

June 20, 2022

City of Detroit
Historic District Commission
2 Woodward Avenue
Suite 808
Detroit, Michigan 48226

RE: Proposed Multi-Family Projects within Corktown Local Historic District

Dear Historic District Commission:

Kraemer Design Group, LLC (KDG) is writing to submit information to the Detroit Historic District Commission, on behalf of Oxford Perennial Corktown Propco II, LLC (Owner), regarding the proposed development at 1750 Trumbull. This project is being pursued simultaneously with the new construction building proposed at 1567 Church St. The proposed projects are located within the Corktown Local Historic District. These two projects together are a part of the Perennial Phase 2 work by Hunter Pasteur and Oxford Perennial Corktown Propco II, LLC (Owner).

The project has already undergone initial review by the Planning and Development Department and community leaders of the local Corktown Historic District. We are submitting this conceptual package and requesting that we be placed on the HDC July agenda.

General Building Description and Materials

1750 Trumbull will be a new wood framed, (4)-story multi-family residential development with 72 units, ground floor amenities and apartment units on all floors. The primary entrance of the building will be located at the corner of Trumbull and Leverette with a projecting canopy above. A warm grey brick shall be used on three stories of the façade along Trumbull and wrap arounds a portion of the north and south façades with a single story of brick running the entire perimeter of the building. Cool grey panelized siding shall be used on the remaining façade above the brick. The panelized siding at the floor lines and parapet will be of a slightly darker grey color to create horizontal banding, giving visual distinction to the individual floors. Aluminum trim pieces, painted to match the adjacent paneling, will conceal the panel edges and create a small reveal between the individual panels. The windows and storefront will have a black finish with black surface mounted balconies. Surface parking will be located along the alley and 8th street with screening consisting of brick walls and wood fencing. Black, metal, cantilevered carports shall cover half of the parking spaces. The exterior of the proposed design remains complimentary to the Corktown Local Historic District and is considerate of the district’s Elements of Design as described below.

Height

As noted in the elements of design, the buildings within the district range in height from one (1) to five (5) stories tall with the average height of typical multi-unit buildings being (4) stories. At four (4) stories tall, the proposed building height fits accordingly with the District. The top of the parapet is proposed to be around 49’-6” above grade which is well within the allowed zoning height as well with our frontage along Trumbull giving us an allowable height of 55’-0”.

Proportion of Buildings’ Front Facades

The Elements of Design for the Corktown District indicates newer commercial buildings in the Corktown district “may be wider than taller” which fits the descriptions of our front façade along Trumbull, at 92’ wide and 49’-6” tall. The front façade consists of brick on the lower 3 floors with a panelized siding at the 4th floor which is recessed to allow for a balcony. The brick portion is divided into 10’ wide recesses bays of glazing and brick divided by brick pilasters.



Proportion of Openings within the Facades

The buildings within the district are composed of five (5) to seventy-five (75) percent openings on façades, as noted in the design elements, and the shapes and styles of the window openings are “usually taller than wide, but there are also 10’-0” by 9’-0” openings of grouped windows and doors, as well as transom window openings, which are wider than tall”.

The proposed building, as noted previously, is divided into 10’ wide bays by pilasters. Spanning between the pilasters are either fully glazed balcony sections or two windows with a brick divider. Similar to other buildings in the district, approximately 30% to 35%, of the façades are composed of openings.

Several window types compose the façade:

- Large, glazed sections, roughly 9’x10’ are present at all surface mounted balconies. These consist of a glazed swing door with a transom and a horizontally divided glazed section directly adjacent to the door.
- The second type of window is a standard punched opening. These are typically a 2’ and 4’-8” wide commercial grade, vinyl window, grouped together with either a brick or panel divider between them. Both windows are 6’ tall with a dark gray spandrel panel below to give the appearance of full height glazing.

Rhythm of Solids to Voids in the Front Façade

The proposed building has a regular rhythm of solids to voids with glazed bays placed directly above the other. The rhythm is present throughout the district as noted in the design elements.

Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings on Streets

The proposed building is placed on the side property line along Leverette and front property line along Trumbull. The elements of design state that “Houses on narrow lots were usually placed on or closer to a side property line” so we feel this falls in line with our current design.

Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections

The proposed main entrance to the building is located at the corner of Trumbull and Leverette and signified by a canopy that wraps the corner. Up-lit, pinned lettering building signs are attached to the top of the canopy above the entrance doors. The building entrances will be lit with recessed downlighting on the underside of the canopy. The Design Elements speak little on the entrances for commercial or multi-family buildings, however, in reviewing the surrounding context, the corner entrance is a typical condition on existing commercial buildings in the district.

Relationship of Materials

The design elements describe “the great majority of buildings in the district are wood frame structures” which the proposed building is, with multi-unit dwellings typically being brick.

Materials of the proposed building are primarily brick, panelized siding, and glazing.

The brick will be a modular brick (nominal dimensions 2 1/4 x 3 5/8 x 7 5/8) with a running bonding pattern, a module of brick can be found on other buildings in the district. The brick shall be used on three stories of the primary façade along Trumbull and wrap arounds a portion of the north and south façades with a single story of brick running the entire perimeter of the building. The color will be a warm gray to complement the existing context.

Panelized siding in a cool gray color with horizontal banding of panels in a slightly darker gray at the horizontal floor lines will clad the remaining façade above the brick. The paneling shall be divided into segments that continue the vertical and horizontal elements of the brick through the rest of the building. These elements can be found in the neighboring context noted in the elevations.



Window frames will be black in color with complementary spandrel panels consisting of fiber cement panelized siding painted a dark gray color. The aluminum balconies will have a black finish. The canopy at the main entrance will also have a black finish with cedar wood in a clear finish on the underside.

Relationship of Textures

The Elements indicate “detailed brickwork on brick buildings contributes to textural interest when it exists”. The proposed building will have recesses brick and glazing bays between brick pilasters. These recesses portions of brick will have a change in bond pattern which will contribute to the textural interest of the façade.

Relationship of Colors

Natural and common brick colors are prominent in the district often with dark colored window frames. Natural and earth tones are also common on other multi-unit and commercial buildings as well.

As noted above, the colors of the proposed building will be a warm grey brick color with a contrasting dark grey panelized siding. The addition of black windows and balconies are consistent with the design features of other buildings in the district.

Relationship of Architectural Details

The architectural detail of the district is rich with a variety of building styles.

Consistent with the other buildings in the district, the proposed building at 1750 Trumbull will have architectural elements and details that relate to its contemporary style but still tie in common elements from its surrounding context. The masonry detailing at the base and main façade is kept simple, with regularly spaced pilasters and recessed window bays. These stacked, recessed bays emphasize the verticality of the front façade, consistent with other masonry buildings in the district. The dark grey panel siding is oriented in a way that emphasizes the horizontal floor bands that are typical on other facades in the neighborhood as well. Façade mounted sconce lights will accentuate the brick pilasters with up lighting and provide downlighting to the walkways surround the building. Wall pack fixtures with a black finish will provide lighting to the western fourth floor balcony. Lighting attached to the bottom side of the guardrails will light the remaining balconies.

Relationship of Roof Shapes

Consistent with the other commercial buildings in the district, the roof of the proposed building will be flat and will not be seen from the ground.

Walls of Continuity

A continuous street wall will be created along Trumbull as the façade of the proposed building will be aligned with the existing home on the adjacent property. The façade along Leverette, will align with the façade of the auto shop on the next block east of 8th street which is a zero-lot line condition, along with the addition of trees planted between the building and street consistent with conditions across the street and further west down Leverette.

Relationship of Significant Landscape Features and Surface Treatments

The proposed building will have plantings and lawn turf along the right of way on front façade of Trumbull and hedges along the side lot right of way on Leverette to create some separation between the building and the adjacent sidewalk. This is consistent with the design elements which state, “Foundation plantings and evergreens are typical plantings in front yards. Hedges are occasionally planted along the side lot lines...”. The length of 8th street will also receive landscaping that runs along the proposed parking screen wall with a more substantial planting bed at the south end near the alleyway entrance. New trees will be planted along Trumbull, Leverette and 8th street between the building and the street.



