

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #24052
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory Review and Final Action
ADDRESS/LOCATION	NW Corner 26 th and U Streets
HEARING DATE	April 02, 2024
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	--
APPLICANT	Aaron Burd, amburd76@gmail.com
STAFF CONTACT	Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL or CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Summary of Request

The applicant is proposing to construct two two-story buildings, each with four townhome units, on the vacant lots 2537 and 707 (Hawley Corners CUP, at the northwest corner of 26th and U Streets). The property is adjacent to the Hawley Local Landmark District. The applicant is requesting TIF assistance, thus the project requires design review.

Per 27.57.190 Jurisdiction of the Commission Relative to Other Boards “The Historic Preservation Commission shall provide a recommendation to the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission and the Urban Design Committee on applications pertaining to National Register properties or districts, properties determined to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register by the federal government, or properties within 300 feet of local landmark districts.”

Since this property is within 300 feet of the Hawley Local Landmark District, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the project on the 21st March, and provided recommendations on the proposed development’s appearance and its impact on the historic district.

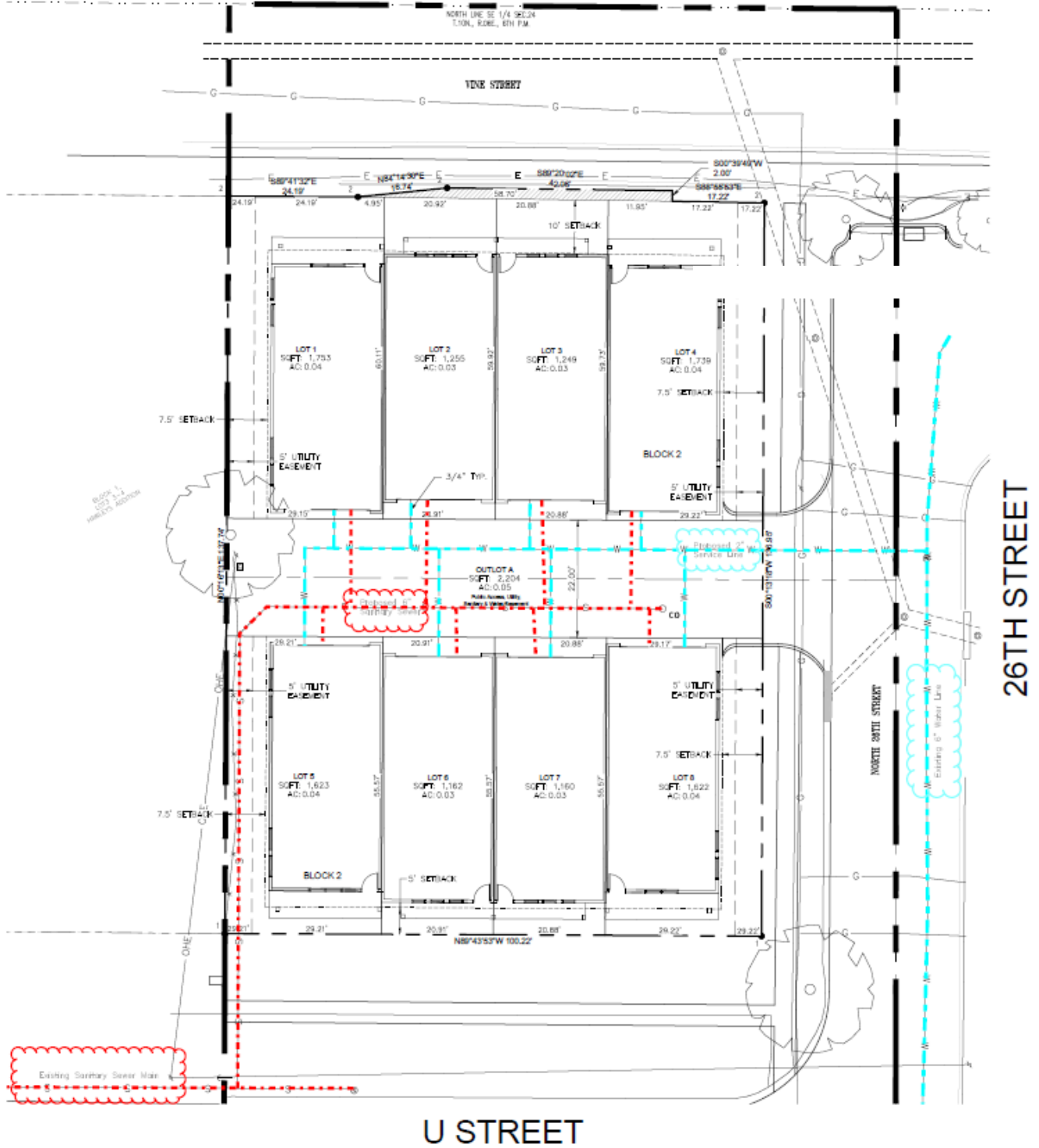
The buildings are oriented east-west with porches fronting U Street and Vine Street. Garages are oriented to the center of the lot accessed from 26th Street. Each townhome is a 4 bed-2.5 bath unit with an attached rear garage. The east-west driveway/alley provides access to the garages on either side of the driveway.

