

# ANN ARBOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

## Staff Report

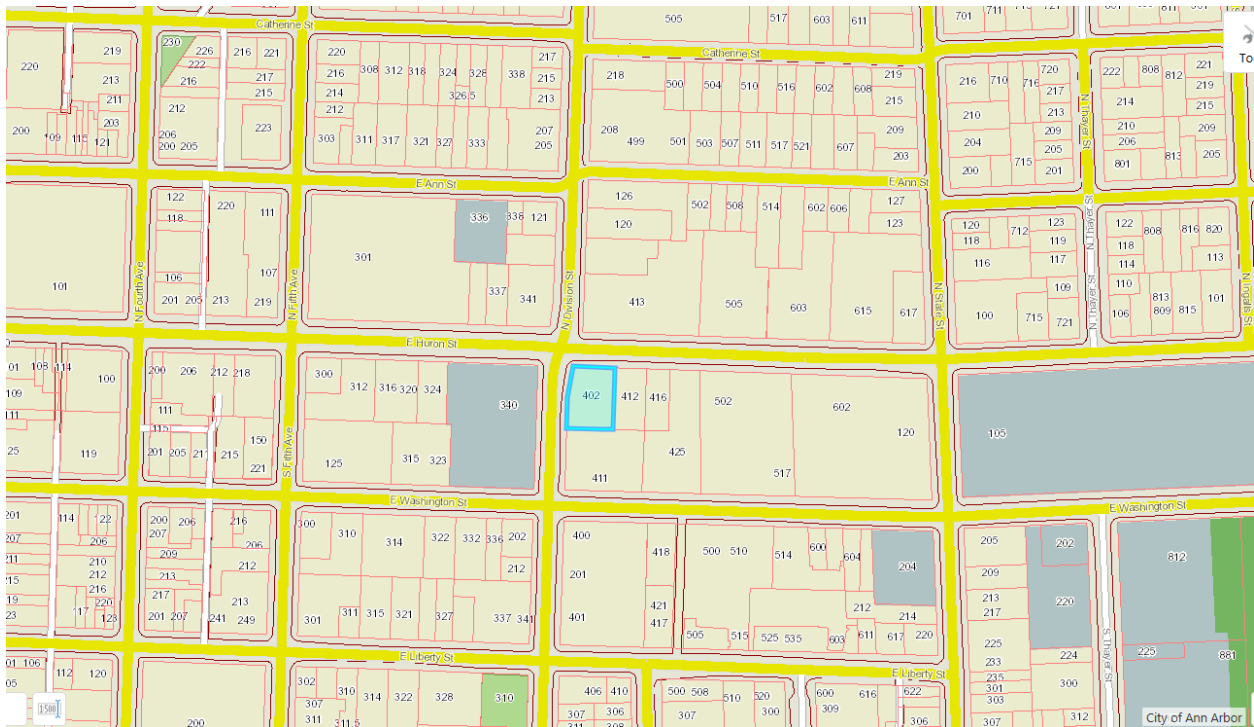
**MEETING DATE:** September 11, 2019

**PROJECT:** Ann Arbor Campus Hotel  
Project No. DR19-010

**ADDRESS:** 402 East Huron Street

**ZONING:** D1 Downtown Interface (base)  
East Huron 2 Character (overlay)  
Secondary (street designation) – East Huron Street  
Secondary (street designation) – South Division Street

**DESIGN TEAM:** Mortenson Development, Inc.  
ESG Architects



**Figure 1- Location**

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** A plan to redevelop 402 East Huron Street into a 9-story hotel. The 12,821-square foot site currently contains an automobile tire and service

station. The [design plan](#) proposes to demolish the existing building and construct a 78,012-square foot, 9-story hotel in its place. The hotel fronts on South Division Street and is set back from East Huron Street to provide a pedestrian plaza on the north side of the site. A driveway, entered from Division and exiting onto Huron, wraps around the rear of the site to provide vehicle access, including valet parking, and services access.

Brick, in two colors, is the predominant exterior material. A strong metal-paneled corner distinguishes the main entry to the hotel. The base of the building is a transparent storefront including a canopy over the corner entrance and extending along both fronts. The development uses two premium options for additional floor area ratio, the green building LEED gold option (150% FAR increase) and the pedestrian plaza option (additional 8,000 square feet).



Figure 2 - Perspective Sketch (looking southeast)

The [design plan application](#) illustrates the proposed redevelopment.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

1. **Zoning Compliance (Area, Height, Placement).** The following provides a cursory review of the proposed development for compliance with the D2, East Huron 2 Character, secondary frontage designation area, height and placement regulations.

