

Project Design Narrative – J Block

To: Dublin Planning & Zoning Commission and Staff
From: Crawford Hoying
RE: Final Development Plan Submission, Bridge Park Block J
Date: June 2, 2025

Introduction

The proposed J-Block Final Development Plan is a culmination of concerted efforts by the design team, City staff, and the Planning and Zoning commissioners. The design team has been working diligently to implement the comments and suggestions provided by staff and commission members to create an outstanding and unique project. The following is a summary of the project and design changes based on feedback received during the Preliminary Development Plan.

Overall Project Narrative

The J Block development is extending the five Bridge Street District Vision Principals east of Dale Drive terminating with Wendy's Headquarters to the east. The office building is limited to 4 stories as it mimics the mature tree line on the north side of Bridge Park Drive, creating a "corridor" entering the Bridge Park district without overpowering the elevated 2 story residences north of the existing tree line. The 4 story Office is also similar in overall elevation as the adjacent 6 story Spring Hill Suites hotel and the 6 story Bailey to the west across Dale Drive. The condominium at the east end of the site has similar heights as the office and is connected to a parking garage at the Southeast corner of the site, which will also house a COTA Bus Stop waiting area on Banker Drive. The central park open space of J Block will be the largest interior park in Bridge Park to date and is overlooked by the J Block buildings and the hotel and The Bailey across the street, enhancing the quality of life in the area beyond just J Block.

The J Block development accomplishes the Bridge Street District Vision Principals with minimal waiver requests. First it enhances economic vitality by bringing office tenants, a restaurant, and for-sale condominiums into the eastern portion of Bridge Park, extending the influence of the Bridge Park District. The Central Park open space embraces the existing natural setting and will be the largest internal open space in the Bridge Park District. We have taken advantage of a natural ravine and have kept the open space as the most important part of J Block. The buildings are secondary to the park and are designed as back drop to allow the park to be the focal point. The park will also serve as a natural bio-friendly filter for stormwater treatment and detention. From the pedestrian view, the backlit "Tower" of the garage serves as a beacon for pedestrians west of the site on Dale Drive, revealing the depth of the green space. Within the Block, the Code required street has been reduced to 1-way and the design updated to seamlessly connect pedestrians between the buildings and open space, while providing the required life-safety access for the fire department.

The buildings themselves are designed with quality, long-lasting materials: Brick, Metal Panels, Glass, and Concrete.

Conditions from the Preliminary Development Plan

- 1) The applicant continues to work with Staff to address the streetscape design of Bridge Park Avenue and Green Street at the FDP.

- a. Response:

Bridge Park Ave

The design team continues to work with Staff to address the streetscape of Bridge Park Avenue, through this process and into the permitting process. Bridge Park Avenue is part of the designated Greenway System within the Bridge Park District and it is important that the design aligns with those guidelines in both form and finish. The south side of the street is framed by architecture and features the standard Bridge Park District brick sidewalk, granite curbs, and paved parallel parking spaces. It also includes tree grates, street trees, and standard district lighting. On the north side, granite curbs and paved parking spaces are provided. Beyond the curb, the existing multi-use path remains, accompanied by a tree lawn and additional street trees.

Green St

In conversations with staff, the private street design, bisecting the J Block development, has further prioritized pedestrians. The street remains for fire access, but has been reduced to a one-way (north to south direction) and a 13.5 foot curbless cross section. The street's "woonerf" design features uniquely-shaped tree planters with benches, large boulders, specialty pole and bollard lighting, and a unique concrete paving finish. These elements create a homogenous plaza that connects the two halves of the site to the substantial central open space. It will include two loading zones, one adjacent to the trash pickup at the office/restaurant, and one at the south end for future development. These wider sections also provide the required width for fire response adjacent to the buildings. Removable bollard hardware will also be integrated to easily accommodate occasional street closures for events, when desired. Together, these enhancements support a flexible, pedestrian-focused streetscape that balances functional access with a welcoming public realm.