The buildings would be immediately north of the previously approved Hawley Corners project—three new two-story dwellings at the southwest corner of 26th and U Streets approved by the HPC in 2022.

The development is seeking TIF assistance from the city, and hence, the Urban Design Committee is being asked to review and offer advice on the:

1. **Building Design:** Architectural design and aesthetics,
2. **Landscaping:** Outdoor elements including porches, and landscaped areas of the proposed residential development,
3. **Neighborhood Integration:** Compatibility of the design with the existing houses in the neighborhood, and
4. **Blight and substandard conditions:** Evaluate whether the proposed development contributes positively to the neighborhood's character and contributes to mitigating blight and substandard conditions.

COMMUNITY UNIT PLAN
 BASED ON PC-Res. 01844



CUP Boundary with the Proposed Site Plan.

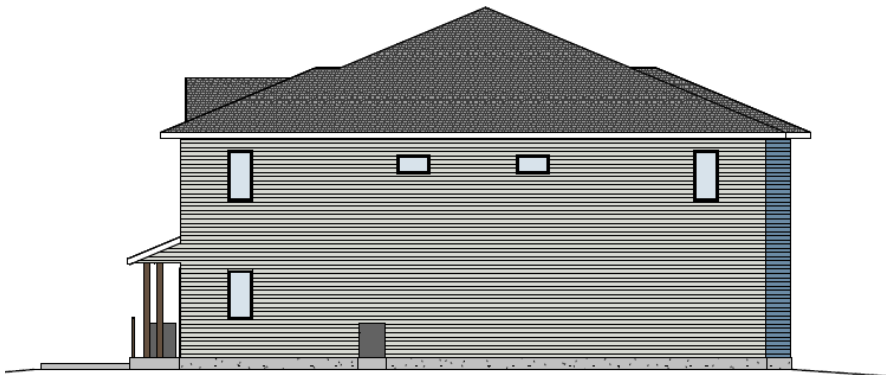
The exterior elevations of the proposed buildings include a combination of Pearl gray Hardie Plank Cement Board and either “Evening Blue” or “Gray Slate” with an 8-inch reveal., and Pabco’s “Antique Black” roofing. All doors and windows are to be black, and fascia, gutters and downspouts to be white. All trims to match the color of the area it is adjacent to.



TYPICAL FRONT ELEVATION



TYPICAL REAR ELEVATION



TYPICAL SIDE ELEVATION

The landscape plan (**Attachment C**) shows the following plant selection for the façade fronting Vine St.

- Pennisetum -Dwarf Fountain Grass
- Burning bush shrub, winged euonymus
- Arborvitae 'emerald green' (thuja occidentalis 'emerald green'), b&b 1.5" cal
- Weigela wine-and-roses weigela,

The following for the façade fronting U St.

- Rudbeckia fulgida goldsturm, (black eyed susan)
- Phacelia, (bee's friend)
- Baptisia bracteata (plains wild indigo)
- Callirhoe involucrata, (purple poppy mallow)
- Pennisetum -dwarf fountain grass
- Liatris punctata, (dotted gayfeather),

And the tree selection includes

- 4 Acer Saccharum-Sugar Maples (Orange) along 26th St, and
- 2 Picea Pungens - Colorado Blue Spruce, B&B 1.5" Cal along the west side.

Compatibility with the Neighborhood Design Standards (NDS)

Given its location and zoning, apart from the **Hawley Landmark Design Guidelines**, the project is also subject to the Neighborhood Design Standards. The purpose of the Neighborhood Design Standards is to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing in certain areas while allowing necessary new construction that is compatible with the surrounding development. What follows is a summary of the relevant design standards and the staff's analysis of the project's compatibility with said standards. The Neighborhood Design Standards should be considered as baseline expectation since this is a TIF funded project.

Chapter 3.75, Neighborhood Design Standards **Section 4.1: Building Elements.**

1. New buildings shall utilize a roof type and pitch commonly found within the same and facing block front. Hipped or gable roofs with a pitch of at least 22.5 degrees (6/12 pitch) are acceptable for any project regulated by the Neighborhood Design Standards. Roofs of lower pitch and other types may be compatible in specific districts and can be proposed and approved on an individual basis.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant.*

Roof pitches in the area are steeper gables like a 9/12 pitch and steeper hip roofs which commonly have a dormer. The proposed roof configurations alternate between hip and gable to break up the elevations and blend with the mix of roof types found in the district.

