

STAFF REPORT: 12/10/2025 MEETING
APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00696

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

ADDRESS: 1455 CENTRE (292 GRATIOT) & PUBLIC ALLEY BETWEEN GRATIOT, BROADWAY, E. GRAND RIVER & RANDOLPH/CENTRE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: BROADWAY AVENUE LOCAL & MADISON-HARMONIE

APPLICANT: DAVID ZANLEY, HAMILTON ANDERSON

PROPERTY OWNER: CITY OF DETROIT, PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY & RANDOLPH CENTRE 2020 LLC

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 11/17/2025

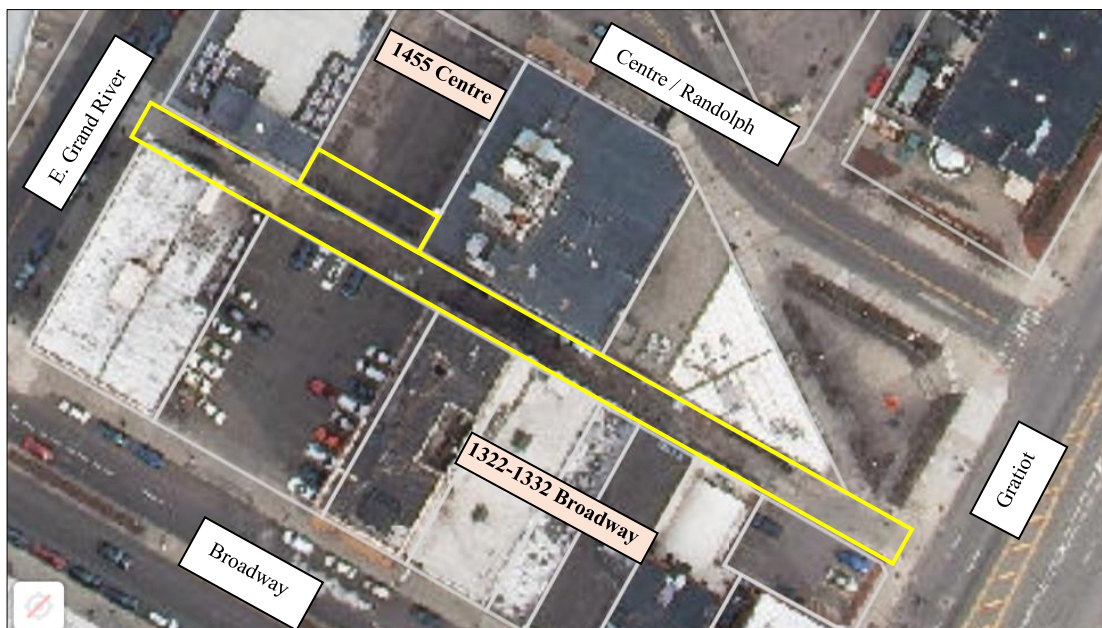
DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 11/25/2025

SCOPE: ALTER, REHABILITATE ALLEY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The properties and areas subject to this application are 1455 Centre and the 16-foot-wide alley bound by Gratiot, Broadway, E. Grand River, and Randolph/Centre. The alley is public right-of-way (i.e., it is not closed nor vacated) and appears to be used for service of the buildings facing it, such as delivery and trash pickup. 1455 Centre is currently used as surface parking.

The ground surface of the alley and parking lot is concrete and a wrought-iron style fence closes off the parking lot at 1455 Centre from the alley. A portion of the alley is currently fenced off as it is an active construction site due to the new buildings being erected on Broadway (1322 – 1332 Broadway), previously approved by the Commission.



