



Annual Report | Urban Design Committee

UDC 2023



URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michelle Penn, Chair
Gill Peace, Vice-Chair
Frank Ordia
Emily Deeker
Jill Grasso
Tom Huston
Mark Canney

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Collin Christopher
Teresa McKinstry
Paul Barnes
Stephanie Rouse
Arvind Gopalakrishnan

APPROVED

The Urban Design Committee approved this Annual Report on January 9, 2024.

PHOTO & IMAGE CREDITS

Cover Image: Clark & Enerson, Inside Cover Image: Flickr.

All other project photos, images or illustrations were provided by applicants that appeared before the Urban Design Committee and are considered part of the public record unless otherwise noted.

Background

The Urban Design Committee was established by ordinance in 1981 to advise city government on enhancing the physical environment of our city to increase enjoyment of living in and visiting Lincoln. Per Section 4.36 of the Lincoln Municipal Code, the Committee is to consist of seven appointed citizen members serving three-year terms. The Committee meets as necessary on the first Tuesday of the month at 3 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

The Urban Design Committee member roster remained unchanged until July 2023, including Michelle Penn (chair), Gill Peace (vice-chair), Peter Hind, Emily Deeker, Jill Grasso, Tom Huston, and Mark Canney. Subsequently, Peter Hind resigned from the committee, and Frank Ordia assumed his position in October. The Committee was staffed by Collin Christopher and Arvind Gopalakrishnan, with support from Teresa McKinstry, Paul Barnes, Stephanie Rouse.

The committee advises the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, city boards, city departments, and other public agencies in matters relating to urban design, visual relationships, architectural design, and aesthetics. Reviews are generally limited to projects sponsored, initiated, or financed by the City (public projects); projects in which the City will make some financial contribution (public/private projects); and projects located on City right-of-way or other City property (private projects).

Project Review Summary

In 2023, the Urban Design Committee reviewed 16 unique projects, with some receiving multiple reviews. Those 17 consisted of 8 TIF projects, 1 city-led project, 5 sidewalk cafe applications, 2 neighborhood design standards appeals, and 1 application with a waiver of downtown design standards.

17

UNIQUE PROJECTS





TIF Project Reviews

The Urban Design Committee provided a total of fourteen advisory reviews for projects requesting Tax Increment Financing (TIF). These projects vary widely in scale, scope, location and land use. Of note, they include two affordable housing projects, two small-scale “missing middle” infill projects, a number of other multi-family housing concepts, an industrial park, and what would be downtown’s first extended stay hotel. What follows is a brief summary of each of the 8 TIF project reviews that came before the Committee in 2023.

Marshall Addition Development 2716 and 2718 Starr Street



In January, the Committee reviewed this multifamily infill project on the vacant land at the northeast corner of N 27th and Starr Streets. The applicant requested for Tax Increment Financing assistance from the city. The project proposal consisted of 12-unit apartment building closest to N 27th and a tri-plex to the east that will serve to transition into the existing neighborhood. Each of the proposed two-story tri-plex units will consist of four bedrooms and three baths. Each of the units within the larger three-story building will be made up of two bedrooms and one bath.



Woodside Village, located at the northeast corner of NW 48th and W Holdrege, is a multifamily project consisting of one (1) three-story building and three (3) four-story buildings that will house approximately 289 total units. Those units will consist of three (3) studio units, two hundred seven (207) 1 bed/1 bath units, and seventy-nine (79) 2 bed/2 bath units. The project is located in a growing area of the City and is adjacent to the new Lincoln Northwest High School. The applicant requested for Tax Increment Financing assistance and as a result, the committee reviewed this project in January, wherein they offered comments and asked to review it again in February.



Speedway Developers proposed a mixed-use redevelopment project on the vacant lot at the southwest corner of N 48th Street and Madison Avenue. This site has been vacant since a 2003 fire destroyed the Green's building, and its redevelopment is expected to include 54 apartment units and approximately 4,800 square feet of leasable ground floor commercial space. A portion of the residential units were to be dedicated to affordable housing. The applicant requested Tax Increment Financing assistance, leading them to present before the Urban Design Committee in February, followed by a subsequent final review in March.