2. New buildings shall provide at least two openings (combination of windows or door) per story oriented to the street including at least one window and an entrance to a dwelling unit or to a hallway leading to a dwelling unit.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant.*

3. Front porches are required when half or more of the houses on the same and facing block fronts or on adjacent blocks have front porches. Front porches shall be equal in width to at least 50% of the length of the front façade and equal in depth to half the depth of the front yard, or ten feet, whichever is less. Smaller porches may be approved based on evidence that half or more of the houses on the same and facing block fronts or on the adjacent block faces have smaller porches.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant*

The proposed rowhouses have covered porches and extended seating areas fronting Vine St, as well as U St.

4. The elevation of the first-floor level of new dwellings shall generally match the pattern of half or more of the houses on the same and facing block fronts. In other words, if the first floor of most houses in an area are positioned three or four steps above the prevailing grade, new dwellings should have a similar height of first floor, and if most surrounding houses are one or no steps above grade, new construction should match this characteristic. The Planning Director may approve designs that do not meet this requirement upon receiving information that there are no other practical and reasonable means of providing accessibility to a new dwelling for persons with mobility impairments and provided the design offers other features to enhance the compatibility of the new building with neighboring dwellings.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant*

5. Garages, if constructed, shall follow the pattern of half or more of the residential properties on the same and facing block front, such as:

- a. if the pattern in an area is that garages are located behind the house, a pattern of rear garages shall be followed.
- b. if the pattern in an area is that garages are attached or that garages are part of the main building with doors facing the street, doors for not more than two stalls are permitted on a portion of the main building facing a front lot line, provided such doors shall not occupy more than 40% of the length of the principal street façade. Garage doors are permitted in the main plane of the façade or forward of the main plane only when documentation is provided that such a feature is the pattern of half or more of the houses in an area (such as post-World War II “ranch” houses).
- c. if there is no garage pattern shared by at least half of the residential properties on the same and facing block front, garages may be attached and face the street provided the garage portion of the building is set back from the main plane of the principal façade at least five feet.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant*

There is no set garage pattern on the same and facing block front. All existing homes in the block have open parking in the rear. The proposed rowhouses will have attached rear garages.

6. The height of new buildings should be similar to that of existing residences on the same and facing block fronts. New buildings shall be acceptable that are not taller than the tallest residential structure, nor shorter than the shortest residential structure, built prior to December 31, 1949 on the contiguous block face, provided that:

- a. the maximum allowable height shall not be reduced to less than twenty-eight (28) feet, and
- b. if the height permitted under this section would exceed that permitted in the underlying district, the new building shall be no taller than an existing, adjacent building. Taller structures may be approved on a case-

by-case basis, when a steeper roof would increase compatibility between the new building and adjacent older residences.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant. The buildings are two stories in height, like the majority of homes in the district and on the block.*

7. The rhythm of similar-width houses on similar-width lots does much to establish the character of Lincoln's established residential areas. Large new buildings disrupt this character unless design measures are employed to reduce their apparent scale. New buildings over fifty feet (50') in length on the principal street facade should be designed to maintain the rhythm of the existing adjacent buildings. Designs will be bound to meet this standard which offsets the principal street facade and roof at intervals of fifty feet (50') or less. These offsets shall be at least six feet (6') in depth, and the portions of the facade offset shall equal at least 10% of the length of the facade. Alternate designs that maintain the rhythm of the blockface by such means as shifts in materials within the facade, use of multiple porches and/or dormers, and grouping of windows and entrances, may also be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant. The structure is designed to fit well within its context. The front facade is broken up by alternating colors and gables, and offsetting the alternate units a few feet from each other.*

Section 4.2: Yards and Open Space

3. No more than one mechanical unit, such as air conditioning units, shall be located within each required front yard and not more than three in any required side yard, provided that multiple units are spaced at least twenty feet apart. Such accessory structures will be screened from adjacent properties if located within a required front yard or within ten feet (10') of a side lot line.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compatible.*

There are 2 mechanical units placed together in front of the main facade on U St as well as on Vine St, but are screened with a 48" tall fences. The units will not be visible from the streets.

4. Care should be taken to preserve existing street trees. Any trees removed shall be replaced in accord with the City's Master Street Tree Plan, and additional trees shall be planted as necessary to reach a standard of one street tree per fifty feet (50') of street frontage.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *The plans and perspectives do not show the existing trees.*

However, the proposal shows a total of 6 trees that would be planted as part of the project, out of which 4 are along 26th St.

Section 4.3: Parking

1. No required parking space shall be allowed between the building and the front property line. Driveways and parking aprons in the front yard may not measure more than 20 feet wide.

Compatibility per Staff Analysis: *Compliant*

Staff comments:

Overall, the plans appear to be in conformance with the Neighborhood Design Standards. Given the project's request for TIF assistance, the Urban Design Committee is tasked with providing insights and taking final action based on the following parameters showcasing how the project exceeds the expectations set by the Neighborhood Design Standards.

1. **Building Design,**
2. **Landscaping**
3. **Neighborhood Integration**
4. **Mitigation of blight and substandard conditions**

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the design of this project at their regular meeting on March 20th. The comments provided by HPC are below and can be considered by the Urban Design Committee when providing advisory review.

