



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 3401 E Washington Avenue  
**Application Type:** Residential Building Complex in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 5 Informational Presentation  
**Legistar File ID #:** [71151](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC | Mike Slavish, Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp.

**Project Description:** The applicant is providing an Informational Presentation for development of a Residential Building Complex consisting of approximately 245 units in four buildings, with underground parking and a large greenspace amenity for residents and the public.

**Approval Standards:** The project site is located in Urban Design District 5 (“UDD 5”), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design requirements and guidelines of [Section 33.24\(12\)](#). However, the project site is currently zoned Industrial Limited (IL), in which residential uses are not permitted. While the UDC is an **approving body** on development requests within UDDs, it will also be an **advisory body** on this request given the likely need for Conditional Use consideration. As such, the UDC should also consider the applicable Conditional Use review and approval criteria pursuant to Section 28.183, MGO, more specifically subsection 28.183(6)(a)(9), which states:

*When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation. (Am. by ORD-14-00030, 2-18-14).*

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is also within the Carpenter-Ridgeway-Hawthorne-Truax Neighborhood Plan (the “Plan”) planning area. The Plan identifies goals and objectives with regard to development in the planning area including those related to enhancing the visual and physical prominence of the Hawthorne Elementary School within the neighborhood, encouraging the development of neighborhood-oriented shopping nodes that host pedestrian-friendly businesses and mixed-use development along East Washington Avenue, enhancing aesthetics along East Washington Avenue, and improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

While the project site is within the planning area, the Plan does not specifically identify the project site as a “redevelopment site” for which specific design goals were developed.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC provides feedback related to the requirements and guidelines of UDD 5.

- **Site Planning Considerations.** Overall, there are a limited number of ground floor units located at the street level along E Washington Avenue. However, given the intensity of E Washington Avenue consideration should be given to providing adequate setbacks and buffer for these residential units, including landscaping, raised planters, noise mitigation, recessed balconies, etc.

In addition, the interior of the site is primarily designed with many units fronting and oriented towards a large surface parking area. Staff believes that consideration should be given to opportunities to enhance the orientation of these units. Such considerations may be reduced stall sizes, angled or parallel parking, enhanced landscaping, larger islands, limiting circulation and drive aisles, utilizing decorative concrete, pedestrian amenities, or the possible incorporation “woonerf” style of design in this area to create a shared neighborhood street.

- **Open Space and Pedestrian Connectivity.** As noted on the site plan, there is a large open space provided on the site that is concentrated in the southeast corner, with few units having direct access. Staff requests UDC provide feedback on the proposed open space and its location, which is currently sited adjacent to the abutting school property.
- **Building Transitions.** Along the E Washington Avenue frontage, the proposed building height is five stories, however as the building turns the corner to N Fair Oaks Avenue, the building mass abruptly drops to two stories. Staff requests UDC’s feedback regarding the appropriateness of the transition area or separation between buildings to accommodate the shift in mass and scale. Staff note that this may also create additional opportunities for site permeability and open space. Staff requests UDC provides feedback on the proposed five story height, as well as the proposed building transitions.
- **Building Design and Materials.** As proposed, there are four buildings that comprise the development. Each building presents a unique design aesthetic and color palette drawn from a similar materials palette, which is comprised of multiple types and colors of composite panel and lap siding, as well as masonry elements. Staff requests UDC provide feedback on overall building design relative to the architectural detailing (vertical and horizontal elements), application of materials and details, and the proposed material palette.