Eighteen N Multifamily Redevelopment Project

Southwest corner of S 18th and N Streets



Speedway Properties proposed a development of a multifamily housing project at the southwest corner of S 18th and N Streets. The proposed five-story building, which will occupy land that is currently being used as a surface parking lot, is designed to consist of a combination of studio, one bedroom and two-bedroom units. A portion of the 84 total units will be reserved as affordable housing. Most of the first floor of the building will be used for internal parking, while the apartment units will occupy the remaining upper floors. UDC's advice was sought as the applicant requested the use of Tax Increment Financing.

The Union at Antelope Valley Streetscape

The block bounded by Antelope Valley Parkway, 18th, K, and L Streets.



The Annex Group proposed a 5-story residential building on the block bounded by Antelope Valley Parkway, 18th, K, and L Streets. UDC's advice was sought because the applicant is requesting the use of Tax Increment Financing. They appeared before Urban Design Committee in November of 2022 and received a recommendation of approval. At that meeting, they were asked by the Committee to bring the streetscape plan back for review at a future date. City staff advised the design team that the streetscape design focus on pedestrian connectivity, ample overstory tree coverage and foundation plantings along the Antelope Valley Parkway frontage that soften the impacts of the building's interior parking.

Residence Inn Hotel

401 N 9th Street



In October of 2022, Urban Design Committee recommended approval, subject to review of the site plan once complete. While refinement of the site plan cannot be completed until streetscape-related improvements are negotiated, the developer proposed some changes to the project that they sought approval for.



The original proposal included a freestanding canopy south of the building that would complement the existing canopy in front of the adjacent Courtyard by Marriott. What was later shown was an enlarged canopy extending out from the building's south façade. The canopy would consist of white fascia and soffit, with a faux framing recess above the lobby entry point. This recess would be lit to further highlight and brighten up the entry. In the June and July meetings, The Urban Design Committee was asked to weigh in on these proposed canopy modifications.

Centerpointe

13th and E, 1000 S 13th Street



Hoppe Development is proposing a Mixed-Use building on 13th and E Street, that is part of the South of Downtown PUD. The applicants presented to the Committee to receive preliminary feedback before applying for the NIFA award.

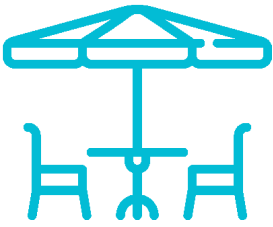
The building responded to some key themes as informed by the neighborhood groups and proposes amenities and services that the neighborhood could utilize, such as affordable housing, gathering spaces neighborhood parking trees and public space, and a healthcare office. The Committee granted approval to the project and asked the applicants to return for streetscaping and landscaping concepts.

Central at South Haymarket

205 S 10th St.



The Annex Group proposed a 6-story residential building (75 ft tall) on 205 10 street, with N street to the North, and 9th and 10th to the west and east respectively. This site is in the B-4 zoning district subject to the Downtown Design Standards, which was the basis for design review. The project would consist of 173 affordable housing units targeted for families, with off-site parking currently being negotiated with the City, to be provided in the City garage at 11th and N St. The project will have a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. The applicants wanted to apply for the NIFA award in November, and requested TIF assistance from the City. Hence, the Urban Design Committee provided an advisory review of the project over three meetings and approved the building design in December. The applicants are to return in early 2024 for parking and drop-off, streetscape and landscape design review.



Sidewalk Cafe Reviews

The Committee provided design review for 5 sidewalk cafe applications in the downtown area in 2023.

Sultan's Kite Sidewalk Cafe 1309 O Street



Mr. Sultan Attaie applied for a sidewalk café permit for the use of the surface space outside Sultan's Kite (1309 O St.) abutting the public right-of-way as an extension of the café. The applicant proposed a sidewalk café of 10' x 25' attached to the building. The property sits between Walgreens pharmacy and Atmosphere Lincoln. The applicant submitted the package to the planning department, and upon review, it was suggested that, given the absence of plans to serve liquor, the café could be positioned by the curb, away from the building. The pedestrian passageway would act as a separation between the café and the building, offering an experimental café space for the next few years until the O street improvements commence. The Urban Design Committee approved this proposal in the June meeting.