- It would be good if it could look less new and a bit more integrated into the neighborhood. Internal grills would be nice, and though it may not be necessary or code because of the short elevation of grade, would be to still have some railings up front on the porches.
- Members like to see housing going in but would like to see more dimension on the exterior façade. It would be good to do a one-over-one double-hung window or add dimension to the window or main elevations such as a porch rail to match the neighborhood. The style of railing isn't as critical as the presence of a railing. It helps to break up the flatness and neutralness of the façade and gives a nod to architectural styles in the neighborhood.
However, the porch is 5' wide and adding a railing would considerably reduce the usable space. It can be used as a stoop without railing. In staff's opinion, the plants around the porch will add to the aesthetic and hence, might not require railings.
- A member asked if the window casing could be differentiated color-wise, to differentiate it from the siding color. In the design, the trims are the same color as the siding, and the windows would be white.
Currently, most houses in the block and district feature trims either in white or contrasting colors with the siding. Staff suggests standardizing all trims to white, or contrasting colors. This adjustment will enhance depth in the facade and make the siding colors stand out more effectively.
- A member stated that even though 8-inch siding is more available he would like to see it narrower, and the applicant stated it's more cost-effective to have the 8-inch siding.
- The member then stated to try to keep it constant with what is more ubiquitous in the neighborhood. It takes more time and money, but he would like to see a narrower reveal.
- A member stated there are cost considerations and there can be a happy medium. Changing the siding would be preferable, but changing the windows and railings may be more cost-effective. The point is to not make it look old but to bring in some of those elements of the neighborhood.
- A member stated the typical side elevations have major view potential, especially on 26th Street and those look bleak. Worth stated to get better window patterns on those facades as well. Otherwise, they are relatively blank and don't contribute much to the neighborhood.
The applicant stated one side is the garage and they cannot have windows due to LES guidelines since they are next to transformers. They had designed more windows originally but had to remove them.

Overall, the HPC recommended approval of the project as presented is a contribution to the neighborhood and the developer should apply design elements that match stylistically to the district, which would include porch railings styled at the applicant's discretion, window configurations, window grills, and considering a siding reveal, and reviewing the non-primary façade.

https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/REPORTS/2024/04 April/26th and U_Staff report.docx

Neighborhood Context

Current Site conditions



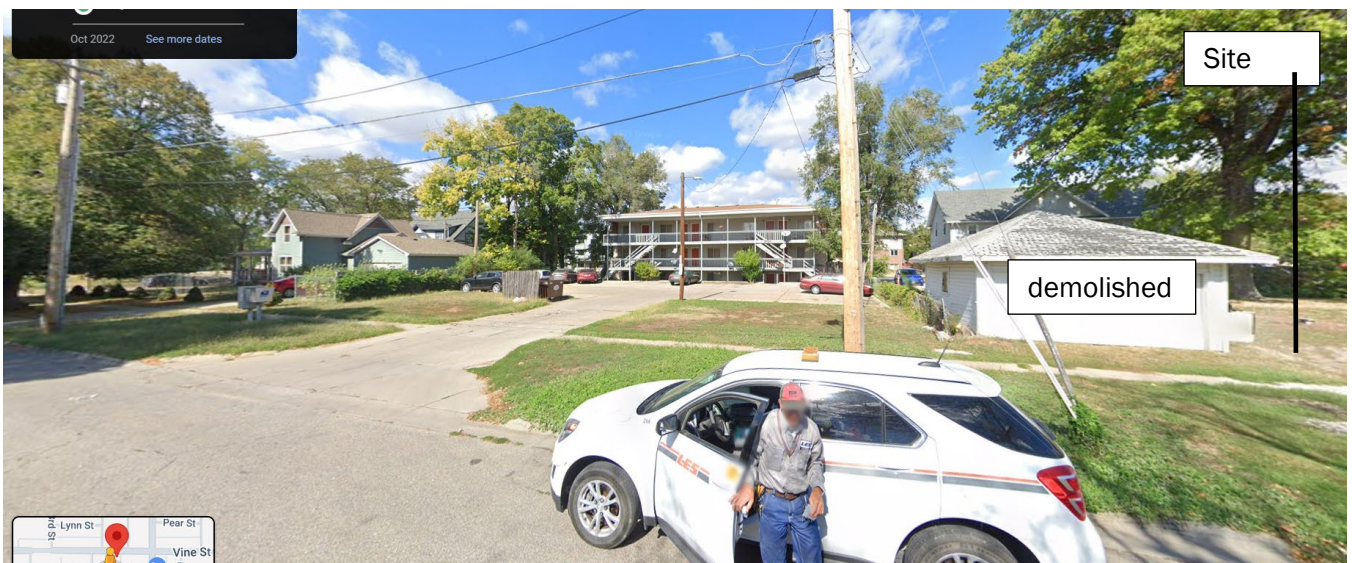
Looking south towards the 26th St, and U St intersection.



Looking east from Vine St. (The house has been demolished)



Looking north-west from the 26th St, and U St intersection.