- 2) The applicant continues to work with Staff to provide streetscape improvements as required by the City Engineer.
 - a. Response: The design team continues to coordinate with engineering staff on the public and private streetscape to follow City standards and to meet the design intent of the development.
- 3) The applicant continues to work with Staff on the design of the pocket park at the intersection of Dale Drive and Bridge Park Avenue to create a more seamless transition between the streetscape and the office building.
 - a. Response: Through coordination with staff, the design at the corner of Dale Drive and Bridge Park has evolved into a more occupiable public space that echoes the natural elements found throughout the J Block development. At the elbow where the sloped walk converges with the brick sidewalk, a stabilized decomposed granite gathering zone features large landscape boulders that serve both as seating and visual accents. These playful seating

elements not only appear at the core of the site but are also commonly used in other pocket parks throughout the Bridge Park District.

- 4) The applicant update the plans to accurately represent lot coverage and front property line coverage.
 - a. Response: The lot coverage and front property lines have been updated per conversations with staff.
- 5) The applicant works with Staff to address the façade recommendations of the office building as outlined in the report.
 - a. Response: The south facade design has been altered to accommodate this request by emphasizing the vertical brick piers and separating the parapets in groupings of 3. Additionally, the far western bay is now extended in front of the typical south façade and wraps the corner to the west facade, creating a prominent element that emphasizes the corner. The colors in this corner are a combination of primary colors on the south facade and primary colors on the north face creating a materials transition zone between the north and south weaving the facades together further enhancing the southwest corner. The south façade design intent is to provide a strong, yet reserved backdrop for the unique, large public garden space. The north facade windows have the dividing mullions extended to the face to provide further vertical elements and break up the horizontality of the windows. The building is combining charcoal colored brick and “leather” metal panel accents on the south with light gray brick and “copper” metal panel accents on the north. These materials are in the same family but provide distinct looks in the elevations. They are brought together on the west elevation in a “weave” that transitions the two looks.
- 6) The applicant work with Staff to provide a connection between residential units and Bridge Park Avenue with the condominium building.
 - a. Response: Concrete stairs with cast stone corbeled veneer have been integrated into the three ground floor units along Bridge Park Avenue to reinforce the pedestrian feel and presence. The parallel orientation of the stairs to their patios does not encroach into Bridge Park Avenue right-of-way.
- 7) The applicant work with Staff to address concerns about the façade treatment of the garage and condo building as outlined in the report.
 - a. Response: The design team continues to work with Staff to address the façade treatment of the condominium building and the garage through this process and into the permitting process. The current architectural detailing of the garage is consistent with the overall design of J block. In lieu of a warehouse look, we are striving for a more contemporary feel while using materials consistent in the J block. The use of the southern scrim will hide the angled floor ramps of the garage and instead provide an interesting, artistic back drop feature when viewing from the south. Enhanced lighting at the corners and in the Tower will also create a unique feel to the building.

See Condo Section for response to condo façade.

- 8) The applicant continue to work with the Engineering Staff on final civil plan details with the Final Development Plan.
 - a. Response: The design team continues to work with engineering staff on the civil plan details and meets with them weekly for coordination.
- 9) The applicant enhance terminal vistas opportunity on the site within and adjacent to the public green.
 - a. Response: From the visitor's perspective at Dale Drive, the central open space—nearly the length of a football field—offers a layered view into the site's key components. One first sees a distinctive footbridge bisecting the space, followed by the community deck beyond and the glass garage tower rising above. Pursuant to coordination with staff, these elements are now further emphasized by dynamic, colored lighting designed to draw people in. At the base of the garage tower, a new raised seating platform has been added. This allows for more occupiable space on the east side of the pedestrian street. Adjacent to this, at the terminus of the open space and woonerf, two-tiered landscape walls with stepped gardens lead up to the private amenity deck above.

Conditional Use Condition for Garage

- 1) The applicant continues to work with Staff to address concerns about the façade treatment of the garage as outlined in the report.
 - a. Response: The design team continues to work with Staff to address the façade treatment of the garage through this process and into the permitting process. The current architectural detailing of the garage is consistent with the overall design of J block. In lieu of a warehouse look, we are striving for a more contemporary feel while using materials consistent in the J block. The use of the southern scrim will hide the angled floor ramps of the garage and instead provide an interesting, artistic back drop feature when viewing from the south. Enhanced lighting at the corners and in the Tower will also create a unique feel to the building.