Jake's Cigars & Spirits Sidewalk Cafe

101 N 14th Street



Mr. Alex Roskelley applied for a sidewalk café permit for the use of the surface space outside Jake's Cigars and Spirits (101 N 14th St.) abutting the public right-of-way as an extension of the café. He proposed a sidewalk café of 46.5' x 9.0' attached to the building. Jake's is located on the first floor of the University Square parking garage, which is a corner lot, at the intersection of North 14th Street and P Street. It fronts both N 14th Street and P Street. However, the proposed outdoor café is only on the sidewalk along N 14th street. The sidewalk café permit application was submitted to the City, and was presented to the Urban Design Committee after an initial review. The City informed the business about the future plans of the city for 14th Street, and the Committee granted approval to the sidewalk café.

Bison Witches Bar & Deli Sidewalk Café

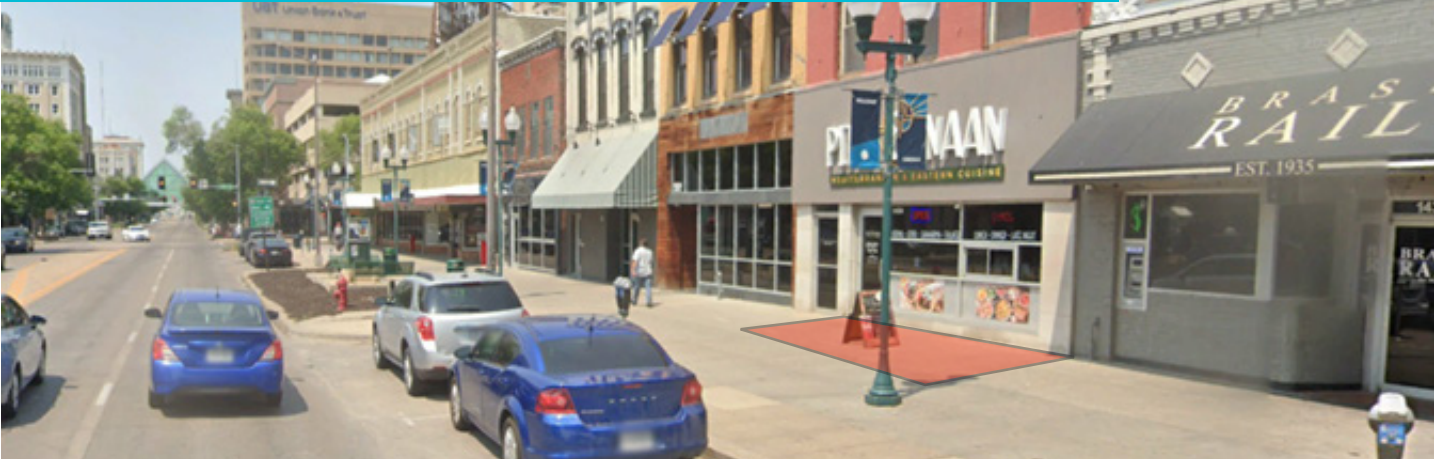
1320 P Street



Nearly ten years ago, Bison Witches was approved for a sidewalk café that borders the east side of Tower Square at N 13th and P Streets. The patio space includes an overhead canopy that provides shade and overhead protection from the elements. More recently, it was discovered that Bison Witches had installed an enclosure around the patio that was not approved by the City. Upon an internal staff review of the added enclosure, it was determined that the Bison Witches sidewalk café was no longer in conformance with the approved application. In discussions with the applicant, they have conveyed that the enclosure is an attempt to expand seating in the cool-weather months when an outdoor patio would not otherwise be appropriate. The enclosure appears to be made of a thick canvas material with a red color finish and transparent, vinyl window openings. The Urban Design Committee was not in support of the enclosure, and after subsequent meetings with the Planning Department, the business was informed that the city expects them to change the existing enclosure and come up with a new design that the City and the Urban Design Committee would have to approve before erection.

