



Project Address: 999 S Park Street

Application Type: New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 7
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [90917](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Michael Carlson, Threshold Development

Project Description: The applicant is proposing to construct a four-story, mixed-use building with approximately 2,900 square feet of commercial space and 52 residential units. The project will be served by 30 enclosed parking spaces.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 7 ("UDD 7"), 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\(14\)](#).

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Traditional Shopping Street (TSS). The Zoning Code outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings in the City's mixed use and commercial zoning districts ([MGO 28.060\(2\)](#)), including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, design of street-facing facades, door and window openings, equipment and service area screening, and building materials.

The project site is also located in the Transit Oriented Development Overlay District (TOD). The TOD Overlay stipulates development requirements for new buildings and additions of a certain size, including:

- Maximum/minimum building heights (six stories/90 feet and two stories),
- Maximum principal building setbacks from the primary (S Park Street) and secondary (Lakeside Street) streets (no more than 20 feet for at least 30 percent and no more than 20 feet from the secondary street),
- Principal building entrance orientation (primary abutting street (S Park Street) and located within the maximum setback (20 feet)).

While as proposed the building location **appears to meet** these requirements, staff notes that a complete Zoning analysis will be conducted as part of the Site Plan Review process. Ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with all applicable Zoning requirements.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommend that the UDC provide feedback and make findings on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** As a project site with frontages on two streets, in addition to being located along a major transit corridor and will be one of the taller buildings on this side of the street; the proposed development will be highly visible.

UDD 7 building design-related guidelines and requirements generally speak to providing a consistent level of design and detailing across all elevations, minimizing blank walls, providing richer architectural detailing at the ground floor, screening mechanical equipment, incorporating articulation in the use of material and color variations, designing entrances to be a focal point on the façade, etc.

In addition, the applicant is advised that the UDD 7 requirements state that, "*The ground floor of office and other non-retail buildings shall have at least 40 percent of the street wall devoted to windows.*" As proposed, while the ground level street facing façade (S Park Street) **appears to meet** this requirement, staff note that the applicant is advised that additional information will be required as part of the Site Plan Review application to confirm that this standard is being met.

Generally, and in summary, the Commission's Informational Presentation comments are noted that consideration should be given to:

- Utilizing a consistent level of design and detailing across all elevations, including the back of the building (northeast elevation),
- Maintaining datum lines,
- Incorporating more variation in the window openings and design details to differentiate between residential and commercial uses,
- Look at building proportions, especially the height and mass of the barrel roofs elements,
- Simplifying the material palette.

- **Building Height, Massing and Articulation.** UDD 7 requires that new buildings shall be at least two (2) stories in height. Additionally, district building height-related guidelines note that for buildings over three stories, the guidelines also recommend a 15 foot-stepback from the building face at the third floor, however several recent buildings have more commonly had stepbacks at the fourth floor. While the proposed building is four stories, much of the building mass along Park Street is one story along the Park Street frontage. The [Park Street Design Guidelines](#), which were implemented through UDD 7, speak to generally having a minimum of two stories to create a comfortable sense of enclosure along Park Street.

UDD 7 Building Massing and Articulation guidelines and requirements generally speak to creating visual distinction between the upper and lower building components, utilizing flat roofs for mixed use buildings, creating positive termination at the top of the building, and corner buildings being designed and located so as to define the street intersection with distinctive architectural features.

As proposed, overall, the building height is four stories. The massing reflects varied stepbacks, including those at the second floor along the S Park Street-facing-façade, as well as the stepback at the fourth floor on the easterly elevation.

Staff request the Commission's feedback and findings on the overall height, massing, and articulation, giving consideration to ensuring the building is providing adequate height along Park Street.

- **Materials.** As noted on the plans the materials palette is comprised of masonry, Galvalume (a brand of steel coated with alloy of aluminum and zinc), and metal siding.

As noted in the UDD 7 Materials and Colors requirements state that, "*Exterior materials shall be durable, high-quality materials and appropriate for external use*". In addition, the guidelines generally speak to brick, stone and terra cotta being the preferred primarily materials, utilizing complementary colors to design style and context, as well as applying a similar level of design and detailing across all elevations.

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

- **Landscape and Screening.** UDD 7 Landscape and Open Space requirements and guidelines generally speak to utilizing well-designed landscaped areas and screen fences to provide buffers and separation between uses and along property edges, providing year-round screening, utilizing materials that are complementary to the building design and that create an enhanced pedestrian environment, etc.

As reflected on the elevation drawings there is a blank wall along the easterly property line, which is adjacent to smaller residential scale development. Consideration should be given to the plant selections in this area with regard to minimizing and softening the blank wall and providing year-round screening, texture and color, etc.