Office Building Narrative

The Office Building design is a building with 3 fronts: The Bridge Park Avenue office entry on the north, the open space office entry to the south, and the restaurant function to the west.

The south elevation, which faces the central open space, is designed to be predominantly a backdrop to the park, with a subtler language on the elevations. The lighting design on the south elevation is bit less traditional by using a diagonal pattern to create a nighttime “star” effect visible from the open space garden. The majority of the office employees will park in the garage to the southeast and cross the pedestrian open space to the south “front door”.

The prominent front door on the north facing Bridge Park Avenue will be the main address identifier for visitors. The west end will house a tall restaurant tenant space which will have their own front door.

The west is enhanced by the 3 balconies that look down Bridge Park Avenue. The restaurant will have a terrace which is elevated above the street (due to significant grade changes on the site). It also has views of the southern open space.

The building is combining charcoal colored brick and “leather” metal panel accents on the south with light gray brick and “copper” metal panel accents on the north. These materials are in the same family but provide distinct looks in the elevations. They are brought together on the west elevation in a “weave” that transitions the two looks. The long elevations are grouped in bays of 3, for a more vertical rhythm around the building.

Office Building – Staff Comments

- 1) Front Property Line Coverage – This is shown incorrectly and will need to be updated with the Final Development Plan submission. Due to the private street and public open space impacting the placement of buildings, a Waiver will likely be necessary.
 - a. Response: The front property lines have been updated per conversations with staff.
- 2) Lot Coverage—The plans do not show this correctly, and it will need to be updated to accommodate the entire site’s lot coverage.
 - a. Response: The lot coverage and front property lines have been updated per conversations with staff.
- 3) Alternative Material (HPL Panels) – The applicant is requesting the approval of phenolic panels as a permitted material on the building. The applicant will need to provide additional details for staff’s review of the material, but the applicant is requesting the Commission’s feedback on whether this material would be considered.
 - a. Response: The HPL Panels have been replaced with Alucabond Metal panels which is an approved secondary material.
- 4) Architectural Elements – The applicant is working with staff to address the redundancy of the south facade of the building along the public green. Staff has made recommendations to break up the roof plane to better align with the intent of the Code and provide more visual relief on the facade, similar to other facades of the building. Additionally, staff has made recommendations to address the wide windows on the north facade to be more consistent with the remainder of the building.
 - a. Response: The south facade design has been altered to accommodate this request by emphasizing the vertical brick piers and separating the parapets in groupings of 3. Additionally, the far western bay is now extended in front of the typical south façade and wraps the corner to the west facade, creating a prominent element that emphasizes the corner. The colors in this corner are a combination of primary colors on the south facade and primary colors on the north face creating a materials transition zone between the north and south weaving the facades together further enhancing the southwest corner. The south façade design intent is to provide a strong, yet reserved backdrop for the unique, large public garden space. The north facade windows have the dividing mullions extended to the face to provide further vertical elements and break up the horizontality of the windows.

Garage - Project Narrative

The garage design is reflective of a more contemporary overall look of J Block while maintaining traditional, long lasting materials. It’s main vehicular entry/exit is on the east side on Dave Thomas Boulevard and the majority of traffic will utilize this entry. The west side has an entry/exit but it will only be utilized by a few parking spaces on the lowest level and is also on a one-way street so traffic will be minimized. The east and west elevations are a contemporary expression of a traditional building, using

brick patterns and groupings separated by the concrete superstructure exposures. The south elevation is utilizing a large graphic scrim that will be designed in conjunction with the Dublin Arts Council. It is meant to be an artistic back drop and not a billboard. It does conceal the angled ramps of the garage but primarily gives life to the view from the south and alludes to the observer that there is something special going on in this block. The corners of the south end facades are exposed concrete superstructure with ceilings that will be lit with wall washing colored lights that can be changed to suit the season or event. This will also help create a very interesting nighttime look. The northwest “Tower” is where the main stairs and elevator are located for the garage and is closest to the office building. The full height frosted glass look will have controlled colored lighting so that the tower will glow in the evening and create a beacon and terminus for the open park. The garage serves the condominium directly at every floor so owners can park on their “own” level, which distributes the parking more evenly, leaving a greater number of spaces on the lower levels for visitors.

