



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1801 East Washington Avenue (6th Aldermanic District, Alder Rummel)

Application Type: Rezoning, Demolition and Conditional Use

Legistar File ID #: [41183](#), [41011](#)

Prepared By: Heather Stouder, AICP, Planning Division
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted

Summary

Applicant and Project Contact: Michael J. Campbell; MMP CCG Madison, LLC; 5887 Glenridge Dr NE, Ste 360; Sandy Springs, GA, 30328

Property Owner: Marling Lumber; 1801 East Washington Ave; Madison, WI, 53704

Requested Action: Approval of the demolition of existing buildings, the rezoning of property from Industrial Light (IL) to Traditional Employment (TE), and a conditional use for construction of a mixed-use building with residential dwelling units and retail space in the TE District, adjacent to a City park. The approval for the rezoning involves review and approval of an associated amendment to the East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan, as well as review and approval for new development in Urban Design District 8. Note: While not part of this review, depending on tenant selection, it is possible that the applicant may seek future conditional use approvals for a restaurant tenant and an outdoor eating area.

Proposal Summary: The applicant proposes to demolish retail, office, and storage buildings associated with a lumberyard for construction of a mixed-use building with approximately 20,000 square feet of commercial space and 228 residential dwelling units.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: This proposal is subject to the standards for zoning map amendments (MGO Section 28.182(6)), demolition (MGO Section 28.185) and conditional uses (MGO Section 28.183(6)).

Review Required By: Urban Design Commission (UDC), Plan Commission (PC), and Common Council (CC)

Summary Recommendation: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the approval standards for zoning map amendments, demolition, and conditional uses can be met, **approve** the demolition and conditional use requests, and forward the rezoning requests to the Common Council with a recommendation to **approve**. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the Planning Division and other reviewing agencies.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject property is located between East Washington Avenue and East Main Street, immediately east of the Yahara River Parkway.

Existing Conditions and Land Use: The 3.9-acre subject property is currently developed with a lumberyard, associated store and office buildings, and vehicle circulation and surface parking.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

Northwest: Across East Washington Avenue to the northwest, Burr Jones Field in the Conservancy (CN) District.

Northeast: Immediately adjacent to the northeast, an auto-repair facility facing East Washington Avenue in the IL District, and a two-story commercial building facing East Main Street in the IL District. Further east, across the railroad right-of-way, single- and two-family homes in the Traditional Residential – Varied 1 (TR-V1) District.

Southeast: Across East Main Street to the southeast, single- and two-family homes in the Traditional Residential – Consistent 4 (TR-C4) District.

Southwest: Across the Yahara River, a commercial building and surface parking area in the Traditional Employment (TE) District.

Adopted Land Use Plan: The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2006) recommends Employment uses for the East Washington Avenue side, and medium-density residential uses for the East Main Street side of the subject property. Land use recommendations in the [East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan](#) (2008) are similar, with the East Washington Avenue side identified for “Primarily Employment, with some Residential”, and the East Main Street side identified for “Primarily Residential, with some Employment”.

Zoning Summary: As proposed, the property would be in the Traditional Employment (TE) District.

Environmental Corridor Status: The subject site is not located in a mapped environmental corridor.

Public Utilities and Services: This property is served by a full range of urban services, including several Metro Transit Routes running along East Washington Avenue.

Project Description

The applicant proposed to demolish buildings associated with the Marling lumberyard for construction of a four-story mixed use building with approximately 20,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 228 residential dwelling units. Since the project was presented to the Urban Design Commission for informational purposes on October 7, 2015, the overall program and building massing are similar. Aside from the provision of further detail, significant changes to the plan set include the following items:

- Following discussions with interested neighbors, City Engineering staff, and Planning staff, the applicant has revised the grading plan so as to raise and better orient the prominent corner of the building to both East Washington Avenue and the Yahara River.
- The palette of exterior materials has changed significantly, based on feedback from the Marquette Neighborhood, Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood, staff, and the Landmarks Commission.
- The courtyard opening up to the Yahara River has been widened to approximately 75 feet.
- Along East Main Street, the public sidewalk to be constructed if this proposal moves forward has been slightly shifted to the northwest, partially on private property, in order to support the viability of a few large existing street trees. This shift results in a public terrace of twelve feet or greater along East Main Street.

Analysis of Consistency with UDD 8 Standards

An analysis of the proposal against the many design requirements and guidelines in Urban Design District 8 (MGO Section 33.24(15)(e)) is provided below.

