

5 February 2013

To: Ann Arbor Planning Commission

Fr: Eleanor Pollack
515 Detroit Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Re: **413 East Huron Street**

For the past 40 years, beginning with the 1973 Central Area Policy Plan for the City of Ann Arbor, Ann Arborites have voiced concern about new development and its impact on existing in-town residential neighborhoods. Over the years planning studies have acknowledged that new development should be respectful of the existing adjacent residential neighborhoods, and yet here we are again.

The developers of 413 East Huron suggest that the site plan before you is consistent with the character of Huron Street, citing City Hall to the west and the commercial structures across the street from City Hall. I respectfully disagree ~ they have failed to account for the adjacent abutting residential neighborhood to their north.

The concept of Huron Street as a grand avenue emerged in 2004 Huron, Division and Fifth Corridor Study prepared by Pollack Design Associates for the Ann Arbor DDA.

The study suggests that “buildings along the grand avenue should contribute to the density development in the downtown zone while providing areas of refuge and pedestrian interest that encourage diverse activities.” The study proposed design guidelines for architecture in this particular location:

Establish a building setback of 10' for new construction on Huron Street to create an avenue character with a wider building façade to building façade street ...

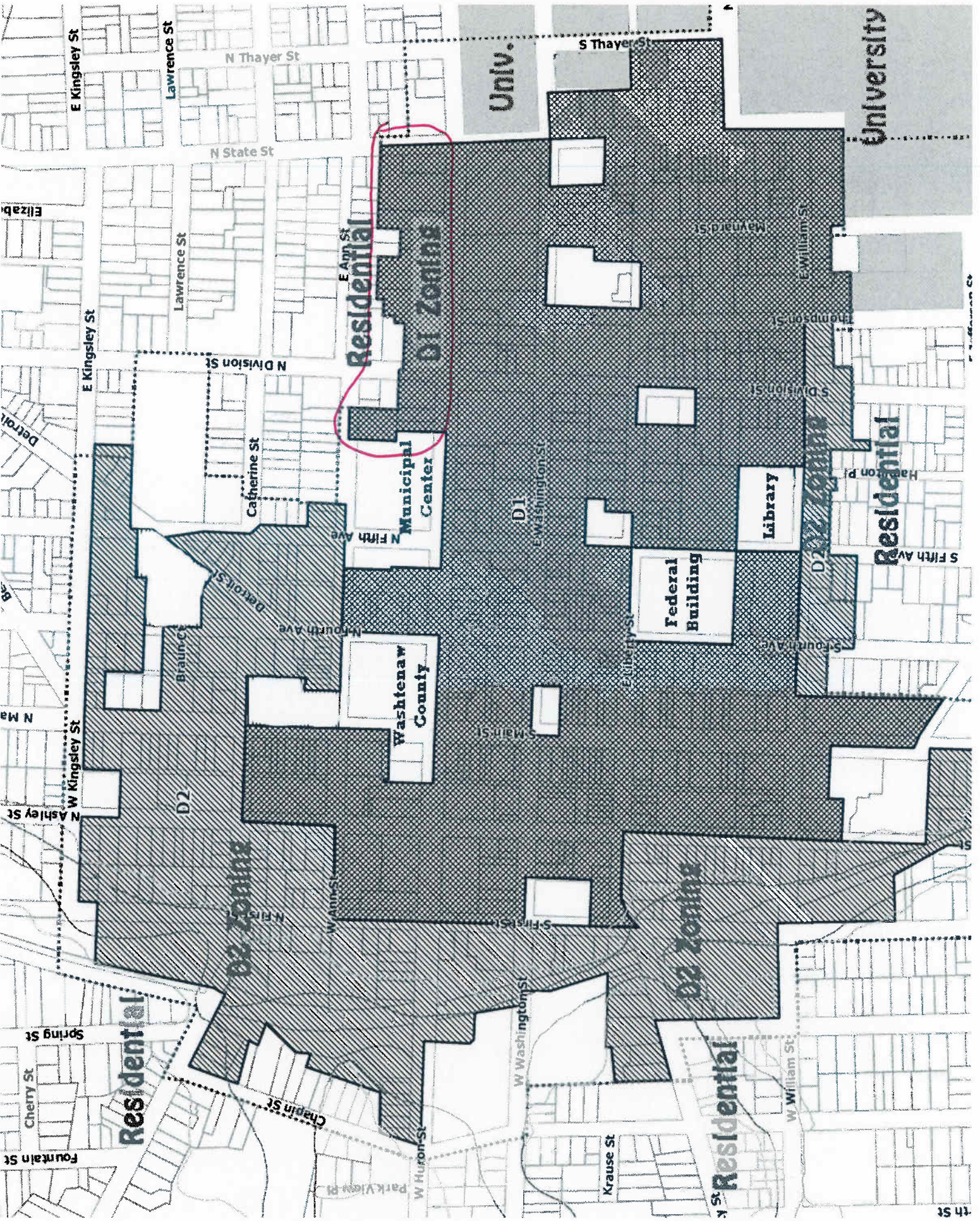
In mixed use residential buildings, modulate 10-20' setbacks to allow for green entry plazas and places of pedestrian refuge.”

