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Mr. Garrick Landsberg
Director of Historic Preservation
Detroit Historic District Commission
Planning & Development Department
City of Detroit
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Corktown Site 1 – HDC Request for Advisory Comment for future Advisory Review of proposed Mixed Use Apartment building at 1611 Michigan Avenue

Dear Mr. Landsberg:
In accordance with requirements from the Detroit Historic District Commission, we are submitting project information for the proposed construction of a Mixed-Use Apartment building located at 1611 Michigan Avenue in Corktown and requesting that we be placed on the HDC March agenda to request Advisory Comments for a future application for "Advisory Review" on this project.

The Mixed-Use Apartment project is proposed to be built on the site of the existing building at 1623 Michigan Avenue (Bucharest Grill) which is a contemporary restaurant structure, and the balance of the site is currently surface parking lots and vacant land.

Advisory Comments: We request that the Historic District Commission provide Advisory Comments on our future application for Advisory Review of the proposed design of the Mixed-Use Apartment building at the HDC April meeting, for use by the development team in their subsequent design development of the project.

We are presenting the design of the new Mixed-Use Apartment building with accompanying materials as follows

- Blockfront elevations studies of surrounding neighborhood buildings illustrating solid/void rhythms of openings.
- Architectural site plan
- Schematic drawings including floor plans, elevations, and building sections
- Material sample boards
- Project narrative
- 3D renderings of the proposed new building

In addition to the attached documentation, we are also submitting the following narratives to describe the design of the new building and how it was contextually developed relative to the HDC "Elements of Design."

Corktown Site 1- Mixed Use Apartment Design Narrative
The main portion of the proposed building design exhibits a three-part vertical expression with base (retail storefront display windows/transom), body (masonry grid with vertical pilasters and metal panel accented window openings), and crown (upper two floors in lighter color material for accent) similar to

the historic commercial buildings on Michigan Avenue. The dark red brick masonry coupled with gray metal accent colors is derived from the historical palette of materials in the neighborhood. The stepping of the façade emphasizes the verticality of the structure while also serving to break up its massing and recall the blockfront massing of narrower historical structures in the neighborhood. Balconies on various apartment groupings also add filigree to the façade to again break down its scale.

Materials for the proposed new building utilize the brick masonry warehouse aesthetic of the larger historic commercial buildings in the surrounding area. The form, massing, and scale of this proposed apartment building also closely resemble those elements of other Corktown structures.

Mixed-Use Apartment Building Compatibility with Corktown Elements of Design

Adjacent Buildings Context: To the east is a one-story masonry auto repair shop dating from the early twentieth century. To the west are the rear facades of several historic two- and one-half story residential structures fronting on 11th Street. To the south are the rear facades of two- and one-half story residential structures on the west end of Church Street and the proposed Townhouses at the east end. To the north across Michigan Avenue is the recently constructed "The Corner" four story mixed-use apartment building and the Detroit PAL Headquarters and restored former Tiger baseball field

1. Height: At 82'-6" in height, the Mixed-Use Apartment building utilizes the maximum allowable height in the Michigan Avenue Traditional Overlay District. The tripartite division of the façade is established with a datum representing the historic storefront display window/transom heights on neighboring buildings, the crown/body datum is established by the heights of neighboring buildings such as Elton Park's Crawford and the 6th Street Loft building.

2a. Mass/Scale: The building's massing is derived from the examples of the larger commercial/industrial historic buildings in Corktown (Checker Cab, Grinnell's Lofts, 6th Street Lofts, Kaul Glove factory, etc.) The scale of the proposed apartment building relates to the scale of historic blockfronts on Michigan Avenue (as a combination of building facades) as well as the larger loft buildings.

2b. Proportion of Front Façade (Vertical/Horizontal Expression): The mixed-use apartment building front façade proportions (Michigan Avenue, and 10th Street) are essentially rectangular with horizontal form and vertical design elements such as the brick pilasters traversing the height of the building and the stepped vertical masses of the façade setbacks.