Pita & Naan Sidewalk Cafe

1434 O Street



Mr. Omar Attaie applied for a sidewalk café permit for the use of the surface space outside Pita & Naan (1434 O St.) abutting the public right-of-way as an extension of the café. He proposed a sidewalk café of 13.5' x 20' attached to the building. The property sits between Brass Rail and Junction. This block between Centennial Mall and N 14th Street running north-south, on O Street running east-west currently has one sidewalk café outside Gourmet Grill, on the same side as Pita & Naan and two cafés across the street, outside Yia Yia's and Isumo Ramen. The applicant presented before the Urban Design Committee and got approval for a 13.5' wide café.

The Mill Coffee and Tea Sidewalk Cafe

1040 O Street



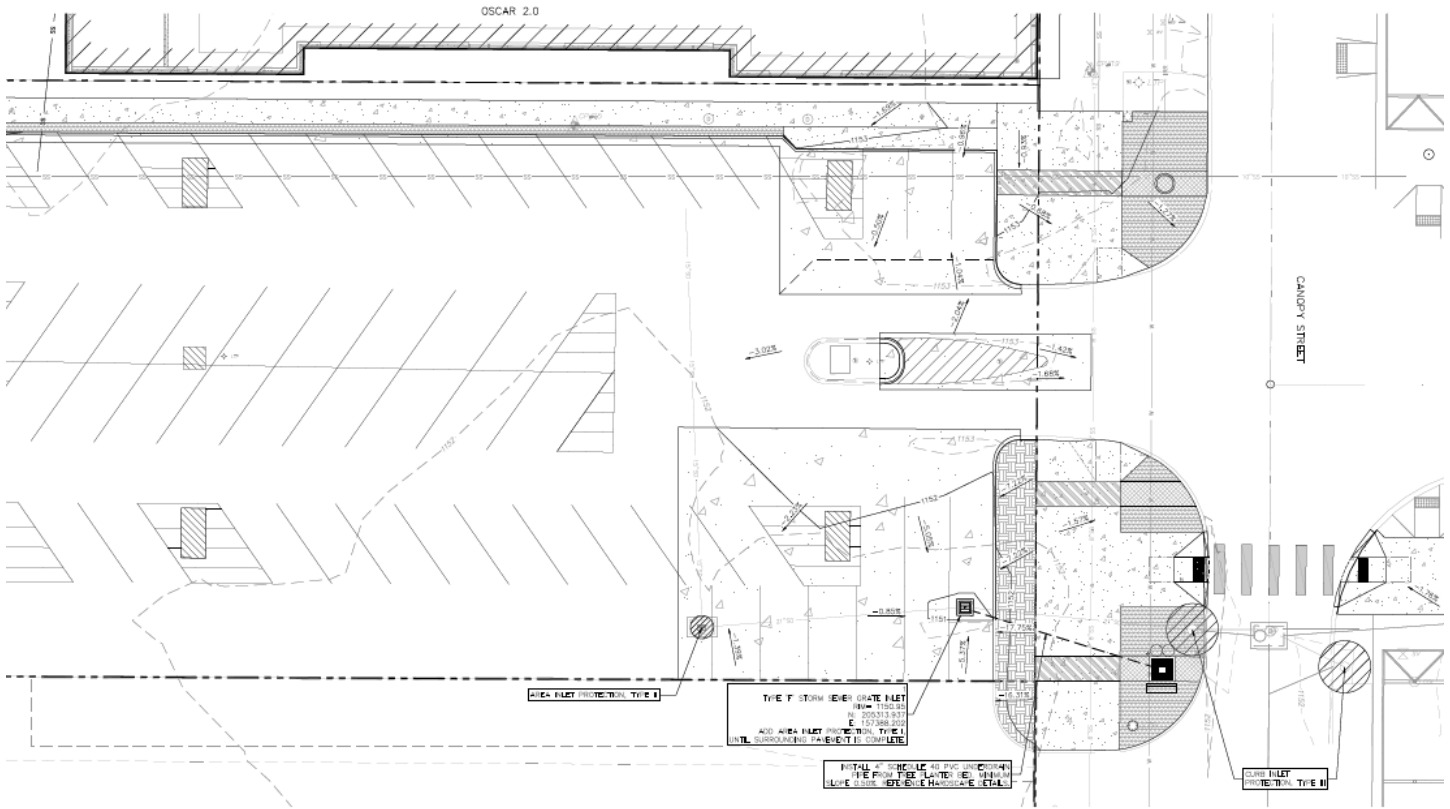
The owners of the Mill Coffee & tea on the first floor of the "TEN 40 CONDOS" building applied for a sidewalk café permit for the use of the surface space outside the building abutting the public right of way as an extension of the café. The applicants are proposing a sidewalk café of 9'-4" x 34'-6 1/2" attached to the building. The applicants presented before the Urban Design Committee in November and December and were granted approval for the sidewalk café.



