



ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: December 13, 2023

PROJECT: 228 Packard, Project No. DR23-0004

ADDRESS: 228 Packard [main address]

ZONING: Current:
R4C (Multiple-Family Dwelling) and M1 (Limited Industrial)

Proposed:
D1 Downtown Core (base)
First Street Character (overlay)
Secondary Street (street type designation)

DESIGN TEAM: ESG Architecture and Design, Subtext, Midwestern Consulting

PROJECT LOCATION: The site is located on the block bounded by Packard Street on the north, South Fifth Avenue on the east, East Madison Street on the south, and South Fourth Avenue on the west.

PROJECT HISTORY: The applicant has assembled 22 of the 28 lots in the block bounded by Packard Street on the north, South Fifth Avenue on the east, East Madison Street on the south, and South Fourth Avenue on the west. Addresses and some basic information about each lot is provided at the end of this report. Every lot currently contains a residential building of some sort.

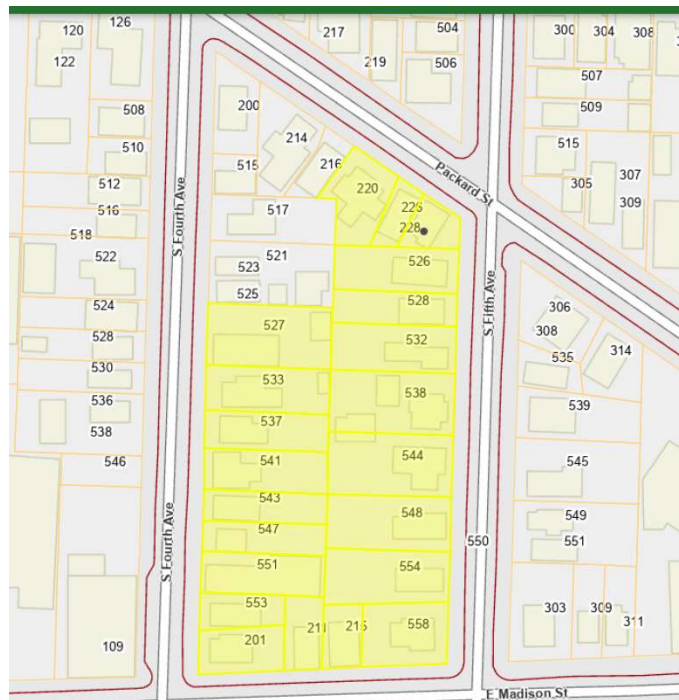


Figure 1: Proposed Site Location

The proposed development was initially contemplated as a PUD Zoning District, and a PUD pre-petition conference was

held with City Planning Commission at its September 12, 2023 meeting. The applicant has since reconsidered, and is working toward rezoning to a D1 base, First Street Character overlay, Secondary Street type, and a site plan for City Council approval. In accordance with Ann Arbor's Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 5.28.5.B, projects in the D1 district shall submit an application to the Design Review Board.

PROPOSED PROJECT: The applicant proposes to redevelop the site with a single apartment building ranging from 6 to 12 stories, containing approximately 450 dwelling units and incorporating a 400+ space parking structure topped with resident amenities. The building design features a 6-story section on Packard Street, extending to 12 stories along East Madison Street, following the natural slope. It exhibits a minimalist style with natural colors. A distinct one-story base with an overhang accentuates the 6-story north end, while the 12-story south end features a three-story base with an overhang between the first two stories and a material change above the third. The upper floors align with the base but include full-height recesses for façade variation.



Figure 2: Proposed "228 Packard" Development, view from northeast looking southwest.

ZONING COMPLIANCE AND SITE CONTEXT:

- Zoning Compliance (Area, Height, Placement).** The following provides a review of the proposed development project for compliance with the D1 base, First Street Character overlay, and Secondary Street type designation dimensional standards and development standards.

	Requirement	Proposed
Lot Area	No minimum	119,900 square feet, complies.
Floor Area	No minimum	Data not provided, not applicable to compliance.
FAR (Floor Area Ratio)	None ¹	Data not provided, appears compliant. See footnote 1.
Front Setback	0 ft MIN; 10 MAX	Data not provided, appears compliant on all fronts.
Side Setback	15 ft. minimum side	Data not provided, appears to be or nearly compliant.
Streetwall Height	Min 2 stories, max 3 stories	Does not comply, streetwall 1 story on north end of building.
Offset at Top of Streetwall	Average 5 ft MIN	Does not comply, no offset proposed.
Total Height	Unknown ²	60 ft (at north) to 135 ft (at south) See footnote 2.
Massing Articulation	Maximum 66 ft	Data not provided; does not appear compliant.
Tower Diagonal	Not applicable	Not applicable to this district
Building Coverage	None	Data not provided, not applicable to compliance.
Open Space	None	Data not provided, not applicable to compliance.

¹ 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.

² Table 5.17-6 (Downtown Character Overlay Zoning Districts Building Massing Standards) does not provide a maximum building height for the First Street Character overlay district when D1 base district as this combination does not currently exist. A maximum height limit may be established as part of a proposed rezoning petition.

Maximum heights when D1 vary between 180 feet, when in the Main Street, Midtown, East Huron 2, Liberty/Division and State Street character overlay districts, 150 feet in the South University, and 120 feet in the East Huron 1 character overlay districts. The maximum height for the First Street Character overlay district in the D2 base district is 60 feet, which is also the maximum height for the Kerrytown, Main Street, Liberty/Division, and South University character overlay districts when D2.

