



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 402 W Wilson Street
Application Type: Planned Development (PD) for Redevelopment of an Office Building to Residential
Initial/Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID # [70549](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Nick Orthmann, Bear Development, LLC | Responsible Esthetics, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is seeking Initial/Final Approval of a proposed Planned Development (PD) for the redevelopment of an existing office building into a multi-family residential building. The development proposal includes the reuse of an existing two-story office building. Originally, the development proposal included a four-story building with 45 units; the current proposal is four stories and 54 units. Underground parking will be provided for both vehicles and bikes.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received and Informational Presentation on March 30, 2022.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on July 25, 2022.

Approval Standards: The UDC will be an **advisory body** on the PD request. For Planned Developments the Urban Design Commission is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections [28.098](#)(1), Statement of Purpose, and (2), Standards for Approval (PD Standards Attached).

The site is currently zoned PD, which also includes the two structures immediately north of this site. Due to zoning complexities and compliance issues raised by the existing PD, staff does not object to the continuance of PD zoning in this case.

Adopted Plans: The project is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) (the "Plan") planning area. The Plan recommends residential development for the project site, noting the density and scale will be defined by the height recommendations provided within the Plan, the neighborhood plans, and zoning districts. The Plan recommends a maximum building height of four stories for the project site.

In addition, the site is also within the Bassett Neighborhood, with a neighborhood plan objective noting this *"neighborhood should continue its predominately residential nature with an evolving mix of new higher-density buildings carefully integrated with existing older structures that are compatible in scale and character..."* The neighborhood plan further notes as part of this redevelopment, slightly larger buildings should be directed to the ends of blocks and along the Broom Street frontage.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide findings and make a recommendation on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards including comments related to the items noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** As noted in the application materials, while the majority of the existing building will be maintained, the applicant is proposing to add two new upper stories and expand the north and west sides of the building. Since the Informational Presentation, the applicant has revised the mass to create additional space between the proposed addition and abutting residential structures. As currently proposed, the majority of the building addition will be located to the west side of the building, which also resulted in the loss of an amenity roof deck.

Staff requests UDC make findings and provide a recommendation on the overall design cohesion between the existing and proposed elements. Consideration should be given to the overall building composition and how it relates to:

- The surrounding context, especially along the west side of the building as it relates to providing an adequate transition/buffer,
 - The proposed rhythm along Broom Street, including the adequacy of direct porch access and the integration of the limestone material,
 - Creating a positive termination at the top of the building,
 - The projecting balconies along W Wilson Street, especially the proximity of the balconies to the sidewalk (roughly three feet), and
 - The blank walls on the north side of the building where the floor plan reflects bathrooms and a stair case, etc.
- **Setbacks.** While PD-zoned projects do not have pre-described setbacks, staff notes the prevailing zoning district in this block is Downtown Residential-2 (DR-2), which generally requires a front yard setback of 10 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet, and side yard setback of 5 feet. Based on the submittal materials, it appears that setbacks would likely comply with the DR-2 zoning district setbacks. As a corner lot, the applicant can choose which street side is the front yard, and in this case they are considering the longer Broom Street frontage as a side yard. The building setback along Broom Street varies from approximately six to fourteen feet. At its closest points along Broom Street, the setback is approximately six feet, though a portion of that setback is within a sidewalk easement which is being shown to provide a requested increase to the adjacent terrace. The resulting distance between the building face and edge of sidewalk is approximately three feet. Staff notes that while likely approvable by Zoning this distance is closer to the sidewalk than many other similarly-scaled developments in the Bassett Neighborhood. Staff requests UDC make findings and provide a recommendation on the overall building setbacks relative to the surrounding context.
- **Landscape Plan and Open Spaces.** As shown on the elevations, the proposed first floor private balconies appear to be both cantilevered and flush with first floor building wall, leaving a void space between the ground and the balcony, almost at eye level along the street. Consideration should be given to the successful landscape treatment of these void spaces. In addition, the at-grade yard space on the north side of the building is minimized as a 'yard' space by the number and organization of the proposed plantings and placement of the cedar fence. Consideration should be given to the successful planting and amenitization of this space so that it not only serves as a 'yard' for the residents, but also a buffer for the property on the north.