	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Lot Area</b>		12,821 sq ft
<b>Floor Area</b>	51,284 sq ft standard maximum, 78,515.5 sq ft maximum with premiums	78,012 sq ft <i>(Green Building and Pedestrian Amenity premiums used)</i>
<b>FAR (Floor Area Ratio)</b>	400% standard MAX, up to 700% MAX with premiums	608% FAR
<b>Front Setback-North</b>	0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX	8 ft approximately
<b>Front Setback-West</b>	0 ft MIN, 10 ft MAX	0 ft
<b>Side Setback - South</b>	0 ft	0 ft
<b>Side Setback - East</b>	0 ft	0 ft
<b>Streetwall Height</b>	Min 2 stories, Max 4 stories	No apparent streetwall
<b>Offset at Top of Streetwall</b>	Average 5 ft MIN	No apparent streetwall or offset
<b>Total Height</b>	180 ft MAX	101 ft approximately
<b>Massing Articulation</b>	Not applicable	
<b>Tower Diagonal</b>	Not applicable	
<b>Building Coverage</b>	Not applicable	
<b>Open Space</b>	Not applicable	

The proposed development does not appear to comply with the requirement for a streetwall and an offset at the top of the streetwall. Planned project modifications could be requested to modify these dimensional requirements if the project provides certain benefits.

2. **Site Context and Site Planning.** The design guidelines for context and site planning addresses the arrangement of buildings and features on the site, including how the site relates to its neighbors, and suggests preferred ways to express and articulate some of the minimum and maximum area, height, and placement standards. Staff finds the design team assessed the character of the adjacent streetscapes and buildings in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines and incorporated the positive characteristics into the proposed project. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:

- a. Guideline A.1.1 – Positive characteristics of adjacent (and nearby) sites are reinforced.
  - b. Guideline A.1.3 – A dominant architectural features is provided at the corner.
  - c. Guidelines A.3 – The open space has an urban quality and character that enliven the street and enhance the pedestrian experience. It is located where there is a high level of pedestrian activity, is at the sidewalk level, is oriented to the street, provides dining opportunities and framing elements, and enriched with special paving and structures.
  - d. Guideline A.4.1 – The driveway, access points, and service areas minimize impact on pedestrians and maintain pedestrian safety, comfort, and circulation.
3. **Building.** The design guidelines for buildings focus on breaking down massing of larger buildings from their lower-scale neighbors. Staff find that the building mass has not been stepped away from the adjacent lower-scale buildings to the east, but does include most of the suggested strategies to visually divide the mass, provide clear definitions and a sense of scale. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:
- a. Guideline B.1.1 – Step taller building elements away from lower-scale buildings, locate taller elements at the intersection of streets
  - b. Guideline B.1.2 – Vary the height of building modules, cornice lines and roof finish elements
  - c. Guideline B.1.3 – Use a distinct horizontal molding to define the base, provide district change in ratio of solid to void to distinguish base from upper floors
4. **Building Elements.** Building elements include specific features that give character and detail to a building and influence the degree to which a new building contributes to the urban fabric. This section of the design guidelines call for features and architectural details at the street edge to have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience and creating an attractive and interesting street front. Staff find the design achieves the goals of the design guidelines for building elements. The following guidelines are particularly relevant:
- a. Guideline C.1.1 – First floor canopy that complement the design character of the building and its street front, wall surfaces with interesting detailing, textures and colors
  - b. Guideline C.2 – Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it toward the

street

- c. Guideline C.3.1 – High level of ground floor transparency

## 5. **General Comments**

- a. The design team should explore whether brick can be used instead of the metal panels on the east wing. Because the adjacent site is in an historic district, it is unlikely its form will ever change and therefore the east wing will be permanently visible from the east.
- b. The design team should present an option without the “playful use of light and dark colored spandrels below the vertically organized windows” to compare or illustrate how effective (or not) they are.
- c. The proposed design provides the third corner anchor at this prominent downtown intersection and will fit well into the emerging context of midrise urban buildings. Although staff generally prefer only one curb cut at any single site, the proposed vehicle and service access layout provides the most effective solution to accommodate those functions with the least impacts to all modes of transportation.
- d. It is likely that planned project modifications will be necessary to approve the future site plan as currently proposed because of the lack of streetwall and offset at the top of the streetwall. Staff feel it may be appropriate to support a planned project modification application to reduce those dimensional standards to none given the site’s relatively small footprint and how the proposed design reflects the elevation of the adjacent building to the south. Staff encourages the Design Review Board to specifically discuss this issue during its discussion on September 11, 2019.