In addition, consideration should be given to the planting plan along the street frontages, especially as it relates to softening the hardscape areas, adding year-round color and texture, and appropriateness of plant selections in an urban pedestrian environment.

Staff request the UDC provide feedback and make findings on the proposed landscape plan.

- **Lighting.** UDD 7 Lighting guidelines and requirements speak to providing adequate light levels in pedestrian areas, as well as low-level lighting for building accent and landscape lighting, and that all fixtures shall be full cutoff. While light levels on site appear to be relatively low, additional information is required to fully evaluate lighting for consistency with the UDD 7 guidelines and requirements.

Staff note that a light fixture cutsheet needs to be submitted for fixture OS1, the proposed string lighting shown on the northwest side of the building to confirm that it meets cutoff requirements. In addition, the applicant should confirm that the light emitted from those fixtures has been accounted for in the light levels reflected in the lighting plan. The fixture cutsheets will need to be updated to reflect the fixture selections to confirm cutoff requirements.

Staff believe that the continued review of lighting can be completed administratively.

Staff note and the applicant is advised that additional information will be required as part of the Site Plan Review process to confirm compliance with MGO 29.36, including a luminaire schedule and light calculation table that indicates minimum and maximum light levels, and uniformity ratios in each of the following areas: pedestrian areas (i.e., sidewalks), outdoor parking areas and vehicle use areas (i.e., driveways), as well as light levels at the property line.

Summary of Informational Presentation Discussion & Questions

As a reference, a summary of the Commission's discussion and questions from the December 3, 2025, Informational Presentation are provided below.

The Commission noted that taking another look at the materials would be beneficial as there is a lot for such a small building, and inquired why the green material is not an accent on the front of the building, like it is on the back. The Commission talked about more variation in the window sizes to differentiate between commercial, residential, and lobby spaces, as well as for transparency. Look at the datums; the windows, sills, and heads. The Commission agreed with the neighbor that this does not support, relate to or respect the context. Good or bad, it is pulling no cues from anything around it. Look at the proportions, you have a story and 1/2 of interior space for mechanicals, the barrels can come down and relate more to the surrounding context.

The Commission inquired about the barrel roofs and whether they could come down in height. The applicant noted that they are taller due to the mechanical penthouse located within them, but that would be something they could study. The Commission noted that bringing them down would help them relate more to the surrounding development scale-wise.

The Commission inquired about the barrel roofs and whether that transfers to the sides of the building. The applicant noted they are still working on those design details, and also looking at a premanufactured steel system barrel metal. The Commission suggested they look at the materials, right now it is starting to become a lot for such a small building and how they integrate with each other.

The Kalwall panels are a great thing, we would need more detail on where and how those are being used. Backlit is a much better application to bring color, vibrancy and excitement to the project. The brick base is debatable. Canopies could be used to denote entries. The sizing of the address could be better integrated into that façade. This is an interesting concept, it has the foundation to be a unique addition if done right.

Commissioner Mayer commented that this is weird and unusual, and that is a compliment. He agreed that the blank space within the barrels is odd. He stressed consideration of the points by neighbors, specifically about outdoor ventilation.

Commissioner Mbilinyi appreciated that the applicant studied Madison and is passionate about design. She complimented this different building, the hiding of the mechanicals, the community spaces, and the garden. She noted that the barrels remind her of farms, the modernizing of Wisconsin right here, with this shape. She suggested not lowering the barrels, to go big, and make a statement. She also noted the importance of respecting the neighbors' opinions about understanding the community, that is super important. Bravo to this work.

Commissioner Klehr commented that the shape of roofs remind her of Quonset huts, which at one time, there were many of along Park Street, like the shoe repair with George Fabian. The next door bakery looks like one too, she appreciated that reference and noted it could be a selling point with developing this.

The Commission noted the design considerations in the staff report and advised the applicant to look at them as well. This is early as far as detailing. There are material concerns about not meeting guidelines for UDD 7, but it is a great expression. The applicant asked about detailing that base to the ground with masonry, and if there is an openness to stucco. The Secretary responded that material requirements come from the Zoning Code, and are required to be met, it's not something that is flexible. She encouraged the developer to reach out to Zoning staff to have that conversation and get clarification on that.

The Commission gave kudos for the community room. On the neighborhood side of the building there are 12-foot masonry blank walls to conceal parking, and that exploring ways to articulate that somehow with texture and detail.

The Commission talked about parking, noting this is somewhat new territory with the City not having parking minimums. The Traffic Engineering Division will review traffic patterns and intersections, the parking requirements come from the Zoning Code. The project is at about 60% of parking spaces to units, and will have lots of bicycle parking.