3. Openings (% and Orientation): The proportion of openings versus solid wall on the building is 42% on average, and again derives its proportion from neighboring historic loft structures.

4. Opening Rhythm: Window openings are in a regular grid pattern both vertical and approaching a square form within the majority brick rectangular grid of pilasters and spandrel elements with vertical window mullions emphasizing verticality. This shape/rhythm of wall openings is compatible with the wall patterns of historic loft buildings in the neighborhood.

5. Blockfront Rhythm: The building's façade rhythm is again derived from the opening cadence in nearby loft structures.

6. Entrance/Porch Rhythm: Not applicable for this mixed-use commercial building. Retail and apartment entrances are interspersed along the facades as tenant layouts dictate.

7. Compatible Materials: The building's material palette is derived from common Corktown building elements: brick, glass, metal accent elements, and crown of lighter color upper floors.

8. Compatible Textures: The textures of brick surfaces juxtaposed with coated metal accent glazing elements (contemporary cousins of Victorian painted wood trim and panels) are used as accents within the building facades.

9. Compatible Colors: With the majority use of brick as the body color of the building with darker gray metal glazing elements, the apartment building derives its coloration from the historic loft, industrial structures in Corktown.

10. Architectural Detail: The apartment building's use of architectural detail is found in the decorative metal balcony railings, brick patterns, and differing color of upper stories producing the building's crown.

11. Roof Shape: The building has a flat roof similar to historic commercial buildings in Corktown.

12. Continuous Street Wall: With the apartment building's two street front facades developed at zero lot lines, the urban commercial district public realm character is preserved in a continuous street wall.

13. Landscape/Surface Treatments: The public right of way sidewalks adjoining the apartment building on Michigan Avenue and 10th Street will all be finished with traditional concrete paving.

14. Open Space Relationship to Building: Similar to 13 above, with the building extending to the property lines, the public right of way will be the only open space at grade level around the building. A second level resident's entertainment deck is provided on the south side of the building.

15. Façade & Elements Scale: The apartment building uses the traditional storefront base of display windows and signage transom to derive context from neighboring historic commercial facades. The body of the building comprised of a rectangular brick and glass grid offers a pleasing rhythm of openings compatible with nearby loft structures and its scale is further decreased by the various vertical façade setbacks along Michigan Avenue. The two story, differing color building crown provides detail to add to the interest of the buildings top.

16. Directional Expression of Front Elevations: The overall massing of the building is horizontal in nature with strong vertical elements in the façade setbacks and the vertical orientation of window glazing.

17. Rhythm of Building Setbacks: The setbacks of vertical façade planes on Michigan Avenue are symmetrical around the center of the façade with corner planes and intermediate secondary planes providing relief from the broad expanse of the overall building.

18. Relationship of Lot Coverages: The building is built to the property lines and thus completely covers the site.

19. Façade Complexity: The Tripartite vertical design of the building's façade brings it within the milieu of traditional historic façade expression throughout the historic district. That coupled with the intermittent introduction of apartment balcony railings provides a delicate character to the overall composition.

20. Orientation, Vistas, Overviews: The primary orientation of the building is to Michigan Avenue with secondary orientation to 10th Street. General overview is the continuation of larger warehouse type structures interspersed throughout the low scale residential neighborhood.

21. Symmetrical vs Asymmetrical: The apartment building's two primary building facades are a continuous rollout of vertical structural bays with entries punctuating the transparent storefront base on Michigan Avenue and 10th Street. The facades do not exhibit a large entrance expression either central or asymmetrical and therefore this design element does not apply here.

22. General Environmental Character: This apartment building will contribute to the Corktown neighborhood's unique combination of wood clapboard houses combined with larger masonry commercial and industrial structures creating a unique aesthetic in this near downtown neighborhood.

Please let me know if you require additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,

NEUMANN/SMITH ARCHITECTURE

Joel Smith, AIA
President

Copies: Mike Kirk: Neumann/Smith