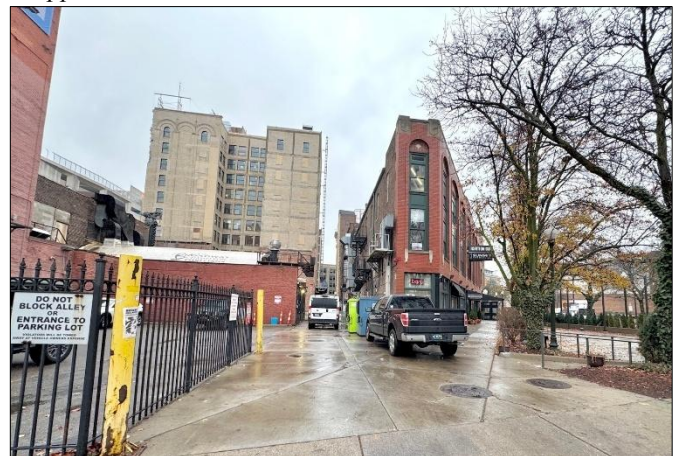
Detroit Parcel Viewer. The areas outlined in yellow are subject to this application.



Left: Alley entrance at E. Grand River.

Right: Alley entrance at Gratiot.

Staff photos, November 25, 2025.

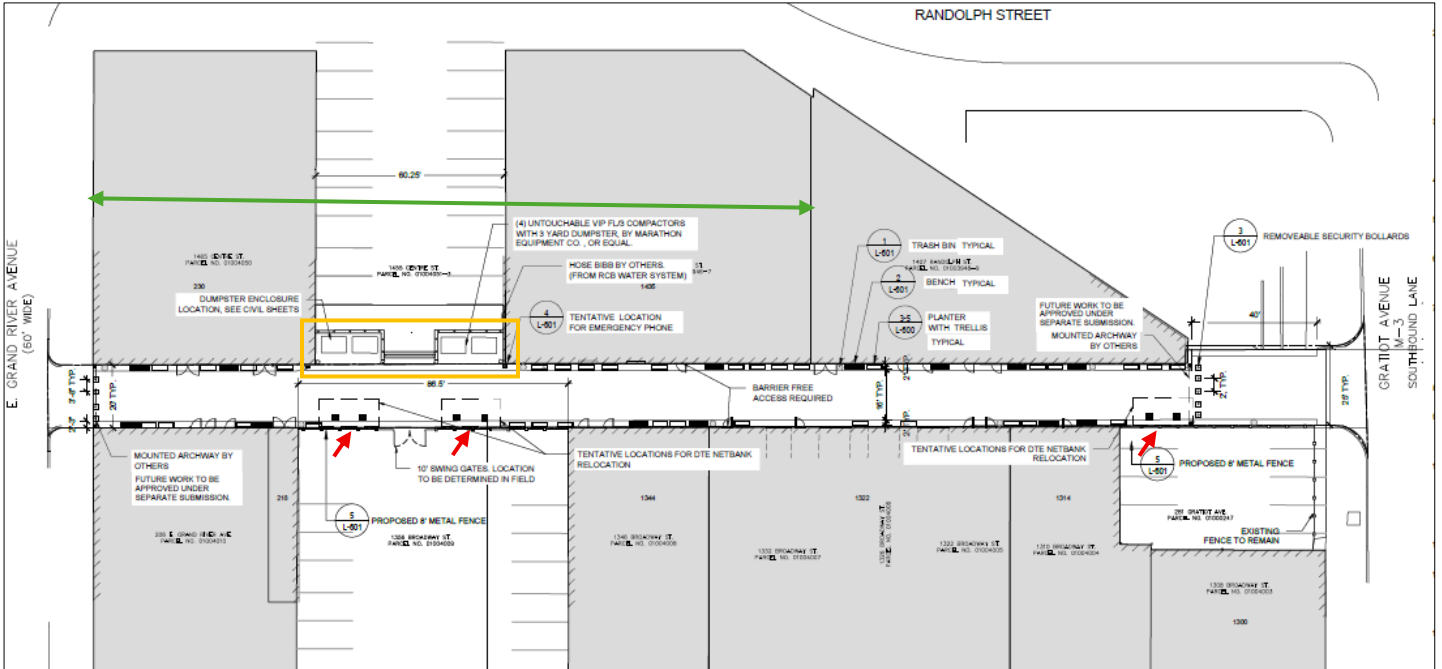


PROPOSAL

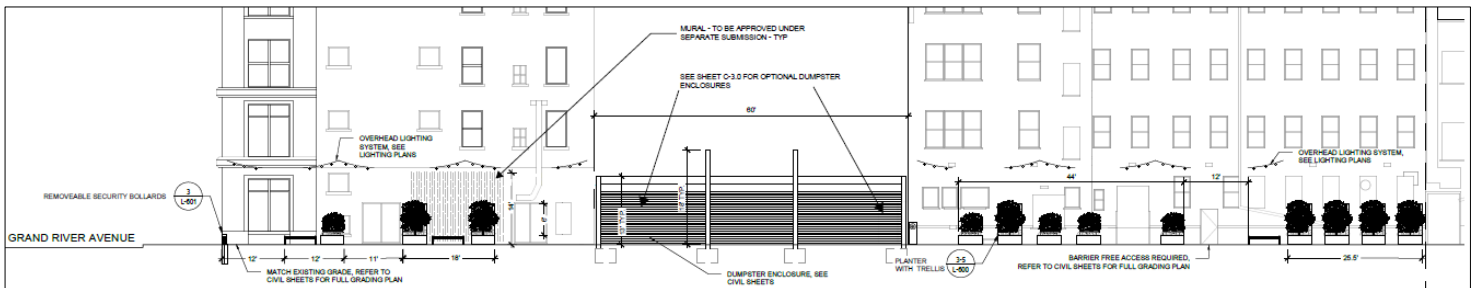
The proposal is to alter and rehabilitate the alley and includes the following components:

- Erection of trash enclosure and fencing. Material: aluminum, color: black
- Stamped concrete paving to cover alley ground surface from Gratiot to E. Grand River
- Security bollards (removable) at alley entrances (at E. Grand River and Gratiot), as well as on the outer side of the trash enclosure at 1455 Centre
- Landscaping/site design - moveable benches, planter boxes with trellises, fencing and gates, lighting
- Repainting of existing fire escapes; color: black.

