



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 2125 Commercial Avenue  
**Application Type:** Building Addition and Exterior Remodel of an Existing Public Building in UDD 4  
UDC is an Approving Body  
**Legistar File ID #** [75402](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Drew Martin, Strang, Inc. | Fred Brechlin, Madison College

**Project Description:** The applicant proposing to construct a building addition and exterior remodel of an existing building for the Madison College B Building. The proposed work will provide additional classroom and workshop space, as well as updated facilities and amenities.

**Approval Standards:** The project site is located within Urban Design District 4 (UDD 4). As such, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) is an **approving body** on this request. The Urban Design Commission shall evaluate the proposed project for consistency with the UDD 4 requirements and guidelines as noted in [MGO Section 33.24\(11\)](#).

In addition, the existing building is considered a Public Building for the UDC is an **approving body**. Per MGO Section 33.24(4)(d), the Urban Design Commission shall approve plans for all buildings proposed to be built or expanded in the City by the State of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin, the City of Madison, Dane County, the Federal Government or any other local governmental entity which has the power to levy taxes on property located within the City.

**Related Zoning Information:** The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T). Within the mixed-use and commercial zoning districts there are general provisions related to building and site design that are intended to foster high-quality building and site design. Such standards are outlined in [Section 28.060](#), including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials (see attached).

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC review the proposed development and make findings related to the UDD 4 guidelines and requirements giving consideration to the following design considerations:

- **Building Design and Composition.** The UDD 4 Building Design requirements and guidelines state that *“Structures should be designed to be compatible with the structures adjacent to them”* and *“The architecture of new in-fill buildings and additions to existing buildings and major exterior remodelings should be compatible with that of existing adjacent buildings.”* Consideration should be given to creating one cohesive architectural expression, especially where the proposed addition meets the existing building. Staff refers the Commission their Informational Presentation comments which were focused on minimizing slopes and refining the design of the vertical limestone elements to include a cap and/or to provide more depth to the element.
- **Exterior Materials.** The building material palette consists of aluminum metal panel and multiple types/colors of masonry, including buff limestone and brick. Staff requests the Commission’s make

findings related to the building material palette as it relates to UDD 4 guidelines and requirements, including those that state “*Exterior building materials shall be low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the areas.*” Consideration should be given to material transitions and to the consistent application of masonry, especially along the east and west elevations.

The applicant is also advised that there are exterior material limitations noted in the Zoning Code, MGO 28.060, including those that require metal panel systems to be heavy gauge and non-reflective and that smooth-face/split-face block shall only comprise 33% of any building wall adjacent to a public street or walkway. The Zoning Administrator would ultimately need to confirm compliance as part of the Site Plan Review process.

- **Screening.** As shown on the plans, there is a louvered equipment screen for the purposes of screening ground mounted mechanical equipment located on the Packers Avenue street side of the building (east elevation). Staff requests UDC review and make findings related to the proposed mechanical screen giving consideration to the UDD 4 guidelines and requirements that speak to screening, including the use of landscape to do so and avoiding the use of chain-link and other metallic fences.

## Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission’s January 11, 2023, Informational Presentation comments are provided below.

- Watch the slopes where it says “Madison College,” that masonry element with the roof around the building, to avoid visual confusion with too many slopes.
- I would argue that the stone horizontal alignment doesn’t lend itself to a slope at all. One rendering has it looking very thin over an entrance, I would revisit turning the corner on that. Give it more depth on the top and the opposite corner.
- If it’s going to be sloped like that it may need to be a solid precast cap at the top to be consistent with the signage and things like that. Otherwise you could consider going flat. In the future how that would get detailed and executed.
- Is it really a light blue wall on the inside?
  - No that will be either plywood or drywall.
- Are those operable doors with glass panels or just fixed fenestration?
  - The larger openings are operable overhead doors with glass panels.
- What is the function or need of a totally transparent door?
  - The faculty of this remodeling program is really excited about the opportunity for getting natural light into their workshops, especially the two are facing north so indirection diffused natural light should be nice.
- Something interesting with the angled increasing height. Opportunities for some clerestory windows for high quality natural light deep into the space. If that was really the true goal it seems there are opportunities for exploration in lieu of the proposed glass doors.
- Your bathroom layout, I understand this is maybe a new strategy, but I’m curious if your office has had experiences with this kind of a bathroom layout.
  - This is an all-inclusive, all-gender layout and includes full partitions, robust doors, separate rooms for each toilet fixture, and a shared wash area. We do have some experience but not quite to this scale.
- With bathrooms like this have you found any noise issues, at the sinks going into conference rooms next door?
  - Great question, I think we’ve got not only the conference room but the kitchen vending areas nearby.



## 28.060 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR MIXED-USE AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

(1) Statement of Purpose.

Mixed-use and commercial districts are established to provide a range of district types, from the small neighborhood center to regional-level retail centers, while fostering high-quality building and site design and pedestrian, bicycle and transit as well as automobile circulation.

(2) Design Standards. The following design standards are applicable after the effective date of this code to all new buildings and major expansions (fifty percent (50%) or more of building floor area). Design standards shall apply only to the portion of the building or site that is undergoing alteration.



