



PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 10, 2023

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 304-318 N Broom Street/408-430 W Johnson Street/407 W Gorham Street

Application Type: New Student Housing Building in UMX Zoning
UDC will be an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [76205](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Brian Munson, Vandewalle & Associates | Chad Matesi, CS Acquisition Vehicle, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing a seven and fourteen-story student housing development with frontages along Broom, Gorham, and Johnson Streets. The project will include active-unit entries along Johnson and Broom Streets, resident amenities spaces, and a mix of unit types and configurations.

Approval Standards: Upon formal submittal, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) will be an **advisory** body on this request. Section [28.076\(b\)](#) includes the related design review requirements which state that: *“All new buildings that are greater than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet or that have more than four stories shall obtain Conditional Use approval. In addition, the UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#) and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission.”*

Related Zoning Information: The property is currently zoned a combination of Urban Mixed-Use (UMX) and Planned Development (PD). With this proposal, it is staff’s understanding that the applicant would rezone the entirety of the project site to the UMX district. In addition, the Planning Division understands that the proposed development is considered a conditional use under the Zoning Code.

As noted on the Downtown Height Map, the maximum recommended height is up to 12 stories (172 feet) as it relates to those properties fronting on W Johnson and W Gorham Streets and six stories (88 feet) for those fronting on N Broom Street. In addition, the Capitol View Preservation Limit will also apply to the proposed development. As noted in the Zoning Code, buildings must meet both the maximum number of stories and the maximum height. A recently approved modification to the Zoning Code allows, in cases where applicants voluntarily enter into a contractual agreement to provide affordable housing, the maximum number of stories may be exceeded, provided the building remains at or below the maximum height (172 feet and 88 feet, as noted above). The applicant is exploring the possibility for additional stories (maximum 12 and six stories, where 14 and seven are proposed) within the maximum allowed height. Further discussions are in progress related to compliance with the provisions of the ordinance, including those that speak to affordability, floor area, etc.

The UMX zoning district also outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX zone district are included as an attachment to this report, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) (the “Plan”) planning area in the Johnson Street Bend Neighborhood. As noted in the Plan’s recommendations, this district should continue as a primarily higher density student housing area with some new neighborhood service retail uses. Development on the project site is also subject to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines as noted above.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and provided feedback regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff recommends consideration be given to the following:

- **Building Scale and Massing.** As noted in pre-application meetings with applicant's design team, staff's primary concern is the overall scale of the development. Given the extent of the project site, staff has emphasized the importance of the appearance of a development of this size read as a collection of multiple buildings versus one building. While the applicant has already made some efforts to incorporate articulation and provide gaps between building components, the proposed building surrounds another development on three sides and elements such as the above-grade skywalk remain concerning to staff.

Staff notes that the tallest components of the building are currently proposed up to the Capitol Height View Height limit. While this may be determined to meet the allowable height standards, the proposed development will nonetheless be the tallest building(s) in the surrounding area. If bonus height is indeed sought, staff requests consideration be given to the overall shape and design of upper level components in order to provide visual relief and interest at the tops of the buildings compared to a simple extruding of the lower level mass.

In addition, consideration should be given to the building mass and scale as it pertains to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that speak to:

- Building orientation, including the location and orientation of common building entryways, defining public and private spaces along the street, maintaining an appropriately scaled, enhanced pedestrian environment,
 - Building mass and scale, including potentially incorporating setbacks and stepbacks to reduce mass/scale, providing adequate transitions between differing levels of intensity and the surrounding built environment, and
 - Building components, including the levels of design details at the street, incorporating positive termination at the top of the building, integrating the rooftop equipment into the overall building design.
- **Longviews and Sensitivity to Context.** Due to location of this site within a major transit and W Johnson view corridor, as well as mass/scale of the development, it will undoubtedly be experienced from multiple perspectives and vantage points. As such, consideration should be given to the overall composition of the building design and materials both as part of the overall cityscape, as well as how the proposed building relates to the immediately surrounding context and transitions to the scale of development along Broom Street, which is significantly different than the W Johnson Street and W Gorham Street frontages. As noted in the Downtown Plan and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, consideration should be given to how buildings and their architectural designs anchor street corners and frame intersections, contribute to the overall composition of the cityscape, and incorporate a higher degree of architectural design.
- **Building Design and Composition.** Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building composition as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that generally speak to size and rhythm of windows, organization of voids and openings, building mass and scale and proportions and articulation (vertical/horizontal), etc. Consideration also should be given to the central building wing and how it relates to the overall composition, as well as general site context, orientation to at grade open spaces, and creating an enhanced pedestrian environment along street frontages.

- **Building Materials.** The building material palette is primarily comprised of multiple colors, types and styles of flat metal panel and masonry materials. Given the scale of the proposed buildings, staff believes that the design details will ultimately be a very important consideration. Staff requests UDC provide feedback on the proposed material palette giving consideration to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that generally speak to utilizing high quality, durable building materials and appropriate scale, color, texture, architectural detailing to create an enhanced pedestrian environment, as well as providing continuity in the finish and detailing of all four sides of each of the building components.

ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.
3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.

4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.