



Project Address: 124 E Gorham Street
Application Type: Residential Building Complex
UDC is an Advisory Body
Legistar File ID #: [90077](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Joel Koeppen, Kahler Slater | Bruce Bosben, Apex Real Estate

Project Description: The applicant is proposing to construct a four-story, 18-unit multi-family residential building and convert an existing carriage house building into four residential units. The development will be served by underground parking.

Staff note that as part of this development proposal, the applicant is also seeking to combine two parcels (124 E Gorham Street and 116 E Gorham Street) into one. One of the existing parcels (116 E Gorham Street) includes a Madison designated landmark known as the Brown House. The Brown House is to remain “as is”.

Project Schedule:

- The Landmarks Commission approved a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a land combination and new construction in the Mansion Hill Historic District at their meeting on August 18, 2025 (Legistar File ID [87103](#)). The Landmarks Commission’s action included the condition of approval as noted below.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on December 1, 2025.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. [Section 33.24\(4\)\(c\)](#), MGO states that:

*“The Urban Design Commission shall review the **exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings** or structures and the **landscape plans** of all proposed residential building complexes. It shall report its findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission.”*

Related Zoning Information: The subject property is zoned DR1 (Downtown Residential 1 District). As proposed, both rear yard and side yard setback waivers are being requested *for just the carriage house*. As a Residential Building Complex, setback waivers may be requested as part of a conditional use. Any such waiver falls under the purview of the Plan Commission. Given that the setback waiver pertains only to the existing Carriage House building, staff have not identified any concerns with the requested setback waivers.

Staff note that ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with the Zoning Code requirements though UDC staff is not aware of significant code issues at this time.

Landmarks Commission Action: The applicant requested the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a land combination and new construction. The subject property is located within the Mansion Hill local historic district and once the land is combined, all of the project will be on a designated landmark site. Ultimately, the Landmarks Commission’s review focused on the new building being design with a sensitivity its context, both in mass and scale, as well as materials and detailing. In their review of the application, the Landmarks Commission found that the that the proposed land combination meets the standards of approval and that Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation could be met with the following conditions:

- Final specifications shall be submitted for the proposed windows, doors, railings, fiber cement siding, soffit, fascia, roof venting, lighting, and mechanicals with modifications as recommended in the staff report, and
- A relocation plan shall be submitted for the historic carriage house for its temporary removal and reinstallation once the parking structure is constructed.

The continued review and subsequent approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness related to the conditions will be completed administratively by staff.

Given the location of the project site in a historic district and that it includes a landmark, staff recommend that the UDC defer to Historic Preservation staff on the evaluation of the building design details included in the conditions of approval.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards and adopted plan recommendations as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** As noted above, the project site is located in the Mansion Hill Historic District, and the new building design has been reviewed and conditionally approved by the Landmarks Commission. While a Residential Building Complex requires UDC's advisory review, staff have not identified design-related considerations that have not already been addressed as part of the Landmarks Commission's action.

Staff note that further exterior modifications may require additional review and approval by the Landmarks Commission.

- **Landscape and Screening.** As indicated on the landscape plan, the proposed landscaping is primarily limited to the street frontage and the courtyard area between the buildings. As indicated on the landscape plan, the plant list is primarily comprised of perennials. While there is limited space for at-grade open spaces and landscaping, consideration should still be given to the softening of hardscape areas, providing year-round color, texture and screening.

Staff request the Commission's feedback and findings on the proposed landscape plan.