

# PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION



**Project Address:** 5535 University Avenue

**Application Type:** Alteration to a Previously Approved Mixed-Use Development Located in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 6 – Final Approval is Requested

**Legistar File ID #** [66576](#)

**Prepared By:** Kevin Firchow, Acting UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC | Martin O'Connor, Realm Real Estate Development, LLC

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking final approval for an alteration to a previously approved development. The proposed alterations consist of an increase in apartment units from 60 to 66, elimination of the first floor parking below a portion of the building and elimination of vehicular access from University Avenue.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC last granted final approval on the previous plans on October 24, 2018 (Legistar File [#49171](#)).
- The Plan Commission approved this proposal on November 19, 2018 (Legistar File [#53124](#)).
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review related aspects of this request on August 23, 2018.

### Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 6 ("UDD 6"), 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\(13\)](#).

## Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Planning Division staff recommends that the UDC review the project, provide findings, and base their decision on the aforementioned standards for UDD 6.

While there is generally some flexibility in the applying of design guidelines, standards are considered regulations that must be met. Please see the code for full standards.

The proposed development is similar to the [previously approved plans](#) that the UDC reviewed in 2018. From a site planning perspective, the building is shifted about 10 feet further from Capital Avenue, with a new concrete patio area proposed near this corner. A driveway to University Avenue on the building's south side has also been removed. Architecturally, the building is very similar in composition to what was previously approved. Primary differences include ground floor changes, reflecting the reduction in the amount proposed commercial space and modifications to the fourth floor setbacks.

Staff notes that the design requirements for UDD 6 are generally broad and not as prescriptive as those in other districts. The UDD addresses Public Rights-of-Way; Off-Street Parking/Loading; Signs; Building Design; Lighting; and Landscaping. Staff have not identified any inconsistencies with specific district requirements, though request UDC reference relevant guidelines and/or standards when providing their review.

### **Summary of Previously Provided UDC Commissioner Comments**

As a reference, staff refers the Commission to their comments from the December 6, 2017 initial approval:

- Why exit on University Avenue?
- I have concerns regarding the viability of commercial spaces on the first floor. Someone needs to know where they are going.
- I'd like the commercial space to succeed, look at the overall, I don't see much differentiation. Open it up, use more glass. No parking on University Avenue, make more of a retail storefront, add a canopy. This is retail – express it as retail.
- Think about where the dumpsters will go.
- It's a pretty nice project.
- Remove the grass in front of the landscape wall in the front. Bus stop people will sit on it.
- Agree there should be more windows on the commercial and more glass on University Avenue.
- Agree about the appearance on University Avenue. What about the common space on the fourth floor?
- Talk to Forestry about street trees. We want to see more large canopy trees that tie into the neighborhood.
- You need to confirm the comment regarding soils on the landscape plan.
  - The church side is very heavily planted with trees.

Staff further refers the Commission to their comments from the October 24, 2018 final approval:

- The new driveway creates a lot more impervious surface than the old one. Now that you have a more contiguous greenspace how have you mitigated that impervious surface?
- This is not changing on the inside. On the upper left there the balconies seem to be protruding, but the new composition they don't seem to be cantilevering out.
- On the first floor plan, there's a one bedroom apartment facing the parking lot. I'm curious about bicycles in front of that. It seems a bit cramped in there for that one apartment, is there anything that can be done about that? It looks like there's a wall on the west side...