



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 6853 McKee Road (aka 6728 Mader Drive)  
**Application Type:** Planned Development - Specific Implementation Plan  
**UDC is an Advisory Body**  
**Legistar File ID #:** [77465](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Roman Ryan, Ryan Funeral Home | Brad Koning, Sketchworks Architecture

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story funeral home with a chapel, gathering spaces, a warming kitchen, limited outdoor seating and offices.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on October 12, 2022 on the General Development Plan.
- The UDC made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to grant Final Approval of the Planned Development – General Development Plan (PD-GDP) on January 11, 2023, Legistar File ID [73955](#).
- The Plan Commission conditionally approved the PD-GDP on January 23, 2023, Legistar File ID [75171](#).
- The Common Council conditionally approved the PD-GDP on February 7, 2023.
- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on May 31, 2023, on the Specific Implementation Plan.
- Plan Commission is scheduled to review this item at their September 18, 2023, meeting, Legistar File ID [79524](#).
- Common Council is scheduled to review at their October 3, 2023, meeting.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC is an advisory body on this request. As with any Planned Development, the Urban Design Commission shall 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, including Standard (e), which states:

*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.*

In addition, as part of the PD-GDP approval, the following conditions apply to the GDP-SIP, including:

- *Condition No. 61: At the time of Specific Implementation Plan approval, the applicant shall limit, reduce, or share parking for the proposed buildings to increase usable open space to the greatest extent possible, including at the northwestern corner of proposed Building A2.*
- *Condition No. 62: That all future buildings be as oriented to the adjoining streets as they may be to any parking that will be developed to serve them, including active entrances directly accessible from the McKee Road and Maple Grove Drive. Ground floor entrances to residential buildings and dwelling units are strongly encouraged. This requirement shall be referenced in the final zoning text for the PD(GDP) and be met as part of the approval of the Specific Implementation Plan(s) preceding the issuance of building permits.*

- Condition No. 63: *The western standalone commercial building shall be two-stories tall.*

As part of this review, the UDC should provide findings and recommendations as to the proposed development's consistency with the PD-GDP conditions of approval.

**Planned Development Zoning:** The project site is located within the Maple Grove Commons General Development Plan Planned Development (est. 2010). The Planned Development does include general architectural guidelines for commercial buildings:

*"Individual commercial buildings will be designed to be as oriented to, or more oriented to the adjacent public and private streets than to the internal parking lots through the inclusion of architectural features including but not limited to vision glass, usable entrances and fully screened utility and mechanical facilities along all street-side elevations."*

As noted above, in January 2023, the PD-GDP was amended to include funeral homes as a permitted use.

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is located in the [Cross Country Neighborhood Development Plan](#) (the "Plan") planning area. The Plan recommends the project site for commercial/office land use development. In addition, the City's adopted [Comprehensive Plan](#) recommends the project site for Neighborhood Mixed-Use development. The Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use recommendation includes more prescriptive development objectives, including those related to building form and type, which in this case is 2-4 stories, and where free-standing commercial buildings would be appropriate.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC review the proposed Specific Implementation Plan and provide feedback and findings based on the standards for Planned Developments and PD-GDP conditions of approval as noted above.

- **Building Height and Massing.** As noted above in the Common Council's adopted approval conditions for the PD-GDP, *"The western standalone commercial building shall be two-stories tall."* Zoning staff has determined that the proposed building meets the requirements to be considered a two-story building. Staff notes that meeting of the aforementioned technical standard related to height does not necessitate a finding that design of the proposed building meets the other review and approval standards, which must be carefully considered by the various reviewing bodies.

From a design standpoint, consideration should be given to the building and roof mass, forms, and height, and whether any further modifications to those elements would better align this development with the Planned Development standards, especially Standard (e), which speaks to maintaining sensitivity to context and utilizing a higher level of design. As noted by the Commission in their Informational Presentation comments, consideration should be given to the simplification of building roof forms and heights, as well as utilizing consistent pitches. Recognizing that efforts have been made to further simplify the roof forms, staff continues to believe that consideration should be given to the overall design and height of the chapel component. Staff notes that additional modifications that could better emphasize the structure height and reduce roof mass could include the possible incorporation of clearstory windows, restoring the removed dormers/windows, or other treatments. Staff requests the Commission's review and findings related to the overall building mass and height.

