



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 929 E Washington Avenue

Application Type: Informational Presentation – Major Alteration to a Previously Approved Project in Urban Design District (UDD) 8
UDC will be an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [80425](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Doug Hursh, Potter Lawson | Curt Brink, Archipelago Village, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a 15-story dual brand hotel comprised of 265 rooms and 160 parking stalls that was previously approved as a mixed-use office/commercial building with 105 residential units.

Project Background:

- At their April 13, 2022, meeting, the UDC granted Final Approval for a mixed-use building containing office/commercial and residential uses (Legistar ID [69485](#)). As part of this approval, the UDC granted approval of two bonus stories citing the extreme attention to detail and materiality, the success of the front façade, including the parking garage screening, the purple/green roofs, and energy efficiencies/sustainability measures.
- In 2020, UDC granted approval of a minor alteration to a previously approved planned multi-use site (Legistar ID [62297](#)).
- In 2019, UDC granted Final Approval for the development of a mixed-use commercial/office building (Legistar ID [54198](#)). Originally, the development proposal included an 11-story mixed-use building (156 feet in height) with modern architectural design comprised of 257,000 square feet of commercial/office space and wrapped structured parking. As part of the original approval UDC granted approval of bonus stories due to the fact that the height of the proposed building was in excess of what would be allowed by a 12-story building (147 feet).

Approval Standards: Upon submittal of a formal application, the Urban Design Commission (“UDC”) will be an **approving body** on this request. The development site is within Urban Design District 8 (“UDD 8”) - Block 13a, which requires that the UDC review the proposed project pursuant to the requirements and guidelines of [Section 33.24\(15\)](#). The code states that the UDC shall apply the UDD 8 district requirements and guidelines as may be appropriate in order to implement the Core Development Principles of the [East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan](#).

Summary of Design Related Plan Recommendations: The East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan (the “Plan”) provides a framework for addressing significant land use and design issues for the area centered along East Washington Avenue, from East Mifflin to East Main Streets, one of the City’s most prominent corridors. As noted in the Plan, the project site is recommended for commercial and residential land uses.

The Plan generally provides development principles and design guidelines that speak to maintaining capitol views by establishing maximum and minimum heights, setbacks and stepbacks, encouraging building design, materials, and colors that are complementary to and consistent with surrounding development, providing a mix of land uses, and creating a vibrant streetscape along East Washington Avenue.

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Traditional Employment (TE). Within the TE zoning district, the maximum permitted height is five stories/68 feet, however additional height may be allowed if approved as part of a Conditional Use. The TE zoning district also includes site development standards that speak to parking placement, loading areas, and entrance orientation. Please refer to [MGO Section 28.084](#) for additional information.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff recommends consideration be given to the following:

- **Building Height and Bonus Stories.** The development proposal includes a request for three bonus stories for an overall height of 15 stories/155'-6". As noted in UDD 8, the maximum building height is 12 stories without any bonus stories. A total of three bonus stories may be allowed provided that the proposal provides sufficient public benefit to warrant the additional height, including but not limited to affordable housing, energy efficiency, sustainability, structured parking, pedestrian connectivity, and open space. Please refer to MGO Section 33.25(15)(e)(12)(c) for additional information. The resulting maximum permitted height within Block 13a, including the three bonus stories (15 stories total) would be 183 feet (assuming maximum floor-to-floor heights 15-foot first floor, 12-foot upper floors).

Within UDD 8, in addition to the specific requirements with regard to building height, there are also street level façade height and stepbacks for each block. Street level façade heights within block 13a are required to be 3-5 stories, and there is a 15-foot building stepback required along the E Washington Avenue frontage.

As proposed, the building is 15 stories with an overall height of approximately 155'-6" feet, which is under the maximum permitted (183 feet). In addition, the proposed building has a four-story mass at the street, and a stepback that appears to be consistent with UDD 8 requirements above the fifth floor along E Washington Avenue.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback related to the proposed bonus stories, including elements outlined by the applicant in their letter of intent for achieving the bonus stories. The listed elements include the provision of structured parking, providing a mid- and through-block pedestrian connection, and the completed rehabilitation of the Kleuter Building and the Wisconsin Telephone Garage and Warehouse, at a future date. Upon an initial review, staff believes that the parking and through-block may be used to help satisfy this requirement, though staff has questions on the applicability of the historic rehabilitation items as such efforts are not proposed directly as part of this effort.

- **Overall Building Design.** Staff requests UDC feedback on the overall building design as it relates to building massing and articulation. Consideration should be given to the UDD Building Massing and Articulation guidelines and requirements, including those that speak to utilizing for-sided architecture, minimizing blank walls, including those on the east and west elevations, incorporating a higher level of design and detailing along the ground floor, creating visual distinction between building components (top, middle, base), providing a positive visual termination at the top of the building, and integrating mechanical equipment screening into the overall building design, etc.

In addition, while not indicated on the elevations, consideration should be given to potential HVAC louvers, including wall parks units, which are commonly associated with lodging uses. It has been the current practice to not locate such units on street-facing façades though they have been approved in some situations when found to be well integrated into the façade's design. Staff request the Commission's feedback on potential HVAC louvers/wall pack units.

- **Building Materials.** As noted in the application materials, the building material palette is primarily comprised of brick and metal panel accents. Staff requests the UDC provide feedback on the proposed material palette giving consideration to the UDD 8 Materials and Colors guidelines and requirements, including those that generally speak to utilizing high-quality durable materials, color choices being complementary to design and context. In addition consideration should be given to the treatment of floors 2-4, which include structured parking. As noted in the design guidelines of UDD 8, all visible sides of the building shall be designed with details that complement the front façade.