Encourage building heights that modulate in height in keeping with existing character of downtown Ann Arbor.”

The recent Design Guidelines written over the course of 2010 and approved early in 2011 recommend that new development adjacent to residential neighborhoods “step down” to meet the existing adjacent architectural character.

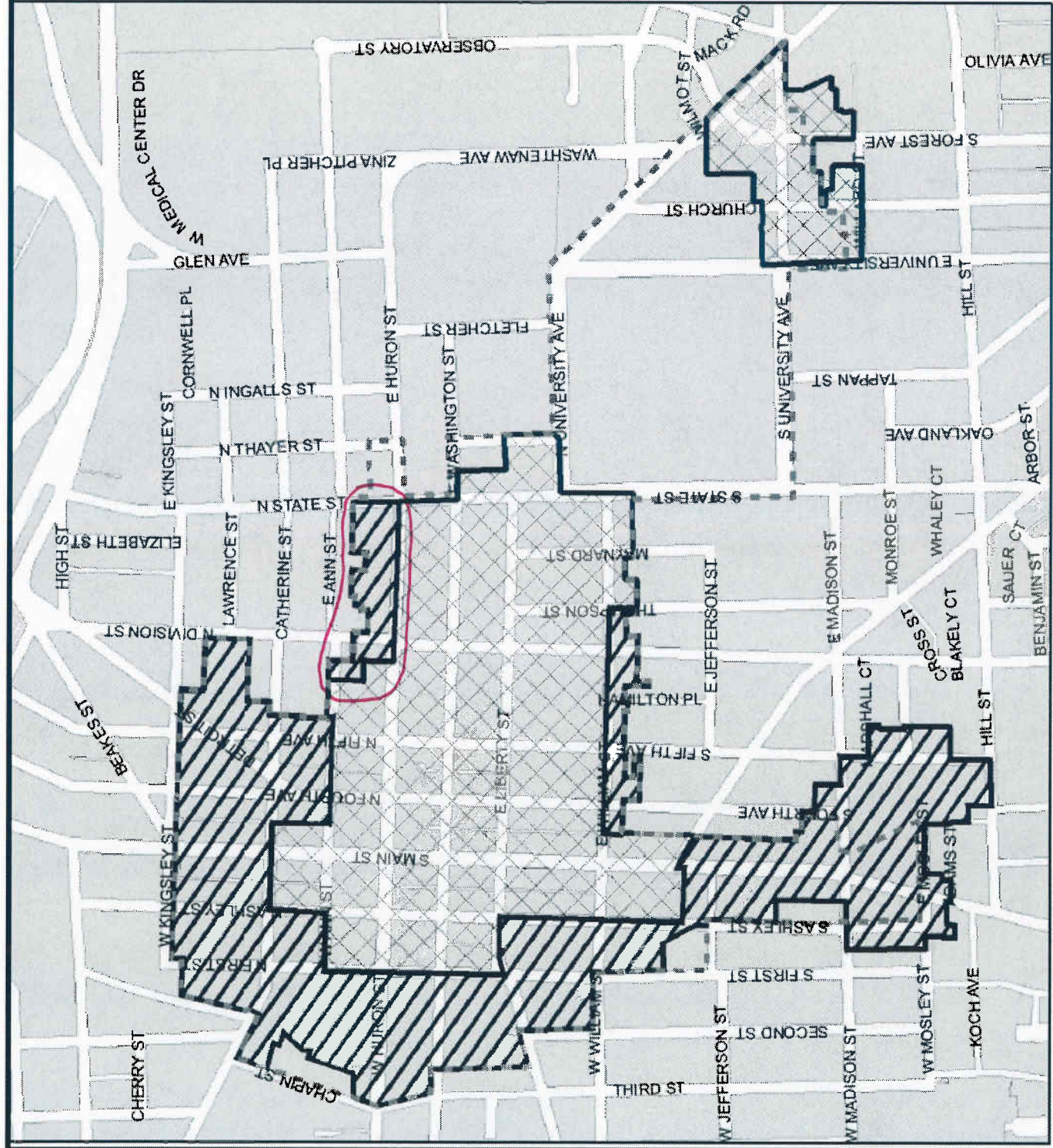
None of the above design guidelines or recommendations have been applied to this site plan.

