

## Ann Arbor Design Review Board Application

### Section 1: General Information

Project Name: Kingsley Parkside


Project Location and/or Address: 213 W Kingsley

Base Zoning District: D2  
Character Overlay District: Kerrytown  
Building Frontage Designation: Front Yard Street

Type of Site Plan Petition: Site Plan for City Council approval

Developer: James & Werner, LLC  
417 N Maple Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Property Owner: James & Werner, LLC  
417 N Maple Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Property Owner Signature:  , MEMBER 16-16-15

Design Team: The Meier Group Architects, Architect  
Perimeter Engineering LLC, Civil Engineer  
Jax Land Surveying LLC, Surveyor

Contact Person: William (Bill) Davis III, 734-657-3437  
bdavis@charterltd.com

### Section 2: Project Details

2a. Brief description of design concept (what the project/structure looks like):

The project is a five story building on a D2 zoned lot. The design is a contemporary soft loft but with a traditional townhouse footprint. The finishes are brick and battened-panel siding with extensive windows, back-yard terraces and a roof deck. The project combines a commercial shape and volume with residential uses and materials at a scale appropriate to its zoning.

2b. Brief description of development program (intended uses, known or possible tenants, etc.):

The project uses are residential with two units of 2,600-2,900 square feet and two enclosed parking spaces per unit. The D2 zoned lot area is 3,168 square feet with an

FAR of 200%. The units will have a condo legal description and are intended as owner-occupied residences. The project responds to demand for new housing in downtown Ann Arbor for residents seeking greater space and privacy as compared to a typical flat.

### **Section 3: Project Design**

3a. Describe the context of the site:

213 W Kingsley is located on a two-lane one-way street that is part of the Main St bypass loop. As such there is a higher speed and volume of traffic than would be experienced on a typical residential street. This condition has existed for decades but is predated by the construction of residences along the street. At present there is a mix of commercial and residential structures to the east, north and west while the area to the south is in transition with new residential development of higher density and larger scale. The topography of the site places it at the bottom of rising ground to the south and east. It is the lowest parcel on its block by elevation. The site is adjacent to a small city park at the corner of Kingsley and First which contains several sculptures and a meandering gravel path. There are no significant trees or natural features on the site.

The block shared by the site is home to residences, businesses, parking lots and a group home. The structures are a mix of older single-family homes, one and two-story commercial and repurposed residential structures serving business uses. This location is within the downtown walk-able range where market demand for new housing is strong. As a D2-zoned parcel it is planned for higher density. The small existing unoccupied single-family home on the site is in disrepair due to substantial water damage that has rendered it un-restorable. Any addition to or redevelopment of that structure is uneconomic because of its size, market conditions and its obligation to be reviewed under the exhaustive D2 zoning regulations regardless of project scope. A large redevelopment project is planned on an adjacent lot with a building of similar height and much greater volume encompassing several dozen residential units arranged as flats.

3b. Is there an inspiration or a theme for the design concept? Describe:

The theme of the design is to combine several features of the Kerrytown Character District in a unique way. In order to achieve volume, the structure will take on the shape of a commercial building mass. However its uses will be limited to residential, keeping it in character with its smaller-scaled neighbors. To reflect the residential use, generous-for-D2 setbacks are planned including a front yard matching or exceeding others on the street that will open to the park at the west helping to keep it visible to pedestrians and neighboring homes.

The commercial building shape will be detailed with residential finishes including brick and battened-panel siding to give it a sense of familiarity with respect to adjacent residential structures. Keeping in mind the commercial/industrial element of its district,

the fenestration and detail will respect that genre. A major influence on the design is pulled from a larger adjacent structure planned for First St which is a five floor residential building with a commercial loft theme.

A further design intent is the incorporation of a traditional townhome floorplan into each unit to enhance privacy and a sense of single-family living even though the building itself leans toward commercial shape and volume. This is in contrast to “flats” which often have circuitous routes to access units, parking and the street level. The floorplan also allows for a top-floor deck, covered porch and recreation room, often referred to as a “city room”, where the views, sounds and atmosphere of the city can be experienced by the homeowner and guests.

3c. Describe how the project responds to the Design Guidelines for its Character District:

The Kerrytown Character District is noted for an eclectic mix of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. This mix roughly follows a geographic pattern with a higher ratio of residential to the east and a greater intermixing of commercial as one travels west. The site is located at the northwestern-most corner of the district two blocks from Main St which is identified by its higher concentration of commercial buildings. Of the range of uses in the district, the site is clearly in a more commercial portion thereof. The site also borders the First Street Character District which is known for its industrial heritage.

“New investment should fit into the existing eclectic mix.”

Given the higher ratio of commercial buildings in this portion of the district, that theme is primary to the building’s shape and volume. Adjacent new development is also given consideration in terms of height, volume and finishes. The D2 zoning of the site is significant as well because it provides for larger scale, in this case a FAR of 200%. In order to reflect the residential character of portions of the neighborhood, the building uses are limited to residential.