Garage – Staff Comments

- 1) Front Property Line Coverage and Lot Coverage – See previous comments in the office building section.
 - a. Response: The lot coverage and front property lines have been updated per conversations with staff.
- 2) Corner Façade Treatments – Staff has provided recommendations to update the exposed concrete corners of the building to provide a consistent façade treatment across the entire building.
 - a. Response: The exposed concrete corners and subsequent gaps between the façade panels provide a break in the overall façade and parapet line, and are similar to the North Market Parking Garage. The exposed concrete gaps blend into the background of the projected facade and help break up the building massing and divide the building to a smaller scale. The exposed stair tower corners are also part of a lighting design scheme that will have color-controlled lighting reflecting off of each ceiling providing a soft glow of interest at each corner. An evening rendering has been provided to demonstrate this intent.
- 3) Garage Appearance – City Council provided several comments about the architectural treatment of the garage and were concerned with the existing architectural details provided. Council encouraged the applicant to ensure the façade of the garage provides improved screening of the operations of the garage and integrates the building design more completely with the development. Council members identified the Block G garage as an example of expectations for design, façade articulation, and screening of internal operations. The applicant should continue to work with Staff to address concerns about the façade treatment of the garage. The applicant is working on revising the plans to respond to these comments, and have worked with staff to identify potential solutions. These comments will be incorporated into the conditions of approval for this application and will be addressed with the FDP.
 - a. Response: The current architectural detailing of the garage is consistent with the overall design of J block. In lieu of a warehouse look, we are striving for a more contemporary feel while using materials consistent in the J block. The use of the southern scrim will hide the angles floor ramps of the garage and instead provide an interesting, artistic back drop feature when viewing from the south.

Condominium Building Narrative

During Conceptual Plan Review, Staff expressed their desire that the exposed foundation façade area be distinguished from the first floor for the residential units, additionally Staff wanted the re-integration of steps for the three first-floor units along Bridge Park Avenue. During the PDP presentation to PZC, some members expressed reservations for the utilization of the thin brick material.

Condominium Building – Staff Comments

1. Thin Brick – Staff has provided comments regarding the use of thin brick and the Commission’s previous concerns with this material. Staff has provided a consultant report for the potential use of ‘NewBrick’, which would be an alternative building material requiring approval by PZC. This material choice will impact the percentage of primary/secondary building materials, so waivers addressing these requirements would be presented with the FDP.
 - a. Response: Section Details have been included to help communicate how the thin brick veneer is being installed over an insulated concrete board substrate. The details have been developed to emulate the appearance of full-depth brick veneer with the utilization of ‘outside corner’ pieces at the jambs, heads and sills of window and door openings. The approximate 3-inch difference between the plane of the thin brick veneer and the plane of windows, doors and adjacent siding material will create practically identical shadow lines to that of full-depth brick veneer. The thin brick veneer chosen for this building is made from select clays and shale chosen for their relative purity, fired strength and proven physical characteristics.
2. Front Property Line Coverage and Lot Coverage – See previous comments in the office building section.
 - a. Response: The lot coverage and front property lines have been updated per conversations with staff.
3. Street Engagement from ground floor units – The applicant originally provided stoops that extended to the sidewalk along both Bridge Park Avenue and Dave Thomas Boulevard, but the stoops were removed along Bridge Park Avenue since they encroached in the public right-of-way. Staff has provided recommendations to find alternative ways to connect these units to the street, and the applicant is working on solutions to achieve this.
 - a. Response: Below the Finished First Floor, cast stone veneer, in 4-inch high coursing, with every-other course corbeled ½”, will help distinguish the foundation façade from the façade of the first-floor residential units. This detail will also continue vertically along the north façade of the Stair to add shadow lines and visual interest for the overall elevation. Concrete stairs with cast stone corbeled veneer have been reintegrated into the three ground floor units along Bridge Park Avenue. The parallel orientation of the stairs to their patios does not encroach into Bridge Park Avenue right-of-way.

Conclusion

The design and development team would like to thank Planning and Zoning Commission and Staff for their valuable insight and suggestions for Block J that are now incorporated into this Final Development Plan Submission. The team is looking forward to the next meeting and a more detailed discussion.