



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 929 E Washington Avenue

Application Type: Alteration to a Previously Approved Planned Multi-Use Site in Urban Design District ("UDD") 8 – Initial/Final Approval is Requested

Legistar File ID # [69485](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Doug Hursh, Potter Lawson, Inc. | Curt Brink, Archipelago Village, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is seeking Initial/Final approval for the alteration of a previously approved project. Previously approved as an office building, the project is being refined to reduce the amount of office space and include 105 residential units.

Project Background:

- The Urban Design Commission granted Final Approval of original proposal on April 24, 2019 ([62297](#) and original UDC file [54198](#)).
- Originally, the development proposal included an 11-story mixed-use building (156 feet in height) with modern architectural design comprised of 257,000 square feet of commercial/office space and wrapped structured parking.
- As part of the original approval UDC granted approval of bonus stories due to the fact that the height of the proposed building was in excess of what would be allowed by a 12-story building (147 feet).
- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on February 9, 2022.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission ("UDC") is an **approving body** on this request. The development site is within Urban Design District 8 ("UDD 8") - Block 13a, which requires that the UDC review the proposed project pursuant to the requirements and guidelines of [Section 33.24\(15\)](#). The code states that the UDC shall apply the UDD 8 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 the development proposal, the ordinance requires that the development can be 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 commercial and residential land uses.

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

Planning Division Staff requests that the UDC review the project, make findings and base their decision on the requirements and guidelines of UDD 8. As part of this Final Review, staff refers the Commission back to their Informational Presentation comments and notes consideration be given to the following:

- **Building Height and Bonus Stories.** As noted in UDD 8, the maximum building height is 12 stories without any bonus stories. The development proposal includes a request for two bonus stories for a total overall height of 14 stories. Bonus stories are permitted provided code-compliant setbacks and bonus story provisions are met. A total of three bonus stories may be allowed provided that the proposal provides sufficient public benefit to warrant the additional height, including but not limited to affordable housing, energy efficiency, sustainability, structured parking, pedestrian connectivity, and open space. Please refer to Section 33.25(15)(e)(12)(c) for additional information.

While the project site in its entirety is located within Blocks 13a and 13b of UDD 8, the proposed building is only located within Block 13a. Within UDD 8 there are specific requirements with regard to maximum building height, street level façade height, bonus stories, and setbacks for each block. Within Block 13a, building heights of up to 12 stories with the potential for three additional bonus stories are permitted. Street level façade heights of 3-5 stories are required for both blocks, as well as a 15-foot setback.

The maximum permitted height, within Block 13a, including the three bonus stories (15 stories total) would be 183 feet (assuming maximum floor-to-floor heights 15-foot first floor, 12-foot upper floors).

As proposed, the building is 14 stories with an overall height of approximately 157 feet, both of which are under the maximum permitted. Overall, staff believes the proposed building can be found to be consistent with the UDD 8 guidelines and requirements pertaining to maximum permitted heights, bonus stories, and setbacks, including but not limited to those that speak to providing structured parking, energy efficiency, green roofs, publicly accessible plaza space, and pedestrian connectivity.

Staff requests the Commission's findings related to the proposed bonus stories and building height.

- **Parking Garage Screen.** Staff requests UDC provide findings with regard to the garage screen architectural element, material, lighting, and details.
- **Balconies.** Both suspended and recessed balconies are proposed. As noted in the Commission's Informational Presentation comments, there was question as to the appropriateness of suspended balconies on the building ends. Staff requests the Commission make findings with regard to the use of suspended balconies.
- **Consideration of Future Signage Areas.** While signage will be a separate application, Staff requests UDC provide feedback on potential future sign areas along the E Washington frontage as noted in the application materials. Consideration should be given to the impacts of signage on architectural features, desired sign types, lighting, etc. As noted in UDD 8, sign design and placement should fit the character of the building and not obscure architectural features.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

Staff refers the Commission to their comments from the February 9, 2022, Informational Presentation:

- I would say this is a very sexy building, you have knocked it out of the park. The retail and parking, I beg you not to change anything on that section. Love the detail, the materials, this is a win. You've achieved everything you tried to accomplish. Those colored lights give a sense of place to that area, this will be a very welcomed and great addition to the area. Congratulations.
- It comes down to proportion and detailing. You can see there is already a lot of thought about how these materials are detailed, the depth of even the storefront. It struck me that all these buildings are the same color, this is lighter brick but when we look at the overall renderings, why not a cream or gray brick? Maybe you can add something about this brick color vs. the other ones.
- You could show pictures of those next to what you're proposing to help us understand how this stacks up.
- I agree, the devil is in the details with brick. The options for the penthouse level where you had potentially dark brick or metal panel, I really like the texture. On the backside garden space it has these flat metal panels, I don't like that as much, there's some shadowing when you have a texture and it recedes a bit more. If at all possible I would go with something more heavily textured on the top level. Really nice design.
- I agree, I was most curious to hear everyone's reaction to the E Washington façade and the parking garage. I still pause and think we should give very careful consideration to that, it's a really bold move. I like the abstraction of the pattern and repetition and proportion of it, but I also think it's a bold move and we want to make sure that we're comfortable with something and not swooning over the renderings, which are really nice. The lighting design depicted is really beautiful. Otherwise the project has a lot of the really nice attributes that the previous project had.
- The projecting balconies on the ends are out of character architecturally, as opposed to the recessed balconies. Those are not quite as elegant as the detailing in the rest of the building. I'm fine with projecting in south facing courtyard space, but on the ends it felt a bit foreign to the rest of the design language.
- It's not uncommon to see suspended balconies on rehabilitated old industrial buildings.
- I like the exposure it gives the tenant to the outdoors, but because of the scale of the project it looked more elegant with the recessed balconies.
- It's so refreshing and nice to see this much detail at the informational level. I'm most interested in the fact that this is looking to have bonus stories.
- It's great to hear the design team's perspective on how they are achieving those goals and how it aligns with the bigger picture design.
- I appreciated your introductory verbiage about your MEP system, efficiency, and sustainability on those. I thought the previous proposal with the striking glass façade in an angle did justice to E. Washington Avenue and was pretty exciting. I'm completely gobsmacked, this is strikingly different than what we saw before.
- The masonry patterns are really wonderful to see. I also appreciate seeing three-bedroom units in there, I hope somehow families are included.
- Agree on the projecting balconies, the north and south façades are much more elegant. On the parking lighting, suggest that would be flexible lighting you could adjust. I love the idea of making stormwater management visible to the public. I'm thinking of the Central Library where you did visible glass floor tiles, you could do glass pavers to see the purple roof components. Making people aware through architecture what goes on with stormwater management.
- Still very cautiously optimistic on the translucent character of the glass with parking behind it. The scale and prominence of it, I'd feel more comfortable seeing an example of that treatment in real life rather than a rendering.