



City of Ann Arbor

Formal Minutes

Design Review Board

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

3:00 PM Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St, Basement, conference room

A **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Tamara Burns called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

B **ROLL CALL**

Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo

Present 7 - Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Tamara Burns, Paul Fontaine, William Kinley, Geoffrey M. Perkins, and Shannan Gibb-Randall

C **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

D **INTRODUCTIONS**

E **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

15-0317 December 17, 2014 Design Review Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board. On a voice vote, the motion was carried.

F **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

G **NEW BUSINESS**

15-0318 600 South Main Street; The Madison on Main - Design Review - The proposed design for a new 7-story residential building with retail use at the ground floor, including a parking garage to be located at 600 South Main Street. The exterior design features a street level stone clad "base", a brick clad main "body" and metal rain-screen clad "top." The

design is rooted in traditional architectural values, pedestrian scale in order to compliment the charming Midwest neighborhood to the west. The development has a Floor Area Ratio [FAR] of approximately 400% and a maximum height of 76 feet (planned project modifications will be requested). (Ward 5)

Note, Shannan Gibb-Randall recused herself from all discussion of the project.

Project Number DR15-001, (Legistar #15-0318)

The Design Review Board met on March 18, 2015 to review the proposed design for a new development at 600 South Main Street, presently named "The Madison on Main." The following report contains a summary of priority issues the Board would like the developer to consider in finalizing the design proposal and subsequent site plan submittal.

Description of Project

Daniel Ketelaar, 225 South Ashley Street, Ann Arbor, President of Urban Group Development Company, and Victor Saroki and Mark Ehgotz, Saroki Architecture, represented the design team.

The design team described the proposed project to construct 7-story residential building with retail use at the street level, including a parking garage on a 9,441-square foot site in the downtown interface and the First Street character area. The exterior design features a street level stone clad "base," a brick clad main "body" and metal rain-screen clad "top." The design is rooted in traditional architectural values, pedestrian scale in order to compliment the charming Midwest neighborhood to the west. The proposed development has a floor area ratio (FAR) of approximately 400% and a maximum height of 76 feet [60 feet is the maximum height limit, planned project modifications will be requested as part of the site plan to allow the increased height].

A revised design was offered by the team, the result of continued refinements made to the project since the application was submitted on February 18, 2015. The proposed massing generally remains as originally designed but the exterior materials have been revised. The Design Review Board's commentary focused on the revised plans, the updated design is attached to the project file.

Summary of Priority Issues

The Design Review Board concluded that the project met the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines. Specific suggestions were offered to

enhance the design and respond to requests for advice from the design team. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board noted the discussion focused on the north and east facades of the building and encouraged the design team to apply the concepts and principles discussed for those to the west façade. Public comments were positive regarding the redevelopment plan but critical of the design of the west façade and the proposed height.

Examples of especially applicable guidelines are noted below in parenthesis; the full text of each referenced guideline is provided at the end of the summary. Please note that the First Street character area guidelines also apply.

Site Planning (and Urban Pattern and Form)

The revised design well identifies and reinforces the positive characteristics of its neighbor at 618 South Main Street (A.1.1) and mostly provides sidewalk level features and facilities to provide enrichment of the pedestrian experience (A.1.2). One particularly good example of this was the recessed vehicle garage door entry on Main. However, the Board noted that the proposed design does not address its neighbors to the west on Madison and the standing seam metal proposed for the full height of the south portion of the Main façade was inappropriate at the street level.

The Board complimented the design's corner canopy (A.1.3) and the well defined entries (C.2.1) but felt two garage doors and driveways was not ideal (A.4).

Regarding the courtyard on the south side of the building, the Board felt this area was too small and narrow to be used for public open space or an amenity (A.3, A.3.2, A.3.3, A.3.4).

Buildings

The proposed design was praised for its excellent massing (B.1, B.1.2) to illustrate a sense of scale. Further attention should be given to minimizing the proposed development's impact to the adjacent lower-scale buildings immediately west on Madison.

With the revised design, the building's clear definition between the base and upper floors has been strengthened (B.1.3) and its top is well differentiated (B.1.4). Some Board members commented about the building's height relative to the low scale residential structures immediately adjacent to the west.