1. Building Height – The proposed building all minimum and maximum building height requirements for Blocks 18a, 18b, and 18c as follows:

Block	Minimum Facade Height	Maximum Facade Height	Maximum Building Height	Proposed
18a	2 stories	4 stories	4 stories	4-story facade and building
18b	2 stories	3 stories	4 stories	2-story facade, stepping back to 4 stories
18c	3 stories	5 stories	6 + 2 bonus	4-story facade and building

2. Building Location and Orientation – The building as proposed is placed 18-21 feet from the property line along East Washington Avenue, exceeding the 15-foot maximum setback requirement for this side of the block. Similarly, along the Yahara River, the setback ranges from approximately 8 feet to 27 feet, which exceeds the 10-foot maximum established in the ordinance. Section 33.24(15)(e)2.a of the ordinance provides the UDC with the flexibility to allow greater setbacks for the creation of pedestrian plazas and usable open space. In this case, staff supports the greater setbacks along both East Washington Avenue and the Yahara River for several reasons. First, the space in front of the building along East Washington Avenue provides an active, landscaped pedestrian space. Second, the additional setback is needed, particularly at the prominent corner of the building, in order to allow for a grade transition from East Washington Avenue. Third, since this block is separated by the Yahara River from the rest of the corridor, the impacts of five additional feet in front of the building facade is minimal on the uniform character of the district along East Washington Avenue. Fourth and finally, with regard to the setback along the Yahara River, the greater setback is necessary for the creation of a public path linking East Washington Avenue and East Main Street, along with landscaping and other quasi-public open spaces. From a design perspective, the interface between the building and the Yahara River Parkway is critical to the success of this project, and ten feet would be an insufficient width to accomplish many of the details being proposed by the applicant.

Along East Main Street, the building placement ranges from 5 to 10 feet from the property line, with much deeper courtyard on the east end of the site. Staff notes that the ordinance is currently unclear related to the required setback. In the table in Section 33.24(15)(e)3, the minimum and maximum setback from East-West streets is listed as 15 feet for this portion of the property. However, a footnote to the same table notes that the minimum and maximum setbacks from East Washington Avenue are 15 feet, but that the setback range for other East-West streets is 5-20 feet. Staff believes that in this case, the tighter front setback as proposed meets the letter of the ordinance, and that it is adequate, particularly since the width of the terrace will be 12 or more feet following construction of a new public sidewalk. As mentioned related to East Washington Avenue, the separation of this property from others by the Yahara River reduces the need for a setback consistent with other properties in the district. That said, the UDC should carefully review the adequacy of the setback and landscaping proposed between the sidewalk and building face along East Main Street, and make any suggestions for improvements (see Landscaping section below).

3. Building Height, Location, and Stepback – Addressed above in #1.
4. Parking and Service Areas – The proposal appears to meet the requirements in this section. The proposed parking structure is surrounded on two and a half sides by the building itself. The side facing East Washington is visible and adjacent to the building, set back approximately 80 feet from the East Washington facade due to a jog in the property line. Along East Main Street, the lower levels of the parking structure are hidden by with a two-story residential component of the building, and upper levels are stepped back approximately 30 feet. Further information is needed on trash management, but the trash room appears to be located inside the first level of the parking structure, accessible from East Main Street and thus screened from public view, as is required by ordinance.

Many guidelines in this section are addressed with the proposal, but a few are either not met or unclear at this time. First, Guideline ix notes that driveways from East Main Street should only be permitted if no other option exists. In this case, the proposal has driveways leading from both East Washington Avenue and East Main Street, and the other sides of the building are not applicable. While traffic will primarily be driven by the residential use, and should be well distributed throughout the day, the East Main Street driveway allows for a much safer and more convenient way for westbound traffic to arrive and leave the site. Meanwhile, eastbound traffic will most likely arrive and leave the site using the East Washington Avenue driveway. The UDC and Plan Commission should both consider this issue when making a determination on the proposal. Second, revised floor plans and supplemental information related to bicycle parking and circulation will need to be provided to meet basic zoning requirements, as well as the guideline in this section related to distribution of bike parking throughout the site.

5. Landscaping and Open Space- Staff believes that the proposal has a strong open space plan, with three large courtyards, including a quasi-public area on the west side of the property facing the Yahara River. The mix of programmed hardscaped areas, open lawns, landscaped areas, and usable gardens provides for a variety of uses within these spaces. The third floor roof-top terrace overlooking the river will also be a great asset for residents.

With regard to the landscape plan, it is first important to note that the proposed trees in the public right-of-way should not be approved as part of the UDC review, as this area will be fully planned by City Forestry staff in coordination with the applicant and other agencies. Upon initial review, Forestry staff has suggested that many of the trees shown are spaced too closely together, and it is likely that approximately half of the trees shown can actually be planted. Further coordination with Forestry and Fire staff regarding tree-planting distances and fire access is needed prior to final approval by staff. As part of the Plan Commission approval, staff will recommend a condition of approval that the applicant include a note on plans that the specific planting plan for new street trees in the terraces will be determined by Forestry staff. If the UDC wishes for this issue to be addressed prior to final approval of the design, that should be made clear.