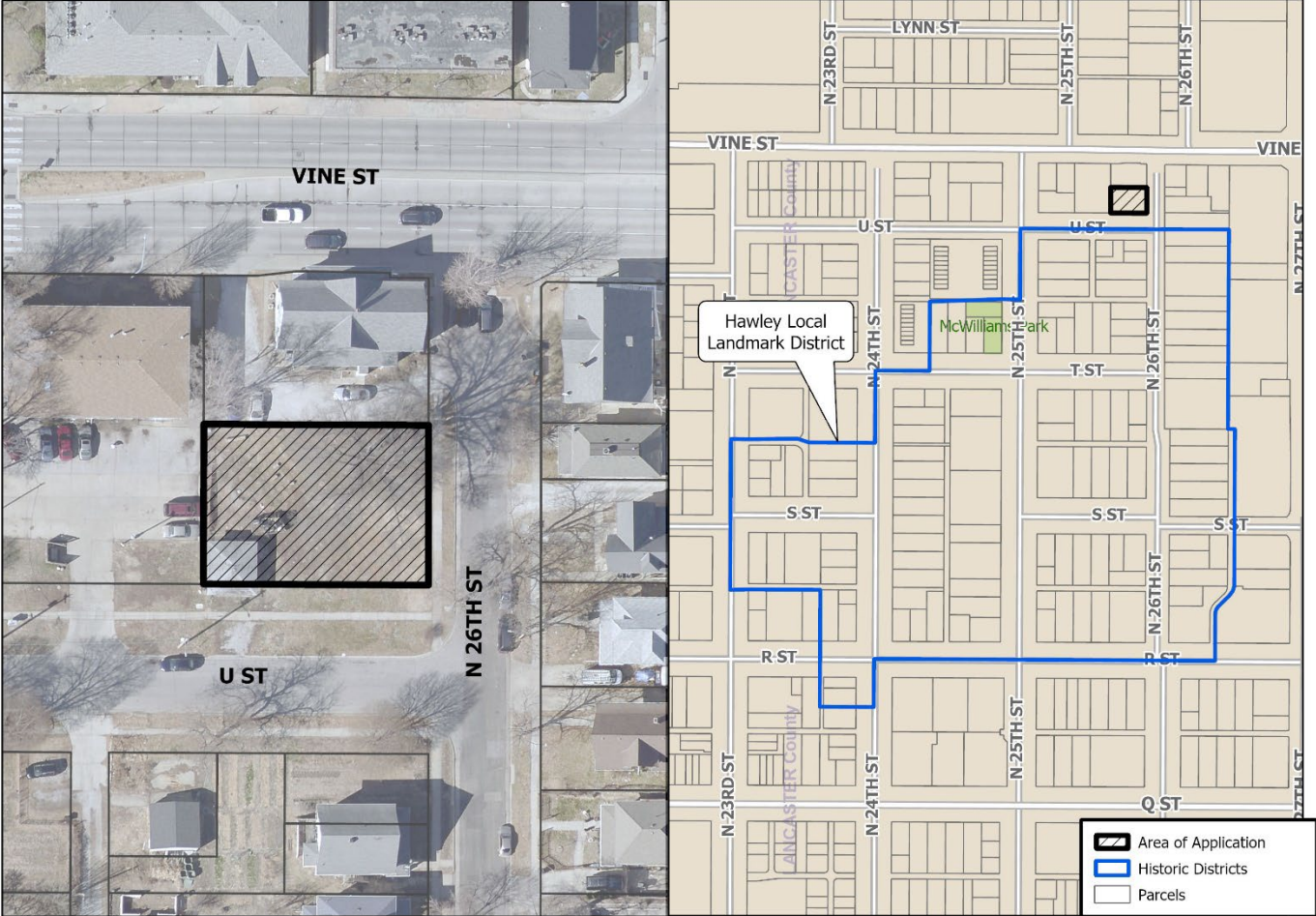


Area west of the site.



Looking East towards the 26th and U St intersection.

ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



2022 aerial

UDR24026 (26th St & U St)

Project: \\GIS\Projects\2024\Review\PC_LocationMaps.aprx
 PDF: \\GIS\REPORTS\Location Maps



