

May 22, 2023

1530 Bagley St.
Detroit, MI 48216

RE: 1530 Bagley St. Multi-Family Residential New Construction, Historic District Commission Submission

Project Narrative

The Project proposes to construct a new three-story eleven-unit residential building on Bagley St. between Trumbull and 10th Streets. The ground level consists of six one-bedroom flats, with small front porches and entry doors facing Bagley, and five 2-story units occupying levels two and three. Each of the upper units also has entry doors at grade (two accessed from Bagley, three accessed at the rear of the building from the parking lot). Each unit has access to private outdoor space. The ground level flats have a small patio at the rear of the building, the upper units have balconies, and additionally, the two Bagley facing upper units have access to private roof decks. Parking is situated at the rear of the lot with an 11-space surface parking lot accessed from the alley.

The building is situated very close to the sidewalk with only a 4'-0" front setback. This continues an urban street wall that is established by the commercial buildings closest to Trumbull, and continued on the other side of 10th St. by the existing Beyster Terrace rowhouses and the newly constructed Coachman townhouses. It is also understood that there are plans in development to replace the Clement Kern Gardens development across Bagley with a higher density, more urban mixed-use development in the near future.

Despite the overall urban nature of the block, the two lots directly to the west feature historic single-family homes. To create relief between the proposed three-story building and the existing two and a half story homes, a wide pedestrian pathway is to be created along the west property line of the site. This pathway provides access between the rear parking lot and front of the building and maintains a visual break between the larger building and smaller historic homes. In addition to this, the second and third stories of the building step back on the west side, reducing the height of the side wall closest to the homes to a single story.

Project Scope

- Construct a new 3-story 11-unit multifamily building
- Construct new 11-space surface parking lot to the rear of the building, accessed from the alley.

Description of existing conditions (including materials and design)

The Existing site is a group of vacant residential parcels. Directly to the west are two historic wood-sided single-family homes. To the east is an unadorned brick commercial building set to the rear of the lot with a deep fenced front yard. Further to the east are a historic brick home, a new two-story masonry commercial building, and a historic three-story brick commercial building at the corner of Bagley and Trumbull.

Narrative

1. Height:
37'-0" to the top of the parapet/guardrail.
2. Proportion of Front Façade:
Front façade is broken horizontally into thirds and is generally symmetrical
3. Proportion of Openings:
The front façade is generally equal in solid wall and openings

4. **Rhythm of Solid to Void:**
Voids are grouped together in threes, which align vertically on each level.
5. **Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings:**
The middle of the block is currently empty of buildings, but the spacing of buildings at either end of the block features tight side setbacks. The proposed building maintains a slightly larger setback on the west to give relief to the existing historic homes
6. **Rhythm of Entrance and/or front porch projections:**
Front porch projections are distributed equally along the front façade and align with the openings above.
7. **Materials:**
The exterior is mostly two colors of gray brick with accents of dark gray metal and cedar-colored wood-look siding. The rear (north) elevation utilizes large format GFRC panels for the upper two stories.
8. **Textures:**
The texture of brick is mostly continuous throughout the elevations. A woodgrain textured GFRC siding helps to break this up as an accent near window openings.
9. **Colors:**
The color palette is generally gray tones with an accent of cedar colored wood-look GFRC siding.
10. **Architectural Details:**
The detailing is kept minimal and clean. The organization of façade elements creates the overall character of the elevations. Brick is used to create a solid base and wraps the three portions of the front façade. Within these areas, the façade steps back, creating depth and a tectonic quality to the façade.
11. **Roof Shapes:**
The building features a flat roof
12. **Wall of Continuity (setbacks):**
The minimal front setback continues an urban street edge established by the buildings to the east.
13. **Landscape Features:**
Built-in planter boxes along the outer edge of the front-facing balconies add greenery to the front elevation. Landscape buffers are used at the rear of the property to screen parking.
14. **Open space:**
Each unit has access to a small private outdoor space.
15. **Scale of Facades/Façade Elements:**
The building is generally wider than it is tall. The front elevation is broken into three horizontal portions. Within these, a consistent rhythm of solid and void is created.
16. **Directional Expression of Front Elevation:**
While the overall façade is horizontal in nature, the stacked vertically oriented windows create a vertical expression.
17. **Rhythm of Setbacks:**
The minimal front setback continues an urban street edge established by the buildings to the east.
18. **Lot Coverage:**
 - a. Lot Size: 13,000sf

- b. Building Footprint: 3,905sf
- c. Percentage of lot Coverage: 30.0%

19. Degree of Complexity in Façade:

The façade is organized and consistent.

20. Orientation/Vistas/Views:

The building will be highly visible when travelling either direction along Bagley. From the building, the upper units offer views to downtown to the east, and the train station and bridges to the west.

21. Symmetric or asymmetric appearance:

The overall appearance is symmetrical.

22. General Character:

Corktown is made up of modestly detailed small-scale homes on narrow lots creating a dense walkable neighborhood. Outside of the Michigan Avenue corridor, few multi-story commercial buildings exist. However, this block of Bagley does feature this type of larger scale building. The proposed structure follows the simple massing and closely spaced arrangement precedent set by the existing neighborhood context. The homes and buildings in Corktown were built over various periods of time and are examples of many architectural styles. What makes the neighborhood cohesive is the attention to scale, proportion, and quality in each home regardless of style. While the proposed structure utilizes some contemporary elements, the overall scale, massing, and textural quality are inspired by and designed to complement the overall Corktown character.