



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 500 W. Washington Avenue
Application Type: Mixed-Use Proposal in a Planned Development PD district– Informational Presentation
Legistar File ID # [60100](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Doug Hursh, Potter Lawson, Inc./David Keller, Keller Real Estate Group

Project Description: The applicant is presenting an informational presentation on a new 6-story mixed-use building with 103 residential units and ground floor commercial uses.

Project Schedule:

- The applicant is planning to file a land use application in the future.

Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. As with any **Planned Development**, 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.

Summary of Design Considerations

In addition to the PD standards, Planning Staff request that the Commission provide feedback on how the proposed development relates to the recently adopted [Mifflandia Neighborhood Plan](#). That document, approved in 2019 includes detailed design guidelines. In summary, these include the following:

Mifflandia Neighborhood Plan - Height Setback and Stepbacks, p. 10:

Height: Four (4) Stories, with Two (2) Additional stories allowed, when meeting applicable set and stepbacks.

West Washington Avenue Setbacks: 20 Feet from property line

North Bassett Street Setback: 10 Feet

West Washington Avenue Stepback: Floors 5 and 6 should be stepped back 30 Feet from Face of Building

Bassett Street Setback: Floors 5 and 6 should be stepped back 10 Feet from Face of the Building

Mifflandia Neighborhood Plan “Design and Sustainability” guidelines begin on page 15 and include recommendations related to materials, entrances, articulation, porches, balconies, resilience, and sustainability. Please see the attached PDF with excerpts from the Plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Setbacks, Stepbacks, and Height. The site has two key street frontages on the northwest corner of West Washington Avenue and North Bassett Street. **The current site plan does not show any dimensions;** however, it appears that the new six (6) story building may be set back the required 20 feet from West Washington and the 10 feet from North Bassett. The building will be four (4) stories on the West Washington Avenue street level with two (2) stories above. Note that there is a two (2) story minimum on West Washington – the current proposal includes a one story commercial space with a second level open air covered plaza above that first floor. There is a required 30 feet stepback above the fourth floor on West Washington and a 10 feet stepback above the fourth floor on North Bassett.

Massing and Articulation. Another key consideration relates to façade articulation. The plan recommends that a maximum building length be established at the time an Urban Design District is created for the area though no such standard currently exists. The plan recommends that buildings exceeding 33 feet in width should include vertical intervals and incorporate articulation, design and massing to respond to the historic 33 feet wide lot rhythm through the utilization of program elements such as storefronts, cafes, porches or balconies, arcades, awnings, window bays, and other methods. As part of the informational presentation, staff request the UDC provide comments related to façade length and articulation.

Balconies. Staff also request the UDC give careful consideration to the proposed balconies as they relate to the guidelines starting on p. 17. Staff’s primary concerns related to those balconies that “hang” off the façade and the upper level balconies that present additional mass within the required setback areas. While the plan specifically notes that such features could be allowed in setback areas, the plan does not specify that as a recommended projection within setback areas.

Second Level Patio Wall. Staff also request that the UDC give specific feedback regarding the second level street-facing wall that lines the edge of the rooftop patio. While this is not a zoning compliance issue, Page 16 of the plan recommends a minimum two-story mass and staff had previously raised concerns whether this design feature could be found to meet the intent of this requirement.

West Washington Driveway and Garage Door Opening. Page 19 of the plan recommends that for corner development properties, driveways should only be accessed from the North-South Streets, not West Washington Avenue. The current concept includes driveways on both Bassett and West Wash, which lead to the same level.

In conclusion, this project is the first redevelopment proposed under the recently adopted [Mifflandia Neighborhood Plan](#). Staff urges that the Commission give careful consideration to those adopted guidelines, as plan consistency is an important consideration in the ultimate evaluation of this request. UDC should also comment on the general PD standards, conditional use standards, and include comments related to building placement, bulk, articulation as well as comments related to the pedestrian experience for BOTH West Washington and North Bassett Street frontages.