ATTACHMENT B - Site Plan

VINE STREET

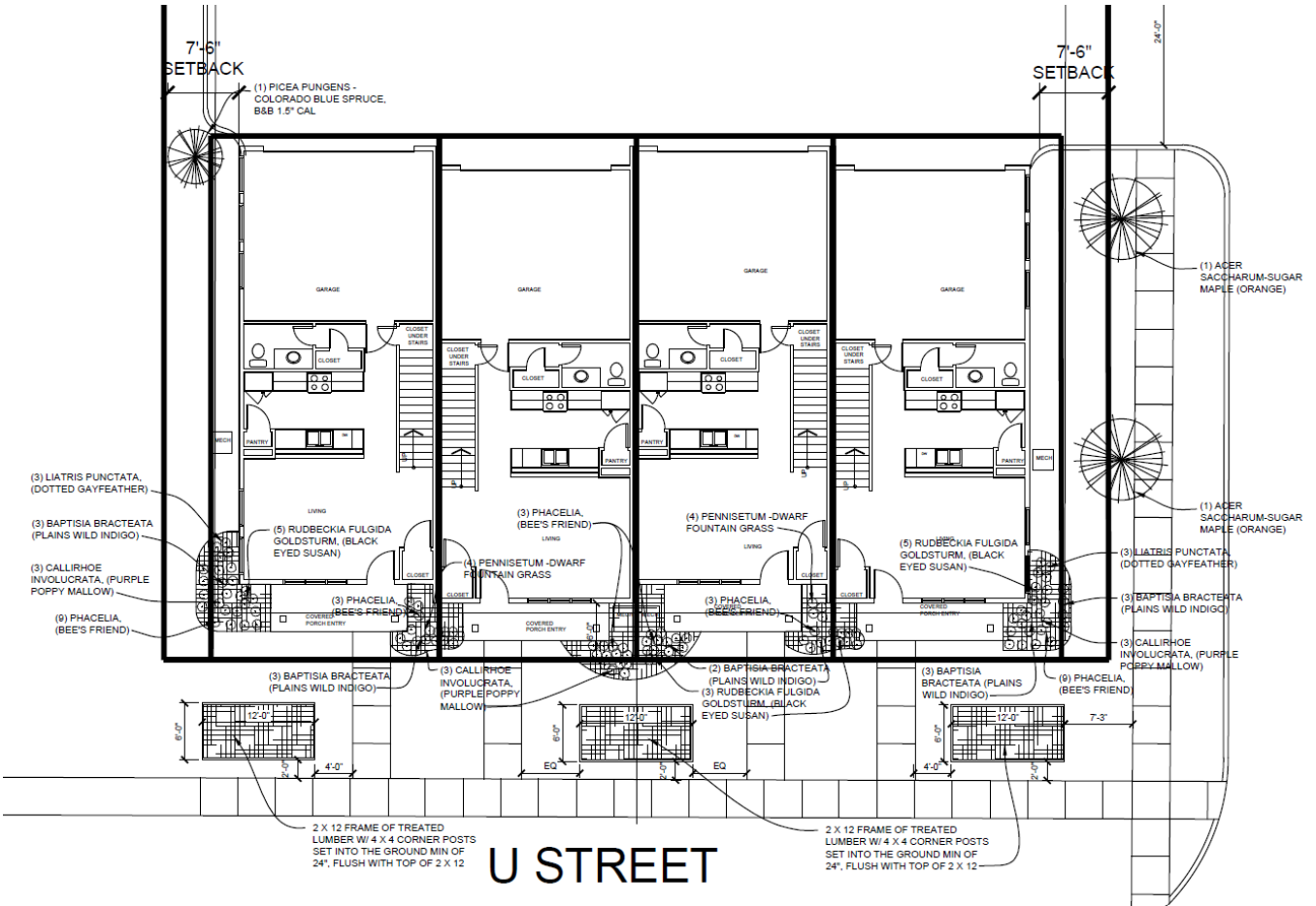
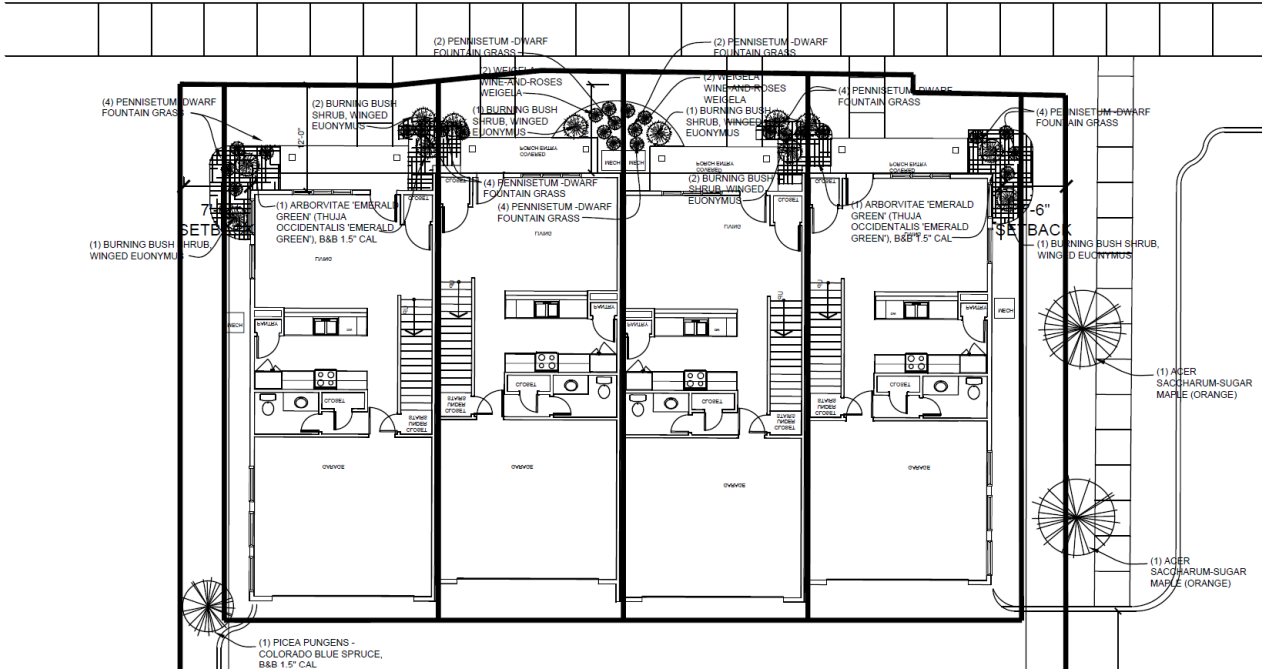