Surface parking will be located behind the building along the public alley and 8th street. The parking spaces along the perimeter will be covered by two carports, one parallel to the alley and one parallel to 8th Street. The steel cantilevered carports will be steel with a black finish and shed rooves. The parking will be secured and screened from the neighborhood by a combination of walls and fencing. The walls will be of double wythe brick construction with a solid grouted cavity. The brick will match the brick cladding of the building, capped with aluminum coping painted black. Cedar wood horizontal fencing with a clear sealer will span between the brick walls. Downlighting on the underside of the carport canopies will illuminate the parking area.

A patio will be located along the western façade. A 3'-0" high cedar wood horizontal fence, detailed to match the parking fence and perennial plantings will separate the patio from the sidewalk. The patio will be lit with recessed downlighting in the canopy above.

The existing parking sign located at the Northwest corner of the property will be salvaged and relocated to the Northeast corner. If it discovered during the process that it cannot be salvaged, a new sign will be constructed and finished to match the original. Lighting for the sign will be mounted directly to sign structure.

Relationship of Open Space to Structures

The proposed building will be situated on the lot line of Trumbull and Leverette which is consistent with many other commercial and multi-unit buildings in the district.

Scale of Façade and Façade Elements

In keeping with the features of similar masonry, multi-story buildings in the district, the proposed building is medium-scaled, and its elements and details are in proportion to the facades.

Directional Expression of Front Elevations

Consistent with the expression of similar commercial buildings the district, the proposed building's front façade is taller than it is wider, yet it has a vertical expression, emphasized by its recessed bays and pilasters. The longer side façade along Leverette is also wider than it is taller, but the horizontal elements at the floor lines are expressed here, much like other buildings in the district with similar overall proportions.

Rhythm of Building Setbacks

Some industrial, commercial, and multi-unit buildings in the district "are situated directly on the front lot line". The proposed building will be consistent with a zero setback along Trumbull which aligns with the adjacent house south of the property and a zero set back along Leverette which will align with the façade of the auto shop on the next block east of 8th street. Setbacks along the alley and 8th St. will be 5' in accordance with city zoning requirements.

Relationship of Lot Coverage

According to the design elements, lot coverage by the buildings in the district range from zero to one hundred percent (100%). Lot coverage of the proposed building will be about 44% with the remaining space comprised of surface parking and landscaping.

Degree of Complexity within the Facades

Consistent with the design elements of the other commercial and multi-family buildings in the district, the composition of the proposed building facades will have a simpler and straightforward level of complexity. More emphasis will be placed on overall vertical elements on the front façade and horizontal along the side façade, but the features that create these elements will be more subtle. Slight changes in brick plane and carefully selected reveal joints will be used instead of ornate details.



Orientation, Vistas, Overviews

Consistent with other buildings in the district along Trumbull, the proposed building will be oriented with its front façade and main entrance along Trumbull. In addition, like other commercial buildings in the neighborhood, the maintenance will be located on a corner. The buildings height will offer vistas of both downtown and Corktown.

Symmetric or Asymmetric Appearance

As noted, "most buildings in the district are asymmetrical in appearance but result in balanced compositions. 1750 Trumbull is no exception. While there is a strong grid on both the front and side facades, the locations of the surface mounted balconies, window placements and brick to panel relationship results in an asymmetric appearance, however, overall, the slight variations balance out over the whole building.

General Environmental Character

As noted in the design elements, "the Corktown Historic District, with its narrow lots, shallow front yards, and small-scaled buildings, has a low-density, urban, mixed-use character of a pre-automobile city" however, "its original cohesiveness has been eroded by housing demolition over the years". While we are not proposing a residential scaled building, we feel it still fits within the overall scale of the district with complimentary materials and contributes to the mixed-use character of the neighborhood. The new construction will help mend some neighborhood cohesion left by previous demolition on the block and be a part of Corktown's overall revival.

Conclusion

The items listed above provide a synopsis of the proposed scope of work regarding the development of the 1750 Trumbull multi-family residential project. Further detail is provided in the enclosed design package. Please contact me or Brian Rebain at Kraemer Design Group if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Kraemer Design Group, LLC



Brian Rebain
Principal

