



MEMO

March 20th, 2023

To: City Planning Commission.
301 E Huron St,
Ann Arbor, Mi 48107

Re: Proposed PUD Zoning & Site Plan for 721 S Forest – Planning Staff comments

To City Planning Commission Members:

The noted staff concerns regarding building massing is unwarranted and nonsequitur.

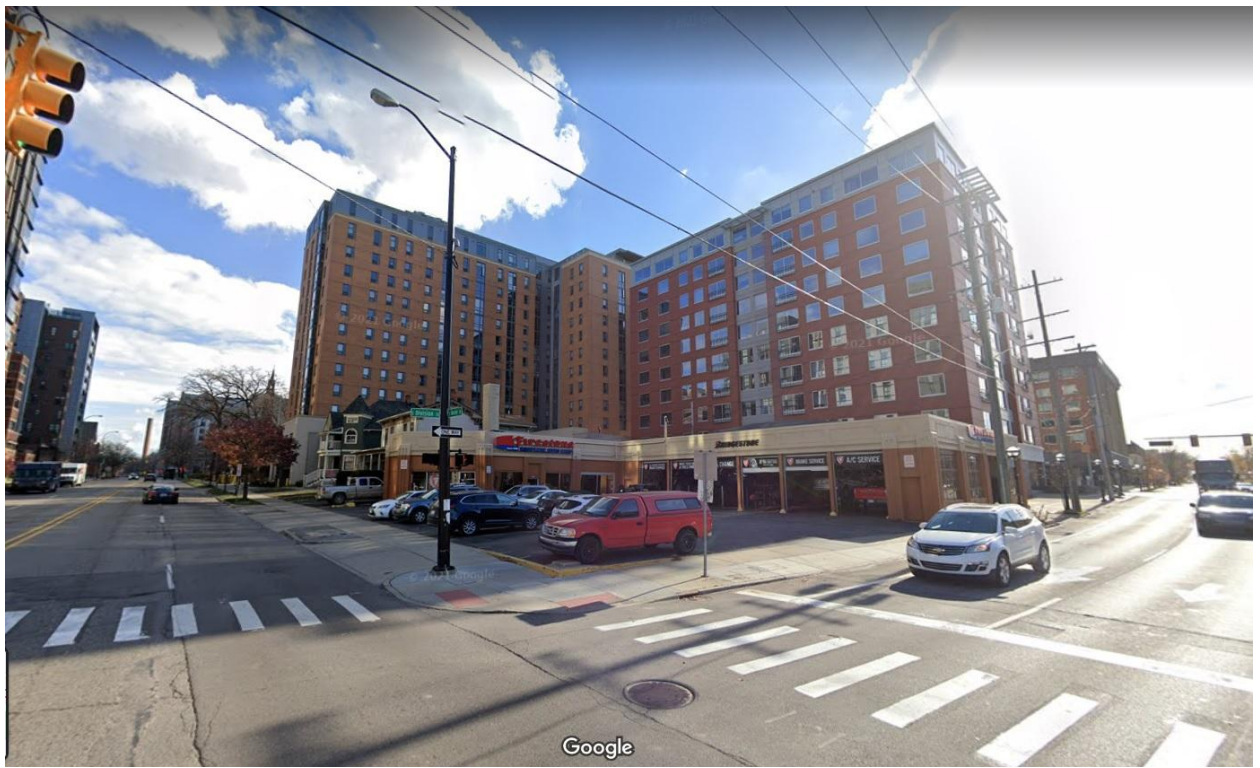
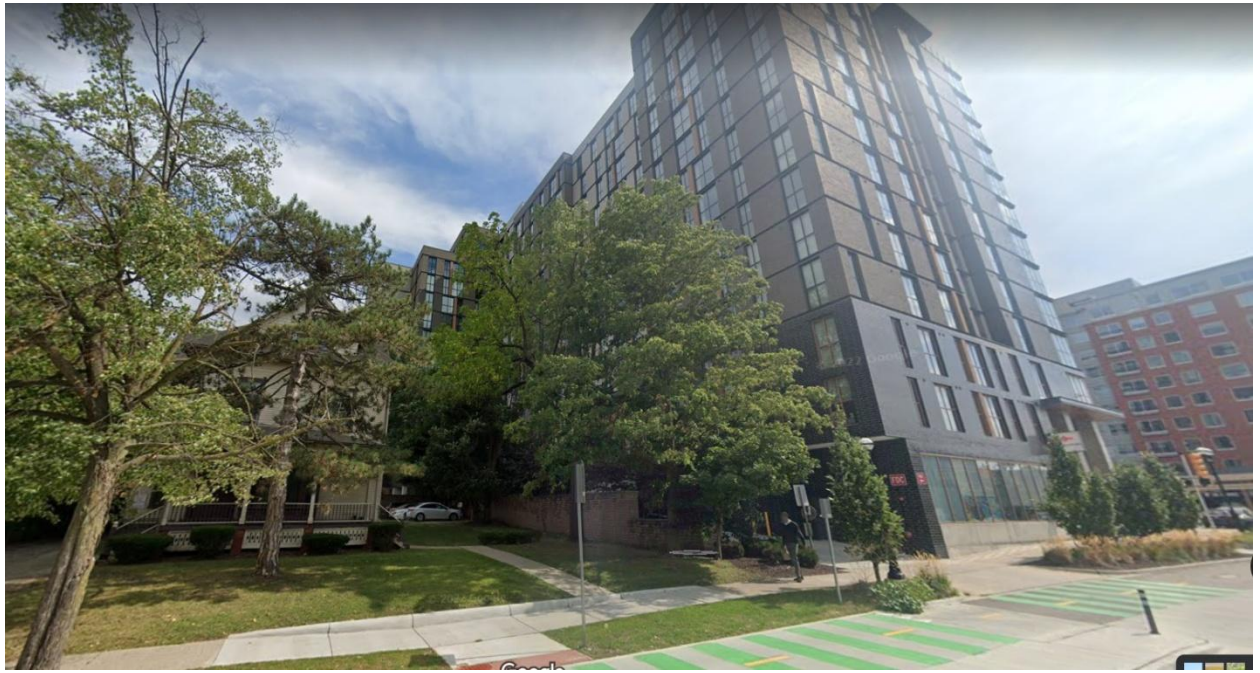
The city is replete with examples of adjoining buildings with significantly differing massing/scale and rather than being objectionable it is one of the attributes of the city that gives it its unique character (one staff planner is found of using the descriptor “funky” whereas I might use cool or neat or groovy). In fact the city's tallest building (26 stories) is flanked on all sides by vastly shorter buildings – a one story retail buildings and a 2 story church!