“Design buildings to have a similar scale”

This block is unusual because of its D2 zoning combined with some existing single family homes. The proposed scale is identical to an adjacent new development in terms of height, FAR and setbacks. It is also reflected in commercial buildings throughout this portion of the district. A one or two story residence is not in scale with the underlying zoning district and the marketplace makes it uneconomic to proceed with a smaller building.

“Use front and side setbacks to reflect residential character”

The project makes use of generous setbacks (for D2) to incorporate this guideline. The front yard is similar to adjacent structures enhancing pedestrian friendliness and allowing a longer view of the park from locations to the east. The side and rear setbacks are identical to a larger adjacent residential project and are situated to connect with its open space flowing through to the city park, with an allowance for privacy screening.

“Whenever possible incorporate existing buildings into new development”

Because of the condition and size of the existing structure we are not able to incorporate this guideline precisely as written, however we intend to salvage portions of the structure to incorporate into the new building. For example, we intend to use stone from the foundation as part of the terrace design in the back yard. A further survey of the existing building will be completed with this re-usage in mind.

3d. Describe how the project responds to the Design Guidelines for Context and Site Planning:

The project incorporates a substantial front yard street setback to reflect the similar setbacks of residential structures along the street. This provides room for a lawn and landscaping that will progress from the public area at the sidewalk to the private area of the residences. Parking requirements dictate two spaces per unit which are planned for an enclosed garage at street level. The driveway will provide direct vehicle access to Kingsley St and given the lot frontage there is no other viable access scheme. Screening of the parking is accomplished by overhead doors planned to be metal and glass units that coordinate with other building elements.

Connectivity of open space at the side and rear yards with adjoining yards is planned. While this is private space, there will be a visual sense of connectivity from both the sidewalk and for residents of the project and adjoining residences. The project plans to incorporate a terrace at the rear yard of each unit as part of the open space. Landscaping of the yard is planned with native and non-invasive materials.

The yard materials are intended to be of a type that does not require mowing. Native grasses and shrubs providing bioswale functions is a design goal. The driveways, walkways and terrace are planned to be permeable pavements as either pavers or porous concrete or a combination thereof. The stormwater system will incorporate a dry well and rainbarrels likely integrated with the terraces for infiltration back to soils on site.

3e. Describe how the project responds to the Design Guidelines for Buildings:

The project makes use of a streetwall height that reduces massing with a five foot offset at the second and/or third floors. The two unit facades are further offset by four feet to establish variation in the streetwall horizontally thereby making a pedestrian friendly appearance when combined with the generous front yard.

Building height is planned to be approximately 49 feet whereas the zoning would permit a height of 60 feet. In terms of scale, the taller portions of the building are offset at the upper levels both at the required streetwall and further at the top floor such that the mass is placed at the rear of the structure to minimize impact on nearby smaller scale structures. This design also incorporates the idea of diagonal tower elements reducing at top floors.

Articulation is accomplished by several techniques. Visually the streetwall offset forms the primary module. That base of the structure rises with the middle formed by floors

three and four having a five foot offset from the base. The top floor incorporates a roof deck oriented towards the street which allows a further offset for that floor that forms an identifiable cap for the structure. The project will also use materials of human scale such as brick and batted-panel siding which will provide variation of color and texture.

3f. Describe how the project responds to the Design Guidelines for Building Elements:

The street edge is planned with a generous setback to reflect the residential structures existing in the neighborhood. This is the primary means to accomplish a pedestrian friendly experience although landscaping will play a role. The setback will also help to keep the view and access to an adjacent public park open. The primary pedestrian building entrance must be along the side of the building but will be well indicated by a walkway, lighting and retaining wall features. The parking is street oriented and although not the “primary entrance” it likely to be a convenient and common way for the residents to access the building. Being served by overhead doors will also convey it as having an obvious access function. Because the two units are private residences, this is not likely to be significant design problem as there is no need for public access.

The structure makes use of windows at higher levels to create a design function different than but complementary to the street level details. The overhead doors are planned to be metal and opaque glass to coordinate with the commercial shape and scale of the building. With five floors of wall area, there are several window combinations that integrate among several floors to break up larger areas and provide a pleasing pattern. Materials are planned to be brick and batted-panel siding which convey human scale to the finishes.

3g. If desired, note any other important elements, features or design concepts not covered above that will help the Design Review Board understand how the project fosters excellence in the design of the built environment of downtown Ann Arbor, the overarching goal of the Downtown Design Guidelines:

We believe the project does convey design excellence both in responding to context and guidelines while also exemplifying appropriate higher density buildings that are called for in D1/D2 districts. The project is “by right” within the height, area and use restrictions of its district by being compliant with permitted standards. The project does not require zoning exceptions which often have greater impact on adjacent properties and require higher municipal scrutiny. The project combines a commercial shape and volume with residential uses and materials at a scale appropriate to its zoning.