



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 30 Ash Street and 2300-2436 Regent Street
Application Type: Major Alteration to an Approved Conditional Use / Public Project - Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID # [66046](#)
Prepared By: Kevin Firchow, Acting UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Jackie Michaels, Eppstein Uhen Architects | Madison Metropolitan School District

Project Description: The applicant requests approval to revise plans and modify an approval condition related to recent approvals for West High School. Specifically, the applicant proposes to remove an existing wall and boulders in order to develop a new wall system due to the wall's condition and the need to shift its location. As part of the UDC's recent review of this request, the body formally recommended an approval condition that such features were to remain and be reused. That condition was adopted by the Plan Commission. As this was a formal condition, staff did not approve this request as an administrative alteration.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC granted initial/final approval on July 28, 2021.
- The Plan Commission approved the related aspects of this proposal on August 9, 2021.
- The Common Council approved the associated Zoning Map Amendment and Certified Survey Map on August 31, 2021.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to consider this request on November 8, 2021.

Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. While UDC is an approving body on Public Buildings per MGO Section 33.24(4)(d), this section of code only provides the UDC approving authority on the buildings themselves. The proposed modifications relate to site improvements and as such, the UDC is advisory to the Plan Commission's conditional use consideration.

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

On July 28, 2021, the UDC approved additions and alterations to West High School as required for public projects. The UDC's motion included a condition to reuse the existing landscape limestone and that the existing wall along Highland Avenue be retained. Based on the UDC's recommendation, the Plan Commission included the following approval condition:

Based on the advisory site design/landscape comments from the Urban Design Commission, it is recommended that the applicant reuse existing landscape limestone into grading modifications and that the existing masonry wall be retained.

After the approvals, the applicant's team was made aware of issues with the wall and contacted staff to discuss structural concerns and the ability to meet this condition. As noted in the applicant's materials, the wall's condition and the stated need to shift its location have prompted the applicant to review different options. The applicant's preferred option is to remove the wall and install a new system as specified in the application materials.

The application indicates that the some stone will be repurposed as a landscape feature on site and at the new Southside Elementary School on Rim Rock Road. S

Staff do not object to this request, but requests that the UDC provide specific findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission regarding this proposed modifications.

As a reference, staff notes the Commission to their discussion on the existing retaining wall from the July 28, 2021 meeting:

- The limestone blocks are a prominent piece of the street presence. Are you reusing, rebuilding with same/new material?
 - We are replacing the existing retaining wall with an interlocking system, the wall is beginning to heave. We can certainly reuse it but the thought is to put in an entirely new wall.
- Would suggest you consider how that wall material dovetails with the older wall that looks to remain along Highland. Suggest reusing some of that limestone on-site, its wonderful material.
 - We are replacing the entire wall along that whole length but that's a good point about reusing those blocks. We have opportunities on-site where we could reclaim some of that.
- Best case scenario would be to rebuild with that existing material.
- I want to clarify that there are two different wall materials: a masonry wall along Highland (southern half), and the part that has the most architectural character and strong ties to stone work you see around Madison. That's a pretty significant piece and I want to make sure that doesn't get lost, either gets repaired or remains. It doesn't appear on the plans like that piece is being replaced or disrupted, it's more the north part which is more a landscape block stone. My previous comments were directed more towards that piece, for clarification that the masonry wall that utilizes the limestone is to remain. There's already a natural gap with the emergency access point.
- That portion looks more like a separation wall than a retaining wall.
- UDC's approving authority is for the building itself.
- Utilize the existing limestone as part of the retaining wall. Reuse the existing landscape limestone (suggestion), but a stronger advisory to retain the masonry wall that occurs south of that.