



# City of Ann Arbor

## Formal Minutes

### Design Review Board

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

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Wednesday, December 17, 2014

3:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street,  
Basement Conference Rooms

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**A**      **CALL TO ORDER**

*Bill Kinley called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.*

**B**      **ROLL CALL**

*Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo*

**Present**    6 -    Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Paul Fontaine, William Kinley, Geoffrey M. Perkins, and Shannan Gibb-Randall

**Absent**     1 -    Tamara Burns

**C**      **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**The agenda was unanimously approved as presented.**

**D**      **INTRODUCTIONS**

**E**      **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**14-1757**      November 19, 2014 Design Review Board Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board with changes. On a voice vote, the motion was carried.**

**F**      **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**G**      **NEW BUSINESS**

**14-1758**      321 North Main Street; Moving on Main Building - Design Review - A proposed design for a new 3-story building to replace two existing buildings. The proposed building shape incorporates a blend of residential patterns and commercial storefront, with a very transparent

lower floor providing interesting views of the dynamic programming within the building and a distinct roof form following a dominant solar array, which has a distinctive eyebrow. Building materials will include a natural wood rainscreen on the first floor, contrasting zinc metal panel cladding on the second floor and a metal wood-looking siding similar in tone to the first floor at the roof deck, with a stucco base. (Ward 1)

*Shannan Gibb-Randall recused herself from any discussion given her involvement on the design team for the project.*

*Project Number DR14-007 (Legistar #14-1758)*

*The Design Review Board met on December 17, 2014 to review the proposed design for a new development at 319-323 North Main Street, presently named "Moving on Main." 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 3-story building for a unique mix of assembly and residential uses on an 8,200-square foot site in the downtown interface and Kerrytown character area. The project design incorporates a blend of residential patterns and commercial storefront, with a very transparent lower floor providing interesting views of the dynamic programming within the building and a distinct roof form following a dominant solar array, which has a distinctive eyebrow. Building materials include natural wood rain screen on the first floor, contrasting metal panel cladding on the second floor and a metal wood-looking siding similar in tone to the first floor at the roof deck, with a stucco base.*

*The entire project has a restorative theme. It is targeting to be net zero (for energy use) and the existing buildings will be deconstructed rather than demolished. Much of the exterior design is driven by the internal function of the building. For example, the entrance is located on the south side of the building to allow the "large movement room" to face and be connected with Main Street.*

#### *Summary of Priority Issues*

*The Design Review Board concluded that the project mostly met the broad intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines. Suggestions to revise the proposed design focused on simplifying the palette of materials and improving the visibility of the main entrance. Examples of especially applicable guidelines are noted below in parenthesis; the full text of each*

*referenced guideline is provided at the end of the summary. Please note that the Kerrytown Character guidelines also apply.*

#### *Site Planning (and Urban Pattern and Form)*

- 1. This area of downtown appears to be in transition and the proposed building will initially stick out until more redevelopment occurs. Some might object to the large shed shape not being like the existing residential forms. (A.1, A.1.1)*
- 2. The “large movement” room on the first floor provides excellent sidewalk level features that enrich the pedestrian experience. (A.1.2)*
- 3. Overall, the proposed project should help this underdeveloped block as it transitions from residential forms to larger, downtown-like buildings. It is an inviting and interesting development that will strengthen the vibrancy of this block. The opportunity exists for the proposed building to be less mono-chromatic. (A.1.6)*
- 4. The alley has been well incorporated into the design and function of the site. Users can easily access the site from the alley, services can be provided from the alley, and everyone can cross the site between the alley and public street. (A.1.7)*
- 5. Solar access has been accommodated to an unprecedented degree with this proposed design (A.2.2)*
- 6. The site is well linked to the public sidewalk, and to the public alley in the rear. (A.5.5)*
- 7. Rain gardens are proposed in the front yard and also serve as a site amenity. (A.2.6)*

#### *Buildings*

- 1. The main entry is neither clearly defined nor oriented toward the street, the Board’s most significant criticism of the proposed project. A stronger visual cue such as a canopy or awning positioned over the entry may provide a more intuitive primary entry for visitors. More distinctive paving patterns and/or accent lighting could also be considered. (C.2, C.2.1)*
- 2. A high level of transparency on the ground floor has been incorporated into the design. (C.3.1)*

#### *Building Elements*

1. *The variety of materials including windows proposed may be overwhelming for such a relatively small building. The contemporary building is appreciated but consideration should be given to simplifying the variety of materials to better compliment the surrounding context. (C.5)*
2. *Accent color could be considered.*
3. *The proposed design excels at incorporating the guidelines relating to building operational systems and sustainability in building elements. Care should be used to ensure that these functions and features do not sacrifice sensitivity to surrounding context. (C.6, C.6.1, C.7, C.7.1, C.7.2, C.7.3)*

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

- A.1. *When considering urban pattern and form, the petitioner should assess the character of the adjacent streetscape, open spaces, and buildings to determine how they function as places and facilities supporting human use.*
  - A.1.1 *Identify and then reinforce the positive characteristics of adjacent sites.*
  - 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.1.7 *On sites that abut an alley, design the alley entry connection to the street to minimize pedestrian/bike/vehicle conflicts while taking advantage of the alley as an open space from which to see and access the new/proposed site and buildings.*
  - A.2.2 *Site designs should accommodate solar access and minimize shading of adjacent properties and neighborhoods.*
  - A.2.5 *Plant native and non-invasive species, especially those that require low levels of water and are tolerant of urban conditions.*
  - 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.*

*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.2.1 Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it toward the street.*

*C.3.1 A high level of ground floor transparency is encouraged throughout downtown.*

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

*C.6 Building operational systems such as waste management, utility services, heating and cooling systems, must be carefully integrated into the design of a building and not detract from the architectural concept.*

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

*C.7 Consider sustainability when selecting structural and facade materials and designing functional building elements.*

*C.7.1 Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.*

*C.7.2 Select and apply building elements to maximize the building's environmental performance.*

*C.7.3 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.*

#### *Kerrytown Character District*

*Kerrytown defines the downtown's northern edge and is the transition from commercial to residential as one moves to the east, north and west – away from the downtown. Two and three story Italianate masonry multi-use buildings with zero lot lines give way to late 19th and early 20th century wood-framed buildings.*

*Many think of Kerrytown as home to several Ann Arbor “institutions” in the form of eateries, markets and entertainment venues. It is a lively district by day anchored by a stable retail presence, ample pedestrian elbow room and a variety of vehicular parking options. Kerrytown is a place locals like to frequent.*

*In the evening, Kerrytown becomes quieter. While Community High School and the Ann Arbor Farmer’s Market provide vitality by day the use of each site recedes to parking at night. Evening activity in Kerrytown is limited to a number of well-spaced dining and entertainment venues in the core area between Detroit Street and Main Street, north of [Catherine Street].*

*Moving from the core of the Kerrytown Character District, with its brick-paved streets, into the surrounding neighborhoods the pedestrian amenities change. The sidewalks transition from continuous hardscape between building facades and the street curb into ribbons of walkway bordered by landscaped setbacks and grassy street extensions. Trees become more prevalent with way-finding signage and lighting levels diminishing.*

## **H PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS**

### **I COMMUNICATIONS**

**14-1759** Communications to the Design Review Board

**Received and Filed**

### **J PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)**

*Ray Detter, Downtown Citizens Advisory Council to the Downtown Development Authority, stated he was impressed with the design, noting it was hard to grasp the proposed use. He inquired about a loading zone, and commented persons using the public parking structure wouldn’t automatically know to use the alley to get to the site.*

### **K ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:10 p.m.**