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Sent: Monday, April 04, 2016 10:10 AM

To: Planning

Cc: Briere, Sabra; Carlisle, Ben

Subject: 615 S Main proposed development

Members of Planning Commission and other interested parties:

What we have here is a need to plan.

You now take up the third or fourth development near the beginning of downtown Ann Arbor on South Main Street.

Prior to this date, approval has been granted for Ashley Mews, 618 South Main, and The Madison (corner of Madison and Main).

Running through proceedings have been consistent comments in the negative regarding:

1. Traffic and access, vehicular as well as pedestrian
2. Streetscape
3. Parking
4. Build up on or near floodplain, historic residential neighborhoods and outside zoning

As every data point attests, these points have been acknowledged but not addressed.

Without re-iterating each of the concerns, may we suggest that it is now incumbent upon the Commission to plan for what looks like at least the penultimate development in the area?

Anyone trying to make the inevitable left turn going north or south along Main Street risks taking out a pedestrian, making an ill-timed foray across the opposing lane as vehicles come into view on the hill or backing traffic up way more than the four cars suggested in the write up. (Perhaps the level of activity has risen since that information came into being?) Vehicles will be turning both ways out of this property onto Main most likely at the same times existing problems are worst. It is time to make provision for safety concerns. Given proximity to a major intersection accessing the neighborhoods, maybe a left turn out of 615 S. Main is not feasible. Staff note plenty for discussion but leave it to you to evaluate and balance needs. At least, please scrutinize the façade and the experience of pedestrians along the length of the property; DDA and others have committed to enhancing walkability.

Anyone attending any of the conversations on this project including the recommendations of the Design Review Board risks coming away with the obvious conclusion that use of the space to visually invite has been dismissed in favor of a busy, looming, too large mass incorporating bits of a historic façade. This proposed project looks more like the Meijer store on Jackson Road than an industrial/residential development in keeping with the character overlay. The D2 height restrictions are again plundered. We strongly encourage revisiting Design Review Board comments for this project and those across the street. In a word, simplify.

East Moseley has to “do it all.” That street is to accommodate utilities, guests, shoppers, overflow parking and existing uses. Physical proximity (within a half mile) of amenities does not negate the vehicular impact of nearly 600 residents and posse components. Add retail. Given other businesses and residences nearby, please answer the question of how does this work?

Development can be good. This plan can be made better. Concrete suggestions exist to better integrate and translate to context. Three projects worth of data poise the Commission to scrutinize and refine this one. This is all part of the process and we encourage debate in your forum toward a compromise more in keeping with the A2D2 vision.

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