

ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Staff Report

MEETING DATE: June 20, 2018

PROJECT: Ann Ashley Public Parking Structure Addition
Project No. DR18-003

ADDRESS: 120 West Ann Street

ZONING: D1 Downtown Core (base zoning)
Main Street Character (overlay zoning)
Secondary (street designation)

DESIGN TEAM: Carl Walker – Michael Ortlieb (Prime Consultant)
Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas, Inc. – Dan Mooney, Blake Hatterman (Architect of Record)
Luckenbach|Ziegelman Architects – Carl Luckenbach (Design Consultant)
Zeimet Wozniak and Assoc. – Julian Wargo (Civil Engineer)
Ann Arbor DDA – Susan Pollay (Owner)



Figure 1 - Revised Design

SUMMARY: The Design Review Board discussed a proposed expansion of the Ann Ashley Public Parking Structure at their April 18, 2018 meeting. The parking structure will be expanded with an additional three levels and a new stair/elevator tower will be added at the southwest corner. Other improvements and enhancements are proposed to lessen the visual impact of the entire, expanded structure.

The Board supported the expansion concept while offering several suggestions in reworking some of the improvements and enhancements. (Find the April 18, 2018 Planning Staff Report [here](#) and the May 14, 2018 Design Review Board Comments and Recommendations memo [here](#).)

The [revised application](#) describes what changes have been made since April 18 in response to the Design Review Board, public input and the Downtown Development Authority Board. The veil of aluminum louvers wrapping around the lower half of the building has been removed and the existing stepped structure at the north end is no longer being removed or enclosed, it will remain as currently existing. The [revised design plan](#) is now very similar to the “base scheme” previously presented as an alternative.



Figure 2 - Revised Design

STAFF COMMENTS:

1. The revised design plan does not rework the improvements and enhancements proposed in the original scheme, so in that sense it does not directly respond to the Board's comments and recommendations. However, the revised design plan is more in keeping with the overall tone of the discussion to embrace the parking structure yet enhance its pedestrian experience.
2. Below, staff have curated the Downtown Design Guidelines to only those that seem applicable to the project to assist the Board in developing unanimous findings and identifying the key attributes that contribute to those findings.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: From the Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines

Staff has identified the following Guidelines as applicable to the proposed project. These include Guidelines both with which the proposed project is and is not consistent. The Design Review Board may find other Guidelines are also applicable.

Chapter 1: General Design Guidelines

A. Design Guidelines for Context and Site Planning

- A.1 Urban Pattern and Form.** 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.1.4 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.**
- A.1.5 If the street geometries are such that the mid-block is the termination of a perpendicular street view, consider a design with enough presence and detail to make that view noteworthy.**
- 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.**
- A.2 Site Planning and Natural Systems.** An urban setting can be a challenging

environment in which to respond to natural systems. Consider natural systems such as sun and wind patterns, climates and seasonality, rainwater harvesting, and significant individual features such as street tree patterns and landmark trees on public and private sites.

A.4 Parking, Driveways and Service Areas. Parking, driveways, and service areas are necessary functions, which should be designed to benefit the urban experience.

A.4.2 Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge at street level adjacent to surface parking areas and enclosed parking structures. Provide a landscape buffer appropriate for urban conditions at the edges of surface parking areas.

A.4.4 Parking structures should incorporate architectural screens, public art, seating, lighting, kiosks, vending booths, and other ground level service shops adjacent to the street and sidewalk.

A.5 Pedestrian Connections. Pedestrian connections include sidewalks, alleys and arcades that provide pedestrian access within, through and among properties. Such connections provide access to buildings, courtyards, plazas and other site elements.

A.6 Cycling and Transit. Walking, cycling, transit and other multi-modal means of transportation are to be considered in the design of streetscapes.

B. Design Guidelines for Buildings

B. 1 Building Massing. Building massing principles address the overall height, size and shape of a building. Although these guidelines refer to the visual aspects of structures, it is important to note that downtown zoning districts address key building massing considerations including floor area ratio, building height, streetwall height, offset and module length.

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

Suggested strategies include:

- a) Step taller building elements away from adjacent lower- scale buildings and/or neighborhoods**
- b) Locate taller building elements at the intersection of streets**
- c) Provide variation in building massing to reflect the underlying pattern of established lot widths**

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:

- a) Vary the height of individual building modules.**
- b) Vary the height of cornice lines and other roof finish elements.**
- c) Change wall surface materials, colors or texture.**
- d) Use vertical moldings to express different building modules.**
- e) Align projecting features, such as balconies or sun screens, to express different building modules.**
- f) Use underlying established lot widths to help determine the width of building modules at the street level.**

C. Design Guidelines for Building Elements

Building elements include specific design features that give character and detail to a building. They are not generally addressed by the requirements of the downtown zoning districts. Entries, windows, materials, and other building elements influence the degree to which a new building contributes to the urban fabric. Quality and creativity are most clearly expressed and experienced at this level of design.

The design of building elements should be compatible with its surrounding context. However, a wide range of styles or design themes are appropriate including creative, contemporary, and environmentally-oriented design solutions. Surfaces that have variations in depth with substantial shadow lines add interest.

C.1 Street Edge. Building elements and architectural details used at the street front have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience and should be combined to create an active and interesting street front. Creative use of materials, textures and architectural details is especially important where there are few windows at the street front of a building.

C.2 Entries. 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.5 Materials. Building materials should reinforce the massing and architectural concepts and enhance the character of the building and its context.

C.7 Sustainability in Building Elements. Consider sustainability when selecting structural and façade materials and designing functional building elements.

Main Street Character District

The Main Street Character District, once the traditional heart of downtown, has evolved into a regional entertainment, business, and retail destination. The center of the district contains the Main Street Historic District. The 1929 First National Building (at Main and Washington) is a prominent landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

First and second floor heights are similar among traditional buildings, which helps establish a continuity of scale. Architectural details also provide interest and convey a sense of scale in Main Street. While there is a range of building heights and architectural styles, most are of durable materials and high quality execution. This district has the strongest streetwall definition in the city, which is enhanced by the fine-grained texture of narrow storefronts that reflect traditional lot widths.

Being a regional dining attraction, this district is one of the more heavily trafficked visitor areas at night. Curb extensions have encouraged outdoor dining areas, which flourish seasonally. A large number of street trees and pedestrian-scaled lights complement the already pedestrian-oriented nature of the restaurant and retail destinations.