

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For Planning Commission Meeting of May 6, 2025**

**SUBJECT: 313-327 Braun Court Site Plan (313 Braun Court)**  
Site Plan for City Planning Commission – File No. SP24-0018

### **PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission approves the 313 Braun Court Site Plan version 4 dated April 2, 2025 and recommends approval of the Development Agreement as it complies with all applicable requirements of the Unified Development Code, and other applicable laws, ordinances, standards, and regulations and based upon the following conditions:

1. All parcels must be combined before issuance of any Building Permits.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the **site plan** be **approved** because the contemplated development complies with all applicable state, local, and federal laws, ordinances, standards and regulations. The development limits the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land.

### **LOCATION:**

The 0.37 acre (16,202 square foot) subject site is on the west side of North Fourth Avenue, north of Catherine Street and south of East Kingsley Street.

### **SUMMARY:**

The applicant seeks site plan approval to build an 89,738 square foot (SF) residential condominium building with 38 two- and three-bedroom dwelling units. The development includes 33 parking spaces beneath the building, with access from the alley that runs between Catherine and East Kingsley Streets. The site is in the D2 (Downtown Interface) Zoning District and Kerrytown Character overlay district with secondary street frontage designation. The site plan utilizes the sustainability component exception to height limits per Unified Development Code Section 5.18.4.



*Figure 1: Location Map*

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Existing Conditions – The 16,202-square foot site consists of seven lots on Braun Court, most recently used for retail, offices and restaurants in seven formerly residential houses. Some of the houses have been demolished. A few parking spaces are accessed via the public alley at the rear. It is zoned D2 (Downtown Interface) and Kerrytown Character overlay district with secondary street frontage designation.

Proposed Development – The proposed development is a 89,738 square foot (SF) residential condominium building with 38 two- and three-bedroom dwelling units, and 33 parking spaces beneath the building. Vehicular access is from the public alley at the rear. Solid waste and recycling services will be provided from the alley. Twenty-four class A bicycle parking spaces will be located at grade beneath the building in two bike storage rooms. A landmark tree would be removed from the center of the site. The proposed building height is 77 feet and uses the sustainable housing development exception to height limits.



*Figure 2: Braun Court Street Level View*

A development standards review is provided below. Other notable proposed site plan details include:

- **Sustainability** – The development features roof and wall-mounted solar panels; geothermal heat pumps for heating and cooling; units will have only energy star appliances and use LED lighting to the greatest extent possible; and electrical capacity will allow for full building electrification. On site energy storage for the building and for individual units is being investigated.
- **North Fourth Streetscape** –The streetscape along North Fourth Avenue will feature an eight-foot-wide sidewalk and a seven-foot-wide amenity zone that will continue the DDA-approved design that will be installed to the south at the 121 Catherine/Dunbar Tower project. A class C bicycle parking hoop will be located in the right-of-way in front of the building.
- The applicant has agreed to provide a \$23,750 park contribution which may be used to improve surrounding area parks such as the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, West Park, Wheeler Park, or Liberty Plaza.

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS REVIEW:

The proposed site plan complies with all applicable development review standards of the D2 (Downtown Interface) zoning district, Kerrytown Character overlay district, and secondary street designation provided in Chapter 55 Unified Development Code.

313 Braun Court Site Plan Development Standards Review Chart		
	PROPOSED	REQUIRED/PERMITTED
Lot Area	16,202 sq ft	No minimum
Floor Area	89,738 sq ft	None
Premiums	Height limit increased 30%, from 60 ft to 78 ft	Earn sustainability component when solar collector surface covers at least 60% of the building's footprint area and the electrical panels have capacity to solely power the site by electricity.
Building Coverage	80%	80% MAX
Open Space	15%	10% MIN
Streetwall Height	2 stories	2 stories MIN 3 stories MAX
Offset at Top of Streetwall	7.5 ft average	5 ft AVERAGE
Building Height	77 ft	78 ft MAX (60 ft plus 30% for sustainability component)
Massing Articulation	21 ft	40 ft MAX building module length
Rear Setback	3.9 ft	No minimum
Side Setbacks	0 ft	0 ft
Front Setback	4.6 ft	0 ft MIN – 10 ft. MAX
Parking – Automobiles	33 spaces with 5 EV-I and 28 EV-C	None (if, then 10% EV-1, 90% EV-C) With 33 spaces: 4 EV-1 and 29 EV-C
Parking – Bicycles	23 Class A	23 Class A (1/2,500 sq ft; 100% Class A)

#### DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

Design plans were seen and discussed by the Design Review Board on July 11, 2024. Application materials can be found on the STREAM system at [stream.a2gov.org](https://stream.a2gov.org) for plan number DR24-0003 and the meeting packet materials including staff report can be found on the Legistar system at [a2gov.legistar.org](https://a2gov.legistar.org). The architectural drawings submitted as part of the site plan are consistent with the design plan discussed by the Design Review Board. The Design Review Board encouraged the addition of public art, particularly something with an aspect of historic storytelling, which was conceptually discussed by the applicant.

#### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

As required by the Citizen Participation Ordinance, the petitioner mailed out a postcard notification and held a virtual public meeting on July 11, 2024. Six people representing the project team and 26 interested people attended. A number of questions were asked about parking, preserving the courtyard, whether there would be affordable housing or a mix of unit prices, the building height, comments on the design being out of character with the

neighborhood, massing, and more. The applicant's report can be found on the STREAM system at [stream.a2gov.org](https://stream.a2gov.org) for plan number SP24-0018.

## **HISTORY:**

The seven buildings at 313-327 Braun Court were built from 1914 to 1918 as single-family homes. They may have been named after carpenter Samuel Braun, who lived in 321 (the eighth house on the court that was previously demolished). The houses were nearly identical gable-fronters with gabled wall dormers and covered front porches. All were stucco-clad, originally with matching stuccoed front porches and triple windows on the second floor.

The street was closed to vehicles by 1974. The houses were slated for demolition in the early 1980s, when a Save Braun Court campaign was undertaken by citizens. The buildings were remodeled shortly after with second floor connections and ramps between some buildings to accommodate restaurants, bars, shops, and office space. The paver courtyard was installed in 1984.

From the mid-1990s to 2020, Braun Court was the center of the LGBTQ community in Ann Arbor, home to the Jim Toy Community Center, Aut Bar, and Common Language Bookstore. In 2015 the local plaintiffs in the Supreme Court decision that states are required to recognize marriages between same-sex couples was celebrated in Braun Court and attracted national media.

## **SERVICE UNIT COMMENTS:**

The site plan and application materials were reviewed by the staff from the Planning, Downtown Development Authority, Fire Marshal, Forestry/Natural Resources, Parks Planning, Engineering, Systems Planning, Recycling/Solid Waste, Land Development, and Transportation units.

*Additional comments from review staff:*

Planning -- A development agreement has been drafted to include the voluntary park contribution.

Prepared by Jill Thacher on April 29, 2025  
Reviewed by Hank Kelley, Deputy Planning Manager  
05/01/2025

Attachments: Site Plan Set dated 04/02/2025  
Aerial Photo  
Aerial Photo Zoomed  
Zoning Map  
Design Review Board Letter  
[Link to all project file documents](#)

c: Applicant and Engineer – Midwestern Consulting LLC (Candice Briere)  
Applicant and Owner – WRE Braun, LLC (Jeffrey Starman)  
Architect – Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (Brian Adolph)  
Systems Planning  
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