



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 575 Zor Shrine Place
Application Type: Residential Building Complex – Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID #: [72416](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Namdi Alexander, AWH Architects | Mark Laverty, Saturday Properties | Robert Gorsuch, Shriners International

Project Description: The applicant is seeking Final Approval for a proposed age-restricted multi-family apartment building.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational presentation on July 13, 2022.
- The UDC granted Initial Approval on August 17, 2022.
- The Plan Commission conditionally approved this proposal on August 29, 2022.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. [Section 33.24\(4\)\(c\)](#), MGO states that: *“The Urban Design Commission shall review the exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and the landscape plans of all proposed residential building complexes. It shall report its findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission.”*

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and make a recommendation based on the aforementioned standards, including the previously recommended conditions that were part of the Commission’s previous Initial Approval motion as noted below:

- Prior to final sign-off of the conditional use, the applicant shall receive a recommendation of Final Approval from the Urban Design Commission, addressing the below points. The UDC should review and make its decision based on the approval standards for residential building complexes and note that their recommendation is appealable to the Plan Commission.
 - The applicant shall provide details on the screened-in porch railing and screening materials.
 - The applicant shall provide details of the material transitions at the balconies, including the returns of material around the porch corner.
 - In areas where there are long expanses of lap siding, alternative façade treatments shall be explored, including utilizing trim, modifications to punched openings, balconies, etc. to reduce the expanse of lap siding.
 - The applicant shall refine the building design to include a positive termination at the top of the building. Consideration should be given to incorporating a cap on top.
 - The applicant shall provide additional information on the tree species and conditions of the existing trees on site. If appropriate, consideration should be given to the preservation of the existing trees.
 - Consideration should be given to the necessity of the use of screened-in porches above the 2nd floor and whether they need to be enclosed.

- The landscape plan shall be updated in address of landscape comments as noted below:
- Utilize alternatives to the Yellow Birches, such as White Spire Birch or River Birch.
- Use Serviceberry in-lieu of the Firebird Crabapples at the amenity deck seating area.
- Placing the Spring Snow Crabapples along the front sidewalks.
- Add more pops of color with gold varieties of low Creeping Juniper, Colored Twig Dogwood, Willow or Serviceberry.
- Add to the perennial drifts with something like Blackeyed Susans or Liatris for more plants and more color.

The UDC should make findings on each of these points, but does not have the ability to add additional conditions beyond what was raised in Initial Approval and formally made conditions by the Plan Commission.

In addition, staff notes that with regard to outdoor lighting, the photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 29.36, MGO) for low level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 1.5 footcandles in parking and pedestrian areas and 1.0 footcandles in driveway areas. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.

Summary of UDC Initial Approval Comments and Conditions

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the August 17, 2022, Initial Approval are provided below:

- Bicycles can really fly by on that path. Make sure it is well signed or divided into a pedestrian side/bicycle side.
- The building looks much nicer, thank you for taking our comments to heart. Give some consideration to the area that is below 42" under the stacked screened-in porches that may require something more substantial. I will be interested to see the details of how those materials come around the corner because it looks really flat right now. The columns don't look substantial enough. They might benefit to having a screened-in porch there too for more privacy.
- We never see screened-in porches on multi-story buildings; when you get above the 2nd or 3rd floor the concern for bugs diminishes. I'm wondering if they are really necessary, it is your call but we need to see realistic drawings of what the guardrails and screens will look like because they tend to make it look like a solid. You should make your best effort to represent that more accurately for us to be able to give any approval on that.
- The siding and the simplification of the façades is appreciated, but the inspiration avoided the use of really long unbroken expanses of lap siding. It is a residential product but it's not typically seen in this scale on big multi-unit buildings. The windows are taller or otherwise broken up in your inspiration photos, so we're not seeing the long expanses of siding. It could be done with trim, rearranging your windows or balconies. That's the one thing you're not achieving with the precedents moving into the actual design, it should be less flat and less institutional. I also agree about the changes of material and color on the outside corners, it makes the materials look extremely thin and two-dimensional.
- If you look at the elevations now, particularly where there's no more than one or two windows, then you're not having long expanses of siding. When you get into 3-4 and the difference in sill height, the lap siding is a little disconcerting to see, that low scale single-family residential material in a large building with punched openings.
- I agree about the transitions between materials, there's an imbalance in the facades. The slickness of the post for the overhangs being right next to something horizontal, and the siding and trim around a window seem like very different languages. The window sizes and trims are not as much of a match-up as in your precedents. It needs more attention to detail to upscale it, either you really go sleek and modern or you add more details like the renderings you're showing.

- The simple color palette is successful.
- I like the building architecture a lot more than the Informational Presentation version. I'm not seeing the pop of color you talked about with your precedents. All that white siding seems a little dull to me, you could introduce color somewhere.
- Overall the plant selection is pretty good. You might want to consider alternatives to the birches across the front, they would be beautiful but that species is not the best choice in this climate. You would do better with White Spire Birch or River Birch. The selections of crabapples are nice but I question their placement on the amenity deck. Firebird Crabapples near a seating area will be a mess, consider Serviceberry in that location instead. On the southern edge between the building sidewalk and the bike path you have three Spring Snow Crabapples, which are really nice, but may be a better selection along your front sidewalks. Appreciate that you added some winter interest plants but you could do a bit more. You could add some gold varieties of low Creeping Juniper for pops of color. More of the Color Twig Dogwoods, Willow or winter berries would be nice along that western edge. Where you have drifts of Little Blue Stem you could replace some with Blackeyed Susans or Liatris drifts for extra color in there.
- What do we know about the existing trees on the site and what considerations were given to preserve those, near the bike path and amenity deck?
 - We do have a tree survey of the site itself, we can include that with our new landscaping plan.
- Normally we think about the site and massing of a building at the Initial level. The maturity of those trees is a key design solution to getting some privacy to that amenity deck given the proximity to the other developments. I would like to understand whether we really exhausted all opportunities to preserve and use that resource. I'm not sure whether a conversation next time quite gets us there or not, but glad to know you've done the survey and have that information.
- I'm not a fan of the bars on the outside trusses, it gives the aesthetic that it's a vanilla box with bars outside the window. Wondering if you could talk about the accessibility of the building?
 - We're entering right at grade with a zero threshold, we do have ramping. We have to meet ADA requirements, this building is age-restricted, so every unit needs to be adaptable.
- The public spaces will be fully wheelchair accessible, there will be van accessible parking spaces, and the individual units can be modified as required.

The Initial Approval motion included the following conditions:

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