



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1802 - 1902 Pankratz Street

Application Type: Addition to Existing Building for Isthmus Montessori Academy Located in Urban Design District No. 4 – Initial/Final Approval is Requested

Legistar File ID # [68727](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Alan Theobald, Iconica | Bill Walsh, Isthmus Montessori Academy

Project Description: The applicant is seeking Initial/Final Approval for a two-story addition to an existing two-story academic building providing additional learning spaces, a gymnasium, and theater. Site improvements include a new main entry, central arrival courtyard, and new student drop-off area. Building materials include masonry, glass and metal panel.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an informational presentation on December 15, 2021
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on May 9, 2022

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The development site is within Urban Design District (UDD) 4, which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design requirements and guidelines of [Section 33.24\(11\)](#).

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC review the project and make findings based on the requirements and guidelines for UDD 4. Staff have identified the following considerations for which it requests the UDC consider as part of its review.

- **Building Composition.** Although the development proposal includes a sizable addition to an existing building, the resulting building should read as one cohesive building. As part of their review, staff requests the UDC consider how addition relates to the existing building, both in terms of overall design intent, architectural detailing, fenestration size and details, material transitions, treatment of blank walls, etc.
- **Materials.** As noted in the plans, the exterior material schedule includes a composition of metal panel, concrete panel, and masonry materials with aluminum accents. Staff requests UDC make findings on the overall composition of the material palette and its relationship with the existing materials, as well as ornamentation and detailing, especially the blank wall treatment on the east elevation where the theater stage sits.
- **Landscape.** As noted in the UDD 4 landscape design guidelines and requirements, landscaping should provide interest and color all year round, complement architecture, and be functional as well as decorative. Staff requests UDC consider the landscape plan in terms of providing texture, color, adequate screening along street frontages, and providing relief to blank walls and the large parking lot.

Please note that the proposed addition will trigger compliance with Section 28.142, "*Landscaping and Screening*," MGO, including interior parking lot landscaping, which will likely result in the reduction of parking stalls.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

Staff refers the Commission to their comments from the December 15, 2021 Informational Presentation:

- As you develop this project, segmented it's fine but together it's a lot that doesn't work well together. Some of the shapes might be competing with each other. The way this building approaches the parking and drop-off ramp, I don't know that this complements it. The shape of the courtyard should bring you in.
- When I look at the different elements, you have the curve on the east side but then you have the rectangular portion on the south, it doesn't seem to be a uniform design in the new area. You want symmetry or rhythm as you go through there. The challenge is trying to bring consistency there and not have it be too stark. A breezeway connecting the two may be more successful.
- I'm having the same reaction. Could the curved new theater slide back so its façade is continuous without the jog, making one singular curve? Overall the design of the building is handsome. Configuration with the courtyard is not working.
- How the light comes in on the theater from the south and west can be pretty harsh. It might want to rotate and bring itself in to the other side, reorienting the entrance for more cohesive massing.
- There's too many ins and outs. That large blank wall on the eastern side is really ugly. Having a smoother curve coming into a straight edge is possibly a nicer, more elegant solution.