26TH STREET

U STREET

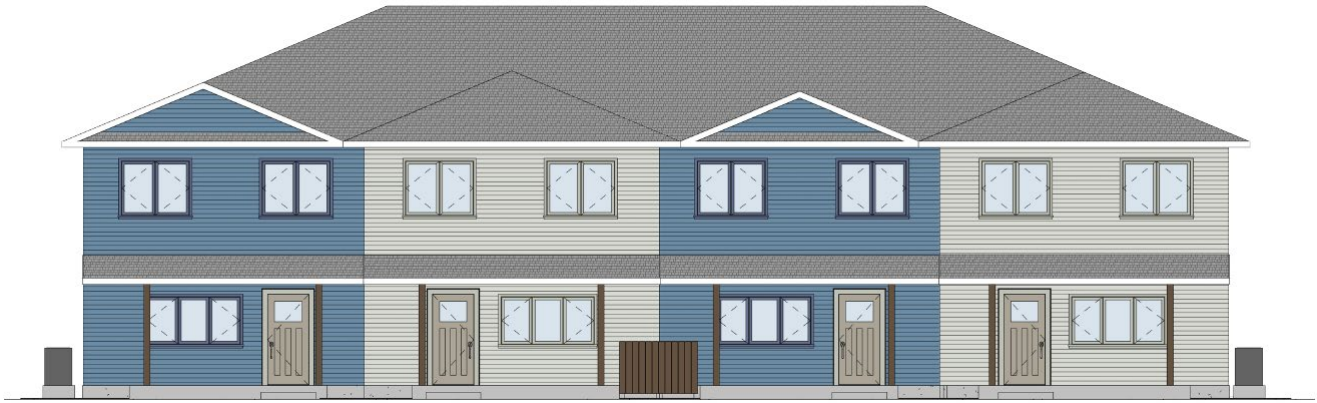
ATTACHMENT C - Site Landscape Plan

VINE STREET



U STREET

ATTACHMENT D- ELEVATIONS



Typical Front elevation



Typical Rear Elevation



Typical Side Elevation

ATTACHMENT G- PERSPECTIVE IMAGES

https://inlanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/REPORTS/2024/04 April/26th and U_Staff report.docx



Front Elevation on Vine St, and U St.



Typical Building Rear Elevation



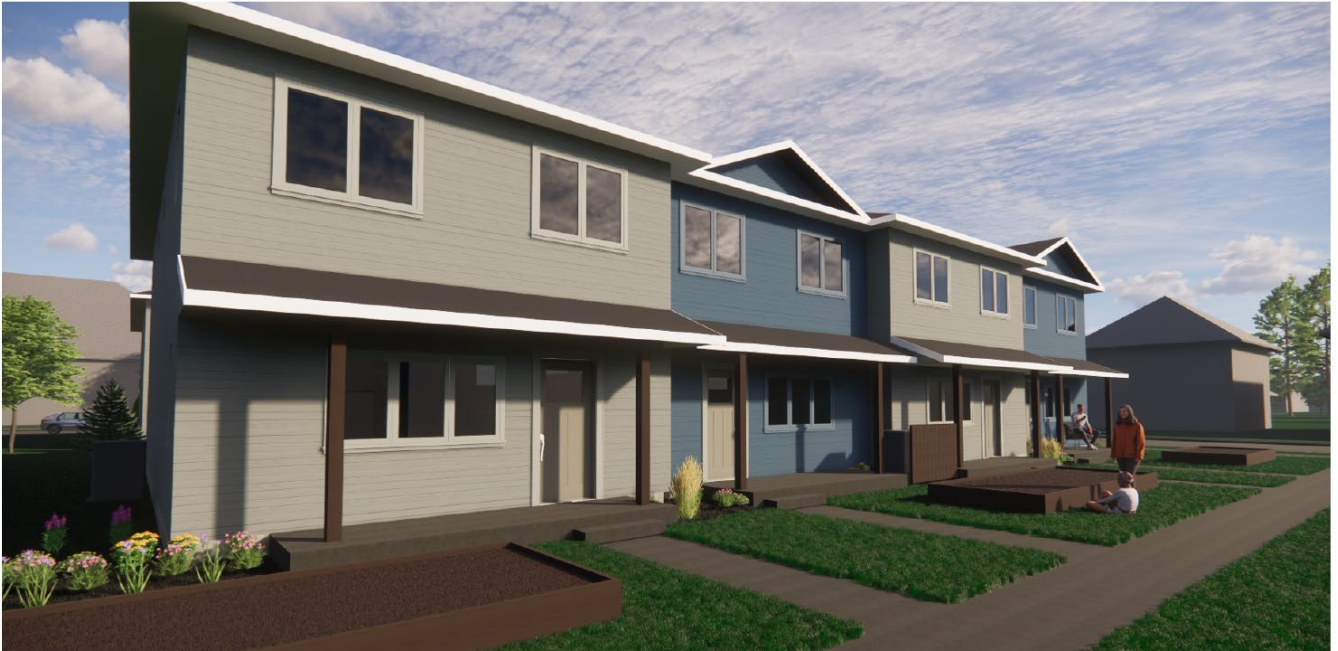
Looking Northwest From 26th & U St.



