



## Board of Zoning and Planning Special Meeting Supplemental Staff Report

November 29, 2023

6:00 PM

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**Supplemental ARB staff report and summary for the Board of Zoning and Planning:**

**Application Number:** BZAP - 23-23

**Address:** 2200 E Main

**Applicant:** Ryan Pearson

**Owner:** Continental Real Estate Cos.

**Request: Request:** The applicant is seeking approval to allow demo and redevelopment of the vacant Trinity Lutheran apartment structures at 2160, 2188 & 2186 E. Main St. and a certificate of appropriateness for a new 6-story mixed-use building to provide additional housing, commercial uses and a parking garage. The applicant is also seeking a variance from Bexley Code Section 1254.10 District Regulations (maximum height of principal building) in the MS District to allow a 6-story building, a variance from Bexley Code Section 1254.13 f. (required maximum depth of public space) in the MS District to allow a +/- 50' building setback for public-private space, and a variance from Bexley Code Section 1254.13 g. (minimum building width along primary frontage) in the MS District to allow a building to be +/- 75% of the lot width.

**Process:** This project is a very significant development and opportunity for the City of Bexley. It is the goal of the City to be open and transparent and encourage public comment and participation. That said, there is a process that the project has gone through that has been very deliberately thought through to produce that best outcome for all. For the purposes of this specific process (the physical completion of the project), which includes site design, massing, variance, vehicular use, architecture. ... the project was before the Architecture Review Board and Tree and Public Garden Commission for recommendations to the Board of Zoning and Planning. The BZAP is the ultimate decision making body for the request(s) of the applicant. Issues such as tax abatements, TIFs, school impact are discussed and decided in other City bodies such as City Council, the CIC (Community Improvement Corporation) and the School Board.

### **Background:**

A few elements of design will, by their nature, be discussed at all of 3 of the Boards and Commissions. These include how the project interacts and activates public spaces and how it is interacts with all its neighboring properties. The BZAP discussions included these issues from a site planning perspective. The ARB will discuss these issues with respect to the architecture and design of the building.

The first (City led) public presentation of this project was at the Board of Zoning and Planning on August 24th, 2023. Prepared as background for the ARB hearing here is a summary which includes the discussion items at BZAP:

- This hearing was for preliminary review and the first opportunity for comments and feedback from the Board and the public.
- BZAP discussion and purview includes site development, general massing, zoning code adherence, adherence to Main Street Design standards (different than the ARB Design Standards), a request for a Special Permit for 5 stories (they can have 3 stories by right), vehicular patterns and parking...
- What was not for discussion at BZAP was the architecture. Although inevitably the design and material choice, style, form, etc....did come up, design review is in the purview of the ARB.
- The applicant is seeking a variance for a partial 6th story addition to the front of the building on the south end of the site. While this is the decision of BZAP, there are factors that weighed heavily for the recommendation from the ARB to BZAP. For reference below - the considerations that are important for ARB are:
  - The extent to which the proposed development represents exceptional architectural and site design.
  - The extent to which the design helps to mitigate a substantial impact upon adjacent single family residential uses.
  - Compatibility of architecture and site design to the surrounding uses and structures.

This project was also heard at the Tree and Public Garden Commission to look at public spaces in the context of the overall project and those recommendations have been posted to the City's website.

This application was before the Architectural Review Board four times:

- The application was tabled at the September ARB for further design study with the offer to have a workshop in the interim.
- The application was tabled by the applicant and removed from the October ARB meeting at their request and a workshop was scheduled.
- A workshop for design critique with Board members (public but with no public comment) took place on October 17th.
- The application was heard at the November meeting with good Board feedback and the request for more views and some material and massing modifications along with an offer for a special meeting.
- A special meeting for the application was held on November 29, 2023 with action taken to recommend the application to BZAP with conditions (included below)..