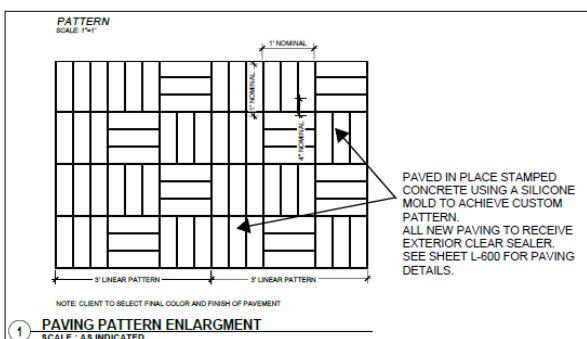
Applicant site plan and drawings



Site plan. Red arrows identify possible future locations of DTE netbanks (i.e., a group of transformers which provide power sources to homes and businesses, which are often placed on platforms supported by a large steel column), which are not part of this application. Orange box denotes location of proposed trash enclosure that will be enclosed by bollards set in a raised curb (at parking lot) and gated louvered panels (facing the alley). Green arrows identify location of the partial elevation drawing shown below.

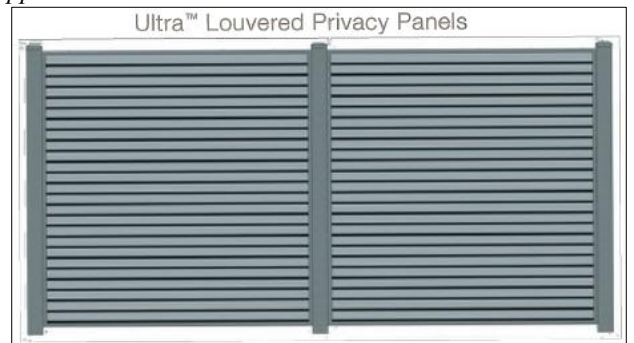


Partial north elevation of alley, rear of buildings at Centre/Randolph. Offers illustration of general placement of proposed seating, planters/trellises and string lighting. Future murals are also not a part of this application.



Left: proposed paving pattern.

