

**Zoning Board of Appeals  
February 26, 2025, Regular Meeting**

**STAFF REPORT**

**Subject: ZBA25-0005; 617 Detroit Street**

**Summary:**

Edward Phillips, representing property owner, is seeking a three foot eight inch variance from Table 5.24-3 Other Mixed Use and Nonresidential and Special Purpose Zoning District Permanent Signs. The applicant is proposing to install a 29 square foot wall sign at 23 feet 8 inches in height. The maximum allowable height for the building is 20 feet. The property is zoned C2B Business Service District.

**Background:**

The subject property is located on the west side of Detroit Street between Beakes Street and East Kinglsey Street. The property is in the Kerrytown neighborhood. According to City Assessor's records, the building was erected in 1952. The total square footage of the combined two buildings on this property is 10,995 square feet.

**Description:**

Table 5.24-3: Other Mixed-Use and Nonresidential and Special Purpose Zoning Districts Permanent Signs require wall signs to be in the lowest 20 feet of the building when installed on a building less than 45 feet in total height. The subject building is approximately 25 feet in overall height. The applicant requests a variance to install a wall sign at a maximum height of 23 feet 8 inches instead of the required 20 feet.

**Standards for Approval- Variance**

The Zoning Board of Appeals has all the power granted by State law and by Section 5.29.12, Application of the Variance Power from the Unified Development Code (UDC).

The following criteria shall apply:

- (a). ***That the practical difficulties are exceptional and peculiar to the property of the person requesting the variance and result from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City.***

Applicant response: *"There are a variety of unique site condition factors relating to this property and the proposed variance request, most of which remain outside of client control. These conditions include the sloping topography from Detroit St. toward Beakes St., the physical building construction; including large windows and stucco trim of the facade proposed, and the surrounding road and traffic patterns."*

- (b). ***That the practical difficulties will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.***

Applicant response: *"The sign ordinance for this property/location would require*

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*the client's proposed sign to be significantly reduced in size to fit within the current approved space on the wall. The building construction for this facade would create another unique set of concerns regarding the place of the sign; mainly the legibility of the sign itself, but also the practicality of location between the windows or above on the window stucco trim."*

- (c). ***That allowing the variance will result in substantial justice being done, considering the public benefits intended to be secured by this Chapter, the individual hardships that will be suffered by a failure of the Board to grant a variance, and the rights of others whose property would be affected by the allowance of the variance.***

Applicant response: *"The proposed location for the wall sign should not create concern with regard to affecting other property rights. The client's space encompasses the entire portion of the building for which the sign is to be located."*

- (d). ***That the conditions and circumstances on which the variance request is based shall not be a self-imposed hardship or practical difficulty.***

Applicant response: *"The request for a variance is not based on a self-imposed practical difficulty."*

- (e). ***A variance approved shall be the minimum variance that will make possible a reasonable use of the land or structure.***

Applicant response: *"Our client is in agreement with this."*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Barrett".

**Jon Barrett- Zoning Coordinator  
City of Ann Arbor**