Building Elements

The Board agreed that the revised design was simpler and less sophisticated “in a good way” that better blends into the existing context of First Street warehouses and utilitarian buildings than the original submittal. It has building elements that create an inviting street edge and welcome pedestrians (C.1). As mentioned above, the building’s primary entries are clearly defined and oriented toward the street (C.2.1). Board members praised the proposed window placement, style and details (C.3). The windows align with the pattern of the adjacent building at 618 South Main (C.3.2).

Referenced Sections of the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Design Guidelines:

A.1. 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.

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.1.3 Corner sites are an opportunity to express an architectural gateway or focal point and a dominant architectural feature.

A.3.2 Locate an urban open space where there is a high level of existing or potential pedestrian activity.

A.3.3 Locate urban open space that serves the general public at sidewalk level. Semi-private or private open space and activity areas may be appropriate if placed above or below the public sidewalk level.

A.3.4 Place an urban open space in a location that serves as a focal point on a site.

B.1.1 Design a building to minimize its impact on adjacent lower-scale areas.

B.1.2 When a new building will be larger than surrounding structures, visually divide it into smaller building modules that provide a sense of scale.

B.1.3 Provide a clear definition between the base (the lower floor or floors) and upper floors to maintain a sense of scale at the street level.

B.1.4 If appropriate to the context, establish a design treatment that includes a differentiated building top.

C.1 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.2. 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.3.2 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.5 Building materials should reinforce the massing and architectural concepts and enhance the character of the building and its context.

First Street Character District

The First Street Character area lies to the west of the Main Street and Kerrytown districts, and forms the eastern edge of the Old West Side Historic District. The topography forming the Allen Creek Valley with its flood plain, the buried/piped Allen Creek, the Ann Arbor Rail Road track with its historic, turn-of-the-century industrial architecture, and the proposed future Allen Creek Greenway, are distinct aspects of this district needing recognition during any First Street District proposed project design. The mixture of historic and non-historic residential and industrial architecture, and the valley land form, gives this area a distinct difference from other downtown character districts.

The area is a mixed use linear district (north to south) that follows the

railroad tracks' older industrial railroad buildings, some of which have been converted into occupied industrial, construction, and other office uses, occasional art and dance studio activities, bars and nightclubs. The district also includes residential frame two and three story structures. The relatively quiet mixed-use neighborhood streets are highlighted by elevated train tracks with trestle bridges above east-west crossing streets from Washington Street north to Miller, and with wooden warehouse-like structures along the tracks, some of which are currently empty. The presence of the Allen Creek Flood Plain and the railroad track and its trestles are unique attributes worthy of design consideration.

The district's urban landscape largely consists of tree lined streets with relatively consistent lot spacing, and an occasionally vacant parcel. At times, a triangular shaped parcel caused by the orientation/alignment of the tracks is in contrast with the local streets. The future Allen Creek Greenway should be given design consideration as a potential element of all First Street Character District proposals.

Reviewed and Filed

H PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS

I COMMUNICATIONS

15-0319 Communications to the Design Review Board

Unfinished Business – Staff reminded the Board of a proposed amendment to Chapter 57 (Subdivision and Land Use Control), Section 5:136 (Design Review Board for certain downtown properties, Paragraph (4) Required Notice, first discussed with the Board almost exactly one year ago. Currently, notice of a Design Review Board meeting must be mailed to all property owners and residents within the same radius as required by the citizen participation procedures, 500 or 1000 feet depending on the scale of a project. Staff has found that both radii generate about a 1% response rate, meaning about 1% of the notice recipients respond in any way to the notification, including attending the meeting, emailing or providing a letter, or calling staff. Given the insignificant difference in responses between the 500 and 1000-foot mailing radii but the significant resource difference in preparing and postage, staff propose an amendment to Section 5:136(4) to require notice be sent to anyone within 500 feet.

Staff asked confirmation of the Board's support because of the delay in action on the proposed amendment.

The Board unanimously approved of the proposed amendment.

J PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)

Rita Mitchell – Ms. Mitchell stated she was a neighbor of the site and said she was disappointed that so much of the discussion focused on the east side, she did not hear how the development or design relates to the neighborhood to the west. She felt more respect should be given to the Old West Side neighborhood, and felt that matching the [increased] height of 618 South Main Street may not be right for the proposed building.

K ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:20 p.m.