

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 16, 2023



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 402 W Gorham Street

Application Type: Informational Presentation - Building Addition in the Urban Mixed Use (UMX) District
UDC will be an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [79237](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Marc Schellpfeffer, CaS4 Architecture, LLC | Riley's Property, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing a third floor addition of roughly 2,900 square feet of office space on an existing commercial building.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission ("UDC") is an **approving body** on this development request. Pursuant to Section 28.076(4)(b): All new buildings and additions that are less than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet, as well as all major exterior alterations to any building shall be approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#), if applicable, and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

Related Zoning Information: The project is zoned Urban Mixed Use zone. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX zone districts are included as an attachment to this report, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials.

Staff notes that as part of the 1988 Zoning Variance, the yards of the property were delineated as follows: Gorham Street was delineated as the front yard and Broom Street as a side yard, the westerly property line a side and the northerly property line the rear yard. In light of the 1988 Zoning Variance, the yards would similarly be applied to the proposed addition. As such, the addition **does not meet** the rear yard setback (10 feet), which would be along the northerly property line.

In addition, in working with the Zoning Administrator, it is staff's understanding that this use is a nonconforming use. As such, pursuant to MGO 28.191, any structural repairs or alterations to the building shall not exceed a cumulative value of fifty percent of the total assessed value. The proposed addition, as well as any improvements that have occurred since 2014, in cost, are limited to fifty percent of the total assessed value. The applicant is encouraged to continue to work with Zoning staff to confirm that the proposed expansion is consistent with requirements for expanding nonconforming uses pursuant to MGO 28.191.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area, within the State Street neighborhood. As such, development on the project site is subject to the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#). The Plan recommendations for development in this neighborhood generally speak to maintaining and enhancing the district as a premier designation for a variety of commercial and civic uses, the unique sense of place, the diverse and vibrant mix of uses, encouraging human-scale developments that actively engage the street, and creating pedestrian oriented streetscapes.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and provide feedback regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below.

- **Building Massing and Composition.** Recognizing that the original building has undergone multiple transitions/additions over time, staff notes the opportunity for these improvements to visually tie these elements together. Staff requests the Commission's feedback how the proposed addition could help the resulting building read as a more cohesive architectural expression. Staff further requests feedback on the overall building composition as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those related to the overall massing and proportions of architectural components (top, middle, base), the appropriateness of the use of stepback/setbacks, balancing vertical/horizontal lines and datum, size and rhythm of windows and doors, simplifying roof forms/transitions, creating positive termination at the top of the building, etc.
- **Building Materials.** The building material palette, both existing and proposed, appears to be comprised of multiple types/colors of masonry, metal panels, and EIFS. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to utilizing high quality materials and four-sided architecture, as well as using a palette that is simple. Staff requests that the Commission provides feedback on the proposed material palette and composition, especially as it relates to creating a cohesive building design.

ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.
2. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front façade.