



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Planning & Development Services - Planning (734) 794-6265

Community Services Area

January 24, 2014

Dear Mr. de Parry,

This letter serves to explain the Historic District Commission decision to deny the request to construct a new condominium building in the Old West Side Historic District. The complete reasons for the Commission's decision were discussed at the January 9, 2014 Commission meeting and are contained in the record.

The proposed work does not meet *The Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for new construction, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 9 and 10 and the guidelines for district/neighborhood.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

District/Neighborhood

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the district or neighborhood.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines:

All New Construction

Appropriate: Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features and open space.

Designing new features so they are compatible with the historic character of the site, district, and neighborhood.

Basing the site location of new buildings on existing district setbacks, orientation, spacing and distance between adjacent buildings.

Designing new sidewalks, entrances, steps, porches and canopies to be consistent with the historic rhythm established in the district.

Designing new buildings to be compatible with, but discernible from, surrounding buildings that contribute to the overall character of the historic district in terms of height, form, size, scale, massing, proportions, and roof shape.

Not Appropriate: Introducing new construction onto a site or in a district, which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, and texture or which destroys relationships on the site or the district

New Construction in Historic Residential Settings

Appropriate: Maintaining the existing spacing of front and side yard setbacks along a block as seen from the street.

Orienting the front of a house towards the street and clearly identifying the front door.

Designing a new front façade that is similar in scale and proportion to surrounding buildings that contribute to the overall character of the historic district.

Selecting materials and finishes that are compatible with historic materials and finishes found in surrounding buildings that contribute to their historic character.

Not Appropriate: Placing a structure outside of the existing pattern of front yard setbacks along a historic residential block

New Construction in Historic Commercial Settings

New construction should be compatible with the context of its surrounding historic district.

Maintaining the setback and alignment pattern seen on surrounding historic properties should take precedence over the setback and alignment pattern of any surrounding properties that are not historic.

Alternative building orientations should generally not be considered for new construction in historic districts.

Building massing should fit with existing historic patterns.

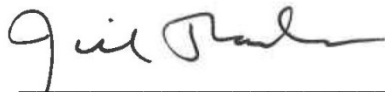
Buildings should not be immense in scale or greatly contrast with the existing scale on the block or in the surrounding historic district.

At its January 9, 2014 meeting, the Commission determined that the proposed building massing does not fit with existing historic patterns and should be pulled back farther from the front of the site, and that the building is visually incompatible with the character of the neighborhood. Concern by the Commission was expressed over the front of the building not being parallel to West Liberty Street, the design of the highly visible east elevation, and the building's relationship to neighboring historic structures.

As noted in the Historic District Commission Determination, you have the right to appeal this decision within 60 days of the receipt of the denial to the State Historic Preservation Review Board. If there is new information you may submit a new application to the Historic District Commission.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Planning Division at (734) 794-6265 or e-mail hdc@a2gov.org.

Sincerely,



Jill Thacher, City Planner/Historic Preservation Coordinator

c: File HDC13-228
City Attorney's Office