City of Ann Arbor

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING DIVISION

301 East Huron Street | P.O. Box 8647 | Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647

p. 734.794.6265 | f. 734.994.8312 | planning@a2gov.org

Ann Arbor Design Review Board

Procedures and Application

Please follow the procedures described below and complete the application included on these sheets for presentation to the Ann Arbor Design Review Board. These procedures, requirements and application may be revised – check with the Planning Division for updates.

Procedures – Many downtown projects are required to first present the project to the Ann Arbor Design Review Board. These projects include:

- Projects in the D1 or D2 zoning district, or located within the Downtown Development Authority boundary zoned or proposed to be rezoned PUD, and
- Not in a historic district, and
- Proposes an increase in floor area, and
- Is a site plan for City Council approval, a PUD site plan, a site plan for Planning Commission approval, a planned project site plan, or administrative amendment to an approved site plan that includes significant building façade changes.

1. **Optional Pre-Application Meeting.** Potential petitioners have the option to meet with planning staff for a courtesy pre-application meeting to review the Downtown Design Guidelines and application procedures and requirements. Contact the Planning Division to schedule a pre-application meeting if desired.

2. **Submittal and Filing Deadline.** Submit all completed forms and required materials, plans and supporting documents, along with the required fees, to the Planning Division at least three weeks prior to the desired Design Review Board meeting. See *Board Meeting and Project Presentation*, below, for meeting schedule information.

3. **Notices.** Required notices will be prepared and distributed by City staff. Direct mailings will be sent to all property owners and residents within 500 feet of the project. Email notifications will be sent to all subscribers. A note will be posted on the City website.

4. **Packet Distribution.** Staff will prepare an informational packet for the Design Review Board with the materials, plans and supporting documents provided. A meeting agenda and packets for each project on the agenda will be electronically distributed to Board members. Paper packets for Board members will be available for pickup at the Planning Division. Packets not picked up prior to the meeting will be distributed at the meeting. Petitioners will be electronically sent an agenda and a copy of their project's packet only.

5. **Board Meeting and Project Presentation.** The Design Review Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month (subject to change). Applicants may give an informal

presentation up to 10-minutes. The Design Review Board will then have a dialogue with the project design team to discuss consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines.

6. **Report.** Following the Design Review Board meeting, a report of the Board's discussion will be prepared. A copy of the report will be electronically sent to the petitioner and posted on the City website. If a site plan petition is submitted for review and approval, a copy of the report will be included in the site plan petition staff report packet to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Application Materials

Applicants are responsible for preparing and providing all materials for application and presentation to the Design Review Board. The following items must be provided in the required format in order for a project to be accepted for discussion by the DRB.

Required Information:

- Completed Application Form
- Site plan of proposed project including lot lines, proposed building footprint, walkways, driveways and curb cuts, landscape areas and other site improvements.
- Floor plan(s) of proposed building
- Elevations of every side of the proposed building, including identification of proposed materials and colors
- Ground level and upper level sections
- Photographs or massing drawings of surrounding site context
- Any other supporting materials you wish to provide which show or help explain how the design concept responds to the Downtown Design Guidelines

Required Format:

- All drawings must be at least at the preliminary design stage.
- All drawings must be scaleable and provided on 11" x 17" paper.
- Submit 9 sets of all required materials.
- Submit 1 PDF file containing all required materials, up to 15 megabytes. This single PDF file can be emailed to a city planner or planning support specialist, or provided on a memory stick or disc. If the file size will exceed 15 mb, divide the file into two or more smaller files attached to the same email or saved on the same device. Materials sent "piecemeal" or in separate transmittals will not be accepted. Materials which require special software to view will not be accepted.
- Bring at least one set of full size drawings to the Design Review Board meeting.

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Ann Arbor Design Review Board Application

Section 1: General Information	
Project Name:	618 South Main
Project Location and/or Address:	618 South Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 Property is bordered by Main St. to the east; Mosley St. to the south; and S. Ashley St. to the west.
Base Zoning District, Character Overlay District, and Building Frontage Designation:	Zoning District: D-2 Character Overlay: First Street Frontage Designation: Secondary Street
Type of Site Plan Petition (check):	☐ Site Plan for City Council approval ☐ Site Plan for Planning Commission approval ☐ PUD Site Plan ☒ Planned Project Site Plan ☐ Administrative Amendment with façade change
Developer:	Urban Group Development Company
Property Owner:	David & Becky Fox and Fox Tent & Awning Company
Property Owner's Signature:	See separate document.
Developer's interest in property if not owner:	Agreement to purchase.

