

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

March 13, 2014

Members Present

Courtney Nicholas
George Davis
Sheri Chaney
John Ranson
Justin Ferrell
Peyton Keesee

Members Absent

R.J. Lackey

Staff

Ken Gillie
Renee Burton
Scott Holtry
Alan Spencer
Christy Taylor

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Davis changed the order of items for Public Hearing, moving item #2 to end.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install two projecting wall signs at 549 Main Street.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. Kevin Keys. I am representing Clement & Wheatley. On page 1, there is a rendering of the actual shingle that they would like to place out front. It is two sided. It will be roughly 1" in depth. It is going to be permanently affixed to the mounting bracket. It will not swing. It is going to be a good deal higher than any of the other shingles on Main Street. They asked that since they are building this so much larger than the rest of the buildings, do they have any leeway with the 4' requirement or is it set in stone?

Mr. Gillie responded it is 4 square feet.

Mr. Keys stated I didn't know if there was any leeway for larger buildings. It would only be about 3/4" larger just to give us some symmetry.

Mr. Gillie stated that would have to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals because it is a projecting sign. Flat wall signs can be larger, but when they stick out and projecting out into the right-of-way that is when they are limited because it is extending out over public space.

Mr. Keys stated we will pass on that and move forward sticking to the guidelines. Page 2 just shows a nice truck and I drew a square on the back wall. This same sign will go on the back wall but will not project. It will be mounted to the wall. They are going to take down all of the little signs.

Mr. Keesee arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Mr. Gillie asked how much over did you say it was going to be?

Mr. Keys responded 32"x19 ½" instead of 30"x18".

Mr. Gillie stated so you are 4 ¾ square feet then. We can work the ¾ under another section. It is up to you. The guidelines say 4, but there is a provision that will allow us a little bit of lee way on the ¾. If the Commission wants to go with that size, we can make it fit.

Mr. Ferrell arrived at 4:10 p.m.

Mr. Keys stated the next page is item number 2. It is a sign for the front building pier. If you look at page 1, you can see what is there currently. It is tarnished, brass lettering. They are going to replace that with this simple sign right here, which is 18"x18". I assume that is well below the requirement.

Mr. Gillie stated it is.

Mr. Keys stated the last thing is to replace the awning. I am not even sure they need approval for this. Instead of it being Barney purple and green, they want to make it the same colors as the other signs. It would be a simple replacement.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Chaney made a motion to approve the request with the 4 ¾. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

3. A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new wall sign at 754 Patton Street.

Open the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on the request.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Davis stated if I understand this correctly, they are just going to take this sign at the place of business in Market Square and move it over to the new one.

Mr. Gillie stated correct.

Mr. Davis stated which is the same building Edward Jones, Abercrombie have their office in.

Mr. Gillie stated correct.

Mrs. Nicholas asked will the sign be facing Patton Street or the parking lot? That building is oriented strangely.

Mr. Gillie responded it will face toward the parking lot.

Mrs. Chaney stated it is going on the front of the building.

Mr. Ranson asked is the sign going to look precisely like that?

Mrs. Nicholas responded it is already up there. They are taking it off of the building and putting it on this one.

Mr. Keesee made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

- 4. A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new wall sign and construct a ground sign at 115 Riverside Drive.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Sara Folmer, YMCA. Since staff has recommended approval, I am just here to answer any questions that you might have.

Close the Public Hearing.

There was discussion about the location of the proposed signs.

Mr. Keesee made a motion to approve the request. Mrs. Chaney seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

- 5. A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new wall sign at 600 Lynn Street.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. David Eagle, Fire Chief. In your packet, it shows a sample of our sign. This project started about three years ago from the design phase. We have gone through a review with the local historic board as well as the Department of Historic Resources. Now we are bringing it to you for approval. It is going to be a flat sign over the top of our fire station. It is going to look very similar to

what you see on some of Mr. Davis' buildings with the black backdrop and white letters. It is approximately 32'x4' built into the brick. There are brick corbels and it is flat with black accent bricks with white metal letters. There is a light that goes along the bottom of the sign that has a maximum output of 54 watts. It is actually 7 small lights in a row that go the distance of the sign to kind of give it a soft glow.

Mr. Ranson stated I am confused because the first person said the sign couldn't be larger than four feet.

Mr. Gillie stated that is a projecting sign. If it sticks out over the right-of-way it is limited in size. They can have 400 square feet of sign on the wall as long as it is not projecting.

Mrs. Nicholas asked what kind of lighting are you going to be using?