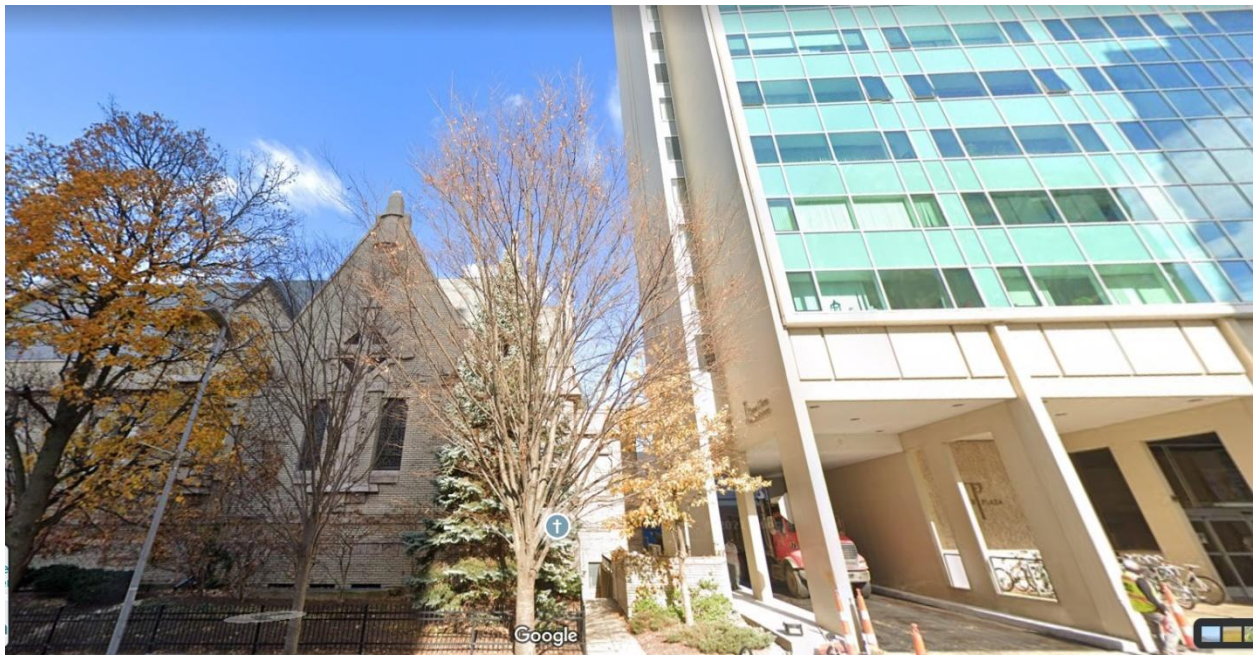
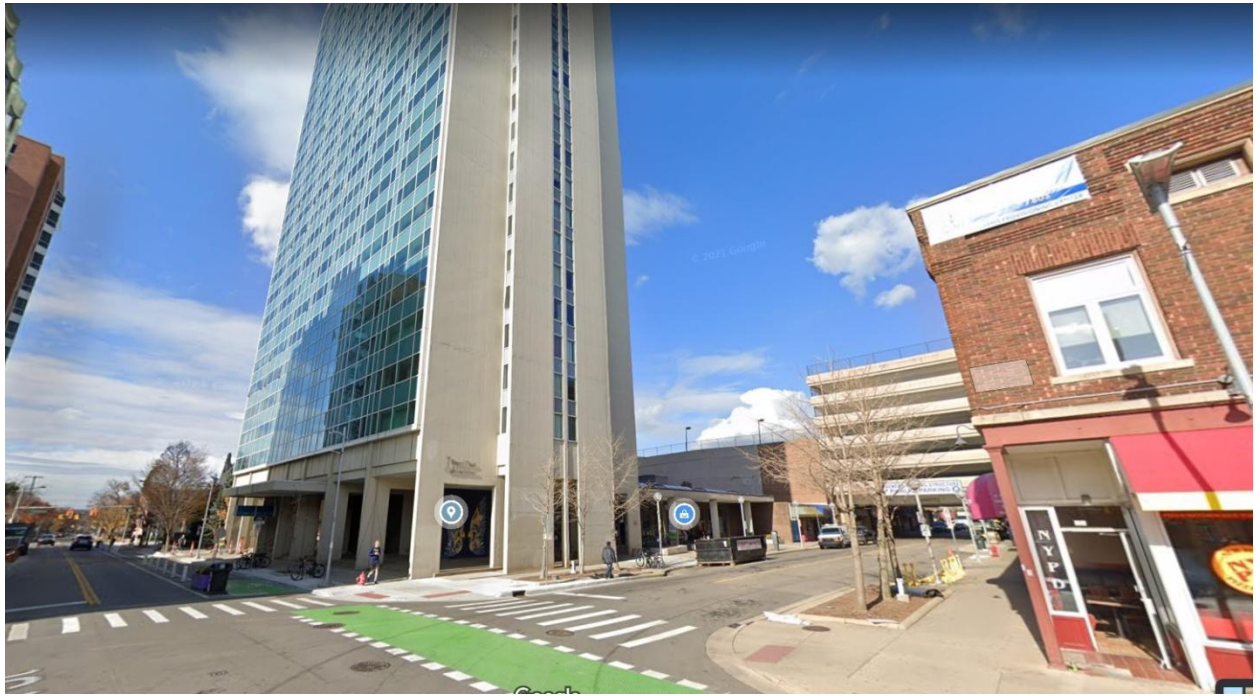
Below please find some imagery documenting some of these conditions.