Design Team (include all individuals, firms and groups involved):	Daniel Ketelaar – President, Urban Group Development Company Mike Siegel – Architect, VOA Architects/Chicago Shannon Gibb-Randall – Landscape Architect, InSite Design Bob Wanty – Principal, Washtenaw Engineering Jessica Helgerson / Em Shephard – Helgerson Design Todd Zimmerman – Market Analysis Consultant, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.
Contact Person (name, phone number and email of **one** person):	Daniel Ketelaar, President Urban Group Development Company 734.747.7230 dk@urbangroupdev.com

Section 2: Project Details	
Project Specifics:	Site size (sq. ft.): 43,124 sf Total floor area (sq. ft.): 140,000 sf Number of stories: 6 stories plus penthouse Building Height (ft.): 85 ft from average ground to top of elevator penthouse and solar hot water panels Ground floor uses: Residential apartments and public spaces Upper floor uses: Residential Number dwelling units: 200 Number off-street parking spaces: 138 Open space (sq. ft.): Approximately 17,000 sf

On a separate sheet(s), please address each of the following in separate statements:

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

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

2a. Brief Description of the Design Concept

The design concept is, basically, a warehouse redevelopment for an urban living community. Imagine that the whole wedge-shaped property is a single brick warehouse three stories tall. The design of this simple brick structure includes brick detailing expressive of varying structural modules, ornamental precast lintels, and structural steel infill that creates large factory-like window fenestrations for daylight along the street wall. A landscaped setback and recessed residential balconies soften the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk.

A large outdoor public space, approximately a third of the site area, is cut out from the northwest corner of the warehouse block to provide green space for the residents of this community. This exposes the inner structure of the warehouse allowing these facades to be much more columnar while maintaining a more wall-like articulation along the Main Street side. Cantilevered steel balconies break this façade down to a residential scale and animate the wall facing the courtyard with residential life.

The overall warehouse appearance is enhanced by extending the inner masonry columns, set back from the street wall, up an additional three stories to the sixth floor of the building. Structural steel and glass infill these columns to create a lighter top to the building, reminiscent of factory skylights.

The lower three-story brick warehouse block is further articulated with glass slices through the block along the street wall. These are done at corridor ends and along an east-west access that connects the entry on the west side through the site. A glass pavilion extends into the garden to the west and creates the building's entrance. This pavilion is a community gathering space with multiple avenues connecting it to outdoor activity spaces. These spaces support various types of interactions: quiet conversations, group cookouts and gatherings, active exercise, or poolside socializing.

The garden space in the courtyard will be extensively used for storm water retention, and landscaped with a variety of species and scales of plantings. The intent is to create spaces and buffer zones and define the borders of the larger outdoor space. This will assist in defining the human scale experience along the Ashley Street sidewalk as well as within the courtyard. There will be a balance of geometric spaces and organic flowing spaces.

2b. Brief Description of the Development Program

The development program is an urban apartment community with a targeted demographic of 25- to 35-year-old professionals living alone, with a friend, or a partner. The unit mix consists of studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, some duplex units, and penthouse units. The larger units may also attract empty nesters wanting to live close to town. Programmatically, the project intends to provide a hotel-like experience with amenities and services rather than typical apartment living. The design provides significant indoor and outdoor spaces to stimulate community activity. The location of *618 south main* will promote a young professional lifestyle in that it is just a short bike ride or walk to town for work, shopping, dining, or cultural activities.

Section 3: Project Design

On a separate sheet(s), please address each of the following in separate statements:

3a. Describe the context of the site.

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

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

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

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

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

3g. If desired, note any other important elements, features or design concepts not covered above that will help the Design Review Board understand how the project fosters excellence in the design of the built environment of downtown Ann Arbor, the overarching goal of the Downtown Design Guidelines.