City Project Reviews

The Urban Design Committee completed an advisory review of a streetscape project project in 2023.

West Haymarket Streetscape Improvement Completion Canopy Street, south of O Street



The City of Lincoln and the West Haymarket Joint Public Agency (WHJPA) partnered to complete one of the final gaps in the Canopy Street streetscape in West Haymarket. The scope of the project addresses improvements to the public streetscape and the BNSF parking lot under the overpass that is owned by the WHJPA. The streetscape portion of the project is designed to continue the existing streetscape pattern already along Canopy Street, including amenities like decorative paving, landscaping, benches, trash receptacles and a new crosswalk. The improvements to the WHJPA parking lot are meant to establish a cleaner, simpler design for the lot and its adjacent sidewalk to the north. Specifically, a curb is being added to the north edge of the parking lot, the river rock is being removed in favor of a widened sidewalk, and the parking lot entry structure is being eliminated. Combined, the improvements will serve to unify the developments to the north and south and present a finished streetscape for visitors to Canopy Street.



Waiver of Downtown Design Standards

The Urban Design Committee granted a waiver of the downtown design standards for one project, based on a conditional approval by the planning director in september, 2021



Rev Development proposed an enclosed parking structure on the lot south of the Terminal building to address the needs and requirements of their condo tenants. The site currently houses a drive-thru area for two bank machines of their commercial tenant- First Interstate Bank.

The proposed single-story, enclosed parking structure would accommodate about 25 parking stalls based on the current needs of their tenants.

The proposed building is a metal structure spanning 64' x 117' with vinyl wrap (PVF film) on all sides with about 60% ventilation provided by the vents under the roof running along the perimeter of the building. The building does not have any windows but has a wrap with a printed mural. Rev Development is planning this structure as a short-term solution for the next 5-7 years.

