



Agenda Item #: 6

Project Title: 124 E Gorham Street - Residential Building Complex. (District 2)

Legistar File ID #: 90077

Members Present: Shane Bernau, Chair; Jessica Klehr, Anina Mbilinyi, David McLean, Davy Mayer

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of November 19, 2025, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **APPROVE** a Residential Building Complex located at 124 E Gorham Street. Registered and speaking in support were Joel Koeppen, and Bruce Bosben. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Peter Bissen, and Joe Grundhoffer. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Nicholas Davies.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission noted the front staircase is very large and asked if it could be broken up like the one next door. The applicant replied that they kept it this way for simplicity given existing grade and limited space in the front yard. There is an accessibility ramp on the side of the building. The applicant noted they could look at providing a landing before the sidewalk like the 116 building, to take away some of the lower vertical expression.

The Commission inquired about the 12:12 roof pitch and eave overhang. The applicant replied it is essential for adequate space for a unit on that floor. A 9:12 pitch made the building appear too massive, this brings the eave line down while increasing the pitch to allow units up there to function.

The Commission noted the lovely courtyard space, but noted smaller scale ornamental plantings are not in the planting plan like they are shown in the renderings. The applicant stated they are still working through the planting plan and do hope to provide an ornamental-scale tree, if the soil depth allows for one.

The Commission appreciated that the same design language as the building next door is being maintained, and liked the modernization.

The Commission inquired about whether a different stair alignment was considered; the front stairs could be aligned on the left side to allow for an active landing or a turn could be incorporated. The Commission acknowledged that one implication would be the historic context and maintaining a center stair, but something to consider.

The Commission asked about their purview, which is building design and the landscape plan. Since this is in a historic district, the Landmarks Commission has authority to review the final building design and detailing.

The Commission inquired about the soffits and eaves; how far do they stick out from the façade? The applicant replied they are at about 18" and are limited with zoning requirement that can't exceed setbacks. The Commission commented that the front could go deeper, specifically in the gable. The building is large and there is so much façade it makes it look tighter than it is or needs to be. Consideration should be given to increasing the eaves, which would provide more shadow there. The applicant note that they liked this idea and hopes that they are able to increase the eave overhang.

The Commission noted that they appreciate that the design is complimentary to its neighbors while calling enough language to look of the time. Even though it's large the design elements come together very well.

Action

On a motion by Klehr, seconded by McLean, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **APPROVE** with the following conditions:

- The applicant should continue to give consideration to the design of the front stairs and explore ways to minimize the run and create a landing (if possible), and to increase the eave overhang (deeper soffit) on the front of the building, and incorporate smaller-scale ornamental trees in the courtyard area where feasible.

The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (4-0).