3a. The Context of the Site

The site is located between a two distinct urban and architectural contexts created by South Main Street and the railroad corridor to the east and the residential community known as the "Old West Side" to the west. The industrial buildings and warehouse structures to the east have large simple lot line volumes in massing and large openings for daylight on the upper levels and for access at the ground level. The most elegant structures are constructed of masonry and typically have a distinct rhythmic expression of their structural bays. They are tall floor to floor and have straight street walls on the lot line with a consistent cornice height. Some have a traditional base, middle, and top expression. The simple masonry and structural detailing add warmth and human scale to the large volume of the structures.

The residential neighborhood to the west is populated with two-and-a-half story homes made of brick, stucco, and wood. Most of these have pitched roofs and sit within a yard. Scattered within this neighborhood are a number of larger institutional buildings such as the old Chrysler plant now converted into the well-received Liberty Loft condominiums. The Argus buildings, formerly a manufacturing location for Argus cameras, have been repurposed as rental offices. The Bach public school just south of the Argus buildings reflects the brick warehouse / large window openings characteristic of the factory aesthetic. These structures are three- to six-story brick buildings that occupy much larger parcels than the homes. The Argus buildings range from three to six stories tall and sit directly on the property line--consuming much of their sites. Liberty Lofts located their parking lot in an area that had the potential to be their only open space. These buildings have interesting old masonry detailing and a residential scale of fenestration along with landscaped parkways that soften their scale to the sidewalk. The school rises three very tall stories yet sits recessed on its site to provide an open landscaped buffer to the sidewalk and the surrounding homes. These larger structures sit comfortably within the surrounding context.

Main Street's context bears some explanation. As Main Street runs north into town from the intersection of Stadium Boulevard, it has a stated elevation of 890 feet. It then slopes down significantly to a low point very near the *618 south main* site dropping to 825 feet at Mosley Street -- a drop of 65 feet. Then the street rises significantly as it continues north towards into town rising 16 feet to an elevation of 841 feet at William Street.

At the south end of Main Street sits the very tall U of M Stadium. Moving north, there are some 2- to 3-story commercial structures and apartment buildings mixed in with houses. At the low point, east of the proposed apartment building, are warehouse structures. A few blocks north, three-, five- and even seven-story structures line the street as it rises to within only two to three blocks of the top of the hill. Experientially, these taller structures along the wall of Main Street work to transition to the height and density of the downtown area.

3b. Design Theme and Inspiration

Design is often inspired by the tension between pure design and the realities of zoning and the site context. In this instance, the design theme has been strongly inspired by the context of the site. To the east is the busy Main Street of Ann Arbor surrounded with commercial and contextual warehouse structures; simple masonry buildings with strong structural expression, and large fenestrations for daylight and connection to the outside. To the west is the Old West Side neighborhood and the low profile housing where a strong sense of community dominates. How to balance the D-2 zoning between these quite different contexts? This tension led the design team to create a somewhat hybrid design to respect both of these realities and visual influences.

Additional themes and inspirations: 1. The attractive spaces of the loft-style apartments; the warmth of natural materials, abundant light and ventilation; connections to the outdoors and flexible living provided by simple open spaces. 2. The sense of community and social interaction afforded the residents by "hotel-like" public indoor gathering spaces such as lounges, a business center, and a fitness center. 3. The even greater sense of community and social interaction--the result of connecting interior public spaces to outdoor public spaces designed to promote interaction and communal activity.

Living environments that have inspired aspects of this design can be seen at the Hotel Modera in Portland where an L-shaped hotel and covered entry walkway create a series of landscaped outdoor seating areas with fire pits. These comfortably scaled outdoor spaces are occupied continuously. In the Ace Hotel, which markets itself to the 20-something demographic, the over-sized casual lobby and seating area function as a popular gathering space for hotel guests and friends. Its large windows connect the space to the street and outdoor seating. The Railroad Car townhomes in Portland have recessed porches that are raised a few feet off the sidewalk and are further separated from it by a landscaped buffer. These design elements create a residential scale and feel along a busy city street. Local buildings that have inspired the design of the proposed *618 south main* include the present Liberty Lofts, the Argus buildings, and the Bach community grade school.