Mr. Eagle responded it is LED. It is designed to just put a soft glow on the letters, so you can read them at night.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

2. A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate 554 Craghead Street.

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. Rick Barker, Mr. Mike Allen, Project Foreman with Callahan Construction, and Ms. Christy Dalton, Business Manager. Mr. Barker stated I don't have a presentation but we wanted to make ourselves available to answer any questions that you may have. This is a tax credit project, and what you have before you is what is acceptable through the City Code wise and then put through additional filters to qualify for State and Federal tax credits. We just received a reply from the State Department of Historic Resources. They have approved our project with conditions. The conditions that are noted refer to interior specifications with a couple measurable exceptions to the exterior doors and the mechanical roof top equipment. It looks like we have a large part of approval from the State for our plans provided we execute the plans within the limits of these conditions.

Mr. Davis stated what I would like to do is take each one of these items separately. I don't know if we need to take an individual vote on each line item.

Mr. Gillie stated unless someone feels that one of the items would not be recommended for approval, you don't have to take an individual vote. You can discuss the line items and as you are going through you could pull something off if you feel it is unacceptable.

Mr. Ranson stated it would be handled something similar to a consent agenda.

Mr. Davis stated ok. Number 1, the new roof is complete now. Does anyone have any discussion about that?

Mr. Ranson asked what kind of roof is it?

Mr. Allen responded it was basically a roll of asphalted material and we replaced it with built up insulation and rolled rubber. The physical makeup appears the same.

Mrs. Nicholas asked you said the State had conditions on a mechanical roof.

Mr. Barker responded we had a structural engineer look at the roof and determine the weight capacity of the current structure. It was determined that with the layers upon layers that were added among the last century that the current weight was actually 110% of the maximum weight bearing load, which prompted the removal of the roofs to remove the weight and get down to the original decking. The decking has been replaced with similar decking. Our new design calls for 9 rooftop mechanical units for the HVAC staged from the center of the roof going the length of the building. We had to go back and add steel supports to the wooden truss system. The State is asking that we somehow mock up these HVAC units. We built a fake unit to size, mount it on the roof, and with that in place take photos of the building from Craghead, Lynn Street, Colquhoun Street, and Farmer's Market with the idea that these roof top units should not visually impair the historic character of the building.

Mrs. Nicholas stated the only way you would be able to see them is from the roof of a building.

Mr. Davis stated item 2, restoration of period windows approved by the DHRMPS.

Mr. Barker stated the regulations regarding window treatment is such that all of the original windows have been removed and restored. They have not been installed. The original windows are wood, 6/6 light windows. There is a remaining question left with the State, at some point glass block was added to some of the original windows. We do not yet have permission to remove those glass blocks. We don't think there is going to be a problem with us removing the glass block, but we still have to obtain approval from the National Park Service (i.e. Federal Tax Credit) to approve our window design. If you look at the schematic you see the drawings for the proposed windows. It does not represent the original window pattern because we do not have photographs for us to determine what the original pattern was. With that evidence missing, the best we can do is use buildings in the same neighborhood built plus or minus 10 years. Those photos have been submitted with our proposal.

Mr. Ranson asked has the design of the windows been approved conditionally or once you get permission to remove the glass block do you think you will have to get the design approved again?

Mr. Barker responded we think that is going to be a two part answer. We are not mimicking the original design but we are presenting a period appropriate design. We know they want additional photos, so that is where we are in that process.

Mr. Ranson asked so if we approve this and the design changes, will we have to reapprove this?

Mr. Gillie responded if you approve it conditioned upon State approval, you are ok.

Mr. Ranson asked will those be wood windows?

Mr. Allen responded it is a wood framed window with an exterior aluminum cladding. It is a little modern construction for long term maintenance but it would match.

Mr. Ranson asked would the mullions be aluminum as well?

Mr. Allen responded no, the mullions would be wood. The profiles are as close to original as possible.

Mr. Davis asked are you going to have to do any kind of change to the brick work itself?

Mr. Barker responded it appears that in the 50's renovation, some original windows were closed and bricked in. They cut new holes beside them and put glass block. I intend to be a purist and think that the original architecture is the best. It is our intent to take out the glass block, close that up and open up the original holes that are now bricked up and put in a brand new wood window designed with the same specifications as the original windows that are being restored.

Mrs. Nicholas asked do you think the windows are behind the brick?

Mr. Barker responded no, we lost those windows.

Mr. Davis stated the tenant entrance on Colquhoun Street, floors 2 and 3 will have aluminum store front with shed roof to match the Davis Warehouse. I remember one of your drawings, maybe the original drawing where you had a wheelchair accessible ramp on the side. Is this entirely different from that?

Mr. Barker responded yes. If you looked at the original rendering, we had a ramp and steps exterior which was taking up sidewalk space. If you are familiar with the entrance to the Masonic Temple, that would be our preference. That leaves more leasable space on the inside. The City advised that was not acceptable due to the width of the Street

and due to the fact that Colquhoun Street is going to have greater access due to the Fire Department being there. There is certainly not enough room to put that exterior ramp outside, which means that the infrastructure has to go inside. There is a dock door there now. The seal would need to be cut out and the brick lowered 18" to get to the sidewalk grade.

