

# PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 30, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION



**Project Address:** 3535-3553 University Avenue and 733-737 N Meadow Lane

**Application Type:** New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District 6  
**UDC is an Approving Body**

**Legistar File ID #:** [86816](#)

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

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Randy Christianson, Walter Wayne Development | Patrick Terry, JLA Architects + Planners

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing a six-story building containing approximately 4,200 square-feet of first floor commercial space, 146 residential units and two levels of underground parking.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on February 5, 2025.
- The UDC granted Initial Approval on May 28, 2025, which included conditions of approval that are outlined below.
- The Plan Commission approved this project at their June 9, 2025, meeting.
- The Common Council approved this application (rezoning) at their June 17, 2025, meeting.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 6 ("UDD 6"), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in [MGO Section 33.24](#)(13).

As noted above, at the May 28, 2025, meeting, the UDC granted Initial Approval of this item with conditions, including those that generally, and in summary, spoke to refining the building design and details, including those related to window articulation/details, storefront window glazing along the ground floor on both the front and back sides of the building, and fence. The Commission's subsequent review and continued evaluation of this item is limited to the Initial Approval conditions. It is the role of the UDC to focus only on whether those conditions have been addressed.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests the UDC's continued review and evaluation of this proposal for consistency with the conditions of approval as outlined below. The UDC's role is to ensure that these previously established conditions are met. The UDC cannot waive or change these requirements.

- The applicant shall provide fence details for the fence that runs along the south property line. The fence shall be wood or wood type material. Consideration should be given to securing the backyard space by incorporating a controlled access point(s) or landscaping.

*As reflected on the updated Landscape Plan, the proposed fence will be wood (cedar with a natural finish), and the gate will match. Staff believe this condition has been met.*

- The applicant shall provide additional details regarding the glazing along the ground floor, especially as it relates to transparency and lighting on both the north and south elevations.

*Staff refer the Commission to Sheets A200.1 and A205, which include additional information pertaining to the proposed semi-opaque (3M Frosted CRYSTAL Glass Finish) that is proposed along the ground floor on both the north and south garage windows. As noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, the proposed film will reduce the visibility into the garage but allow illumination to pass through.*

*Staff request the Commission's continued review and evaluation of this condition.*

- The applicant shall provide the final design details for the window systems. Of particular concern is that articulation/relief is being incorporated.

*Staff refer the Commission to Sheet A201, which includes details of the various window systems across the building. As noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, the building façade is a thin brick veneer and to improve articulation in the window systems, precast stone headers and sills have been incorporated, as well as a panel of siding to better align smaller window openings with larger window openings.*

*Staff requests the Commission's continued evaluation of this condition.*

- The applicant shall address the lighting comments noted in the staff report, including revising the lighting plan and providing fixture cutsheets as it relates to rooftop lighting, architectural lighting, individual balcony lighting, etc.

*Staff believe this condition has been met. As shown on the plans, the site light levels appear to be consistent with UDD 6 guidelines and requirements related to lighting, including those that generally speak to maintaining adequate, but not excessive light levels and fixtures relating to function.*

*In addition, as noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, no architectural lighting or lighting high on the building is proposed at this time. Staff note and the applicant is advised that the addition of such lighting in the future will require additional review and approval.*

*Staff note, and the applicant is advised, that the Building Inspection Division will review the proposed lighting for compliance with MGO 29.36, "Outdoor Lighting," will occur as part of the Site Plan Review process. Staff encourage the applicant to work with Building Inspection staff prior to making a formal submittal.*

## **Summary of UDC Initial Approval Comments and Discussion**

As a reference, a summary of the Commission's discussion and comments from the May 28, 2025, Initial Approval are provided below:

The Commission mentioned streetscape conditions and constraints, and circulation of utilities, including concerns with the relationship to University Avenue and having enough space for pedestrians. The applicant

noted they were unable to move the building south due to utility constraints, but that they added planters and architectural details, including piers and articulation along the University Avenue frontage. The Commission noted that the canopies help bring that down to a more pedestrian scale.

The Commission inquired about the proposed fencing material and how the fence relates to grade. The applicant noted it would be wood or wood like material and that the retaining wall at the southeast corner of the building would be decorative, and on the west, it is a low retaining wall, modular block. The Commission asked that it return to the building to have a secure yard space with access control.

The Commission inquired about pedestrian connectivity for pedestrian traffic from Bruce Court. The applicant responded that in neighborhood meetings, the neighbors desired a strong boundary.

The Commission asked about the windows and how flat they may look. The applicant responded they will be operable, vinyl windows on thin brick veneer, with a sill band on top and bottom, and a small relief below to give some depth.

The Commission discussed lighting, glazing, and how the parking behind the windows on the ground floor will appear and whether there was going to be articulation in the window systems in general throughout – relief, articulation – or if they would be flat transitions. The applicant noted that those details have not all been worked out yet, but that the window systems are intended to be vinyl and intended to have articulation with the sill and panel below.

The Commission requested night views of finalized glazing. The west end of the building, the fence gap at 8-feet could be closed off; the Commission requested a rendering of that space as it abuts a vibrant family neighborhood.

The Commission discussed the lighting on the rooftop amenities and whether spill out into the neighborhood would occur.

The Commission liked the material palette and colors, and how it articulates the building. Overall, the Commission felt that the applicant had addressed the previous conditions related to the smooth stone material at the base of the building.

The Commission discussed initial approval versus final approval, administrative review of conditions, and how the project moves forward.

## Action

On a motion by Graham, seconded by Klehr, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL**, with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall provide fence details for the fence that runs along the south property line. The fence shall be wood or wood type material. Consideration should be given to securing the backyard space by incorporating a controlled access point(s) or landscaping.
- The applicant shall provide additional details regarding the glazing along the ground floor, especially as it relates to transparency and lighting on both the north and south elevations.

- The applicant shall provide the final design details for the window systems. Of particular concern is that articulation/relief is being incorporated.
- The applicant shall address the lighting comments noted in the staff report, including revising the lighting plan and providing fixture cutsheets as it relates to rooftop lighting, architectural lighting, individual balcony lighting, etc.

The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1-1) with Graham, Klehr, Hellrood, Mayer, McLean, and Mblinyi voting yes; Asad recused; and Bernau non-voting.