

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 17, 2024

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION



Project Address: 6402 Schroeder Road

Application Type: Major Exterior Alteration to an Existing Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 2
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [83459](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Jeff Stowe, Thrive Architects, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing to construction an approximately 7,500 square-foot addition to the existing building to provide additional classroom, multi-purpose space and teachers' lounge.

Project Schedule:

- At their June 12, 2024, meeting, the UDC granted Initial Approval with conditions.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 2 ("UDD 2"), 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\(9\)](#).

At the June 12, 2024, meeting, the Commission granted Initial Approval of this item with conditions that generally spoke to re-evaluating colors and material transitions, fencing materials, and updating the landscape plan to reflect bark mulch in the new planting beds. The Commission's subsequent review and continued evaluation of this item should focus on whether those conditions have been addressed.

Adopted Plans: The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan recommends the Employment (E) land use category for the project site. Employment areas generally include corporate and business offices, research facilities, hospitals, clinics and other similar uses, as well as limited retail and service establishments that primarily serve the employees and users of the area.

In addition, the project site is located in the Southwest Neighborhood Plan (the "Plan") planning area. Generally, the Plan recommendations identify goals for the Southwest Neighborhood, which specifically speak to increasing programs and services, as well as promoting economic opportunities and workforce development.

Summary of Design Considerations

As noted above, it is the role of the UDC to review the revised drawings for consistency with the conditions of approval as outlined below. Please note that as conditions of approval, they are required to be met. The UDC's role is to ensure these previously established conditions are met, however they cannot waive or change these requirements. Staff requests the UDC's continued evaluation and findings related to the following:

- Relook at the three blue colors to be sure they are compatible.

Staff believes this condition of approval has been met. The renderings have been updated to more accurately reflect the variation in the blue colors. In addition, the U accents on the south elevation have been refined to match the corner element color.

- Consider vinyl coted chain-link fence material in dark bronze or black.

Staff believes this condition has been met. As noted in the letter of intent, the proposed fence is vinyl coated black.

- Relook at how the building transitions from old to new, and provide more cohesion between the two.

Staff believes this condition has been met. As noted in the letter of intent, efforts have been made to provide more cohesiveness between the existing building and transition, including inverting the U accent elements on the addition, updating the color of the U accents to match the color of the corner, providing a recessed transition between the existing building and proposed addition, and maintaining existing datum lines.

- The continued use of stone mulch in the existing planting beds is acceptable. New planting areas shall use bark mulch.

As noted in the applicant's letter of intent, stone mulch is proposed to remain in the new planting beds adjacent to the building to maintain consistency with existing beds, and bark mulch will be used in all other new beds. Given the applicant's intent to maintain consistency in the foundation planting beds, staff believes this condition is met.

- The one Callery Pear Tree is acceptable, though not preferred; the architectural issues are more important.

As indicated in the applicant's letter of intent, the Callery Pear Tree has been replaced with an Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry.

Summary of UDC Initial Approval Discussion and Action

As a reference, the Commission's discussion and comments from the June 12, 2024, Initial Approval are provided below.

The Commission was generally in support of the proposed exterior modifications, with discussion centering on the transition between the existing building and the new addition. Clarifications were made that the existing awnings along the west façade will remain, using blue to tie into the school's logos and colors. The applicant clarified that the metal panel abuts the brick using a metal 'J' channel to slide into that joint, the metal coping matches the composite wood, and the window elements sit proud of the main façade for additional vertical interest.

Commissioner Harper inquired about the foundation plantings obscuring the panels underneath the windows. It was clarified that those will be low spreading Wichita Blue Junipers, which will not obscure the windows. He commended the landscape plan on the number and variety of oaks on the property; adding to the mature trees is a nice step for the future. He further noted that the Commission does not typically approve washed stone mulch, but that in this case, it is generally limited to the perimeter of the building in existing beds, the Commission could waive it in this case, as long as bark mulch is used in the newer planting areas. He requested

that the one Callery Pear tree be swapped out for another species. Skidmore replied that this particular species was selected for a specific purpose, as it is one of the first to flower in the spring, close to Easter, and is a signature plant for Christianity.

Further discussion centered on datum lines, parapet wall heights, window sill heights in comparison with interior ceiling heights, corner transition details, and the number and hues of proposed blue colors. Colors are highly subjective, it was suggested to look at how those three blues blend together, as one appears different having a marked gray tone.

Chair Goodhart commented that the existing building is very basic and minimal, and that usually there is a 'neck' in between the head and body. More attention should be paid to making the areas with white metal panel between the brick either a recessive color or element that goes back a foot or so, to make that transition less abrupt. The big blue element (i.e. the façade of the addition's multi-purpose room) could continue a bit closer to the existing building; perhaps a recessed slot where the door is that says, 'this is new.' It needs a well thought-out and intentional juncture between the two. The wood look metal panels should approximate the wood color that is already there. The composite wood is an unusual language around the windows, very different from the existing building, very different from the corner, protruding up above the roofline. While it is fine to be playful, there should be some connection to the blue corner, a band across the entire façade to bring some cohesiveness to the design. An inverted 'U' could work.

Chair Goodhart inquired about the fence material, noting that a vinyl coated chain link, in dark bronze or black, would complement the building better and look less institutional.

The Commission did not object to the color or playfulness, but noted it is not quite cohesive enough yet. More effort should be given to the composition since it is abstract. The Commission appreciates the effort and improvements to the building.

Action

On a motion by Knudson, seconded by von Below, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (4-0). The motion provided for the following:

- Relook at the three blue colors to be sure they are compatible.
- Consider vinyl coated chain link fence material, in dark bronze or black.
- Relook at how the building transitions from old to new, and provide more cohesion between the two.
- The continued use of stone mulch in the existing planting beds is acceptable. New planting areas shall use bark mulch.
- The one Callery Pear tree is acceptable, though not preferred; the architectural issues are more important.