



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 12 N. Few Street  
**Application Type:** Text Amendment to Urban Design District (UDD) 8 and Addition and New Construction in UDD 8 – Initial/Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #** [64778](#) and [63801](#)  
**Prepared By:** Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

**Background Information**

**Applicant | Contact:** John Seamon, SEA Design/Jeremy Knudson

**Project Description:** There are two related requests before the UDC. The first is a text amendment for the subject block (UDD 8, Block 5). As described below, the amendment creates a new sub-block (Block 5c) and the resulting change amends the front yard setback from 15 feet to a range of 5-20 feet. No other changes to the bulk requirements are proposed. As previously noted to the UDC, this amendment would allow for the redevelopment to occur, as proposed. Secondly, the applicant is seeking initial/final approval for a single-story addition on top of an existing single-story masonry block building, and a new two-story addition to provide 8 small commercial spaces and 8 one-bedroom residential units aimed at providing live-work units.

**Project Schedule:**

- The UDC received an informational presentation on February 24, 2021.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review the demolition request associated with this development proposal on May 24, 2021. (*Demo permit is for a portion of the street-facing façade on E. Washington.*)
- The Common Council is scheduled to consider the Text amendment on June 1, 2021.

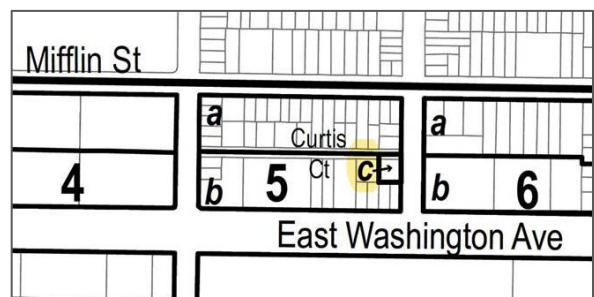
**Approval Standards:**

The UDC is an advisory body on the UDD 8 amendment and is an approving body on the development request. The development site is currently within Urban Design District 8 (UDD 8) Block 5b which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design requirements and guidelines of Section 33.24(15).

In applying the standards, the code states that the Urban Design Commission shall apply the district requirements and guidelines for [UDD 8 \(MGO 33.24\(15\)\)](#) as may be appropriate in order to implement the Core Development Principles of the [East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan](#). In order to approve, ordinance requires that the development is found to meet the requirements and conform as much as possible to the guidelines.

**Summary of Design Considerations**

There are two requests before the UDC. The first is an advisory recommendation on the UDD 8 amendment. This block, between North Ingersoll and North Few Streets is one of the few UDD 8 blocks that has an east/west street, Curtis Court, running through the center. Block 5b currently requires a 15 foot setback on east/west streets. The UDD 8 amendment will create **Block 5c** (indicated as “c” in the figure to the right) that allows a flexible setback between 5-20 feet for a portion of this lot (66 feet) of Curtis Court.



The intent of this amendment is to accommodate both the existing portion of the building, which sits 17 feet - 4 inches back from Curtis Court, and the newer portion which sits roughly six feet back. The ordinance responds only to a portion of the existing site (66 feet) and does not impact setback standards for properties in the district. As a reference, the proposed 5-20 foot setback range is already utilized in some other blocks in UDD 8.

The second request before the UDC is the proposed addition. Staff recommends that the UDC review the project against the requirements and guidelines of UDD 8 and the Core Development Principles of the East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan. As a reference, the Commission's comments from the 2/24/21 Informational Presentation are noted below:

#### Landscaping/trees:

- If you can maintain those trees, they're pretty substantial.
- Recommend saving the trees on Curtis Court, it would be a shame if those were removed.
- There's no paving to that doorway, I'm trying to get a sense of circulation for both customers and apartment occupants.
- What is the purpose for all the paving if you don't intend for cars to go into those spaces?

#### Parking:

- Where do you foresee customers parking when they come here?
- There's not a lot of parking there, I don't think the parking is a huge issue.
- I do think parking can be an issue. In that regard will residents be prohibited from taking their cars into their workspace?
- Four parking spots off Curtis Court - could be permeable paving as opposed to more concrete.
- I share the concerns of everybody with parking and the lack thereof. This used to be my neighborhood and I still frequent businesses nearby, at 3:00 in the afternoon it's really hard to find a parking spot along Few and East Mifflin Streets, there's definitely concerns about that.

#### Building Design:

- Have you developed a building like this before, and what are some of the examples of the type of businesses that run out of a small space?
- I'm intrigued by the proportions, the scale, how you've done the windows. It's all got a really nice Craftsman look to it, is there any flexibility to do a little less of the steel, especially on the Few Street facing side of the building?
- Maybe at the base, even a burnished block that had the same type of vibe while not trying to appear original. I'd keep it the same scale.
- What is the thought for the transparency of the garage doors, a frosted element or transparent?
- I'm trying to understand the likelihood of cohesiveness between the two units. You can't always make multiple tenants do the same thing but that was the first thing that came to mind for me. I'm excited about the idea, it's a dynamic use and I want to support that.
- The metal aesthetic and the trees might go a long way to break that up, soften that up perhaps. I like the proposed aesthetic, I do question the fit in the neighborhood but the trees might help you.
- As far as the garage doors, the condos behind the Galaxie have the exact same thing. Maybe adding some sort of different material on the Few Street side but I would not go crazy with it. Overall I definitely like this building, this project.
- I like this concept a lot.
- I assumed these were combined units that went together. That seems to defeat the purpose of having a development like this, that's confusing to me.
- The existing masonry, where the paint is coming off you can see the masonry underneath, it's not particularly attractive.