

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Matt Kowalski, City Planner

DATE: August 12, 2014

SUBJECT: **Background Information for Proposed Revised PUD at 301 East Liberty Street**

Proposal

The petitioner has requested a review for a revision to the approved PUD zoning at the northeast corner of East Liberty and South Fifth Avenue to allow a partial enclosure to the first floor plaza space. The existing outdoor plaza is 3,367 square feet and would be reduced by 493 square feet, or 15% of the existing plaza. At the time the PUD was approved, supplemental regulations were not prepared for PUD zonings. However, the original petitioner's application materials and subsequent discussion at Planning Commission mentioned the outdoor plaza as an amenity in justifying the PUD zoning.

Before submitting a PUD petition, the petitioner must present the proposal to the Planning Commission for comments regarding the appropriateness of the land uses, the conformance with the master plan, the beneficial effects to be achieved and whether or not a model is required. The petitioner has provided a memo stating justification for the PUD modification, existing and proposed photos of the site, and sections of the Downtown Plan for your review.

Planning Background

The Downtown Plan recommends a strong emphasis on maintaining the sense of pedestrian scale for buildings and ensuring a 'comfortable and convenient' walking environment. It also recommends encouraging active street-level uses. The Plan generalizes this site and the surrounding area as being within the core of downtown. The objective of the core is to encourage downtown's highest density development and tallest buildings to locate within the core area to create the critical mass of activity needed to support a range of central retail, service, cultural, residential, and entertainment functions.

History

The original "preliminary and final phase" PUD was approved by City Council in July 1984. The building was constructed in 1985.

Attachments: Petitioner Letter
Existing and Proposed Photos and Site Layout

Michael Bruner, AIA
Registered Architect

July 3, 2014

Ms. Wendy Rampson, AICP
Planning Manager
City of Ann Arbor Department of Planning and Development
Larcom City Hall
301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Re: 301 E. Liberty.

Dear Ms. Rampson,

Dahlmann Properties, Ltd., the owner of the property at 301 E. Liberty St. in Ann Arbor, is currently planning improvements and upgrades to the building interior. In addition to these improvements, the owner would like to investigate the possibility of expanding the area of the First Floor out into the area of the existing plaza by 493 square feet. The owner believes an expansion of this sort will make the first floor lease spaces more functional and attractive spaces in which prospective tenants may conduct business. This improvement will, in turn lead to an improvement in property income and consequently property tax revenue.

The exterior plaza, provided by the original property developer, was an aspect of a P.U.D. agreement with the City. It is assumed the plaza was included to provide a covered open space at grade level for the enjoyment of the public, which it continues to do today with some success. We feel that a reduction of the plaza total area of 3,367 square feet, by 15 % of the total, to 2,874 square feet, will continue to provide an accessible plaza for the enjoyment of the public very much in the spirit of the original P.U.D. agreement, while providing an improvement in the character of first floor tenant spaces.

The attached 12 x 18 reduced scale site plan outlines the proposed expansion areas on the first floor level of the building. Photos attached below show before and after views of the West Elevation. The proposed expansion area at the West Elevation seen in the lower photo, will be enclosed with aluminum frame and insulated glass storefront system to match the existing system on the building.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Bruner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Michael Bruner, AIA

Michael Bruner, AIA
Registered Architect



Photo 1: Existing West Elevation. Curved handrail will be removed at area of proposed expansion, bottom, center.



Photo 2: New Storefront /Curtain Wall at Proposed Expansion of First Floor onto Plaza, at bottom, center.

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