UDC Informational Review Comments

Site Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Though I’m sure that this project will generate the same controversy we see any time a large building replaces existing older traditional homes, the plan seems to be nice, creative use of this site.• Seems to meet all set-backs established in Mifflandia Plan. First floor terraces respect front porch tradition along W. Wash.
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	<p>Curving driveway to maintain major street tree on W. Wash. is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The garage door on W. Wash is unfortunate. The 5’ setback along the SW side seems so close to the existing residence. • 7 - Site plan conforms well to the neighborhood plan. Rear yard very narrow and will rely on creative landscaping and access.
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the H-shaped design. Decent articulation to break up the mass - while the second story “pillars” fronting the rooftop terrace really help with this on the West Wash elevation, that section does not appear to comply with the 2 story requirement. And while I’m fine with the balconies on floors 3, 4, and 5, the ones on the 6th floor are both visually jarring and seem to extend into the setback space. Would be nice to see some surface or color effects on the masonry on floors 1-4. • Overall composition, massing and design seem appropriate to the dense urban site. H configuration of building breaks up mass well. Choice and detailing of brick will be critical, since it appears to be the primary (sole?) material for first four floors. Not sure I like vertical board & batten approach to metal cladding on top two floors. Projecting terraces on 6th floor W. Wash units are inelegant – that detail needs work. • The massing seems appropriate. Does Unit Type N really only have one window/patio door? When it faces to the North, this unit will not get much natural light, and no direct light? Does the patio for Type N come up against the window of Unit Type T? Unit types H, L and K also only have one window? The wall along the roof terrace facing W. Wash seems appropriate for the 2-story requirement along this façade, but the trellis-like structure seems a little out of scale next to the masses of the building on either side. The roof projections on the W. Wash façade over the balconies on the 6th floor are debatable – they add to the bulk and seem out of scale at the same time. The exterior entry space for the first floor units on the W. Wash façade look very similar to the public commercial entry area – maybe they should suggest more privacy? Maybe be setback a little? • 7 – Nice proportions, good use of restraint. East & west elements are four stories & center portion is one story – would like to see two or three stories at center to balance street presence.
Landscape Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much to see yet - really hope the mature trees on this site can be preserved. Would like to see both green roof and seasonal planters on the rooftop terrace areas. • No landscape plan to react to at this time. • The renderings show trees along the SW side, but the site plan indicates there is only 5’ width in here? Is there enough room for trees?
Site Amenities/Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second floor community room terrace will be great amenity, but also possible noise generator. Assume any lighting will comply with dark sky requirements.

<p>Signs – if shown, do they complement the architecture? <i>(sign approvals will be a separate application.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment at this time.
<p>Pedestrian/Vehicle Circulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can see why you'd want W Wash entrance to parking along with the Bassett entrance, but it seems blatantly contrary to the neighborhood plan. • Respects existing W. Wash. & Basset St. pedestrian experience by maintaining site set-backs. Walk-up units and first floor retail activate the pedestrian experience, as do 1st floor terraces. • Is there access to the elevators from the exterior for pedestrians that don't require them to go through the garage or up some exterior stairs? It looks like there may be access next to the garage door on W. Wash, but that is the connection to the sidewalk? • 6 – Are two vehicle entrances necessary? Eliminate one on W. Washington side?
<p>Urban Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems to be on its way to being a good fit for a changing neighborhood - think it could be better with some tweaks. • While many of us will miss the old 3-story homes along W. Wash, this design respects all the major precepts of the Mifflandia plan. It also occurs on one of the most heavily redeveloped and dense W. Wash blocks, so it fits with surrounding context even better than if it were on the 400 block. The two remaining 'orphan' houses, however, will be problematic for future development, I suspect. • 8
<p>Overall Rating (1-10)*</p>	<p>7, 8, 6, 8</p>

*Individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10. The scale is: 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding.