



## ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** December 13, 2023

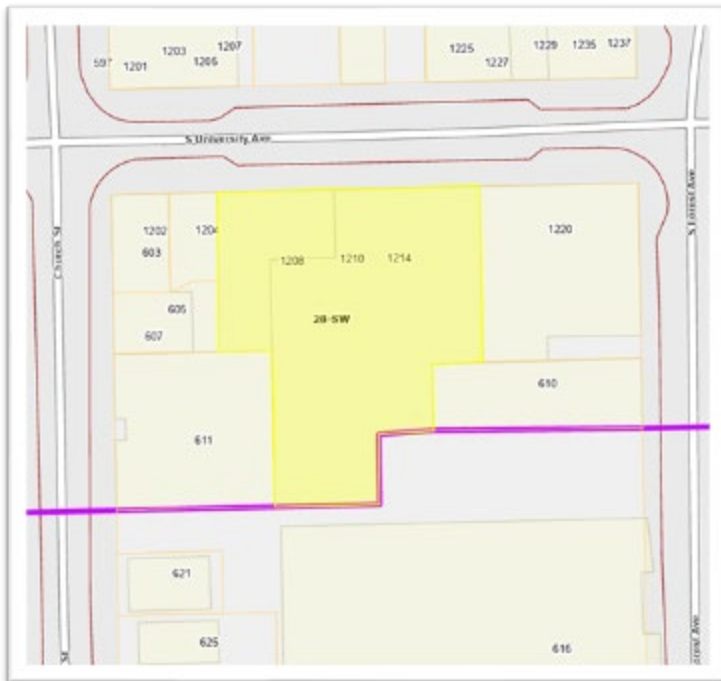
**PROJECT:** Ann Arbor Galleria, Project No. DR23-0005

**ADDRESS:** 1208 South University

**ZONING:** D1 Downtown Core (base)  
South University Character (overlay)  
Primary (street designation) – South University

**DESIGN TEAM:** Myefski Architects, Midwestern Consulting, Inc.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The site is located on the south side of South University between Church and Forest.



**PROJECT HISTORY:** The site is currently owned by Ann Arbor Galleria Associates, LLC and is used for ground floor and basement retail. A central open corridor goes through the building connecting to the alley and parking structure adjacent to the south. The building has a second story that is used for office space. The petitioner is Ann Arbor Galleria Associates, LLC.

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** The proposed concept includes 211 residential units, 2,000 square feet of retail, and residential amenities including a rooftop pool, lounge, and fitness room. The residential units will be a size mix from studio to six bedrooms and will contain a total of 673 bedrooms. The building is proposed to be 17 stories and 195 feet tall. There will be 34 off-street parking spaces are proposed at grade underneath the building and accessed from the alley on the south side of the site. The ground floor will include the retail space, lobby, 120 space bike room and leasing office. There will also be a designated mail room and package pickup location on the ground floor.



**ANN ARBOR GALLERIA**  
1208 SOUTH UNIVERSITY AVE

EXTERIOR VIEW FROM NORTHWEST

11.08.2023



Primary building façade materials are proposed to include brick with prefabricated exterior wall panels with metal balcony railings and aluminum framed glazing systems are also proposed. Project is proposing to utilize the height bonus of Section 5.18.4 which allows for a 30% maximum height bonus when providing Affordable and/or Sustainable building elements. Petitioner is still finalizing the details of what will be provided to address that requirement.

**ZONING COMPLIANCE AND SITE CONTEXT:**

- Zoning Compliance (Area, Height, Placement).** The following provides a cursory review of the proposed development project for compliance with the D1, South University Character Area, Primary Street Frontage, and area, height and placement regulations.

	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Lot Area</b>	NA	25,298 sq ft
<b>FAR (Floor Area Ratio)</b>	400% standard MAX, 900% with Premiums)	1229% FAR* (310,897 sf)
<b>Rear Setback-North</b>	0 ft MIN; 0 MAX	0 ft
<b>Front Setback-West</b>	0 ft MIN; 10 MAX	0 ft
<b>Front Setback - South</b>	0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX	0 ft
<b>Front Setback - East</b>	0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX	0 ft
<b>Streetwall Height</b>	Min 2 stories, Max 3 stories	3 stories
<b>Offset at Top of Streetwall</b>	Average 5 ft MIN	Varies, 6 ft MAX
<b>Total Height</b>	150 ft MAX	195ft (17 stories)**
<b>Massing Articulation</b>	Not applicable	NA with this petition
<b>Tower Diagonal</b>	Not applicable	NA with this petition

\* On December 4, 2023, City Council approved ORD-23-32, an ordinance to eliminate the premium options provided in Section 5.18.6 of the Unified Development Code and to change the maximum FAR in the D1 and D2 districts to none. When effective [between December 15 and 25, 2023], development in the D1 and D2 districts will be regulated solely by height, setback and massing standards.

\*\* Utilizing 30% height bonus for providing sustainability or on-site affordable housing, per Unified Development Code Sect 5.18.4.D.

- Site Context and Site Planning.** The site is currently used as a single and two-story mixed use building adjacent to two-story buildings along South University. The design guidelines for context and site planning address 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 that the design team assessed the character of the adjacent streetscapes and buildings in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines and incorporated a few positive characteristics into the proposed project. Providing limited parking and service

areas accessed from the rear helps preserve consistent streetscape. Staff recommends applicant continue to look for ways to increase active retail presence along South University. Applicant has been meeting with City staff in order to address this concern and they continue to look at interior building modifications to achieve this goal.