Figure D1: Entrance Orientation

- (a) Entrance Orientation (See Figure D1). All new buildings shall have a functional entrance oriented to an abutting public street. Additional entrances may be oriented to a private street or parking area. For buildings with multiple non-residential tenants, a minimum of one (1) tenant space shall have a functional entrance oriented towards an abutting public street. Other tenant spaces shall be connected to the public street with a private sidewalk connection. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features. Barrier-free entrances are encouraged. (Am. by ORD-13-00113, 6-26-13)

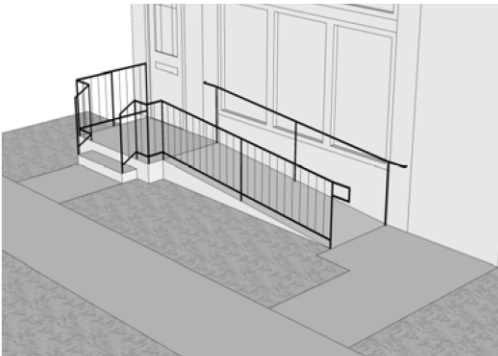


Figure D2: Barrier-Free Entrance Example

- (b) Facade Articulation. Consistent with the design of traditional storefront buildings, new buildings of more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller increments, through articulation of the facade. This can be achieved through combinations of including but not limited to the following:
1. Facade Modulation (See Figure D3). Stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade.
  2. Vertical divisions using different textures or materials (although materials shall be drawn from a common palette).
  3. Division into storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.



Figure D3: Facade Modulation

4. Variation in roof lines by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval (See Figure D4).
5. Arcades, awnings, and window bays at intervals equal to the articulation interval.

(c) Design of Street-Facing Facades.

No blank walls shall be permitted to face the public street, sidewalks, or other public spaces such as plazas. Elements such as windows, doors, columns, changes in material, and similar details shall be used to add visual interest.



Figure D4: Variation in Roof Lines

- (d) Door and/or Window Openings. For nonresidential uses at ground floor level, windows and doors or other openings shall comprise at least sixty percent (60%) of the length and at least forty percent (40%) of the area of the ground floor of the primary street facade. At least fifty percent (50%) of windows on the primary street facade shall have the lower sill within three (3) feet of grade.

For residential uses at ground level, a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the ground level of residential facades or side and rear facades not fronting a public street shall consist of windows and door openings. On upper stories, window or balcony openings shall occupy a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the upper-story wall area.

1. Glass on windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass that mimics the appearance of windows may be used for up to twenty percent (20%) of the required area of the openings. (Am. by ORD-13-00205, 12-10-13)
2. Displays may be placed within windows. Equipment within buildings shall be placed a minimum of five (5) feet behind windows. To preserve views, within three (3) feet of any window, not more than thirty percent (30%) of the view through the windows shall be blocked by merchandise, displays, shelving, or other obstructions.
3. Window shape, size and patterns shall emphasize the intended organization of the facade and the definition of the building.

- (e) Equipment and Service Area Screening. If an outdoor storage, service or loading area is visible from adjacent residential uses or an abutting public street or public walkway, it shall be screened by a

decorative fence, wall or screen of plant material at least six (6) feet in height. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the primary structure.

- (f) Screening of Rooftop Equipment. All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible.
  - 1. The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street.
    - a. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials.
    - b. Screening shall be constructed to a height of at least one (1) foot above the height of the equipment.
  - 2. Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork shall not be located on primary building facades.
- (g) Materials. Nonresidential or mixed-use buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials such as brick, stone, textured cast stone, or tinted masonry units. Table 28D-1 below lists allowable building materials. When applying these requirements, consideration shall be given to the use, amount, placement and relationship of each material as part of a comprehensive palette of building materials. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway should employ materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

**Table 28D-1.**

Building Materials	Allowable for use as/at:				Standards (see footnotes)
	Trim/Accent Material	Top of Building	Middle of Building	Base/Bottom of Building	
Brick (Face/Veneer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Wood/ Wood Composite	✓	✓	✓		
Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Concrete Panels, Tilt-up or Precast	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
EIFS/Synthetic Stucco	✓	✓			C
Stone/Stone Veneer	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Metal Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	D
Hand-Laid Stucco	✓	✓			C
Vinyl Siding	✓				E
Glass Curtain Wall System	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reflective Glass/Spandrel	✓				F
Glass (Storefront)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than 33% of any building wall adjacent to a public street or walkway.

B - Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials.

C - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used in heavily trafficked pedestrian areas or where high pedestrian traffic is anticipated.

D - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge metal, and; shall be non-reflective.

E - Shall be used in limited quantities due to its limited durability.

F - Shall be used in limited quantities as an accent material.



Figure D5: Compatibility with Traditional Buildings

- (h) Compatibility with Traditional Buildings. (See Figure D5.) New development shall relate to the design of traditional buildings adjacent to the site, where present, in scale and character. This can be achieved by maintaining similar, facade divisions, roof lines, rhythm and proportions of openings, building materials and colors. Historic architectural styles need not be replicated.



Figure D6: Building Alignment

- (i) Building Alignment. (See Figure D6.) Buildings shall be aligned with facades parallel with the street to create a well-defined street edge.
- (j) Building Articulation. (See Figure D7.) Buildings shall have horizontal and vertical articulation, which may include dormers, cornice detailing, recesses and projections, stepbacks of upper stories, changes in roof types and planes, building materials, and window patterns. The base of the building shall relate to the human scale, including doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings, canopies, and similar features.



Figure D7: Building Articulation

- (k) Ground-Floor Residential Uses. (See Figure D8.) Ground-floor residential uses fronting a public street or walkway, where present, shall be separated from the street by landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls in order to create a private yard area between the sidewalk and the front door.



Figure D8: Ground Floor Residential Uses