

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

June 1, 2016



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 601 Langdon Street
Application Type: Final Approval
Prepared By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Planning Division

The applicant requests approval of alterations to the “Graduate Madison” hotel located at 601 North Langdon Street. This request is subject to the approval standards for Zoning Map Amendments [MGO Section 28.182], Planned Developments, [MGO Section 28.098] and Conditional Uses [MGO Section 28.183].

Background and Project History

The hotel was originally constructed in 1960. It was rezoned to a Planned Development in 2001 to allow for expansions and renovations, which included the patio that now fronts onto Langdon Street. Alterations were most recently approved in September 2014 to create a roof-top restaurant and terrace. Those improvements also included the addition of a seven-story elevator and stair tower at the rear of the building. The project was originally reviewed by the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission. Those files can be viewed online at [34915](#) and [35425](#).

Summary of Request

There are two components to this current request. The first component is to establish a walk-up service window along the Frances Street façade. The Planning Division notes that walk-up service windows within 10 feet of the property line, such as this one, require conditional use approval in multiple zoning districts. At the direction of staff, this is being added as a conditional use in the site-specific Zoning Text. The lower third of the existing window will be covered with an opaque film to mask equipment and a two-door pass-through window and bar counter will be added. The Planning Division does not have design-related concerns on this element.

The second component of this request is for roof-top modifications for mechanical equipment and associated screening. As noted in the letter of intent, this equipment was not installed in accordance to approved plans. The applicant seeks approval for the as-built mechanicals and new screening.

While some other alterations were worked through with staff during the sign-off process, the rooftop alterations were not discussed with the Planning Division and Zoning Administrator until after their installation. It remains of significant concern that the project was not constructed in accordance with these plans. However, staff believes that should rooftop HVAC equipment have been originally presented with an architecturally integrated plan for screening, it is possible such changes to this existing building could have been found consistent with the applicable standards.

Existing photos and perspective illustrations of the proposed condition are included in the applicant’s materials.

The Planning Division requests that the UDC provide feedback on the following:

- **Rooftop Mechanical Screening.** The Planning Division requests feedback on whether the roof top HVAC screening, which is proposed as beige corrugated metal, is appropriate in terms of color and materiality or if other colors, materials, or textures would better integrate this screening into the building’s design.