2. **Site Context and Site Planning.** Most of the site currently contains older, large single-family homes that have been converted to multiple-family dwellings, with the exception of a few industrial buildings near the corner of South Fourth Avenue and East Madison Street. These buildings are set back between five and ten feet from their front lot lines with the width of a one-lane driveway in between each. The block appears to have been originally platted as 66-foot wide by 132-foot deep lots. Some lots have since been divided in half, others have been reconfigured from two lots to three.

The same context of older, large single-family homes converted to multiple-family dwellings is found north and east of the site, along Packard and South Fifth. East of the site, along South Fourth, the converted single-family character transitions to industrial warehouses at the bottom of the hill. South of the site was a lumber yard that was recently purchased by the University of Michigan to develop a residential campus.

The following guidelines are particularly relevant:

- a. *Guideline A.1 – Urban Pattern and Form. Designers should assess the character of the adjacent streetscape, open spaces, and buildings to determine how they function as places and facilities supporting human use. Specific ways include:*
 - i. *Identifying and reinforcing positive characteristics of adjacent sites.*
 - ii. *Sidewalk level features and facilities that provide enrichment of the pedestrian experience.*
 - iii. *Architectural gateway or focal point and a dominant architectural feature at street corners.*
- b. *Guideline A.2 – Site Planning and Natural Systems. Designers should consider natural systems such as sun and wind patterns, climates and seasonality.*
 - i. *Accommodate solar access and minimize shading of adjacent properties and neighborhoods.*
- c. *Guideline A.4 – Parking, Driveways and Service Areas. These should be designed to benefit the urban experience.*
 - i. *Provide pedestrian-friendly street edges adjacent to enclosed parking structures.*
 - ii. *Locate parking structures behind or to the side of a building.*
- d. *Guideline A.6 – Cycling and Transit.*
 - i. *Provide a comfortable environment for transit patrons.*

- ii. *Provide convenient bicycle racks in proximity to building entries, with weather protection and security.*

3. **Building.** The design guidelines for buildings focus on breaking down massing of larger buildings from their lower-scale neighbors. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:

- a. *Guideline B.1.1 – Step taller building elements away from lower-scale buildings, locate taller elements at the intersection of streets.*
- b. *Guideline B.1.2 – Vary the height of building modules, cornice lines and roof finish elements.*
- c. *Guideline B.1.3 – Use a distinct horizontal molding to define the base, provide distinct change in ratio of solid to void to distinguish base from upper floors. The design guidelines for buildings focus on breaking down massing of larger buildings from their lower-scale neighbors.*

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 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.

- a. *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.*
- b. *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.*
- 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. This application is the first for a site not already in a downtown zoning district. It may seem natural to want to also review the proposed zoning designations for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, but the application should be taken at face value and the Guidelines should be applied as if the site was already rezoned.

- b. Even considering the proposed rezoning associated with the project, defining the site context for this project is particularly difficult. The area could be on the cusp of a significant transition. Already, the context south of the site is being changed from low-scale industrial buildings, outdoor storage, and open spaces to a campus residential quadrangle. Development pressure has recently lessened in the core of downtown, just a handful of blocks north of the site, but has increased in the interface zones and even outside of the established downtown boundary as exemplified by this project.
- c. Based on the established and emerging character of the area within three blocks of the site in all directions, it is staff's opinion that the proposed project is not in keeping with its surroundings. The design and mass are not consistent with the intent of the proposed First Street Character area, which is characterized by "oddly-shaped blocks and a mixture of commercial storefronts, industrial buildings, and single-family homes." It is also not consistent with a dense, near-downtown residential neighborhood, or even a traditional campus style. Both the design and the building mass are more appropriate to the downtown core, perhaps as befitting the proposed rezoning, but not befitting the actual setting.
- d. Some required dimensional standards have not been met, particularly the required offset at the top of the streetwall and massing articulation. It would be especially appreciated if the rhythm of the underlying lots could be visibly reflected in building design as a way of breaking up large, flat facades that provides little reflection or relationship to the surrounding land use patterns.

Attachments: Project Narrative
 Design Plan
 Supporting Materials

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo, City Planner
December 4, 2023

228 Packard Site Information

	Address	Lot Area	Zoning District	Year Built*	Notes
1	220 Packard	5128 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
2	226 Packard	2113 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
3	228 Packard	2576 SF	R4C	1908	Nonconforming (lot area)
4	526 S Fifth	6212 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
5	528 S Fifth	4692 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
6	532 S Fifth	6538 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
7	538 S Fifth	8718 SF	R4C	1860	
8	544 S Fifth	8716 SF	R4C	1901	
9	548 S Fifth	7660 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
10	554 S Fifth	7395 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
11	558 S Fifth	6045 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
12	215 E Madison	2858 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
13	211 E Madison	3126 SF	M1	1901	Nonconforming (lot area and use)
14	201 E Madison	4345 SF	M1	1901	Nonconforming (lot area and use)
15	527 S Fourth	8706 SF	R4C	1966	
16	533 S Fourth	6327 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
17	537 S Fourth	5267 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
18	541 S Fourth	5789 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
19	543 S Fourth	4341 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
20	547 S Fourth	4326 SF	R4C	1901	Nonconforming (lot area)
21	551 S Fourth	5787 SF	M1	1950	Nonconforming (lot area and use)
22	553 S Fourth	3238 SF	M1	1901	Nonconforming (lot area and use)
		119,903 SF			

Year Built Note: Unless specifically and individually updated, "1901" is the default Year Built entry for all buildings constructed in or before 1901. Actual Year Built could be anytime between 1830 and 1901.