



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes Design Review Board

Wednesday, February 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 3:00 p.m.

B ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Tamara Burns, William Kinley, and Geoffrey M. Perkins

Absent 1 - Paul Fontaine

C APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved as Presented.

D APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D-1 [14-0272](#) Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2013

The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D-2 [14-0273](#) Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2014

The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

E UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F NEW BUSINESS

F-1 [14-0274](#) 314 S. Fourth Avenue Restaurant Design Review - A proposal to renovate this single-story building and construct a second-level mezzanine over the front portion of the existing building. The front facade will use a traditional masonry base, with a contemporary treatment rising from the base. Clear glass and ground floor transparency have been maximized to activate the streetscape and provide a sense of scale.

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

Stephen Fry, AIA, President of Concept Design described the proposed project, a complete renovation of the existing single story, freestanding, vacant building on 314 S. Fourth Avenue. The current orange stucco façade will be entirely removed and replaced with a masonry base, clear glass windows, and vertical metal elements. A mezzanine will be constructed over the front portion of the building to increase dining space and to modify the building's street presence so that it is more to scale with the adjacent eight-story parking garage. Concept Design is working with the DDA for permits that would allow valet parking in front of the restaurant. The new, relocated entry will have a new extended height foyer. The façade changes are proposed to improve the streetscape on S. Fourth Avenue and to represent the high-quality of the national franchise restaurant that will be occupying the space

Summary of Priority Issues

The Design Review Board concluded that the project failed to meet the intent of many of the Downtown Design Guidelines, and that further refinements would enhance the proposed design for greater compliance. 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 Midtown Character Area guidelines also apply.

Site Planning

- 1. The proposed building and streetscape could and should do more to enhance the pedestrian experience. (A.1.1; A.1.2)*
- 2. The proposed design does not currently add vibrancy to S. Fourth Avenue and could do more to create an inviting, pedestrian-oriented experience. (A.1.6)*
- 3. There are potentials in the proposed design to add public art, lighting, and moveable windows to activate street life. (A.3.6; A.5.4)*
- 4. Incorporate bicycle parking into the design or find ways to partner with existing bicycle parking facilities. (A.6.2)*

Buildings

- 1. The vertical elements on the building façade are appropriate to the scale of neighboring buildings, but at a cost to pedestrian scale for those walking on the west side of Fourth Avenue. Try to more effectively balance the two. (B.1.3)*

Building Elements

- 1. Use building elements that invite pedestrian activity. (C.1.1)*
- 2. The proposed materials (EIFS, ashlar masonry, metal panels, and spandrel glass) relate more closely to outlying areas such as Briarwood or East Washtenaw Avenue than downtown Ann Arbor. Consider alternatives. (C.1.1)*
- 3. Try to design the mezzanine windows so that they reference established patterns of nearby buildings. Reconsider symmetrical north and south bays.(C. 3.2)*
- 4. Consider operable windows for natural ventilation at east wall of north bay to*

connect the lounge area to the street. (C.7.3)

Additional Discussion Points

The Board expressed concern that the building “turns its back” on Ann Arbor and encouraged the petitioner to consider frontage and streetscape design alterations that activated pedestrian activity on the street. The Board acknowledged the difficulties of the street such as the bus station, parking garage and post office, as well as the restaurant’s need to represent the brand.

Referenced Sections of the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines

A.1.1 Identify and reinforce 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 characteristics, consider a building, site and streetscape design that helps to create a vibrant pedestrian setting.

A.3.6 Provide dining opportunities, moveable tables and chairs, public art, lighting, ... to frame urban open space.

A.5.4 Provide landscaping, seating, public art, lighting, interpretive markers, and water features to enrich and enliven pedestrian walkways and use areas.

A.6.2 Consider use of convenient bicycle racks, including proximity to building entries, weather protection and security when selecting a location for bicycle parking and storage.

B.1.3 Provide a clear definition between the base (the lower floor or floors) and upper floors to maintain a sense of scale at the street level.

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

C.3.2 If contextually appropriate, upper floor windows should reference established patterns of adjacent and nearby buildings in size, shape, and spacing by aligning sills and headers and using similar window proportions.

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

Midtown Character District – Architectural styles in Midtown include some 19th century wood-framed residential (mostly converted to office use), by stylistically, the district is dominated by an a range of late 20th century mid-rise office and governmental facilities.

The primary north-to-south street in Midtown is Fifth Avenue. It can be considered Ann Arbor’s “civic corridor,” anchored to the south by the Ann Arbor District Library’s Main Branch, the Blake Transit Center and the Federal Building. To the north, directly across E. Huron Street from Midtown, are the Ann Arbor municipal Center and the old and new fire stations and Hands-On Museum.

With the exception of the Library, the buildings in Midtown have limited hours and are used primarily during the business day. Since Midtown is surrounded by character districts with evening-use venues, it often serves as a passage, in particular the

west-to-east blocks between Main Street and State Street. Pedestrians seem to be focused on getting from point A to point B and would benefit from more opportunities to linger.

Future development should find opportunities to establish an identity for Midtown, increasing its vitality and expanding its offerings. Primary pedestrian access to buildings along the civic corridor should be from the corridor street.

Reviewed and Filed

G PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS

[14-0275](#) Staff Reports from Planning Commission Meetings

Received and Filed

H COMMUNICATIONS

[14-0276](#) Various Communications to the Design Review Board

Received and Filed

I PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)

No speakers.

J ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:00 pm.