

ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Staff Report

MEETING DATE:	October 21, 2015
PROJECT:	Sun Baths at 319 North Main Street Project No. DR15-015
ADDRESS:	319 and 323 North Main Street
ZONING DISTRICTS:	D2 (Downtown Interface) Base, Kerrytown Character Overlay
DESIGN TEAM:	Jan Culbertson, A3C Collaborative Architecture Peter Woolf, Moving on Main LLC

PROPOSED PROJECT: The 8,184-square foot site (one original platted lot) located west side of North Main Street between Catherine and West Kingsley is currently vacant. It previously had two residential structures and a few parking spaces accessed from the public alley at the rear. It also had two previously proposed projects – a 4-unit apartment building (DR12-003) and a 3-story movement center (DR14-007) – neither of which went any further than the design phase.

The Sun Baths at 319 North Main Street is a 2-story, 12,300-square foot community bath including common and private areas. Water and flow are expressed by the site and building design. The proposed building has a south-facing shed roof, a stone base and horizontal wood planks on the upper portion. The shape incorporates a blend of contemporary residential patterns and commercial storefront entry. Its main entry is a subtle pedestrian scaled recess at the northeast corner.

STAFF COMMENTS:

1. The proposed building itself is a unique and fresh modern design. It well achieves its goal of expressing water and flow.
2. However, the proposed building is not consistent with the character of Kerrytown as described in the Downtown Design Guidelines or the historic gable front, full-width front porch, residential context of the block and surrounding neighborhood.
3. Most recently proposed new developments in the Kerrytown area (more specifically, on North Main, West Kingsley and North First) have deviated from the two and three-story Italianate masonry multi-use buildings with zero lot lines and late-19th and early-20th century wood-framed housing found here. These new developments are rapidly evolving the Kerrytown character away from

repurposed single-family detached dwellings to industrial-inspired brick, metal and glass boxes but none yet have been as unsympathetic as the proposed building.

4. The proposed design responds very well to the Guidelines for site planning, open space and parking, driveways and service areas.
5. The mass of the building is consistent with the Kerrytown character and the context immediately surrounding the site. The proposed design is also consistent with many of the recommended building elements, such as wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors (C.1.1.c), and a truly awesome degree of integrated building operational systems and sustainability in building elements (C.6 and C.7).

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: From the Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines

Staff has identified the following Guidelines as applicable to the proposed project. These include Guidelines both with which the proposed project is, and is not, consistent. The Design Review Board may find other Guidelines are also applicable.

Chapter 1: General Design Guidelines

A. Design Guidelines for Context and Site Planning

- A.1 Urban Pattern and Form.** 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. The project team's assessment should seek to define opportunities to enrich the design excellence of the project.
- 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.1.7 On sites that abut an alley, design the alley entry connection to the street to minimize pedestrian/bike/vehicle conflicts while taking advantage of the alley as an open space from which to see and access the new/proposed site and buildings.
- A.2 Site Planning and Natural Systems.** An urban setting can be a challenging environment in which to respond to natural systems. Consider natural systems such as sun and wind patterns, climates and seasonality, rainwater harvesting, and significant individual features such as street tree patterns and landmark trees on public and private sites.

- A.2.1 Orient the building location to best accommodate climate, rainfall and area drainage patterns. The use of pervious versus impervious surfaces should be determined for each project based on beneficial environmental results.
 - A.2.2 Site designs should accommodate solar access and minimize shading of adjacent properties and neighborhoods.
 - A.2.3 Where location and site features allow, use deciduous trees, which provide shade in the summer and sun in winter months.
 - A.2.4 Orient plant groups to provide wind protection of plazas and entries in wintertime and allow cooling breezes into outdoor spaces.
 - A.2.5 Plant native and non-invasive species, especially those that require low levels of water and are tolerant of urban conditions.
 - 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.2.7 Use porous materials in drainage and detention areas to promote rainwater percolation into the parent soil.
- A.3 Open Space.** Open spaces can include public and private courtyards, plazas, patios, terraces, alleys, and gardens. Throughout downtown, site features and elements that invite use should be provided. In commercial areas, open spaces should have an urban quality and character that enliven the street and enhance the pedestrian experience. Outside the commercial core and in civic areas, open spaces may be more park-like settings for human activity. Private property open spaces should be sized relative to the intended use and level of anticipated adjacent pedestrian activity.
- A.3.4 Place an urban open space in a location that serves as a focal point on a site.
 - A.3.5 Orient an urban open space to the street or to cultural, historic or natural resources.
 - A.3.7 Enrich the space using special paving, plants, trellises and site structures.
- A.4 Parking, Driveways and Service Areas.** 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.4.3 Locate a parking structure or a surface parking lot behind or to the side of a building, minimizing the visual presence of parking on adjacent public right-of-way.

A.5 Pedestrian Connections. Pedestrian connections include sidewalks, alleys and arcades that provide pedestrian access within, through and among properties. Such connections provide access to buildings, courtyards, plazas and other site elements.

A.5.4 Provide landscaping, seating, public art, lighting, interpretive markers, and water features to enrich and enliven pedestrian walkways and use areas.

A.5.5 Link on-site open spaces, such as courtyards and plazas, directly to a public sidewalk.

A.6 Cycling and Transit. Walking, cycling, transit and other multi-modal means of transportation are to be considered in the design of streetscapes.

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.

B. Design Guidelines for Buildings

Building massing principles address the overall height, size and shape of a building. Although these guidelines refer to the visual aspects of structures, it is important to note that downtown zoning districts address key building massing considerations, including:

- *Maximum floor area ratio (FAR)*
- *Maximum building height*
- *Maximum and minimum streetwall height*
- *Average offset at the maximum streetwall height*
- *Maximum building module length*

C. Design Guidelines for Building Elements

C.1 Street Edge. Building elements and architectural details used at the street front have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience and should be combined to create an active and interesting street front. Creative use of materials, textures and architectural details is especially important where there are few windows at the street front of a building.

C.1.1 Use building elements to create a street edge that invites pedestrian activity.

c) Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors

C.2 Entries. The location, spacing and general pattern of building entries impact the quality of the pedestrian experience downtown. Building entries should be located to enhance the street level experience and help give a sense of scale. Entries should be clearly defined, accessible, and located to express rhythm and visual interest along a street front. Although traditional building entry designs may be appropriate, creative and contemporary interpretations are also encouraged.

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

C.3 Windows. Window design and placement should help establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest.

C.3.1 A high level of ground floor transparency is encouraged throughout downtown.

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.3.3 Window depths should be appropriate to the building design concept. For example, windows flush to the wall surface are often appropriate for modern designs, but traditional concepts should have punched or recessed windows.

C.5 Materials. Building materials should reinforce the massing and architectural concepts and enhance the character of the building and its context.

C. 6 Building Operational Systems. Building operational systems such as waste management, utility services, heating and cooling systems, must be carefully integrated into the design of a building and not detract from the architectural concept.

C.6.1 Integrate solar or wind systems into the design of the top of the building.

C.7 Sustainability in Building Elements. Consider sustainability when selecting structural and façade materials and designing functional building elements.

C.7.1 Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.

C.7.2 Select and apply building elements to maximize the building's

environmental performance.

- 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.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo, City Planner
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