



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 402 W Wilson Street

**Application Type:** Planned Development (PD) for Redevelopment of an Office Building to Residential – Informational Presentation

**Legistar File ID #** [70549](#)

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Nick Orthmann, Bear Development, LLC | Responsible Esthetics, LLC

**Project Description:** The applicant is providing an Informational Presentation of a proposed Planned Development (PD) for the redevelopment of an existing office building into a residential building. The development proposal includes the construction of an addition to the existing two-story office building, which would remain and be converted into a four-story, 45-unit apartment building. All of the residential units will be affordable with rents restricted to 60% AMI LIHTC rent limits. The unit mix will consist of 19, one-bedroom units, and 26, two-bedroom units. Underground parking will be provided for both vehicles and bikes.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC will be an **advisory body** on the PD request. For Planned Developments the Urban Design Commission is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections [28.098](#)(1), Statement of Purpose, and (2), Standards for Approval (PD Standards Attached).

The site is currently zoned PD, which also includes the two structures immediately north of this site. Due to zoning complexities and compliance issues raised by the existing PD, staff does not object to the continuance of PD zoning in this case.

**Adopted Plans:** The project is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) (the “Plan”) planning area. As such, the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) would apply to new development. The Plan recommends residential development for the project site, noting the density and scale will be defined by the height recommendations provided within the Plan, the neighborhood plans, and zoning districts. The Plan recommends a maximum building height of four stories for the project site.

In addition, the site is also within the Bassett Neighborhood, with a neighborhood plan objective noting this *“neighborhood should continue its predominately residential nature with an evolving mix of new higher-density buildings carefully integrated with existing older structures that are compatible in scale and character...”* The neighborhood plan further notes as part of this redevelopment, slightly larger buildings should be directed to the ends of blocks and along the Broom Street frontage.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff recommends UDC provide feedback on following:

- **Building Design Composition and Cohesiveness.** The proposed modifications include the addition of both new upper stories and an addition to the north of the existing building. Staff requests the UDC feedback

on the overall design approach to expand upon the existing structure and the cohesiveness between the existing and proposed elements. Staff further requests UDC feedback on the overall building composition as it relates to the surrounding context, proposed rhythm along Broom Street, creating a positive termination at the top of the building, recessed first floor at corner, projecting balconies along W Wilson Street, etc.

- **Building Massing and Setbacks.** While not clearly dimensioned, the development appears to have minimal setbacks and as such, staff also requests that the UDC provide feedback on the building's mass and placement. While PD-zoned projects do not have pre-described setbacks, staff notes the prevailing zoning district in this block is Downtown Residential-2 (DR-2), which generally requires a front yard setback of 10 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet, and side yard setback of 5 feet. Based on the information provided, it appears that some of these setbacks would likely not comply with the DR-2 zoning district should this development had proceeded under conventional zoning. The included exhibits appear to depict very minimal setbacks along Broom Street and between the proposed building and adjacent residences on Doty Street. While staff notes that the proposed building is believed to be consistent with the Downtown Plan and Zoning Code height limitations, UDC feedback is requested on the overall building mass and setbacks relative to the DR-2 zoning district and surrounding context.
- **Underground Parking.** Plans depict a level of underground parking, including under the existing structure. The application does not specify whether this will be achieved through converting an existing basement level, or if other approaches are being considered.
- **Building Entry Orientation.** As noted on the elevations, the main building entry appears to be recessed and located away from the street corner, reducing the building's positive orientation to the street. In addition, as indicated on the building elevations, while individual unit balconies are located along Broom Street, direct unit access from the street does not appear to be provided. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on providing a more prominent main building entry/corner feature, as well as providing direct unit access to the street, especially as it relates to providing a strong corner presence and positive street engagement.
- **Building Materials.** The building material palette consists primarily of the existing masonry, and both a hardie flat panel system and a Coreten metal panel system. While façade articulation and glazing have been incorporated into the design of street facing façades, the north and west façades are primarily blank walls comprised of one material. In addition, a green screen is proposed on the north side of the building in place of openings. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the treatment of the blank wall expanses on the north and west sides of the building, especially as it relates to providing four sided architecture.
- **Open Spaces and Landscape Features.** As noted on the Level One plan, both public and private open spaces are proposed, including individual unit balconies, as well as a raised common rooftop patio located on the western side of the building, above the garage. The proposed private balconies appear to be cantilevered, even at the first floor, leaving a void space between the ground and the balcony, almost at eye level along the street. Consideration should be given to the successful landscape treatment and design of these spaces. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the successful planting of these spaces.

**ATTACHMENT**  
**PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards**

**28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.**

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

**28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project**

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
  - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
  - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.
- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic

and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.

- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.
- (h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map, except as provided for in Section 28.071(2)(a)1. and Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
  - 1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.
  - 2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
  - 3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
  - 4. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.
- (i) When applying the above standards to an application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Stepback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks may be granted unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
  - 1. The lot is a corner parcel.
  - 2. The lot is not part of a larger assemblage of properties.
  - 3. The entire lot is vacant or improved with only a surface parking lot.
  - 4. No principal buildings on the lot have been demolished or removed since the effective date of this ordinance