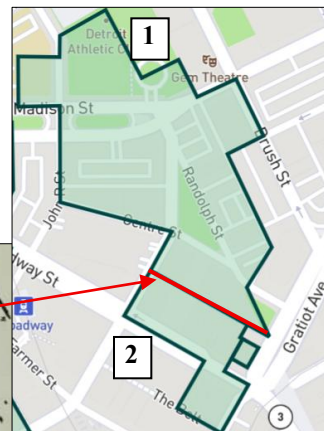
Right: Cut sheet of louvered aluminum panels to be installed at the alley-facing side of the trash enclosure.



STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- This application encompasses two historic districts:
 - The Madison-Harmonie Historic District, enacted on May 17, 1988, and
 - The Broadway Avenue Local Historic District, enacted on August 28, 2005.

History



Above: Historic District Commission map.

1. Madison-Harmonie HD.
2. Broadway Avenue Local HD.

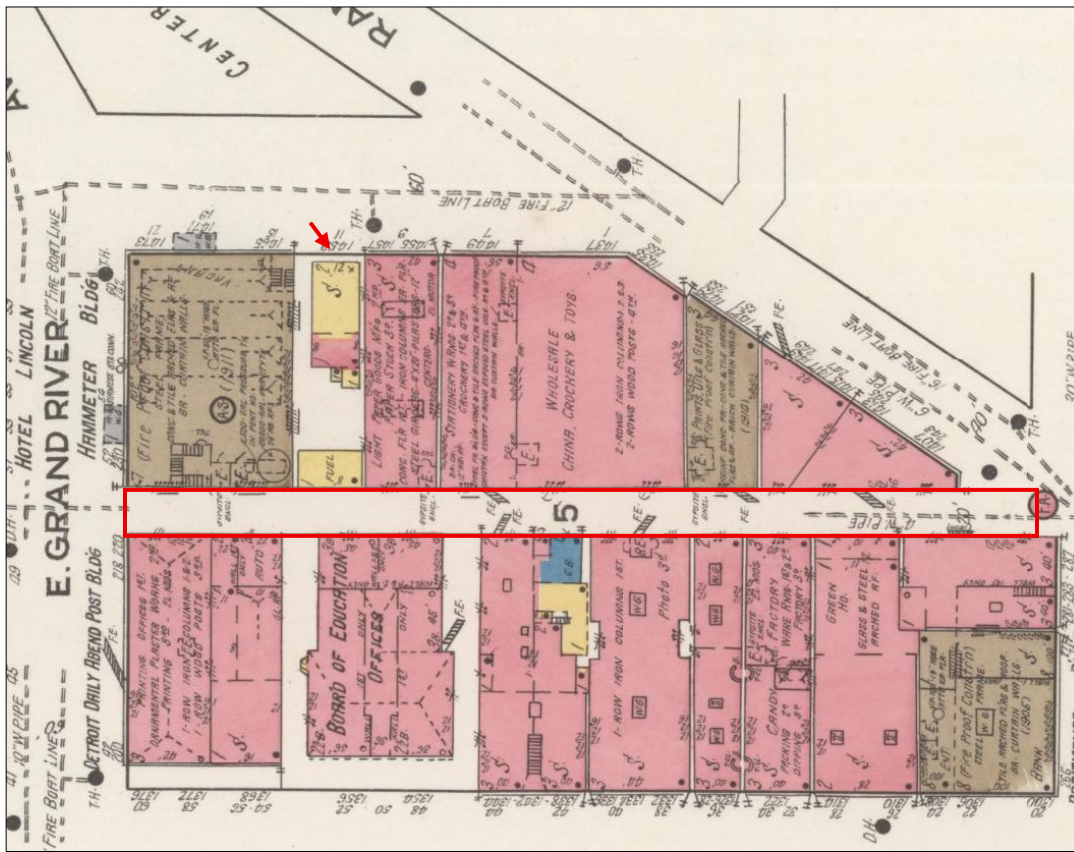


Vol. 2 Sanborn Map, 1884. The above map shows the dominance of residential development (wood frame and masonry structures) that surround the alley.

