



# City of Ann Arbor

## Formal Minutes

### Design Review Board

301 E. Huron St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
[http://a2gov.legistar.com/  
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Wednesday, November 19, 2014

3:00 PM

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

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**A**      **CALL TO ORDER**

*Chair Burns called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.*

**B**      **ROLL CALL**

*Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo*

**Present**    7 -    Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Tamara Burns, Paul Fontaine, William Kinley, Geoffrey M. Perkins, and Shannan Gibb-Randall

**C**      **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**The agenda was unanimously approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.**

**D**      **INTRODUCTIONS**

**Ann Arbor Downtown Street Design Manual. Amber Miller, DDA Planning & Research Specialist, will introduce this project, offering an overview including its format and function as well as provide a status update.**

*Connie Pulcifer, City of Ann Arbor Systems Planning Unit, Susan Pollay, DDA Executive Director and Oliver Kiley, JJR, introduced the Downtown Street Design Manual, a joint project to develop a common language to address downtown streets from building face to building face. The team discussed the goals of the project, what it will and will not address, how the document is organized and will be used, and its basic organization and contents, as well as past work and next steps.*

**E**      **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**14-1635**      August 20, 2014 Design Review Board Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board with**

changes. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

**F**      **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**G**      **NEW BUSINESS**

**14-1636**

408-412 North First Street Residential Project - Design Review:- A design for a four-story, 25-unit residential building with parking underneath on two platted lots. The building is elevated above the floodplain and has a central courtyard open towards the east. Brick, metal and glass materials are proposed in a modern, industrial style to reflect the existing character of both the Kerrytown neighborhood and industrial uses along the Allen Creek and railroad corridor.

*Project Number DR14-006 (Legistar #14-1636)*

*The Design Review Board met on November 19, 2014 to review the proposed design for a new development at 408-412 North First Street, presently named "410 First." 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 a multiple-family development with up to 25 dwelling units in building elevated above the floodplain on a 19,000-square foot site in the downtown interface and Kerrytown character area. The project design includes a 4-story building with parking underneath, having a central courtyard open towards the east. Brick, metal and glass materials are proposed in a modern, industrial style to reflect the existing character of both the Kerrytown neighborhood and the industrial uses historically along the Allen Creek and railroad corridor.*

*Summary of Priority Issues*

*The Design Review Board concluded that the project generally met the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines. Suggestions to refine the proposed design focused on clarifying proposed elements. 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*

1. *This corner of downtown, and this block in particular, appears to be in transition. (A.1.)*
2. *More information, and clarity, on the landscape plan is needed to better determine whether the proposed design enhances the pedestrian experience (A.1.2)*
3. *Overall, the proposed project will help this underdeveloped block. It is an inviting and interesting development that will strengthen the vibrancy of this neighborhood within downtown. (A.1.6)*
4. *How solar access is accommodated should be clarified, or should be included (A.2.2)*
5. *Tree species should be appropriate to floodplains (A.2.5)*
6. *The front yard rain garden and bridge to the main entrance are unique and attractive elements contributing to the streetscape of the block.*
7. *The entry is clearly defined and visible, facing the one way traffic on First Street (C.2)*
8. *The rear courtyard may be reconfigured to provide for even more sunlight for users (A.3.1)*

#### *Buildings*

1. *The Board strongly encouraged the designers to follow through with the contrasting materials and use of color shown on the application materials.  
Using color is a wonderful, and underutilized, way to define smaller masses within a larger project. (B.1.1; B.1.2.c; B.1.4.b)*

#### *Building Elements*

1. *Several features, details and elements recommended by the Downtown Design Guidelines for Building Elements have been incorporated into the proposed design. However, the top floor lacks shading for its windows. (C.1.1; C.2; C.3; C.5)*
2. *Additional consideration could, and should, be given to sustainability in building elements. Photo voltaic panels might be included to power certain lighting needs. (C.6.1)*

#### *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.1.2 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.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.*

*A.3.1. Design an urban open space to maximize activity and usability for a diverse population of abilities.*

*B.1.1 Design a building to minimize its impact on adjacent lower-scale areas.*

*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.*

*Suggested strategies include: ...*

*B.1.2.c Change wall surface materials, colors or texture.*

*B.1.4 If appropriate to the context, establish a design treatment that includes a differentiated building top. Suggested strategies include: ...*

*B.1.4.b Change wall surface materials, colors or textures of the building top.*

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

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.3 *Window design and placement should help establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest.*

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

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

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

**14-1650** Communications to the Design Review Board

**Received and Filed**

## **I COMMUNICATIONS**

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

*Ethel Potts, 1016 Elder Boulevard – noted she was pleased by the discussion on context and floodplain, but was not satisfied with the information provided. She stated she wanted to support the design but didn't yet know enough about the development.*

*Ray Detter, Downtown Citizens Advisory Council to the Downtown Development Authority – stated he liked the creation of the stormwater park at the corner of Kingsley and First, and felt this would be an appropriate next step up the street. He said the proposed project was well designed.*

## **K ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:30 p.m.**