413 East Huron Street may meet minimum development requirements for this project, but the project does not respond to the will and intent consistently expressed by the residents of Ann Arbor.



Proposed Downtown Zoning Districts

Map Features

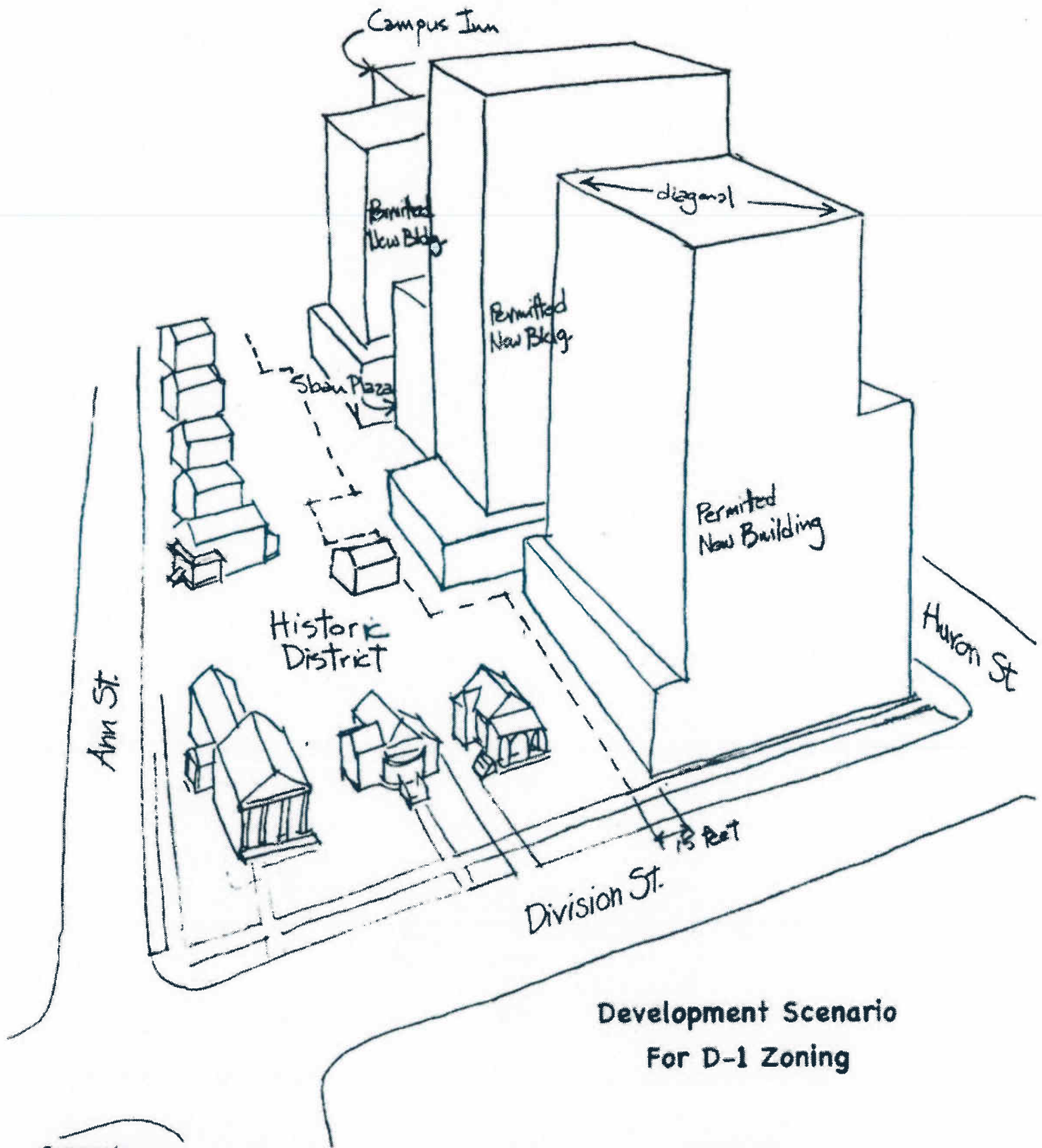


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Prepared By:
City of Ann Arbor
Community Services GIS
June 12, 2007



Comments:

- Proposed zoning should not be approved until ordinance is coordinated and cross-referenced with design review proposal.
- Design review is needed, especially in D-2 zoning, to ensure compatibility.
- Old Fourth Ward/ Ann Street Historic Districts should have a D-2 buffer zone along East Huron.
- Thirty foot setback in rears along Huron Street should not be reduced to 15 feet.