### **Considerations:**

This project will be a mixed use building that has residential and commercial/retail space. It is an exciting opportunity to provide additional housing, retail and development, and to activate the public space along Main street between Gateway and Bexley Square. Many aspects of this project have undergone evaluation and discussion and many decision points. For this meeting staff strongly encouraged the following discussion guidelines to make the best use of our time at ARB:

For discussion at ARB...

- the architecture/style/material choices in general
- how does the building address Main Street corridor with respect to it's architecture (code pushes the building to front through the Main street design standards)
- how does the building activate spaces around building
- how does the architecture and building design interface with adjacent properties
- discussion of materials and detailing of the building -

What we did not discussing in ARB:

- Parking and traffic patterns
- Tax abatements
- Use
- Site Design
- General massing

**Staff Comments:**

Many changes that have been suggested continue to be developed in the latest revisions and there are still design studies that need to be done per the ARB conditions of recommendation. The changes to date include a refinement of the south east entrance piece, a clearer definition of the public spaces, revision of the cornice line, an addition of more height in the front and a thinner footprint in width, and many other changes that came from the discussion at the public workshop.

The original form of the building was uniform in height and did not respond in a sensitive and unique way to the neighbor in each direction. In the process of design development the design team responded to the concern of the Board and neighbors and softened the elevations through the use of richer materials with more traditional applications ("Bexley-like") as well as breaking down the mass of the facades through undulations, public spaces, carving out of rooftop and using setbacks as the building goes back. Additionally using cornices on lower floors to match the neighboring property roofline gives the building better scale and contextual relevancy.

The applicant was encouraged by ARB and staff to explore the possibility of added height (the 6th story) at the front of the building toward main street in return for a thinner/narrower building and a pedestrian courtyard/restaurant/gathering space and to give it a better silhouette and overall shape. This also allowed more flexibility to carve out mass on the rear and sides to lesson the mass and soften the building on the residential side.

Many changes have been made since the original application was submitted. Progress images below show where the design began and where it is to date. At the latest review the design team was asked to add detail to the west and north elevations and bring them up to the level of design that the east and south elevations have.

The following images show the design progression and are a graphic representation of the massaging of the building into a different form in order to create more space between the adjacent neighboring 5 story building and to give some relief to the Main Street streetscape.

# Design Evolution





1 WEST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



1 WEST ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 WEST ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"

2 WEST ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 WEST ELEVATION  
1/8" = 1'-0"



**2 EAST ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**2 EAST ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"

1" = 30"



**2 EAST ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"

**2 EAST ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**2 EAST ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**1 MAIN STREET ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**1 MAIN STREET ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**1 MAIN STREET ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



**1 MAIN STREET ELEVATION**  
1" = 30"



3 NORTH ELEVATION



2 NORTH ELEVATION



At the November 29, 2023 Architectural Review Board meeting the following action was taken:

- MOTION:** The motion made by Ms. Strasser and seconded by Mr. Heyer to recommend to the Board of Zoning and Planning the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed development at 2200 East Main Street subject to the following conditions:
1. The applicant return to the ARB with material boards and samples.
  2. Headlight screening be added to the parking lots where needed
  3. The west drive be redesigned to enhance the green space and allow substantial tree planting.
  4. The north and west elevations should be reworked to lesson the massing,, create better connection to the ground, screening of the garage, and use of more consistent materials.
  5. A reduction of height on the west and north elevations toward the rear of the site.
  6. The west elevation should have more variation in the plane of the facade and the height.
  7. The ARB supports the addition of the 6th floor architecturally to allow flexibility in lessoning the overall massing of the building.
  8. Outdoor dining adjustments should be reviewed by the ARB when a tenant is secured.
  9. The application should be remanded back to ARB for final design review and approval.

The applicant, Ryan Pearson, agreed to the findings of fact.

**VOTE:** The Board voted to recommend this application 4 - 0: Mr Hall - yes, Mr. Heyer - yes, Ms. Strasser - yes, Ms. Toney - yes

**RESULT:** The applicant was granted a Certificate of Appropriateness.