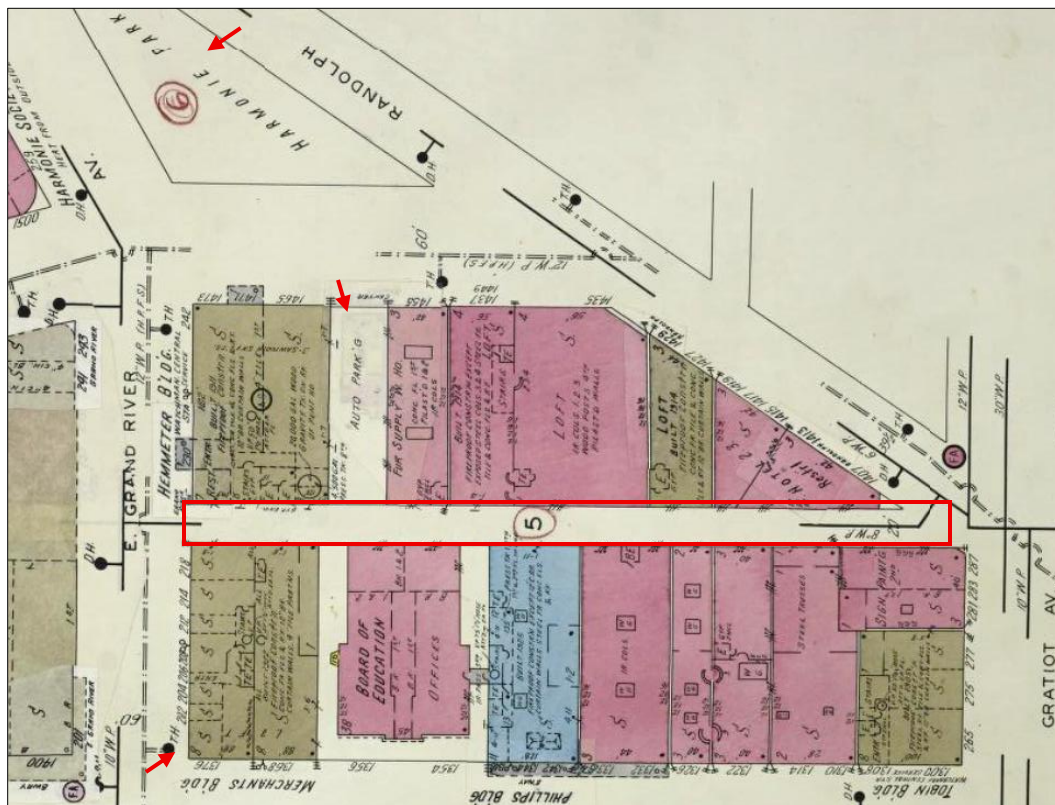


Vol. 2, Sanborn map, 1897. The commercialization of downtown has expanded from Woodward. Multi-storied commercial buildings are present near the corner of Broadway and Wilcox (now E. Grand River), and the remaining buildings on this block are now stores (with one exception at 36 Miami), some of which are housed in former dwellings.

The structures that face Centre and Randolph remain residential in use.



Vol. 3, Sanborn map, 1921. By this time the commercialization/density of development includes the buildings facing Randolph/Centre, except for one remaining residential building/turned store at 1459 Centre.



Vol. 3 Sanborn map, 1950. A few changes on this map include: The Merchant's Building at the corner of Broadway and E. Grand River (erected in 1922), the demolition of the single-family house/storefront on Centre (empty lot) and the triangular park's name change from Center to Harmonie.

Current conditions of alley/1455 Centre. November 2025 - staff photos



Merchant's Building, NE corner of Broadway and E. Grand River.



R to L: 1356 Broadway, existing parking lot to remain. 1346 Broadway (Light colored brick building beyond parking lot



L to R: Photo taken from Broadway. 1332 (empty lot), 1326 (3-story masonry façade) and 1322 Broadway (3-story – terra cotta façade). The demo-façade retention-new construction was reviewed by the Commission (20-6647) at the 2/20/2020 HDC meeting.



