

## **ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

### **Staff Report**

**MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2019

**PROJECT:** University of Michigan Credit Union, Huron Street  
Project No. DR19-017

**ADDRESS:** 304 East Huron Street

**ZONING:** D1 Downtown Interface (base)  
Midtown Character (overlay)  
Secondary (street designation) – East Huron Street  
Secondary (street designation) – South Division Street

**DESIGN TEAM:** Daniels and Zermack

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The site is located on the west side of S. Division Street between E. Huron and E. Washington Streets in the Midtown Character Overlay District.

**PROJECT HISTORY:** The site includes the 1936 art deco building designed by Albert Kahn for the Ann Arbor News. The original portion of the building was constructed at the corner of E. Huron and S. Division Streets. A number of additions were added since then. The Ann Arbor News listed the building for sale in 2009 and ultimately sold it to the University of Michigan Credit Union.

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** A plan to renovate the southern portion of the existing building at 304 East Huron Street. The 49,578-square foot site currently contains a 2 story office building with a basement, loading area, and surface parking lot. The design plan proposes to renovate the southern portion of this existing building by converting an enclosed loading area into more usable space. The facade of southeast corner of the existing building is also proposed to be substantially modified by providing large windows where no windows currently exist. The petitioner is also proposing to add a new floor within the existing building where the printing presses were located. The size of this additional interior floor area will be 2,390 square feet. Additionally, the petitioner is proposing to demolish the 1 story, 394 square foot loading dock and replace it with a 1 story, 511 square foot pedestrian entry area with service access. This will result in a net increase of the building size by 117 sq ft. The existing dumpster will be relocated from the loading dock area to the southwest corner of the site. The parking area will be reconfigured to accommodate new 90 degree parking spaces and additional landscaping. Access will remain from E. Huron Street and E. Washington Street. Glass and metal panels will be the two predominant exterior materials for the proposed addition.

The [design plan application](#) illustrates the proposed redevelopment.

## STAFF COMMENTS:

1. **Zoning Compliance (Area, Height, Placement).** The following provides a cursory review of the proposed development for compliance with the D1, Midtown Character Overlay District, secondary frontage designation area, height and placement regulations.

|                                    | Requirement                                     | Proposed                         |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Lot Area</b>                    |   | 49,578 sq ft                     |
| <b>Floor Area</b>                  | 198,312 sq ft standard maximum                  | 84,924 sq ft                     |
| <b>FAR (Floor Area Ratio)</b>      | 400% standard MAX, up to 900% MAX with premiums | 42.8% FAR                        |
| <b>Front Setback-North</b>         | 0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX                             | 0 ft approximately               |
| <b>Side Setback-West</b>           | NA  | 45 ft approximately              |
| <b>Front Setback - South</b>       | 0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX                             | 0 ft approximately               |
| <b>Front Setback - East</b>        | 0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX                             | 0 ft approximately               |
| <b>Streetwall Height</b>           | Min 2 stories, Max 4 stories                    | No apparent Streetwall           |
| <b>Offset at Top of Streetwall</b> | Average 5 ft MIN                                | No proposed change to Streetwall |
| <b>Total Height</b>                | 180 ft MAX                                      | 22 ft approximately              |
| <b>Massing Articulation</b>        | Not applicable                                  | None                             |
| <b>Tower Diagonal</b>              | Not applicable                                  |                                  |
| <b>Building Coverage</b>           | Not applicable                                  |                                  |
| <b>Open Space</b>                  | Not applicable                                  |                                  |

The proposed development appears to generally comply with the requirement for a streetwall.

2. **Site Context and Site Planning.** The design guidelines for context and site planning addresses the arrangement of buildings and features on the site, including how the site relates to its neighbors, and suggests preferred ways to express and articulate some of the minimum and maximum area, height, and placement standards. Staff finds the design team assessed the character of the adjacent streetscapes and buildings in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines and incorporated the positive characteristics into the proposed project. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:

- a. Guideline A.1.2 – Enhances pedestrian sidewalk level features and facilities to enrich the pedestrian experience.
  - b. Guideline A.1.3 – An enhanced architectural feature (more vibrant corner element) at the corner is proposed.
  - c. Guidelines A.4 – The project creates a new access point to the building that improves pedestrian safety, circulation, and comfort.
  - d. Guideline A.6.2 – New bicycle parking facilities are proposed near the new pedestrian entrance on the south side of the site.
3. **Building.** The design guidelines for buildings focus on breaking down massing of larger buildings from their lower-scale neighbors. Staff finds that the building mass has not been substantially modified. The proposed modifications help to visually divide the mass on the south side of the site and improves pedestrian access. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:
  - a. Guideline B.1.2 – Change wall surface materials, colors or texture.
4. **Building Elements.** Building elements include specific features that give character and detail to a building and influence the degree to which a new building contributes to the urban fabric. This section of the design guidelines call for features and architectural details at the street edge to have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience and creating an attractive and interesting street front. Staff finds the design achieves the goals of the design guidelines for building elements. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:
  - a. Guideline C.1.1 – Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors.
  - b. Guideline C.2.1 – Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it toward the street. c) Design a change in wall materials, textures, or colors that frames the entry.
  - c. Guideline C.3.1 – High level of ground floor transparency is encouraged throughout downtown.
  - d. Guideline C.7.1 – Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.
5. **General Comments**
  - a. The design team should consider providing solar panels on the roof of the building in order to reduce energy costs and the building's carbon footprint.

- b. Has the design team considered black metal exterior siding instead of blue to match the black granite siding that currently exists?

Attachment: [Location Map](#)

Prepared by Jeff Kahan, City Planner  
December 5, 2019