Staff requests UDC make findings and provide a recommendation on the overall landscape plan with regard to overall plant quantities and variety, providing screening for both adjacent properties and blank walls, as well as adding texture, color, and interest to open spaces and the pedestrian pathways. Staff further requests feedback on the adequacy and programming of outdoor open spaces.

- **Lighting.** The photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 10.085, MGO) for low level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 1.5 footcandles along pedestrian pathways. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan, consistent with MGO Section 10.085, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the March 30, 2022, Informational Presentation are provided below:

- Curious about a 402 W Wilson Street character study. Could you walk through the materials a little bit?
 - The existing building is somewhat challenging in that it's historically brutal, but has a lot of shadow and depth, and composed of buff limestone. Our addition provides a composition that will complement that building to keep as much of that materiality as possible but rebrand it. We're ½ in and ½ out with the balconies to maintain the height of the bays, which emulate the rhythm happening along the street. The projecting bays are in alignment with the proportion of residential. The left side bay was infill of metal panel and glass, we're providing new windows and new limestone. The brow expression is an extension of the canopy that's already there. The base materiality is buff limestone and the upper is lightweight cladding, the accent material can tie in with potentially what we're showing at the accent canopy.
- The vertical elements coming down in front, what are those?
 - That's a column expression in weathered steel.
- There are some subtle things that are growing on me. Whatever you do that canopy must remain, it's a nice touch that plays against the limestone and gives it a more modern feel. I don't know about the balconies, they stand out a lot. It's close, keep working on refining it, not adding more materials or colors but simplifying it, the direction is pretty cool so far.
- Affordable housing, this is impressive and I appreciate the styling and the fact that you're reusing an old building and also took the time to search for matching materials, I applaud all of that.
- I really like it, I think it's a nice restrained palette, a lot of interesting points, the way you're changing materials is interesting for such a small building. Will you have any kind of heating or cooling units that will be outside of the building?
 - Those would be mounted on the rooftop and furnaces would be contained within the units themselves. We typically can put them in the middle of the roof area so they can't be seen.
- I think it will matter because of all the taller buildings around you.
- I like the design, the column and canopy components are strong elements that need to remain. The question about the bottom two floors and top two relating, the architect has done a very good job of bringing elements up and down, the more that happens the better those two elements connect and integrate. Pleased to hear they are matching materials on the new projections. One concern I have, because they do project so far out, the underside treatment of the balconies will be important as they will be highly visible.
- Does that building have parking in the basement today?
 - The existing building has usable space at that lower level, we'd be converting that to parking, as well as the addition to the surface lot currently to the north.
- It's engineered to handle that. That's a tricky conversion, that's interesting.
- This is a nice project, when it's done it's not going to look like they converted an office building into an apartment building. It's really seamless and it has a nice design in and of itself as a new project. I really applaud you for your creativity, even if you're not able to exactly match the existing materials, you've separated the new materials in a way that it won't detract if it's not an exact match. You're hearing a lot

of strong support from the Commission, it's a nice addition to the neighborhood, and I hope you're able to hang on to all the good things we're seeing on the project.

ATTACHMENT
PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards

28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
 - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
 - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.
- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic

and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.

- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.
- (h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map, except as provided for in Section 28.071(2)(a)1. and Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
 - 1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.
 - 2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
 - 3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
 - 4. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.
- (i) When applying the above standards to an application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Stepback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks may be granted unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
 - 1. The lot is a corner parcel.
 - 2. The lot is not part of a larger assemblage of properties.
 - 3. The entire lot is vacant or improved with only a surface parking lot.
 - 4. No principal buildings on the lot have been demolished or removed since the effective date of this ordinance