1310 Broadway – rear wall. New construction at 1322-1332 Broadway is at right.



281 Gratiot is directly behind 1300 Broadway and is used as surface parking. It is adjacent to 1310 Broadway.



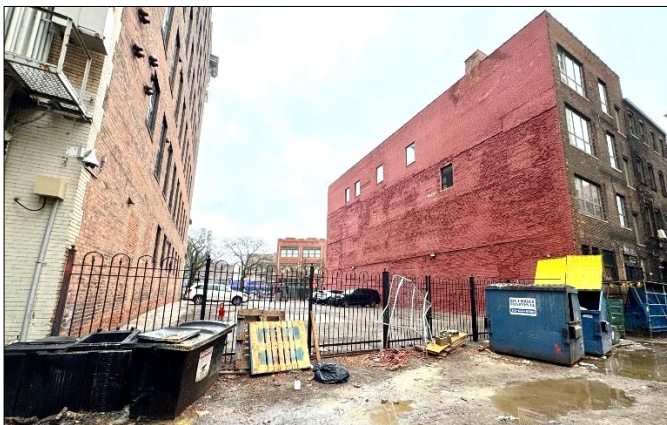
Gratiot entrance to alley. 281 Gratiot at left (masonry wall of 1310 Broadway is visible). 1407 Randolph is at right.



1407 Randolph looking towards center of alley.



1435 Randolph looking towards Gratiot.



L to R: 1455 Centre (parking lot) and 1435 Randolph. This fence will be removed for the erection of the trash enclosure.



View of alley looking towards Gratiot. Building at left is 1465 Centre (on corner of Centre and E. Grand River). Building at right is the Merchant's Building at 206 E. Grand River (and Broadway).

- During staff's recent site visit a large number of trash/recycle bins and smaller trash containers were present.
- The current application proposes to erect one trash enclosure that will hold four large bins.
- Some of the existing bins might be in place for construction debris. However, staff notes the influx of residents expected upon completion of the residential construction on Broadway may necessitate additional trash/recycle bins. Additional trash enclosures require review by the Commission and are subject to public hearing when they are built with structural walls.
- Staff also notes the bollards to be installed at each end of the alley are identified as removable so city service trucks can enter/leave the alley.



