this neighborhood, given the problems, I'm not sure giving people a place to sit and take up space is something you should be doing. Sometimes these things have gates (i.e. New York or Chicago) but it says this isn't for someone walking down the street to be using. It may address some of the neighbors' concerns if it wasn't so wide open.
- With the safety concerns, it might be better to move the entrance to the other side of the building. These big walls, we want to make sure it's more visible for safety concerns. The entries could be moved to the other side of the building.

- The overhangs, the smaller building takes over entirely and has zero purpose. The other seems overly obtrusive, so large. I don't understand the point of the louvers and what's underneath because you're going to get some massive icicles hanging off those.
- It may look better with a more generous overhang but not that far.
- We've had this conversation before of affordable housing, materials and details, and not to look like affordable housing. People are more respectful in places that respect them. Look at the quality of the materials going on the building, how they're detailed and how they go together.
- Stripping all of that articulation of the façade out of there and making it look institutional would be to the detriment of the project. I fear that by stripping out that nice breakdown and massing along the rest of Mifflin, this building now takes on this identity that you don't want it to have. I think everyone in the room can acknowledge that we're dealing with some tricky issues. I would be careful to not take too much of that nice character out of the façade.
- Perhaps tricky issues require some extraordinary solutions. Just to remind the Commission in our motion we should, as requested by staff, have a finding whether or not the project is in compliance with UDD No. 8 standards. The request is Initial, which is basically building mass, site plan and materials. If you find the project is initially approvable, that means those design elements are fine the way they are. Also try to be specific on what you'd like to see from them next time.

A motion was made by DeChant, seconded by Weisensel, to grant Initial Approval. Discussion continued as follows:

- The neighbors who are concerned about the expanded services, I think within your site, how people move through the site, I still don't understand your hours of operation for when spill and people are not allowed on the site, the flow outside of the site. We restrain from making comments that don't involve the building site on projects, but so many public comments have been about how clients and people living there queue in and out of the site and how you handle that. Operational information that's not on the site about flow and stacking, hours of operation and other security operations.
- I heard promises of considering blue roof, LEED certification.
- The double row of street trees is something I'd like to see follow-up on.
- Please look for programs run by the State on energy efficiency in building codes.
- The staff report #1, the height and setback along E Washington, do we think that has been addressed?
- I believe what we're seeing on the screen, not what's in your packet, is updated.

Conditions of Initial Approval for updated plans (October 16, 2019):

- Confirmation that adjusted penthouse level meets 15' setback.
- Confirmation that E Mifflin Street meets the 20' maximum setback.
- Confirmation that the parking lot meets setback requirements.
- Respond to comments regarding the orientation of Mifflin Street walk-up entries, consider adding a gate and/or orienting them toward the courtyard. Keep "The Shield" apartment entry on E Mifflin Street and carefully consider how to articulate the exterior elevation if the walk-up entries are moved.
- Provide more detail on building operational information, i.e. how people move through the site, hours of operation, where people wait to be accepted, where people go if not allowed on site, how people flow through the site, parking entrance queuing, etc.
- Eliminate smaller roof trellis detail on E Mifflin Street and scale back the trellis overhang on E Washington Avenue penthouse element.

Considerations and requested information for Final Approval:

- Stormwater – more detail on how it is being addressed i.e. pervious pavers, etc.
- Provide information on all existing and proposed trees, including street trees. Work with City Forestry on E Washington Avenue, Blount Street and E Mifflin Street terraces.
- Bring samples of exterior building materials. Provide quality materials that are well detailed and don't look like affordable housing.
- Study window patterns/configurations, corner vs. street elevation, continuity of glazing.
- Provide more detail on E Washington Avenue elevation top of roof condition where the white metal panel stops at the top. Consider coping or banding detail.
- Provide more detail on sustainability measures, programs, i.e. Green Built Wisconsin, etc.
- Landscaping – replace Witch Hazel plan with other native planting.
- Confirm that the garage ventilation is not facing towards houses.