



Project Address: 3222, 3230, 3238 E Washington Avenue + 3229 Ridgeway Avenue

Application Type: New Multi-Family Residential Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 5
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [86815](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Travis Fauchald, Volker Development | Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a five-story, mixed-use building comprised of 91 residential units and commercial office space (approx. 350 square-feet), and structured parking.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on February 25, 2025.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal at the October 20, 2025 meeting.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 5 ("UDD 5"), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(12).

Adopted Plan Recommendations: The project site is also located within the [Northeast Area Plan](#) planning area. The Plan recommends Medium Residential (MR) development for the project site, which is further delineated as buildings ranging in height from two to five stories in height and may include a variety of relatively intense housing types, including rowhomes, small multifamily buildings, and large multifamily buildings.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff request that the UDC review the development proposal, provide feedback and make findings regarding the aforementioned standards and the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** UDD 5 "Building Design" guidelines generally speak to encouraging four-sided architecture, compatibility in design and materials with adjacent structures, and minimizing large unbroken facades.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition, including as it relates to:

- Minimizing/screening blank walls, especially those along Carpenter Street and the effectiveness of the masonry detailing along blank walls in do so,
- Utilizing the same level of design and detailing across all elevations, including as it relates to the consistent use of entry canopies, which do not appear to be included on the Ridgeway elevation, the extents of masonry base course (i.e., one, two and three stories), and the finish details of louvers to ensure their architectural integration (i.e., color, framing, masonry surround details, which in some locations includes the appearance of sills and lintels (Carpenter Street/east elevation) and while not in others (west elevation), and

- Minimizing the prominence of the garage openings, including the design details of the garage door design/transparency, etc.

For reference, the Commission's Information Presentation comments related to building design are provided below in summary and generally:

- Consideration should be given to adding walk-up units and providing additional shade for the E Washington Avenue elevation,
 - Explore adding an entrance along Carpenter Street,
 - Refining the garage doors to include additional design details or setback,
 - Softening blank walls or incorporating design details that add interest, especially along the Carpenter elevation.
 - Refining the corner elements to be more cohesive and consistent; the volumes should turn corner the same.
- **Building Materials.** UDD 5 "Building Design" guidelines generally speak to materials being low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the area. The proposed material palette is comprised of masonry veneer (both light buff and medium grey), various types and colors of composite panels and siding (black, Navajo beige or white, grey, rich espresso, and rusted steel), and metal accents (black) and stone accents (buff and light grey).

Staff note that while white composite panels are indicated in the materials schedule, the perspectives, elevation drawings and materials board indicate Navajo Beige color.

Consideration should be given to whether simplification of the material and/or color palette would result in a more cohesive building design.

Staff request the Commission's feedback and findings on the proposed material palette.

- **Wall Packs.** While HVAC louvers are not shown on the elevation drawings, it has been the current practice to locate wall packs and their associated louvers so that they are not located on street-facing or on highly visible facades. HVAC louvers have been approved in some situations when found to be well-integrated into the façade's design. Staff recommend the Commission address HVAC louvers and details as part of their formal action.
- **Landscape and Screening.** UDD 5 "Landscape" guidelines and requirements generally speak to providing landscaping that is both functional and decorative, including screening unattractive views, providing year-round color and interest, and complementing architecture.

Staff note that there is a six-foot tall vinyl privacy fence that is located only along a portion of the southwest property line, however there are blank walls and exposed loading/parking area. In addition, there are multiple modular block retaining walls located along Carpenter Street. While plantings are located behind the walls, the planting plan indicates the use of stone mulch in front of the walls. This area, the area between the sidewalk and the face of the wall, appears to be approximately 2.5 feet in width, which could be suitable for vegetation.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings related to the proposed landscape planting plan, especially as it relates to providing adequate screening and/or buffer along the southwest property line, as well as creating an enhanced pedestrian environment along street frontages by integrating year-round color and texture, and in screening blank walls and mitigating the changes in grade across the site.

As part of the Commission's Informational Presentation comments, the Commission noted the following related to landscape:

- Consideration should be given to using larger deciduous trees to anchor building corner,
- Incorporate screening along the west property line,
- Giving consideration to utilizing more of a scalloped shapes, organic shapes versus angles for the retaining walls along Carpenter Street, and
- The Commission encouraged the application team to think of the rooftop vegetation not as flat sedum planes, but rather introduce some other uses or some other vegetations like natives or pollinators in the mix.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments and Discussion

As a reference, a summary of the Commission's comments and discussion from the February 5, 2025, Informational Presentation are provided below.

The Commission inquired about the E Washington elevation and the potential to add walk-up units, providing additional shading for the E Washington Avenue elevation, and providing an entrance along Carpenter. The applicant noted that additional shading will be added to the E Washington Avenue elevations. A more primary entrance off Carpenter is being studied, as well as a way to celebrate that a little more. The E Washington walk-up units will be explored, but they do wish to maintain privacy to the units.

The Commission highlighted that this has potential for something pretty cool in this neighborhood.

The Commission noted the blank walls at the rear, and the pedestrian entryways as needing more attention.

The Commission asked about screening along the west property line. The applicant noted they will be rerouting power, and there are utility easements, but that it will be screened with a privacy fence and/or landscaping.

The Commission asked about the stepbacks and how they are informing the design. The applicant noted that the Zoning Code is requiring them.

The Commission commented that vegetation at those stepback terraces would be appreciated by the neighbors. The Commission encouraged the applicant to think of those not as flat sedum planes, but rather introduce some other uses or some other vegetations like natives or pollinators in the mix. Noting the trees on the site, in a nod to that and the neighbors and neighborhood, if there are blank building corners it would be nice to have larger deciduous trees to anchor the building.

The Commission noted that the E Washington Avenue garage door appears flush and needs further detailing or setback, and blank walls need to be softened or interest added. The Carpenter elevation also needs more attention – particularly in terms of the garage door, but some detailing could help that. That also goes for the terracing of the concrete boxes, the scalloped shapes, cultural shapes versus angles, and the eyebrows at the top, particularly the smaller ones in the gray massing, they do not make sense.

The Commission commented that each corner has a different expression, and that one volume doesn't turn the corner the same. Refinements are needed.