



Project Address: 126 Langdon Street
Application Type: **Conditional Use Referral from Plan Commission**
New Multi-Unit Student Housing Building in a Downtown District
Legistar File ID # [57757](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Brian Munson; Vandewalle & Associates; Madison, WI

Project Description: The applicant proposes to redevelop the site with a seven story, multi-unit student housing building with 107 units/373 beds, resident amenities, and underground parking.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received Informational Presentations on October 30, 2019 and December 11, 2019.
- The UDC recommended that the Plan Commission not approve the conditional use for the two additional bonus stories on February 12, 2020.
- The Plan Commission referred this item to the UDC on May 18, 2020 for an advisory opinion.

As summarized below, the stated intent of this referral is to provide feedback regarding the design of the Langdon Street-facing façade and to comment on site circulation.

Approval Standards:

The project has been referred by the Plan Commission and the UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. Conditional Use Standard 9, related to project aesthetics, is listed below and allows for a referral to the Urban Design Commission:

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.

Therefore, the Planning Division requests that the UDC provide an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission based on this referral. This should be structured as a motion of the UDC.

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

The project site is zoned Downtown Residential – 2 (DR-2). The subject site is also within an “Additional Height Area” per MGO §28.071(2) which allows for up to two stories and a total of a seven story building. The site is within the Langdon District as described in the [Downtown Plan \(2012\)](#).

The UDC last reviewed this proposal on February 12, 2020 for an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission for the two additional bonus stories. At that meeting, the UDC unanimously voted to recommend to the Plan Commission that this project did not meet the standards for bonus stories as designed, and that the Plan Commission not approve this request. The motion stated, “It is the recommendation that the UDC does not recommend this as designed. While the design team worked hard, the excess height does not demonstrate a

higher quality building with bonus stories. It does not meet criteria item (b). The other condition, based on the Downtown Height Map, seem reasonable to design a building with more than eight units.” Notes from that meeting are available under the [City’s Legislative File Center](#).

On May 18, 2020, meeting in regular session, the Plan Commission reviewed requests for a demolition permit – final plan approval and the following conditional uses: 1) A multi-family dwelling with more than eight (8) dwelling units; 2) Outdoor Recreation (rooftop hot tub and amenity space); and 3) Two additional stories in Area F of the “Additional Heights Area Map” in MGO §28.071(b), all to allow construction of a seven-story, 107-unit apartment building in the Downtown Residential – 2 (DR-2) Zoning District.

At that meeting, the Plan Commission made the following motion and referral to the Urban Design Commission:

On a motion by Cantrell, seconded by Lemmer, the Plan Commission recommended referral of the conditional uses, to no specific date, pending review by the Urban Design Commission. In making their motion, the Plan Commission stated that Standard #14 can be found met and specifically requested that the Urban Design Commission review the front building facade to provide a massing and rhythm that is more compatible with the front facades of buildings within the area. The Plan Commission also requested that the Urban Design Commission review the site circulation to accommodate all the ways people will use the proposed building, specifically in regards to the loading zone, moped parking, and how delivery and ride share vehicles will use and access the site.

There were concerns that the rhythm of front of the building was not complementary with the other buildings along Langdon Street. There were also concerns over rideshare and delivery vehicles and if additional loading areas and moped parking could be incorporated into the site plan.

Since the May 18, 2020 Plan Commission meeting, the development team revised their plans with the most current iteration before the UDC. Notable changes include:

- Redesign of the building exterior, specifically the front façade
- Addition of a walkway on the western side of the proposed building
- Additional space for underground moped parking

Summary of Requests from the Plan Commission:

There are two primary requests from the Plan Commission.

The first request is to provide comment and recommendation regarding the building’s front façade. In addressing this comment, staff recommends that the UDC address how the front façade of the proposed building relates to other structures in the area, namely related to rhythm, massing, articulation, and materials.

The second request is to provide comment and recommendation regarding site circulation. In addressing this comment, staff recommends that the UDC consider the overall site circulation, including the front entry sequence. The body is requested to consider the adequacy and possibilities for loading, moped parking, deliveries, and vehicle loading areas as requested by the Plan Commission. Staff notes that the City’s requirements for setbacks in the downtown area are intended to create an inviting pedestrian sequence and activate the street, providing places for people to gather that are well landscaped and detailed.