Looking Southwest From 26th & Vine St.



Closeup Of Front Porch



Closeup Of Front Porch

DRAFT - Excerpt from **MEETING RECORD**

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, March 21, 2024, 1:30 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jim McKee, Greg McCown, Jim Johnson, Melissa Gengler, Greg Newport and Dan Worth (Nancy Hove-Graul absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Stephanie Rouse, Paul Barnes, Arvind Gopalkrishnan, MC Raterman, and Clara McCully of the Planning Department; and other interested parties.

Advisory review for 8 new townhomes at the northwest corner of 26th and U Streets adjacent to the Hawley Local Landmark District.

Rouse stated this application is for eight new townhomes. This is across the street from the Hawley District. HPC is making the recommendation to the Urban Design Committee, which is meeting in two weeks. Rouse reviewed the proposed project against the Hawley Design Guidelines as outlined in the staff report.

McCown asked what the roof grade is.

Aaron Burd, Applicant, stated the pitch is 5/12.

McCown asked if the porches face south.

Burd stated the porches are to the south and to the north.

McCown asked if the south façade windows are single-pane glass or will have grills.

Burd stated they will not have grills.

McCown stated he would like it to look less new and a bit more integrated into the neighborhood. Internal grills would be nice, and though it may not be necessary or code because of the short elevation of grade, would be to still have some railings up front on the porches.

Gengler asked Rouse if the windows were one-over-one double-hung.

Rouse stated not on this building, but they are typical to the area. First floor you will find the larger picture windows in Hawley homes.

Burd stated the windows on this property are single-pane sliders.

Gengler stated she likes to see housing going in but wants to see more dimension on the exterior façade. It would be good to do a one-over-one or add dimension to the window or main elevations such as a porch rail to match the neighborhood. The style of railing isn't as critical as the presence of a railing. It helps to break up the flatness and neutralness of the façade and gives a nod to architectural styles in the neighborhood.

Newport asked if the window casing could be differentiated color-wise. Something to differentiate it from the siding color.

Gengler asked what color the trim is.

Burd stated it would be gray and tan, the same as the siding. The windows would be white.

McCown stated that even though 8-inch siding is more available he would like to see it narrower.

Burd stated it's more cost-effective to have the 8-inch siding.

McCown stated to try to keep it constant with what is more ubiquitous in the neighborhood. It takes more time and money, but he would like to see a narrower reveal.

McCown stated windows, siding, and railings, all add to being more sympathetic to surrounding neighborhoods than new construction.

Gengler stated there are cost considerations and there can be a happy medium. Changing the siding would be preferable, but changing the windows and railings may be more cost-effective. The point is to not make it look old but to bring in some of those elements of the neighborhood.

McCown asked if the stoops are concrete.

Burd stated yes.

Worth asked if this goes to Urban Design.

Rouse stated yes and this item should have a formal recommendation.

Barnes stated that since this is a TIF project within a certain distance of a local landmark district, part of the new code that was adopted, that's why it's here. The HPC's role is to review and make recommendations.

Worth stated the typical side elevations have major view potential, especially on 26th Street and those look pretty bleak. Worth stated to get better window patterns on those facades as well. Otherwise, they are relatively blank and don't contribute much to the neighborhood

Burd stated one side is the garage and they can't have windows due to LES guidelines since they are next to transformers. They had designed more windows originally but had to remove them.

ACTION:

Gengler recommended approval of the project as presented is a contribution to the neighborhood and the developer should apply design elements that match stylistically to the district, which would include porch railings styled at the applicant's discretion, window configurations, window grills, and considering a siding reveal, and reviewing the non-primary façade, seconded by Johnson and carried 6-0: Gengler, Johnson, McKee, Worth, Newport, and McCown voting 'yes'; Hove-Graul absent.