



City of Ann Arbor

Formal Minutes - Draft

Design Review Board

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

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

3:00 PM

Electronic Meeting

This meeting will be broadcast on CTN Cable Channel 16, ATT Channel 99, and at a2gov.org/watchCTN

Public comment can be made by calling: 877 853 5247 or 888 788 0099 Enter Meeting ID: Webinar ID: 974 6174 9412

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Please note it is possible that telephone or electronic public comment may encounter technical difficulties that prevent your participation. For the greatest assurance that your comments will be heard, submit them in writing ahead of the meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Geoff Perkins called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

Jeff Kahan, City Planner called the roll.

Others present:

Jeff Kahan, City Planner

Courtney Manor, City Staff

Present 7 - Richard (Dick) Mitchell, William Kinley, Geoffrey M. Perkins, Gary Cooper, Lori Singleton, John Kotarski, and Wendy Rampson

Absent 1 - Tamara Burns

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Lori Singleton seconded by Dick Mitchell, to approve agenda. Agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D-1. [22-1941](#) Enactment No: Approved

October 12, 2022 Design Review Board Meeting Minutes

Attachments: October 12, 2022 DRB Minutes.pdf

Moved by Singleton seconded by Bill Kinley, to approve the October 12, 2022 Design Review Board meeting minutes.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 minutes per speaker)

No speakers.

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

F-1. [22-1942](#) DR22-2008; 350 S Fifth Avenue

Attachments: DR22-2008 Staff Report 350 S Fifth 2.pdf

Representing the proposed project:

Michael Johnson, SmithGroup

Lindsay Fercho, SmithGroup

Dan Kinkead, SmithGroup

Sandy Laux, Smith Group

The Design Review Board discussed the design plan for the proposed 350 South Fifth Avenue development project on December 14, 2022. Please consider the following comments and recommendations of the Design Review Board when preparing a site plan application:

1. Comments on overall design

- Concern about bus exhaust impacting air quality inside the proposed building.*
- The building appears to be a single building instead of two separate buildings.*
- Describe the façade materials.*

2. Specific comments

- Rethink the stair towers. They could be designed with glazing to create an interesting architectural feature.*
- Many pedestrians cross at midblock locations between the Blake Transit Center and the Library. Consider rethinking the main access point for the east tower so that it is closer to the southeast corner of the site to encourage pedestrians to cross at the signalized intersection of S. Fifth Avenue and E. William Street.*
- Consider design treatments that would discourage pedestrians from*

entering the protected bike-way on the north side of E. William Street to avoid conflicts with bicycles.

- Some retailers block first floor windows with equipment which is unsightly. Consider adding vertical panels on portions of the first floor so retailers have more flexibility with interior design of the first floor.*
- Consider including “trauma informed design” by creating opportunities for artwork.*
- Consider increasing the amount of solar panels on the site, even above pergolas.*
- Consider “live roofs” with photovoltaics.*
- Consider including “civic motivating art” in the design of the building.*
- Consider rainscreens as well as light shelves and shading devices on the south side.*
- A sidewalk abutting the Blake Transit Center would support pedestrian access.*
- The east tower appears to be a work in progress and could be flushed out more.*
- The written narrative describing features of the building lacked coordination with the drawings: a) several Board members pointed out that the extensive south-facing glass may lead to energy and comfort issues. Heat gain in the summer will increase AC loads and heat loss in the winter will increase heating needs. The narrative spoke to the light shading devices but very few were shown on the drawings; b) light shelves that may decrease electrical needs by reflecting natural light deep into buildings were discussed in the narrative but not shown on the building sections; c) rain screens were discussed in the narrative by not described on the building elevations.*
- Guideline C2.1 speaks to clearly defined entrances. Several Board members suggested that the main entrance to the east tower be moved from it’s current position adjacent to the service alley and closer to the southeast corner of the east tower.*
- Guideline C1.1 speaks to visually interesting details, color, and texture. It was pointed out that the east tower lacks that sort of vitality.*
- It was pointed out that several AAATA bus stops exist on Fourth Avenue, south of the Blake Transit Center and the Air Ride stop is currently on Fifth Avenue, also south of Blake. One of the project objectives cited by City Council was a net increase in bus spaces. The petitioner offered a revised site plan of the new AAATA east/west lane that reduced the number of bus stalls from 4 to 3 when compared to the submitted site plan. The petitioner assured the board that this does not represent a net loss of bus stops and the AAATA is supportive of the changes.*

3. Questions

- What type of windows are proposed?*
- What type of rain screen is proposed?*
- Are floor to ceiling windows being proposed?*
- Describe how the loading area on the north side of building will*

function.

- Describe how the Blake Transit Center will interface with the project.
- Will the developer be obligated to use the design that will be approved by the City?

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G-1. [22-1943](#) Enactment No: **Approved**
2023 Design Review Board Calendar for Review

Attachments: 2023 DRB Meeting Calendar - For Review.pdf

Moved by Wendy Rampson seconded by Gary Cooper to approve the Design Review Board 2023 meeting calendar. 2023 calendar was unanimously approved as presented.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

H-1. [22-1944](#) Various Communication to the Design Review Board

Public Comment Regarding 350 South Fifth Avenue:

Hey Jeff,

I was on the call for the DRB right before the holidays, the session previewing the Housing Commission's 350 S. 5th project; I did call in to the public comment number, but couldn't press the buttons fast enough to be recognized by the chair. I checked in with Wendy and she recommended I pass my comments directly on to you.

Disclosures: I am a DDA board member and a consultant on a Housing Commission project. None of my comments below represent a conflict of interest, I just wanted to be up front about roles I hold that relate to this project.

I'm really excited about the project. The extent of affordable and mixed-income housing that we'll have centrally located in the downtown is just awesome to look forward to.

I'm also delighted to see how integrated the two "towers" are. I feel like formally the project is signaling integrating all our neighbors together.

20% affordable units in the mixed-income tower seems really challenging to deliver. I'm wondering whether the Housing Commission has a sense of whether the pre-work they're doing on the project now is likely to make it more attractive to prospective developer partners. I also

am curious whether the mixed-income tower would be managed by the housing commission or whether that would be the responsibility of an outside company/partner.

Acknowledging the extensive work that's gone into collaboration, soliciting stakeholder feedback, design, a good relationship to Blake, and a great street wall on William, I don't love that half of the site's east and west sides are curb cuts. I'm guessing it's needed for the buses; it just feels like we're de-prioritizing the street experiences there, even if it's made up for on the south side. I'm wondering whether there's anything that can be done in terms of street furniture, art, invitations into whatever the first-floor retail/commercial space is, etc, to make specifically those areas more people-friendly.

Thanks to you, the Board, the Housing Commission, and everyone who was a part of that conversation. As always, I learned a lot, and it was great to be a fly on the wall as this continues to move forward.

Cheers,

Jess

Received and Filed

I. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 minutes per speaker)

No speakers

J. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Cooper seconded by Kinley.

Chair Perkins adjourned the meeting at 4:17 PM.

Geoff Perkins, Chairperson

/courtney manor

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