Mr. Ranson stated my understanding is that DHR has been reluctant on approving new openings on the outside. Has this been approved by DHR?

Mr. Barker responded it has. This is actually not a new opening. It is a modified opening. There is an existing dock door, probably 6' to 8'. We will not be changing the top or the width.

Mrs. Nicholas stated you had mentioned earlier something about the doors. Is that part of this?

Mr. Barker responded yes. I want to be clear when I say the State has approved. When they made an approval based on conditions, we don't actually have a checklist. They are more likely to tell you what they disapprove. The conditions, they have a broad category called the retention of historic materials including but not limited to all components of the trestle, even though that is not developable space and it doesn't qualify for tax credits, should we restore it, it is considered a historic component of the building and must be saved. To complete that sentence, the roof, interior and exterior doors, windows and their associated casings, wall and ceiling plaster, wood trim elements such as base board, wall paneling, stairs and stair components, and floor materials. Most of these are references to interior materials. The highlights on the exterior would be the roof, the doors, the windows and their original casings.

Mr. Ranson asked the building over there next to the trestle, are you cleaning it up as you restore it?

Mr. Barker responded we have actually acquired the building next door, so we own the buildings on both sides of the trestle. As we develop 554, the view out of the windows will be looking at these buildings that are not in such great shape. We will be cleaning that up to make it more presentable. There are some trees that need to be taken up. At a minimum the rails can be aligned and get the vegetation down.

Mr. Ranson stated that seems like a safety hazard.

Mr. Barker stated we will be building a barrier there to keep people out. We will not be constructing it in phase 1, but the ultimate plan is to come off of the dock doors and build a deck.

Mr. Davis asked is this DHS or DHR has declined on the next one?

Mr. Gillie responded it should be DHR.

Mr. Davis stated DHR declined the request to chemically remove the paint from the façade; therefore, there will be no changes to the brick. If you've been by the building you see one square on the side and one on the front where they just put paper adhesive against it, let it sit for a while and then peel it off.

Mr. Barker stated they have a very stern opinion which is not at all to our liking. This chemical process to remove the paint is the most effective and most expensive way. You can take about 100% of it off without damaging the brick or the mortar. One usually uses this process in limited applications. If you look at our rendering you will see that our original plan was to chemically peel this white paint off of the red brick on the façade and around each corner. They agreed that it is more aesthetically pleasing but there is no historic reference for it. They have suggested that the building was originally all red brick and at a later date painted all white. Their comment to me was that the building was never two-toned and should never be two-toned in the future. Our three options are to chemically peel all of the building the façade and both sides, paint over the brick, or leave it as it is. We can't enhance just the façade. We have \$140,000 in the budget to enhance the façade. To chemically peel all of it would take that price to well over \$300,000.

Mrs. Chaney asked so you decided to leave it as is?

Mr. Barker responded yes. If you look at the façade, about 50% is glass. We are thinking that by placing the new windows in it will give it a considerable improvement.

Mr. Davis stated last one is the paint color collection. We plan to use a black/green period appropriate color for the limited exposed wood surfaces.

Mr. Barker stated if you look at the rendering, it is a combination of black and black/green. It is a period appropriate color. It will appear black unless the sun shines on it. It is a limited wood surface, but you can see the front door, two panels below the large windows on the façade, and the remaining windows.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request based on State approval. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

6. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a temporary banner at 427 Patton Street.*
7. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a temporary banner at 629 Craghead Street.*

Open the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on the request.

Mr. Davis asked is the banner the same size as the one on 629 Craghead Street?

Mr. Gillie responded they are the same. They are going to come back every year. If you wouldn't mind saying yes, it is a yearly event. We can make that work.

Mrs. Nicholas asked have they ever been up before?

Mr. Gillie responded yes, every year.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Nicholas made a motion to approve the request going forward. Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

8. A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for landscaping at 500/520 Main Street.

Open the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on the request.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Gillie stated the City wanted to order the plants ahead of time.

Mrs. Chaney asked is this just for the parking area?

Mr. Gillie responded the parking lot is already in place. This is just the planting around it.

Mrs. Nicholas stated so this doesn't affect the section that really hasn't been designated yet.

Mr. Gillie responded no.

Mrs. Nicholas asked is there a permanent decision on this piece yet?

Mr. Gillie responded just to beautify it in the meantime. Everything that is being planted can be relocated if they decide to do anything with that site.

Mrs. Chaney made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Ranson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 13, 2014 minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

The selections of terms were as follows:

1 year- Mr. Ranson and Mr. Keesee

2 year- Mrs. Chaney and Mr. Lackey

3 year- Mr. Ferrell and Mrs. Nicholas

4 year- Mr. Davis

Mrs. Nicholas disclosed that her husband serves on the YMCA Board.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Approved By: