



Agenda Item #: 4

Project Title: 15-27 N Butler Street/302-308 E Washington Avenue - Major Amendment to an Existing Planned Development (PD) for a New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 4. (District 2)

Legistar File ID #: 87895

Members Present: Shane Bernau, Chair; Rafeeq Asad, Jessica Klehr, Davy Mayer, Nicholas Hellrood*

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

*Hellrood was recused on this item

Summary

At its meeting of September 3, 2025, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** and made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **APPROVE** of a major amendment to an existing Planned Development (PD) for a new mixed-use building in Urban Design District (UDD) 4 located at 15-27 N Butler Street/302-308 E Washington Avenue. Registered and speaking in support were Christopher Sina, Joe Rice, and Duane Johnson.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission inquired about the two street trees that are proposed to be removed on E Washington Avenue. The applicant noted that they have been working with City Forestry and they are in agreement with the removal.

The Commission inquired about the curbed planters. The applicant noted that the planters create a 6-inch tall curb around the planted area for protecting trees and plantings. The Secretary clarified that City Engineering will have the final say on right-of-way improvements and that such improvement will be part of the developer's agreement and require a maintenance agreement.

The Commission asked about the pavement on the north side of the building coming off E Washington Avenue, ending at a proposed gazebo and whether additional plantings could be located there to soften the hardscape area. The applicant noted that there was an existing easement there that provides access to parking for St. John's, whose future is uncertain at this time; this area will need to remain open to access that parking. There is a buffer between the 4-foot easement and their property, where bike racks are located. The applicant also noted that there could be landscape incorporated in this area, maybe some shade tolerant plants could go in there.

The Commission complimented the corten steel element and the articulation in the shape of the element, commenting that making it taller could make more of a statement. The corner at the street level needs something special, it's hard to tell it's an important corner and may look nice at night lit up.

The Commission discussed the exterior building lighting, particularly mid-building, where it seems random and doesn't highlight any architectural features. That series at the fourth floor could be eliminated. The Commission discussed the intent of the lighting; if wall washing is the intent, it would be difficult to do with just one set of fixtures. Is this an accurate rendering of what this wall wash would look like? As depicted in the rendering, it seems inaccurate. A larger wall wash could be accomplished with different fixtures. The Commission noted that the more interesting corten steel feature is not lit. The applicant replied that it is difficult to light metal panel continuously with dark sky regulations and not having a linear fixture be visible.

The Commission noted the landscaping proposed both at grade and at the rooftop terrace space is an interesting combination of plant species and an interesting use of a very narrow tree in those planters beds that will accentuate the vertical nature of the architecture. The idea of protecting plantings along N Butler Street with a curbed planter is good.

The Commission inquired about signage and whether signage will come later. The Secretary noted ample room for wall and canopy signage.

The Commission commented that the project has improved since the Informational Presentation. Lighting is a design element.

Commissioner Asad commented that every accent color that we are seeing as of late is an orange terra cotta rusted color, every single project now has this orange color; getting away from gray doesn't mean that everyone has to go toward this particular color. The Commission encouraged exploring other color options for the accent element.

A motion was made by Klehr, seconded by Alder Mayer, to reopen the public hearing in order to ask the applicant to explain the intent of the wall wash lighting. The applicant clarified that the rendering is the best they can do with the photometrics they have with certain fixtures. They are trying to light the brick columns as far as they can with the fixtures they have. The Commission questioned whether or not this would be successful. The Commission clarified the fixture type as being a can light that points down. The Commission inquired about a filter on the bottom noting glare as a concern. The applicant noted that a similar fixture is being used on the Continental. The applicant further noted there are street lights here and they had not planned on doing down lighting in the canopy.

The Commission discussed granting Final Approval, which means approval of the lighting plan. The Secretary noted the Commission should make specific findings that the lighting is consistent with the guidelines and requirements of UDD 4, and how/why. Continued discussion noted that the middle row of lighting doesn't create a cohesive composition. There's nothing in that middle area that the lighting is accentuating, it isn't paired with anything else architecturally, but like the effect of it on the top and base of the building.

Action

On a motion by Klehr, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** and made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **APPROVE**, with the following findings and conditions needing to be met to make a finding that the proposal is consistent with the Planned Development (PD) criteria:

- The landscape plan shall be updated to include plantings along the north side of the building.
- The lighting plan shall be revised remove the light fixtures located mid-building or be redesigned to reflect a better wall wash with a different fixture.
- Further review and approval to be completed administratively.
- The Commission finds that the long views are acceptable and the applicant has addressed the concerns about wallpacks.

The motion was passed on a vote of (3-1-1) with Klehr, Asad, and Mayer voting yes; Hellrood recused, and Bernau non-voting.