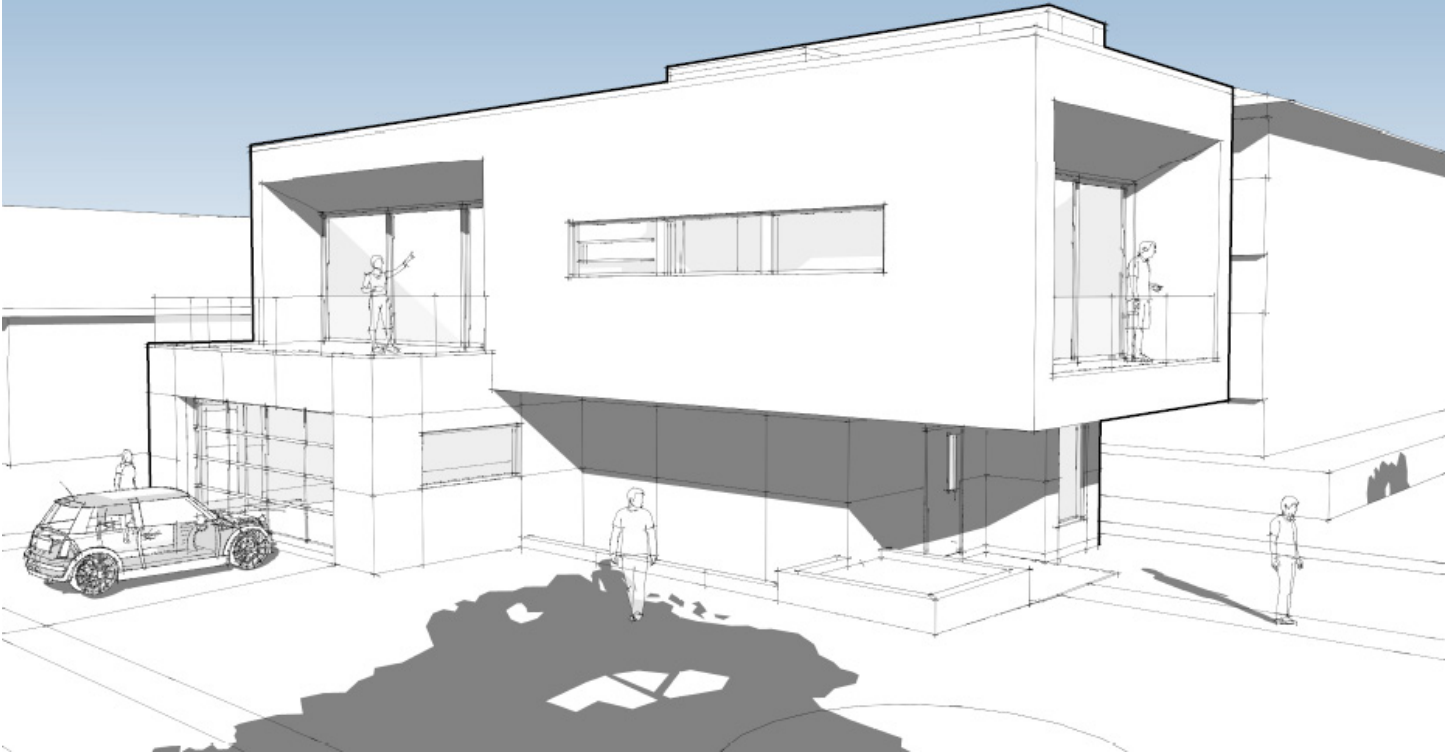
This application required several waivers of Downtown Design Standards, and the Urban Design Committee granted approval to the project under the condition that the structure be taken down in 6 years and house some permanent amenities on the site.



Appeals

The Urban Design Committee conditionally approved a Neighborhood Design Standards appeal for a single-family house in the Antelope Valley PUD, and offered preliminary feedback for another house on Pioneers Boulevard that would require a number of waivers and go through the appeals process.