One



Two

Small trash containers



Three

Four

Miscellaneous containers



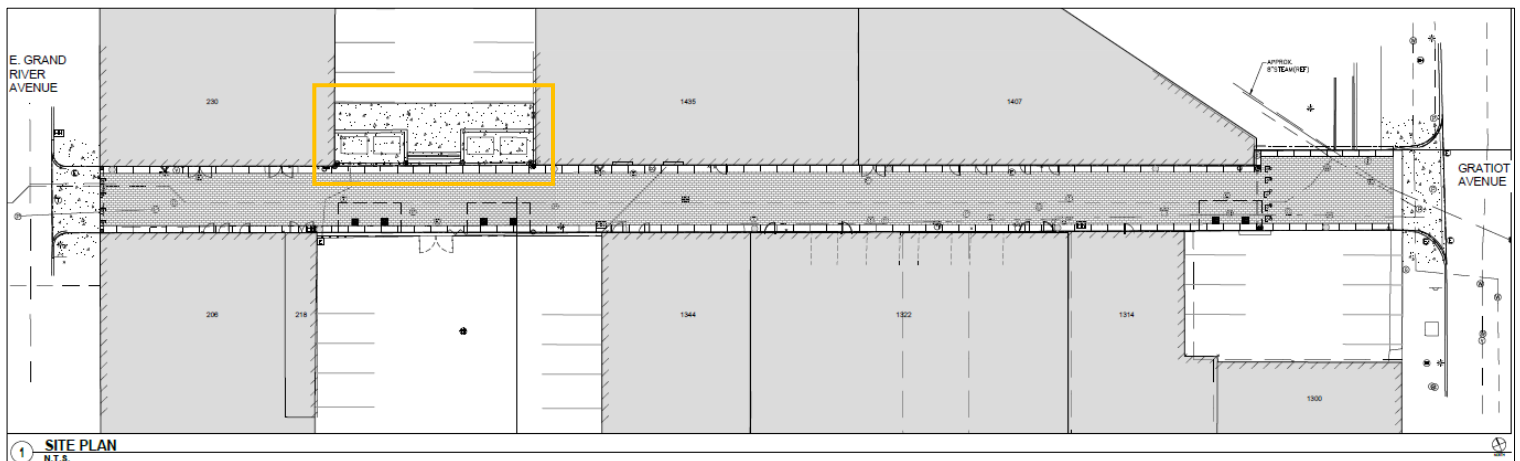
Small containers

Five



Six

Seven

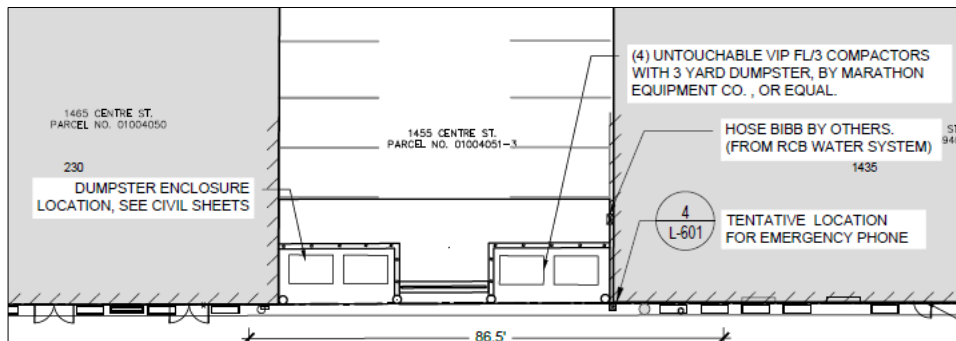


Applicant site plan.

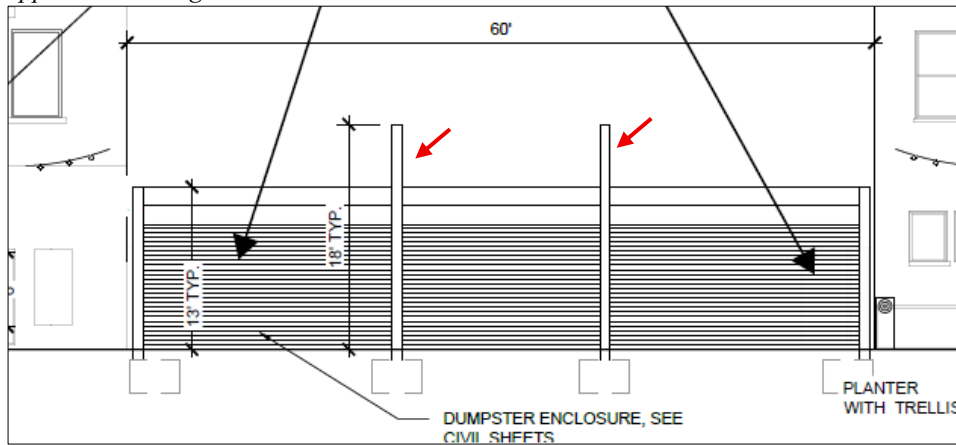
- It is staff's opinion that the character-defining features within the alley are limited to the historic window openings on the rear walls.
- The components comprising this application are compatible in design; and if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the alley and its environment will be unimpaired.
- The applicant noted future work is planned for the alley and may include the relocation of DTE netbanks, murals, signage and other decorative items. The applicant will need to submit additional applications for all future/proposed work.

ISSUES

- It is not clear why the height of the trash enclosure poles must be so high. Their material/finish should also be noted.



Applicant drawings.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1 of 1: Certificate of Appropriateness

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Broadway Avenue Local and Madison-Harmonie Historic District's Elements of Design with the condition that:

- The material/finish color of the trash enclosure poles will be listed, and the height of the interior poles be reduced to match the height of the outer poles. The applicant's drawings will be revised and submitted to staff for review.