- **Building Design and Composition.** In concert with the building height and mass, staff requests that the UDC provide feedback and make findings related to the proposed building design and composition giving consideration to the Commission’s Informational Presentation comments, as noted below, and the PD standards.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

- Providing more organization and consistency in the application of materials and details across all elevations, including utilizing a consistent datum for the top of the stone material, utilizing siding versus stucco for infill areas, etc.,
  - Simplification of window expressions and detailing, as well as architectural details (i.e. brackets and exposed timbers and downspout locations),
  - Separating the trellis from the building,
  - Location, design and integration of mechanical equipment and back-of-building elements,
  - Utilizing a similar design aesthetic and level of detailing on all four sides of the building, including the application of materials, windows, articulation, etc. In particular on the south elevation where there are significant blank walls, and
  - Making refinements to the canopy giving consideration to scale, architectural integration; not only form but also function.
- **Building Orientation.** As noted above in the Common Council’s adopted approval conditions for the PD-GDP, “...all future buildings be as oriented to the adjoining streets... including active entrances directly accessible from the McKee Road...” While the proposed building now shows street orientation with a two-story volume at the corner and an active entry along McKee Road, staff requests the Commission’s feedback and findings on the resulting design including any findings to whether further modifications to the entry element along McKee Road could result in the building that better aligns with this condition.
  - **Landscape.** As previously noted by the Commission in their Informational Presentation comments, consideration should be given to:
    - Utilizing a larger sized specimen of trees and shrubs versus the sapplings and bark mulch instead of stone, providing ample screening for the amenity space located on the west side of the building from the multiple street frontages, and
    - Providing adequate foundation plantings, including those that provide year-round color and texture, especially at the main building entries.

Consideration should also be given to providing adequate year-round vertical landscape to break-up blank wall expanses, screen ground mounted utilities located along the west elevation, as well as adequate screening of the parking lot from the street view and adjacent uses. In addition, as noted on the plans, a retaining wall is proposed at that corner of Mader Drive and Golden Copper Lane, however details and materials were not provided.

Staff requests the Commission’s feedback and findings related to the proposed landscape plan and plant list, and retaining wall design details.

- **Lighting.** Staff notes that while the light levels presumably appear to be consistent with those pursuant to MGO 29.36, to confirm code compliance, the applicant is advised that the Calculation Summary Table will need to be updated to differentiate light levels as noted in the code for pedestrian and parking areas, as well as vehicle use areas versus providing a blanket average across the site as shown in current plans.

In addition, the materials note that pole mounted fixtures are proposed, however pole details are not included other than the pole height, which is noted to be 23 feet. As an interior parking lot surrounded by residential uses, consideration should be given to a pole height that is more consistent with a residential context.

Staff requests the Commission's review and findings related to the lighting plan and pole heights.

## Summary of Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the May 31, 2023, Informational Presentation are provided below.

- I'm trying to wrap my head around all the various cross competing requirements and considerations for these projects that are part of a bigger GDP. As a general comment about the whole process for this project, the notion that we are making someone building something taller than they want it to be, zoning requirements notwithstanding; it's always the other way around. I don't think we should discount the fact that this is a particular type of business, trying to shoehorn them into a building configuration that doesn't really fit with the functionality of said business seems off. Though I can appreciate the zoning and regulatory conditions we are working under. I hope a reasonable compromise can be worked out. As far as the general look of the building, it's fine. I'm happy to see there seems to be plenty of landscaping, though it's put on the plans in very general terms, I hope they follow through on that and would encourage them to go for slightly bigger sized specimens of the trees and shrubs and not these tiny little saplings that take forever to turn into something. The extra cost on a project of this size is negligible and will give you a landscape that looks something like the nice renderings much faster.
- I was not here for the last presentation, so thank you. I agree, I don't see the objective of pretending or forcing a second floor on a building that has no programmatic necessity for it. There's an organization of the plan that when you look at the elevations, Sheet A201, you look at the north elevations there's really not much difference between the east and west sides of the building in terms of height. It's a waste of effort, materials, heating and cooling, and it also forces an acrobatics of rooflines and things that really detract from the building. That's my opinion about the second floor. As far as the building aesthetic, there's way too much going on here that could be simplified. The datum of the top of the stone that pops up over and over on the east side, you could simplify things a lot more. Some of the little brackets are unnecessary and it makes everything kind of pinched, particularly where you're trying to put signage. It is squished in there because you have the fake batons and windows underneath. Give a little bit more scale, more organization of the materials, and height, simplify some of the detailing, and pay really close attention to where your downspouts. Where they are too close to entryways that water will migrate to the front entrance walks and you'll struggle with that all winter long. Simplify window expressions, there are a lot of different proportions, some that have clearstory areas and some that don't, some horizontal expression and clean that up a little bit. Separate the trellis from the building and make it its own thing, it doesn't serve the building by being attached to it.
- Could I ask the business owner what was he wanting to tell us?
  - Roman Ryan spoke, not previously knowing where the Alder stood on this project. He expressed disappointment with her, noting this as a missed opportunity with the offering of a community room that could be used for voting, luncheons, birthdays, celebrations, etc. The second floor has taken five years off his life. This project has been on-going for three years at multiple sites. He wants to build a state of the art funeral home, but the Alder doesn't want a funeral home. Funeral homes celebrate life. During a public meeting two people spoke about not wanting to walk by a funeral home. A funeral home is an asset to a community and a neighborhood icon. Please give us the opportunity to serve the people of Madison.

