



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 120-128 North Orchard Street and 1313-1314 Randall Court Street
(8th Alder District, Alder Bennett)

Application Type: Conditional Uses

Legistar File ID #: [73815](#)

Prepared By: Lisa McNabola, Planning Division
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted

Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

At its November 7, 2022 Meeting, the Plan Commission referred this item to the November 21, 2022 meeting to allow the Plan Commission to consider an additional conditional use request for a parking reduction of more than 20 automobile spaces and 25 percent or more of the required parking, as required by §28.141(5), M.G.O. Prior to the November 21, 2022 meeting the applicant also provided updated building elevations to address the Planning Division condition included in the [November 7, 2022 Staff Report](#).

Conditional Use Standards

The Conditional Use approval standards state that the Plan Commission shall not approve a conditional use without due consideration of the City’s adopted plan recommendations, design guidelines, supplemental regulations, and finding that all of the conditional use standards of §28.183(6) M.G.O. are met. Please note, recent changes to state law requires that conditional use findings must be based on “substantial evidence” that directly pertains to each standard and not based on personal preference or speculation.

Parking Reduction

Per §28.141(5), M.G.O. an owner can request conditional approval of a parking reduction of more than 20 spaces and 25% or more of the required parking. The minimum parking requirement for multifamily buildings is one stall per unit. The proposed 48-unit building needs a minimum of 48 parking stalls. The surface parking accommodates seven stalls and the underground parking accommodates 10 stalls, for a total of 17 stalls.

Factors to be considered include but are not limited to: availability and accessibility of alternative parking, impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods; existing or potential shared parking agreements; number of residential parking permits issued for the area; proximity to transit routes and/or bicycle paths and provision of bicycle parking; the characteristics of the use, including hours of operation and peak parking demand times; design and maintenance of off-street parking that will be provided; and whether the proposed use is new or an addition to an existing use.

Per the applicant, the parking is appropriate for student housing as many students do not use vehicles, the site is in close proximity to the UW-Madison Campus, and the site is within a couple of blocks of multiple bus stops. Bicycle parking is provided on-site, including 81 bike stalls in the underground parking, six bike stalls next to the main entrance, and four bike stalls next to the rear entrance. This development is not eligible for on-street residential parking permits, and on-street parking without a parking permit is limited to two hours. Staff believes that the parking reduction can meet the applicable conditional use standards.

Building Design Considerations

As noted in the original staff report, staff's primary concerns related to the façade articulation, which consists of multiple materials, colors, and transitions. (Please see project plan file for [Original Elevation Drawings](#).) Prior to completion of the November 7, 2022 report, staff met with the applicant to discuss potential design modifications. The applicant noted they referred to several nearby buildings in the neighborhood when choosing the design elements for the proposed building. In that call, staff suggested the building elevations could be simplified with a combination of minimizing the color palette, reducing the number of material transitions, and applying a more regular pattern of window openings. These changes could help better define a base, middle and top for the building and also emphasize the verticality and rhythm of the building, more in keeping with the design guidelines.

There are two sets of revised elevation drawings. The first set, [Revised Elevations dated 11-3-22](#) was modified to create a more regular pattern of window openings along North Orchard Street. The aluminum trellis on the eighth story was removed, which better emphasized the top of the building. The building façade material at the main entry was replaced to match the wood-tone aluminum longboard on the upper floors. While staff appreciated these efforts and believed such modifications improved the façade, staff had questions on whether the design could be found consistent with standards 9 and 12. As such, staff recommended the following, condition of approval in the November 7, 2022 staff report:

- In order to meet conditional use standards 9 and 12, the applicant shall make revisions to all of the facades to be approved administratively by the Planning Division Director. This condition is intended to simplify the facades, emphasize vertical orientation, and limit material changes occurring in the same plane. Changes *shall reflect one or more* of the following steps, or other modifications found to meet the intent of this condition:
 - Simplify the material palette by removing at least one color or material
 - Apply a more-regular pattern of window openings that are mirrored on multiple floors
 - Remove or revise the aluminum trellis feature at the third and eighth floors
 - Deemphasize the horizontal banding created by the buff brick veneer and wood-tone aluminum longboard or otherwise organize materials to create more prominent vertical articulation

Prior to completion of this Addendum, the applicant provided further modified drawings, [Revised Elevations dated 11-15-22](#), including their response to address the above referenced condition. The building now has a more regular pattern of window openings that are mirrored on multiple floors, and the aluminum trellis features were removed from the third and eighth floors.

With three variations on the design theme, the Plan Commission has the opportunity to review this design progression. In their motion, the Plan Commission should specify their selected elevation drawings they believe meets the approval standard. Should the Commission believe additional modifications or simplifications are necessary, staff suggest a modified condition stating:

- In order to meet conditional use standards 9 and 12, the applicant shall make revisions to all of the facades to be approved administratively by the Planning Division Director. This condition is intended to simplify the facades, emphasize vertical orientation, and limit material changes occurring in the same plane. Changes *shall reflect one or more* of the following steps, or other modifications found to meet the intent of this condition:
 - Simplify the material palette by removing at least one color or material
 - Deemphasize the horizontal banding created by the buff brick veneer and wood-tone aluminum longboard or otherwise organize materials to create more prominent vertical articulation

If Plan Commission is not be able to find these (or other) standards met with Planning Division's recommended conditions, then staff would recommend the Plan Commission refer these items to the December 12, 2022 Plan Commission meeting to allow the applicant to update the building elevations or to refer the conditional use to the December 14, 2022 Urban Design Commission meeting for comments and recommendations, to return to the January 9, 2023 Plan Commission meeting.

Recommendation

Planning Division Recommendation (Contact Lisa McNabola, 243-0554)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the approval standards for conditional uses are met and **approve** the conditional uses for a multi-family building with between 37 and 60 units, a building exceeding six stories and 78 feet in height in the Traditional Residential-Urban 2 (TR-U2) District, and a parking reduction of more than 20 automobile spaces and 25 percent or more of the required parking, all to allow an eight-story, 48-unit residential building at 120-128 North Orchard Street and 1313-1314 Randall Court. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions from reviewing agencies contained in the November 7, 2022 staff report.