On private property, the landscape plan can be summarized as follows:

- Along the 600 foot East Washington Avenue frontage, the plan includes six oak trees and two lilacs. In addition, one significant existing street tree will be protected to remain on the site. The trees in this area do not in and of themselves meet the ordinance requirement for canopy trees planted every 40 feet, but even with fewer additional public trees than currently shown on plans, it should be possible to meet this requirement.
- Along East Main Street, four existing street trees will remain, and shrubs and low perennials have been proposed in the space between the new public sidewalk and the building. The UDC should carefully review this area to ensure that the landscape plan is optimal.

- Along the West side of the building facing the Yahara River, the applicant has proposed a pathway leading from East Main Street to East Washington Avenue in an area where a public easement will be required. Low landscaping is proposed just east of the path along the building foundation. The applicant has enhanced the landscaping in this area based on feedback from the Landmarks Commission. Six canopy trees are proposed along the west side of the path, three of which appear to be shown on the property line itself. Staff from the Parks Division is currently reviewing this plan, and may recommend that the placement of these trees be slightly adjusted to avoid the property line.
 - Along the east side of the exposed parking garage, several canopy trees are proposed to soften the facade. While this facade will not be highly visible, the proposed trees and other landscaping will soften the views from the railroad track and single-family homes further to the east.
 - Finally, the three courtyard areas include a wide variety of relatively dense plantings ranging from low perennials to canopy trees, organized around central lawn or hardscaped areas. Seating and other amenities are included in the two larger courtyards, and vegetable garden spaces for tenants are shown in the courtyard opening up to East Main Street, where ample sunlight should support them.
6. Site Lighting and Furnishings- Lighting information that has been provided appears to generally meet the requirements in this section at grade. However, due to lack of information on above grade lighting on all elevations, an assessment of the impacts on surrounding properties cannot be provided at this time. The applicant will still need to provide additional cut sheets for poles and bollard lighting, and further information on any lighting on building elevations beyond switchable porch lights. Staff recommends that this information be provided and reviewed by the UDC prior to final approval for the design of the proposal.
7. Building Massing and Articulation – Staff believes that the requirements in this section are generally well addressed. The three visible sides of the building relate to one another architecturally, and are well-fenestrated.
- With regard to the guidelines, staff is not aware of any specific “green” building components, although the applicant has been encouraged to explore the use of solar photovoltaic panels. Other guidelines appear to be met with the proposal.
8. Materials and Colors – Staff appreciates recent revisions to the palette of materials, particularly the simplification of the exterior and the increased use of brick, as is recommended for Urban Design District 8. While staff generally supports the use of cementitious panels on upper levels of the building, it is unclear whether the applicant is still proposing the use of board and batten style siding, or simply flat panels everywhere this material is specified. Staff would like input from the UDC on the panel type and color throughout the building, including the parking structure.
9. Windows and Entrances – It appears that the first floor commercial frontage facing East Washington Avenue meets the requirement for 60% of the street wall area devoted to transparent windows. The applicant should confirm this with a calculation prior to final approval.
- Entrances to the building are well-dispersed, with eight shown along East Washington, three commercial entrances and two residential entrances along the Yahara River side of the building, and entrances with stoops leading to individual residential units provided along East Main Street.
10. Signage – While signage concepts may be shared at this stage in the process, signage details will be subject to future review and approval by the UDC.
11. Restoration / Preservation Activities – Not applicable to this site.
12. Upper Level Development Standards – Not applicable to this site.

Staff Recommendation

On the whole, staff believes that the proposal has improved significantly since the October informational presentation to the UDC. While some details still need to be addressed, the proposed demolition, rezoning, conditional use, and associated plan amendment are generally supported by staff.

Based on a review of the proposal against the requirements and guidelines in MGO 33.24(15), staff recommends that the Urban Design Commission **grant initial approval** of this proposal, clearly noting any conditions of approval or expectations for additional detail needed for final approval at a later date. Staff recommends that the UDC discussion specifically include the following items:

- Review and acknowledgement of the need for a driveway from East Main Street as it pertains to the related guideline in the Parking and Service Areas section of the ordinance.
- Acknowledge that the specific species and placement of trees in the public right-of-way will be determined by Forestry staff at a later date. Make clear to the applicant any expectations for further coordination regarding street trees prior to final approval.
- Affirm the adequacy of the setback on East Main Street as proposed.
- Review of the adequacy of landscaping on all sides of the building, particularly along the East Main Street frontage.
- Review of the lighting details provided, and a request for further detail on the on-building lighting.
- Discussion on the types of cementations panels, including clarification on whether board and batten panels are still being proposed.