- Let's focus on what the Urban Design Commission can and cannot do. The two-story issue goes back to the adopted GDP. This commission made a recommendation that was not accepted by the Plan Commission. We are beholden to the Plan Commission to make an advisory recommendation ultimately on a building that is consistent with the approved GDP. Whether you call it a funeral home, what the neighbors want, if it's 70% or 30%, right now this is an Informational Presentation, and if we could be consistent with our comments regarding the design before us. The Plan Commission and the neighborhood and the Alder will all have to deal with the larger issues of whether or not this conditional use for a funeral home in this location at this height can be approved. Some of the concern is that they wanted to have an urban edge along McKee Road that is the whole two-story option. If we go to a much smaller footprint and have big gaps between buildings doesn't do much for the urban edge either. But right now we have to look at a building that is legally considered a two-story building, staff said that it is. There are other things we could contribute that could help the designer with the kind of comments that Christian and Lois gave earlier. Hopefully we can get through some building and site design things.
- Building on what Lois was saying, if the building had consistent roof pitches, this cross gable is a little steeper than the side elevations, that always helps to have consistent roof pitches. You have that eyebrow popping up which is different for a second story.
- Also, your top of masonry on one story versus two story and its different in the middle, I would go for a consistent top of masonry elevation, infill it with a lighter material. You have stucco, it could be siding since you are trying to emulate a residential feel, which is what you're saying that funeral homes gravitate toward. That might also be appropriate. Finally, I believe it's the east blank wall needs some openings, some articulation, that's looking almost too agricultural right there. I would encourage you to improve on that, and maybe study the covered entry a little bit, it looks awfully narrow compared to its width.
- Thank you for helping us focus on the design issues. I do echo Lois' take and believe that we can't force programming. It's a decent use of the site, and we have to take into account the market and what else could possibly fit the demand for two-stories in this area, and I have concerns that there isn't anything else.
- The location of the patio and pergola on the west side is fine and could be a nice amenity to the program and people using the building, being able to spill out in that way. Although the landscape is generic right now, if it's adequately screened from traffic and the nearby apartments. I don't have a strong opinion on whether the trellis is attached to the building or not. Its fine either way. On the landscape plan, the whole foundation planting that is facing the parking lot right now just says 'annuals by owner.' It would be good to have some of that should be more permanent so that throughout the seasons there is always something there throughout the seasons. If it means having another foot of space there, it might be necessary to hold something more substantial for planting along that front door edge, while still leaving some space for annuals near the entry, just not the whole elevation. Very small but lastly, one of the landscape details showed bark mulch or stone and we always look for and require that planting beds have that organic shredded hardwood bark mulch and not the stone; we don't want to see the stone mulch used.
- Looking at the entryways, it seems to me from the different renderings that the two different sides have a different depth of roof projection from the gabled roof coming toward us. If there's no functional reason for that, I wonder if some consistency there would be good. What I'm assuming is a faux structure bothers me a little bit and it could render as a little bit artificial and maybe not be overall helpful. Regarding mechanical equipment, in later meetings we'd like to understand where significant mechanical equipment is located and how it is screened, that would be some additional information we'd like to see that in future meetings. In addition to that, energy utility metering, some forethought about that, because you do have a building with lots of different sides and not necessarily a 'back,' some thoughtfulness to how those are treated and where they are located.

**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