

ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Staff Report

MEETING DATE: January 17, 2018

PROJECT: 1101 South University Ave Design Plan
Project No. DR17-002

ADDRESS: 1101 South University Avenue

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

DESIGN TEAM: J. B. Moore – J. Bradley Moore and Associates Architects
Tom Covert – Midwestern Consulting
S. University Properties (owner)

PROPOSED PROJECT: A vertical expansion of an existing two-story building is proposed to create a five-story mixed-use building. In addition to the current coffee shop on the first floor and office space on the second floor, three floors of apartments will be constructed with a total of 16 bedrooms. The proposed building will have 8,117 square feet of floor area and a FAR of 357% on this 2,275-square foot site.

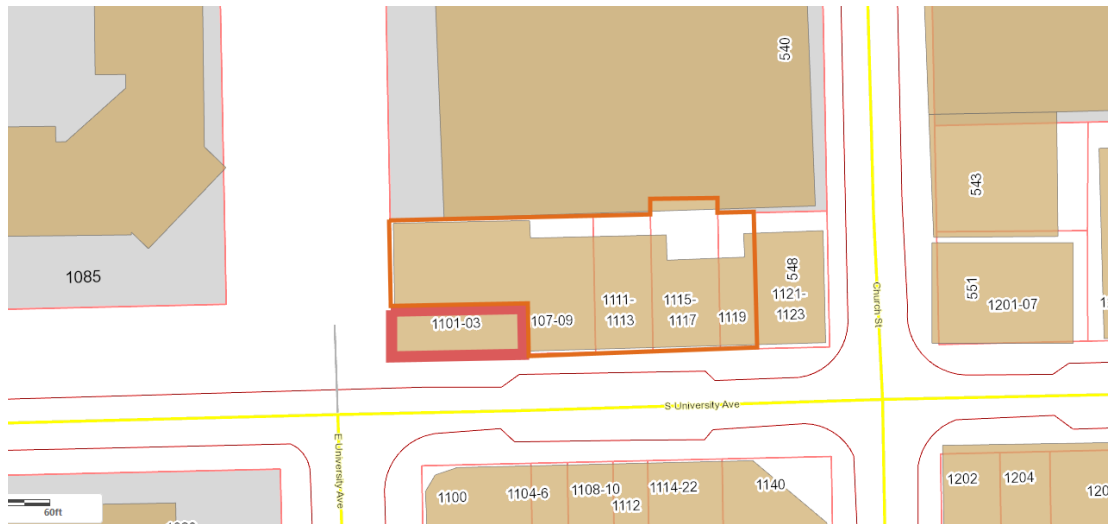


Figure 1 – Location Map

The site (thick red outline in Figure 1) is located on the north side of South University Avenue at what was the northeast corner of East University Avenue. East U is now a pedestrian mall on the outside of the University of Michigan’s Central Campus Diag.

The north and east sides of the site abut the Collegian North development (under construction, thin orange outline in Figure 1).

In the submitted design plan, the applicant states “the building is conceived as an asymmetrical composition of windows, masonry, glass and metal rising 5 stories and culminating in a generous cornice line at the top of the building.” Many projecting horizontal components, such as canopies and balconies, are included to both delineate the base and top as well as provide visual interest, dimensional relief, amenities to residents and benefits to the pedestrian experience.



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STAFF COMMENTS:

1. The area, height and placement regulations for this site (D1, South University Character, primary street) are provided in the chart below. A cursory review of the proposed development indicates meets most applicable zoning regulations.

| | Requirements | Proposed |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| FAR (Floor Area Ratio) | Max. 400% normally, up to 700% with premiums (9,101 – 15,928 sq ft) | 357% (8,117 sq ft) |
| Front Setback | 0 ft MIN – 1 ft MAX | 0 to 3 ft (no change to existing) |
| Side Setback | 0 ft MIN | 0 ft |
| Rear Setback | 0 ft MIN | 0 ft |
| Streetwall Height | None (see note) | None |
| Offset at Top of Streetwall | None (see note) | None |
| Total Height | Maximum 150 ft | 64 ft |
| Massing Articulation | Maximum 45 ft | Not specified |
| Building Coverage | No maximum | |
| Open Space | No minimum | |

Note: Corner sites with less than 5,000 square feet, such as the subject site,

are exempt from the streetwall and offset at top of streetwall requirements per Section 5:10.20(3)(c).

2. The applicant should identify the proposed massing articulation dimension.
3. The applicant should provide the height of the street-level façade from its floor to the next floor above, the percentage of transparent windows or glazing at the street level, the height of the bottom of the windows on the street-level story. Because the structure of the existing two-story building is proposed to remain, the height first floor may remain as an existing nonconforming element (if it is not a minimum of 15 feet, per Section 5:10.20(5)(b)(1)), but the significant façade changes will require compliance with Section 5:10.20(5)(b)(2) and (3).
4. The applicant should note if “other materials” as described in Section 5:10.20(5)(a) are proposed which would need a recommendation by the Design Review Board.
5. The proposed development is notably smaller than its contemporaries in the South University Character area – it is the only one that does not utilize premium floor area – but it is solidly among them in terms of style, massing, and proportions. As they almost all have done, the proposed development’s overall building envelope also incorporates the majority of the applicable **design guidelines for context and site planning**.
6. The **design guidelines for buildings** generally focus on minimizing the impact of a new building and providing details, variation, and design treatments that break down scale. The proposed development provides no setbacks or plane variation but it does have numerous balconies and awnings. The punched window openings, balconies and awnings will provide depth and shadowing to the façade. The Board should discuss whether these features fulfill the guidelines for building massing.
7. The proposed development incorporates many applicable **design guidelines for building elements**. It has a high level of ground floor transparency and entrances oriented towards the street. Its street edge, entries, windows, awnings, materials and (apparently) natural environmental controls respond positively to the guidelines.

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.1.1 Identify and then reinforce the positive characteristics of adjacent sites.

A.1.2 Design sidewalk level features and facilities to provide enrichment of the pedestrian experience.

A.1.3 Corner sites are an opportunity to express an architectural gateway or focal point and a dominant architectural feature.

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.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.

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.1.3 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.

B.1.4 If appropriate to the context, establish a design treatment that includes a differentiated building top.

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.3 Windows.** Window design and placement should help establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest.
- C.4 Awnings.** The use of awnings is encouraged at the sidewalk level to provide shelter from the rain, to modulate natural light, and to indicate entry and provide transition from the outdoor to the indoor environment.
- C.5 Materials.** Building materials should reinforce the massing and architectural concepts and enhance the character of the building and its context.
- 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.
- C.7 Sustainability in Building Elements.** Consider sustainability when selecting

structural and façade materials and designing functional building elements.

South University Character District

This district is located on the southern and eastern edges of central campus (refer to the map for boundaries). Current architectural character includes diverse styles ranging from older eclectic forms to new/contemporary ones, expressed through a wide variety of architectural materials including wood siding, brick, limestone, precast concrete, and various metals. Building heights range from one and two floor/low-rise to mid and hi-rise. Rooflines vary from two and three story frame houses to flat roofed contemporary expressions at various building heights and façade expressions.

This area is a mixed use district, largely consisting today of university population-focused restaurant and commercial services, and student housing. This district is busy and vibrant with automobile and pedestrian activity. Sidewalk level doorways provide access to upper floor offices and apartments.

The urban landscape includes sidewalk extensions (bump-outs) with circular tree sized planters; a well developed tree canopy over some sidewalks; and outdoor dining spaces at sidewalk and rooftop levels. First floor facades are more transparent with clear, large display windows, allowing inside first floor retail activities to be visible from, and contribute to, the district's active street life.

The cumulative character can be described as a busy and vibrant urban setting that encourages and accommodates a diverse range of downtown activities.