3. The following guidelines are additionally relevant:
  - a. *Guideline A.1.4 – For mid-block sites, identify adjacent site and building design qualities, noting that a design may be appropriate for a mid-block site that best serves the area in a secondary role.*
  - b. *Guideline 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.*
  - c. *Guideline 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.*
  - d. *Guideline A.4.3 – Locate a parking structure or a surface parking lot behind or to the side of a building, minimizing the visual presence of parking on adjacent public right-of-way.*
4. **Building.** The design guidelines for buildings focus on breaking down massing of larger buildings from their lower-scale neighbors. Staff find that the building mass includes some of the suggested strategies to visually divide the mass, provide clear definitions and a sense of scale. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:
  - e. *Guideline B.1.1 – Provide variation in building massing to reflect the underlying pattern of established lot widths*
  - f. *Guideline 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.*
    - i. *Use underlying established lot widths to help determine the width of building modules at the street level.*
    - ii. *Vary the height of building modules, cornice lines and roof finish elements.*
5. **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 calls for features and architectural details at the street edge to have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience and to create an attractive and interesting street front. Staff finds the design achieves the some of the goals of the design guidelines for building elements. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:

- g. Guideline C.1.1 – Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors. First floor canopy that complements the design character of the building and its street front, wall surfaces with interesting detailing, textures and colors.*
- h. Guideline C.2.1 – Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it toward the street. Design a change in wall materials, textures, or colors that frames the entry.*
- i. Guideline C.3.1 – Window design and placement should help establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest.*
  - i. 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.*
- j. Guideline C.6 - Building Operational Systems. 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.*
  - i. Integrate solar or wind systems into the design of the top of the building.*
  - ii. Locate and sufficiently screen mechanical systems to minimize or eliminate noise impacts on adjacent sites and buildings.*
- k. Guideline C.7.1 – Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.*

## 6. **General Comments**

- a. The design team should consider providing solar panels on the roof of the building to reduce energy costs and the building's carbon footprint. Consider an all-electric building with no natural gas connections.
- b. Project will need to identify Sustainable and/or Affordable Housing elements planned to activate height bonus per Unified Development Code(UDC) requirements.

- c. Petitioner is actively working with City Staff to re-organize the interior solid waste management area in order to allow for additional retail space along the street frontage.
- d. Provide more details on the materials and construction for exterior glass wall at the southwest corner of the building.
- e. More information is needed on exterior building materials. The STO(or similar) panels proposed are prefabricated exterior walls which appear to be very similar to exterior insulation finishing system which is prohibited on visible surfaces with limited exception. Reference: UDC, Section 5.17.6.C.1.b

#### **DESIGN NARRATIVE FROM THE PETITIONER:**

7. **Theme of the Design Concept.** Building off the scale and character of neighboring structures, the design concept emphasizes urban planning strategies with a contemporary aesthetic that utilizes timeless materials. The design and massing are placemaking and distinct, but also relatable and responsive to the cultural and environmental demands of the community and region.

The development considers the overarching goal of the Downtown Design Guidelines by balancing contextual integration, human-centric design, sustainable practices, innovation, functionality, and community engagement. The contemporary design concept respects the architectural vernacular and scale, fostering a livable downtown environment that adheres to the Downtown Design Guidelines.

8. **Design Guidelines and Character District.** Aligned with the qualities of the South University Character District, the project reflects the district's architectural character, materiality, and massing. The mixed-use residential and retail tower is a natural evolution befitting this vibrant community and its active street life. The progressive design uses contemporary materials and traditional approaches to achieve placemaking, distinctive architecture that relates to the vitality of the district.
9. **Design Guidelines for Context and Site Planning.** Continuity with the urban pattern and adjacent streetscape is achieved by considering the pedestrian experience and configuring the building form and functions to coalesce with the surrounding context. For instance, the inclusion of expansive storefront windows not only complements the established street-level aesthetic but also fosters community engagement through retail prospects and a vibrant residential lobby. Moreover, thoughtful planning places vehicle-related functions like parking, trash, and service areas discreetly off the alley, while strategically situating bicycle parking directly off University Avenue, reducing potential conflicts between bikes and vehicles within the site.

10. **Design Guidelines for Buildings.** The massing of the proposed development respects the established heights, proportions, and character of neighboring structures and fosters a sense of connection with the district's urban fabric. For instance, the three-story base is topped by a fourth-floor setback band demarcating a clear transition to the tower above. Additionally, the northwest corner's glass curtain wall serves as a visual separator, enhanced by a series of balconies that add dimension to the facade. The building culminates at its highest level with subtle pilaster features providing a distinctive identity to the roofline.
  
11. **Design Guidelines for Building Elements.** The proposed development merges traditional and contemporary building elements to enrich the pedestrian experience and further elevate the allure of the surrounding cityscape. Notably, canopies and framed openings at ground-level storefronts serve as welcoming cues, guiding and clearly delineating building entrances within the vibrant streetscape. Furthermore, the exterior materials deliberately celebrate the diversity found within the district, carefully chosen not only for their aesthetic appeal but also for their environmentally conscious qualities, contributing to a sustainable and visually engaging urban environment.

Attachment:           Project Narrative  
                              Submittal Packet  
                              Supporting Materials