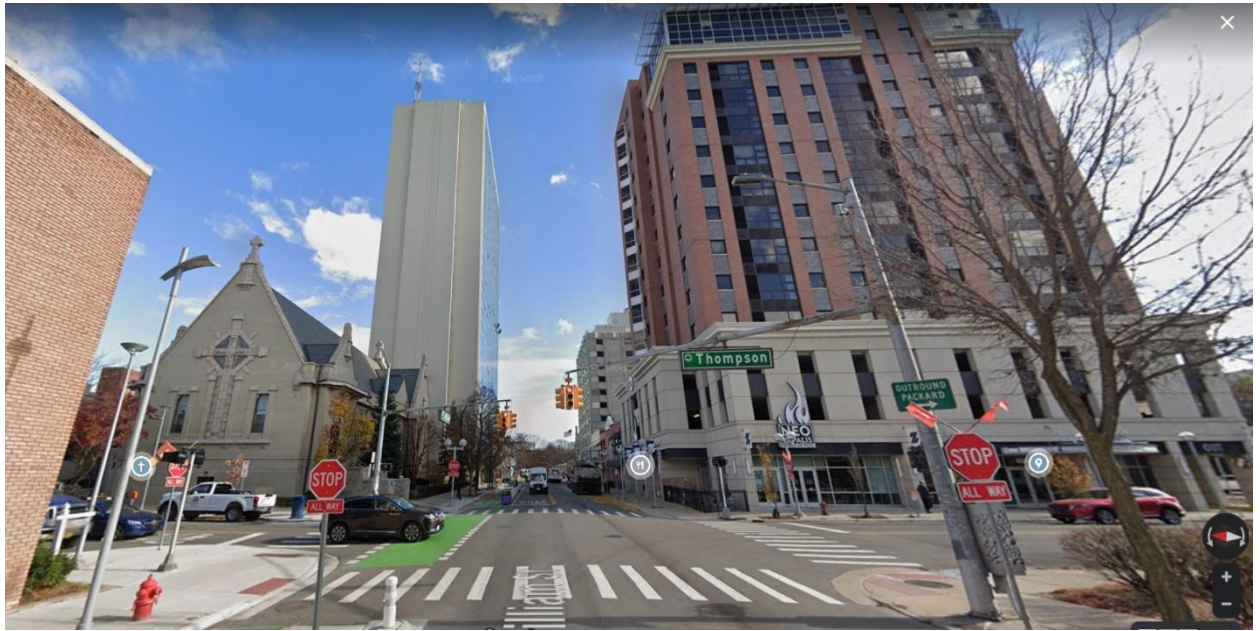














In fact many of these arrangements, of dissimilar buildings being snuggled up together, are an overt choice of city policy - as for example, The Varsity high-rise being sandwiched between two more diminutive structures or the State Street lofts being cuddled up to a vastly shorter yet historically protected building. By the Council approving high-rise structures up next to shorter buildings it has made the policy determination that buildings of dissimilar massing/heights/scale are NOT inherently incompatible or undesirable. In fact contrast or diversity is a fantastic thing in an urban landscape and celebrative diversity is what this town is supposed to be all about. Most recently the council approved a 19 story high-rise structure (as noted by the press it is the tallest building approved in the city in 50 years) nestled up against a 2-and-one half story collegiate building of some historic significance. So, in fact, the council has over and over made it clear that tall buildings adjacent to historic buildings and districts IS appropriate.

Contrast and diversity yield interesting and unique urban landscapes in contrast to overly planned, homogenous, and arguably boring communities like Seaside or Celebration Florida. Ann Arbor should strive for (and be proud of) the former rather than the later.

Sincerely,

J Bradley Moore, AIA