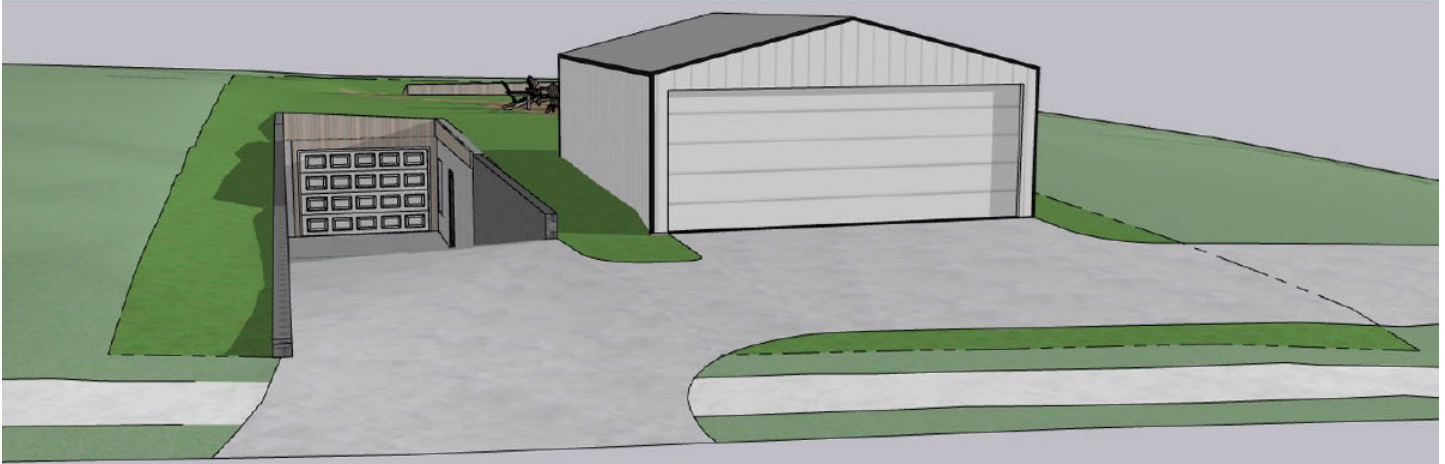
Single Family House 2200 R Street



Jesse Benedict applied for a building permit to construct a two-story single-family home at 2200 R Street. The site under consideration is a corner lot on R Street and N 22nd Street. The site has few neighboring properties given the proximity of Trago Park and the Billy Wolff Trail to the west and south. To the southeast are the Antelope Square townhomes built in 2017 and to the east are apartments constructed in the 1980s. The property currently houses a one-story single-family residence built in 1900. The proposal had some aspects that did not meet the design standards resulting in denial by the planning department. Upon appeal to the Urban Design Committee, they were advised to reassess certain aspects and return for a final review. However, the project has not returned to the Urban Design Committee since then.

Gruenemeyer House

4207 Pioneers Boulevard



Mr. Richard Gruenemeyer proposed an underground single-family dwelling on 4207 Pioneers Boulevard.

The design proposal of the house was in its initial stages, and was incompatible with a number of requisites in the Neighborhood Design Standards. Therefore, the architect met with the planning department, understood the waivers that would be required for the deviations from the standards, and presented before the committee to receive preliminary feedback. The committee provided design advice and asked the applicant to return with some revisions that the city would be open to approve.

Larry Enersen Urban Design Award

The Larry Enersen Urban Design Award was instituted in 1984 by the Urban Design Committee. Named in memory of the Committee's inaugural chairman, a prominent Lincoln landscape architect and urban planner, the awards are intended to "promote public education and appreciation of urban design: by recognizing outstanding public and private projects".

The Urban Design Committee's Enersen Awards program has operated under three general guidelines:

- One or two awards are given annually; if two, they generally recognizing contrasting projects - one public, one private; or one small-scale, one large-scale, etc.
- Projects are located within the Lincoln city limits.
- Projects should be completed in the year preceding the recognition, although some projects, such as those involving landscape design or other long-term efforts may require a few years to mature and be recognized as "completed".

In 2013, a jury including several alumni of the Committee was implemented to assist with the Enersen Award process. The jury screens and recommends projects to the Committee.

The Enersen Awards are presented as part of the Mayor's Arts Awards celebration, produced by the Lincoln Arts Council. Further information on the Mayor's Arts Awards can be found on the Lincoln Arts Council website.

The 2022 winner (awarded in 2023) of the Larry Enersen Urban Design Award was "The Telegraph District"

THE TELEGRAPH DISTRICT

The name honors the history of the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company – a visionary communications business venture that was launched in 1903. The goal was to lay out a unique, visibly-cohesive district that gracefully blends Lincoln's past with the city's future, which would include reflecting the architecture of the older buildings in the area, such as the historic Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Co. warehouse, Fisher Foods campus, and Muny Pool building. The name — Telegraph District — honors the impact telephone companies have had on the local economy for more than 100 years.

Designed as a multifunctional hub for living, working and exploration, the Telegraph District continues to introduce fresh developments. The area is now thriving and plans to integrate art elements to foster community growth and cohesion.



URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT