



City of Ann Arbor

Formal Minutes

Design Review Board

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
[http://a2gov.legistar.com/
Calendar.aspx](http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx)

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

3:00 PM

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St,
Basement, conference room

A **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Tamara Burns called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

B **ROLL CALL**

Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo, Lesley Rivera

Present 4 - Tamara Burns, Paul Fontaine, William Kinley, and Shannan Gibb-Randall

Absent 3 - Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Geoffrey M. Perkins, and Gary Cooper

C **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was unanimously approved as amended to postpone action on the July 15, 2015 meeting minutes to the next meeting.

D **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

15-1040 July 15, 2015 Design Review Board Meeting Minutes

A motion was made that the Minutes be Postponed to the Design Review Board and should be returned by 9/16/2015. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

E **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

F **NEW BUSINESS**

F-1 **15-1037** 220 West Ann Street Design Review - A proposed design for raising the rear roof and adding a covered porch on a vernacular upright-and-wing

multiple-family residential building at the corner of West Ann and North First streets. The existing building is clad in vinyl siding which will be used for the proposed addition as well. An exterior stair will also be added as part of the renovations. The site is 4,356 square feet and is zoned D1 (Downtown Core) - Kerrytown Character Overlay Zoning District. (Ward 1) *(Project Number DR15-003, Legistar #15-1037)*

The Design Review Board met on August 19, 2015 to review the proposed design for additions to the existing building at 220 West Ann Street. The following report contains a summary of the discussion and the priority issues the Board would like the developer to consider in finalizing the design proposal and subsequent site plan submittal.

Description of Project

Aaron Vermeulen, O|X Studio, represented the design team.

Vermeulen described the proposed project to create a full second story, add a porch on the south side and a new covered exterior stairwell at the northeast corner of the existing building. The site is 4,356-square foot site at the northeast corner of West Ann and North First streets in the downtown interface and the Kerrytown character area.

The Board asked several clarifying questions, such as setbacks to the north property line, City Code requirements for storm water management, if any proposed work has actually already been done, and who has done the bulk of the design work.

Summary of Priority Issues

The Design Review Board concluded that the project improves upon the existing conditions towards the goals of the Downtown Design Guidelines, but primarily because the bar is set so low by the existing conditions and there are many additional opportunities to further improve the project. Specific suggestions were offered to better meet the intent of the Guidelines.

Examples of especially applicable guidelines are noted below in parenthesis; the full text of each referenced guideline is provided at the end of the summary. Please note that the Kerrytown character area guidelines also apply.

Context and Site Planning

The proposed additions are residential in nature and fit within the scale of the existing building, so they reinforce what is left of the positive characteristics of the site and its immediate neighbors (A.1.). However, the new windows are out of scale with the original windows of the building and do not align nor follow any pattern. The design does not sufficiently reinforce the character of its own site or the Kerrytown area (A.1.1) Further improvements to the design will help provide more enrichment of the pedestrian experience (A.1.2). Along those lines: If the egress well on the south side requires a railing, the Board recommended instead the finished grade be lowered and swept back to eliminate the need for a well at all. If the existing utility meters on the south façade could not be relocated, they must be screened from view. The new porch on the south side and the covering over the northeast stairwell must be constructed of wood, the traditional material for the period and character of the building. Its roof ends must be finished so they are not open shed structures, in keeping with the period and character of the building.

The Board recommended a rain garden to retain rainwater (A.2.6) to serve as a site amenity, especially since no other storm water management system would be required for this site. Improvements to the existing parking area are needed to minimize impact to pedestrians and make the design of the site fit the character of the building, its immediate surroundings and the Kerrytown area (A.4). The width of the driveway must be narrowed between the sidewalk and the face of the building and there should be no ability for a car to be parked there (A.4.2). This is particularly important for both pedestrian comfort (A.4.1) and so access to the new stairwell is not blocked. Screening should be then provided for the remaining portion of the parking lot from view of pedestrians (A.4.2). Convenient bicycle racks should be provided on the site (A.6.2).

Building Elements

The Board noted that virtually all of the original exterior materials and details of the building are gone, almost certainly through no fault of the owner and applicant. Therefore, trying to replicate and replace its original character is very important. The proposed work should include architectural details that provide a sense of scale (C.1.1.b). The proposed windows and doors are featureless and do not contribute to the character of the building (C.1.1.c). There seems to be no logical purpose for two entry doors to the same apartment from the new porch, and the existing doors are the wrong style for the period and character of the house. At minimum, one of the existing doors should be removed and

the remaining one replaced with a more appropriate style. The Board did compliment the design team for clearly defining the primary entrances on each street side of the building (C.2.1), which the addition of the porch does. Two separate lead walks to the front porch and the stairwell on the east side would better identify those entrances; one currently exists to the front porch but it is unclear what changes are proposed to access to the stairwell.

The new windows on the raised second story and the rearrangement of windows and doors on the east façade do not appear to have any relationship with the remaining original window openings (C.3.2). The Board suggested, if possible, moving the small bathroom window on the new raised second story from the south west side to the north side of the building. Also, add a window on the north side of the new raised second story for symmetry and additional light into the stairs and hallway of that apartment unit.

The Board noted that some of the sheets in the application showed the bank of meters at the northwest corner of the building covering a window opening, and recommended checking the application drawings for consistency and potential oversights. This same bank of meters appears to extend over a new well at the northwest corner and could impede the use of the well and/or hinder meter reading.

Regarding both meter banks, and as mentioned earlier, they must be sufficiently screened along with any other mechanical units (C.6.2).

The design team was acknowledged for all windows operable for natural ventilation, and the new front porch will help screen the south-facing windows behind it (C.7.3).

Referenced Sections of the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines:

A.1. 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.2.6 Where location and site size allow, consider use of a rain garden or vegetated roof to retain rainwater and serve as a site amenity, and employ rainwater harvesting methods for use in landscape irrigation systems.

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

A.4.1 Locate and size driveways, access points, service entries, alleys, loading docks, and trash receptacles to minimize impact on pedestrians and maintain pedestrian safety, circulation, and comfort.

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 where appropriate for urban conditions at the edges of surface parking areas.

A.6.2 Consider use of convenient bicycle racks, including proximity to building entries, weather protection and security when selecting a location for bicycle parking and storage.

C.1.1.b Architectural details that provide a sense of scale

C.1.1.c Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors

C.2.1 Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it toward the street.

C.3.2 If contextually appropriate, upper floor windows should reference established patterns of adjacent and nearby buildings in size, shape, and spacing by aligning sills and headers and using similar window proportions.

C.6.2 Locate and sufficiently screen mechanical systems to minimize or eliminate noise impacts on adjacent sites and buildings.

C.7.3 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control. Suggested strategies include: 1) Operable windows for natural ventilation 2) Rotating doors or wind locks at high volume entries 3) Interior or exterior light shelves/solar screens above south facing windows

Kerrytown Character District

Kerrytown defines the downtown's northern edge and is the transition from commercial to residential as one moves to the east, north and west – away from the downtown. Two and three story Italianate masonry multi-use buildings with zero lot lines give way to late-19th and early-20th century wood-framed housing.

Many think of Kerrytown as home to several Ann Arbor "institutions" in the form of eateries, markets and entertainment venues. It is a lively district by day anchored by a stable retail presence, ample pedestrian elbow room and a variety of vehicular parking options. Kerrytown is a place locals like to frequent.

In the evening Kerrytown becomes more quiet. While Community High School and the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market provide vitality by day the use of each site recedes to parking at night. Evening activity in Kerrytown is limited to a number of well-spaced dining and entertainment venues in the core area between Detroit Street and Main Street, north of Miller Avenue.

Moving from the core of the Kerrytown Character District, with its brick-paved streets, into the surrounding neighborhoods the pedestrian amenities change. The sidewalks transition from continuous hardscape between building facades and the street curb into ribbons of walkway bordered by landscape setbacks and grassy street extensions. Trees become more prevalent with way-finding signage and lighting levels diminishing.

Reviewed and Filed

G **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS**

[15-1041](#) Staff Reports from Planning Commission Meetings

Received and Filed

H **COMMUNICATIONS**

[15-1042](#) Various Communications to the Design Review Board

Staff noted an application was received for the September 16, 2015 meeting, and another is expected to be submitted for the October meeting.

Chair Burns expressed a desire to schedule a retreat or a working session to discuss reviewing and making recommendations to amend the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Received and Filed

I PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)

None

J ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:20 p.m. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.