3 c. The Project's Response to the Design Guidelines for the Character District

The project proposes an infill development that preserves and perpetuates the historic building elements of the area, supports downtown activities, is close enough to downtown to encourage non-vehicular transportation, and provides significant open green space on site.

The infill development preserves the street edge along Main Street with a warehouse-inspired structure that draws upon the industrial heritage of the area's buildings. The site density has been consolidated along the Main Street edge so that a third of the site area running along Ashley Street is outdoor green space for socializing. The programming for this outdoor area is still in the planning stage, however one objective is to develop a community garden. The site is a 5-10 minute walk from most of downtown Ann Arbor, which will allow the residents to easily frequent the downtown's cultural, art, entertainment, and commercial activities using non-motorized transportation.

The building will demonstrate significant environmental leadership as it is designed to be LEED certified and use a number of "beyond LEED" initiatives. These will include items such as zip cars, bike sharing, commuter bike maintenance and storage rooms, tool and appliance lending libraries, as well as a furniture lending library. Storm water retention will be a significant and visible feature within the courtyard green space and it is the project's intent to have roof-mounted solar panels to create hot water for the site.

3d. The Project's Response to the Design Guidelines for Context and Site Planning

The project has been developed through a series of studies exploring the distribution of massing on the site and discussions with planning staff, local business leaders, and local community groups. The proposed massing distribution supports the street edge along South Main Street, Mosley Street, and the corner of Mosley and South Ashley Street. These are seen as the urban edges and corners of the site. The building creates a three-story street wall along these edges. Its articulation is drawn from the warehouse industrial aesthetic that these street walls face. The South Ashley Street wall is activated for a shorter distance, reflective of the smaller commercial structures and houses along the street. Along the northern two thirds of Ashley Street, the design presents an open landscaped courtyard with a smaller residential-scaled entry and public pavilion. The main block of the building is set back well into the property similar to the neighborhood grade school. The landscaped courtyard creates a park-like experience along the sidewalk and a significant buffer to the main block beyond. This massing provides a transition from the residential neighborhood to the industrial and commercial area along South Main Street.

3e. The Project's Response to the Design Guidelines for Buildings

The plan proposes to build approximately 140,000 square feet of the allowable 172,560 square feet of FAR.

The street wall of the building is broken down into structural bays reflecting different sized housing units stacked behind the façade. These bays are typically 18 feet or 27 feet. The 27-foot bay is broken into two 13 feet 6 inch bays. Each bay expresses a structural masonry pier of 3 feet to 4 feet and a large glazed opening. The corner bays are slightly larger and turn the corners. Just in from the corners are two to three 18-foot bays; the middle includes a gang of six 13-feet 6-inch bays. This creates a street wall that has significant ends and a variety of bays along the way. The rhythm of modules breaks up the simple massing of the "warehouse" block. The corridors break through the masonry block as full-height glass slots letting light into the building and allowing for exterior views. The effect is to break the block down into smaller building blocks. The third through sixth floors along the street wall are set back 5 feet. The Penthouse floor is again set back another ten feet making it almost unnoticeable from the street.

3f. The Project's Response to the Design Guidelines or Building Elements

The typical bay street wall is broken down vertically into a traditional base, middle, and top.

The residential block sits on a base of partially sunken parking. A projecting masonry cornice at the second floor level defines the "base" of the street wall. The typical bay connects the grade level to the first residential level with a large masonry bay opening that makes the base of the building taller than the typical floor. The site slopes down from south to north increasing the height of the bay as the building rises out of the ground from 2 ½ feet on the south to 9 feet on the north. The street wall along Main Street is recessed 5 feet with a landscape buffer, and the first floor of units are recessed 5 feet. In this way, the arcade presents a soft porous wall activated by residential life for pedestrians. Above this, the second and third level windows are connected in one large masonry fenestration. A structural steel spandrel divides the two floors and steel columns break the window opening down into smaller residential-scale units. A second projected masonry cornice defines the street wall at the top of the third story of units.

As the building steps back from the street wall, the façade changes to masonry piers tied together by structural steel at levels four and five. This lightens the feel of the building as it ascends. The sixth floor is a continuous strip of windows uninterrupted by masonry piers that creates a top to the building massing.