



Design Review Board Application for 303 Detroit Street

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

With the proposed new construction envisioned, development on this site will have evolved for over 168 years. The historic building (Agricultural hall built in 1856) housed an agricultural implement warehouse which later was used to manufacture farm equipment. Prior to 1958 the brick window openings were widened and new aluminum windows were installed about the time it became the "White Swan Laundry." In 1988 a new office building was added to the north side of the historic building and the existing building was extensively modified for office use.

The historic structure is a three story brick bearing wall building separated by an enclosed pedestrian accessway from the newer 1988 four story concrete frame building. This building is clad in a complimentary brick veneer and green curtain wall glazing system.

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

The design concept is to convert the office space to residential with some ground floor commercial uses. One additional floor will be added to each of the original buildings. The plan calls for keeping the sunken Garden, "silo inspired" egress stair and the defining slot separating the two buildings. Balconies will be added and an innovative vertically rotating automobile elevator will provide parking within the building and in a small addition on the north side

3a. Describe the context of the site.

The site is in the D2 zoning district and in the Kerrytown Character District. This is one of Ann Arbor's few unique commercial areas formed by Detroit Street cutting diagonally across a grid of streets oriented in the four cardinal directions.

This street pattern has led to the creation of at least ten distinctive building forms from The Peoples Food Coop at 214 North Fourth Avenue past the original Zingerman's Delicatessen and ending at 544 Detroit Street a newly constructed flatiron building. Under construction is 330 Detroit Street a five story flatiron shaped building.

While Agricultural Hall and the 303 Detroit Street Market Place addition did not establish a continuous front wall facing the diagonal street the new addition provided an opportunity within the void formed by the two building's wings to create a sunken garden with serpentine railings and walls reinforcing the street edge.

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

“Market Place” at 303 Detroit Street is a late 1980’s addition to the Davis Block / Agricultural Hall an 1856 historic brick building. Design inspiration comes from architect Frederick Herrmann’s use of a heavy concrete base supporting brick walls with “punched” rectangular windows. To reduce the apparent mass of the building and to reflect the lower cornice lines of the historic building, a lighter glass and aluminum curtain wall corner and top story became a part of the design. This will remain and the top two floors will be clad in a lighter colored metal siding.

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

The Kerrytown Character District is a very diverse collection of commercial and residential buildings at different scales ranging from fairly large buildings fronting Detroit and Fifth Avenue to small fewer than 1000 square foot houses in the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

The proposed building site is located in the larger commercially scaled area of Kerrytown and responds to the height, setbacks and more urban feel of this district. This addition does not change the general massing and character of the site as the small car elevator addition on the north side and single story additions on the roof do not appreciably affect the larger building.

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

Sited directly opposite 303 Detroit Street is a five-story building now under construction. 303 Detroit Street is similar in massing and will be the same height. The building wall along 330 Detroit Street emphasizes the diagonal strength of this street by reinforcing the effect of a walled enclosure at more locations along the street’s length as will 303 Detroit Street with its additional story added to the roof.

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

At the south end of the historic building a ten foot deep open balcony is used to reduce the structural mass at the top of the building and to comply with street-wall setback requirements. Because the existing building group can be viewed easily from a distance up Fourth Avenue, the required setback is proposed for Catherine Street as this is the more visible frontage than the other two streets adjacent to the project.

The existing historic building with its 1988 addition is divided into two discrete modules of two different heights. The proposed topmost floors will be clad in lighter metal siding and separated by a stepped back top floor and terraces.

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

The new residential entry on Fourth Avenue is clearly defined by its recess and a large canopy with a balcony above sheltering the pedestrian entrance. On the Detroit Street side the sunken garden with its serpentine guard will remain and provide an arresting visual marker for the end of the Farmers Market.

Adding to the pedestrian experience is the proposed commercial/retail use on the ground floor revealed by floor to ceiling windows. A large landscaped area at the end of the Farmers Market will provide additional visual interest.