



City of Ann Arbor

Formal Minutes

Design Review Board

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

3:00 PM

Guy C. Larcom, Jr. Municipal Building,
301 E. Huron St.,
Basement Conference Room

A **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Burns called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

B **ROLL CALL**

Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo

Present 5 - Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Tamara Burns, Paul Fontaine, and William Kinley

Absent 1 - Geoffrey M. Perkins

C **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approved as presented.

D **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

D-1 **14-0429** Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2014

Approved by the Board and forwarded to the City Council.

E **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

F **NEW BUSINESS**

F-1 **14-0430** 121 Kingsley West for Design Review Board - A proposal to construct two residential buildings to the west and south of the existing two-story building at 111 W. Kingsley. The new East Building, which is accessed off the public alley, will have four condominium units in two stories above an enclosed parking garage. The new West Building, at the corner of Kingsley and Ashley, will have 14 condominium units in four stories over enclosed parking. The two buildings will be connected by a plaza in the

middle of the site.

The buildings are designed to incorporate cantilevered living and stairway elements of varying color and contrast to help define the building module variation recommended by the Downtown Design Guidelines. Another characteristic of the buildings is extensive use of glass to provide as much natural light as feasible and from as many directions as possible. Balconies and recessed open living spaces also are provided.

Chet Hill recused himself from the agenda item discussion.

The following report contains a summary of priority issues the Board would like the developer to consider in finalizing the design proposal and subsequent site plan submittal.

Description of Project

The design team described the proposed project to construct two multiple-family residential buildings containing 18 dwelling units on the site which already contains a two-story commercial/office building. The proposed buildings are oriented parallel to South Ashley Street and the midblock alley, perpendicular to West Kingsley Street. The new East building is proposed to be a southern extension of the existing building on the site and has 4 dwelling units. The new West building has 14 dwelling units. A deck at the main level will connect both buildings.

Summary of Priority Issues

The Design Review Board concluded that the project generally met the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines, but still suggested ways to refine the proposed design. Examples of especially applicable guidelines are noted in parenthesis; the full text of each referenced guideline is provided at the end of the summary. Please note that the First Street Character guidelines also apply.

Site Planning

- 1. Sidewalk level features to enrich the pedestrian experience are provided, more so on South Ashley Street compared to West Kingsley Street. (A.1.2)*
- 2. Overall, the proposed project will help this underdeveloped block. It is an inviting and interesting development that will strengthen the vibrancy of this neighborhood within downtown. (A.1.6)*
- 3. Will the residential buildings on the north side of West Kingsley*

Street be shaded by this development? To what degree? (A.2.2)

4. Should storm water infiltration be a higher priority than storm water retention, which is currently proposed, given the site is so relatively near the Huron River? (A.2.6; A.2.7)

5. Ensure the proposed driveway to the development on Kingsley has adequate sight distance for vehicles entering and exiting. Westbound Kingsley to northbound South First Street is a popular route to bypass Main Street and most drivers do not expect other vehicles to stop midway down the Kingsley hill to enter a driveway, nor anticipate other vehicles exiting driveways to join the traffic flow. (A.4; A.4.1)

Buildings

1. The Board strongly encouraged the designers to follow through with the contrasting and vivid color scheme shown on the application materials. Using color is a wonderful, and underutilized, way to define smaller masses within a larger project. (B.1.1; B.1.2.c; B.1.4.b)

Building Elements

1. Many of the features, details and elements recommended by the Downtown Design Guidelines for Building Elements have been incorporated into the proposed design. The street edge, entries, windows, materials and colors are in keeping with the goals of the Guidelines. (C.1.1; C.2; C.3; C.5)

2. Additional consideration could, and should, be given to sustainability in building elements. Photo voltaic panels might be included to power certain lighting needs. (C.6.1)

Additional Discussion Points

The Board's main criticism of the proposed design was the weak connection between the proposed design of the new buildings with the existing two-story building on the site. They suggested subtle refinements be made to the new buildings to better integrate, respect and coordinate the entire development.

Referenced Sections of the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines:

A.1.2 Design sidewalk level features and facilities to provide enrichment of the pedestrian experience.

A.1.6 Where adjacent properties are underdeveloped and/or the block

lacks inviting and interesting characteristics, consider a building, site and streetscape design that helps to create a vibrant pedestrian setting.

A.2.2 Site designs should accommodate solar access and minimize shading of adjacent properties and neighborhoods.

A.2.6 Where location and site size allow, consider use of a rain garden or vegetated roof to retain rainwater and serve as a site amenity, and employ rainwater harvesting methods for use in landscape irrigation systems.

A.2.7 Use porous materials in drainage and detention areas to promote rainwater percolation into the parent soil.

A.4 Parking, driveways and service areas are necessary functions, which should be designed to benefit the urban experience.

A.4.1 Locate and size driveways, access points, service entries, alleys, loading docks, and trash receptacles to minimize impact on pedestrians and maintain pedestrian safety, circulation, and comfort.

B.1.1 Design a building to minimize its impact on adjacent lower-scale areas.

B.1.2 When a new building will be larger than surrounding structures, visually divide it into smaller building modules that provide a sense of scale.

Suggested strategies include: ...

B.1.2.c Change wall surface materials, colors or texture.

B.1.4 If appropriate to the context, establish a design treatment that includes a differentiated building top. Suggested strategies include: ...

B.1.4.b Change wall surface materials, colors or textures of the building top.

C.1.1 Use building elements to create a street edge that invites pedestrian activity.

C.2. The location, spacing and general pattern of building entries impact the quality of the pedestrian experience downtown. Building entries should be located to enhance the street level experience and help give a sense of scale. Entries should be clearly defined, accessible, and located to express rhythm and visual interest along a

street front. Although traditional building entry designs may be appropriate, creative and contemporary interpretations are also encouraged.

C.3 Window design and placement should help establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest.

C.5 Building materials should reinforce the massing and architectural concepts and enhance the character of the building and its context.

C.6.1 Integrate solar or wind systems into the design of the top of the building.

Received and Filed

G PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS

H COMMUNICATIONS

14-0431 Various Communications to the Design Review Board

Received and Filed

I PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)

Cindy Ives, 509 North Ashley Street – explained that she worked from home and shared her concerns about parking for guests of the development, both on and off-street, and shared how difficult it was to drive and park on the neighborhood streets when snow banks lined both sides of the street.

Kay Kendall, 122 West Kingsley Street – shared her concerns about traffic speeding down the Kingsley hill, and wondered if the proposed development would shade her garden.

Ray Detter, Downtown Citizens Advisory Council to the Downtown Development Authority – indicated the DCAC will approve the project and appreciates the care exercised in the height and massing scheme. He asked about the outside lighting plans.

J ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:20 p.m.