

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

JUNE 11, 2015

Members Present

Justin Ferrell
Courtney Nicholas
Sheri Chaney
John Ranson
R.J. Lackey

Members Absent

Peyton Keesee
George Davis

Staff

Renee Burton
Shanta Hairston
Scott Holtry
Clarke Whitfield
Corrie Teague

Secretary Chaney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing terra cotta cap at 522 Bridge Street. Work includes replacing the existing fourth level terra cotta cap with a .024 aluminum cap with the roof membrane folded beneath rather than cleated just below.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Nicholas entered the meeting at 4:03 pm.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. Carl Manasco with Hawser Manasco Realty.

Mr. Manasco stated I'm Carl Monasco with Prudential Manasco Realty. I'm also the managing agent for Burton Condominium Homeowners Association. I think you all know me, but some of you I haven't met. I emailed Kenny a package yesterday. Did he supply it to you? Do you all have a copy of that?

Mrs. Chaney stated we do not.

Mr. Manasco stated I have a few extra. May I bring them up?

Mrs. Chaney stated yes.

Mr. Manasco passed out packets.

Mr. Manasco stated the Burton Condominium was completed in 2007 and almost from day one we've had problems with the roof on both levels. The units have two roof levels. One is above the fourth floor level and then about eight of the units are beneath the

second floor level. Our major problem right now is with the fourth floor level. We've started the process of taking bids to replace the entire fourth level with a new roof and we've run into a problem. To be honest with you- and I don't know if it's been pointed out to you by Kenny- we have on the fourth floor level, the building was built in 1889 and it has the original terra cotta on the top level. Actually here's an extra photo that shows that. That first photo you see is an aerial view of the roof. It shows what we're talking about doing initially. The building faces Bridge Street; and if you look in the group of photos I've given you, the Burton Condominium has 27 units in it then there's one detached to the left hand side. The second photo I put in there was this. Initially in 2007 when the building was renovated, they allowed us to put the aluminum coping on that building. For those of you who don't understand what coping is, it's the finish over the top of the aluminum metal on this piece.

Mr. Lackey asked is that on the stand alone building or the main building

Mr. Manasco stated this is on the stand alone building. It was completed like that in 2007. If you look at the next page, that's a view of the top front of the Burton Condominium. It shows the terra cotta and you can see the terra cotta coping from the street. Historically, that's the way it was done but it's really difficult to tear off and replace that in the same way with today's construction techniques. What we're running into if you flip to the next page, there's a view of the roof from the backside and the way the coping is capping off the roof. This is an old rolled roof here and it looks like what you saw 30 years ago. The roofing material they put on most buildings now is on the Pemberton Lofts and the aluminum building across the street. I guess the best way to explain it is it looks like a vinyl swimming pool cover. They put down hard board insulation and then on top of that they added vinyl roofing to it. What we're asking for is that when they do that and roll the roofing up the wall, this terra cotta coping is in such bad shape that it's got to be taken off even if we were forced to replace it with something like what was originally there. It's pieced into four foot sections and if we tear it off and do that then we'll still face the same problem we're running into. The mortar deteriorates and has to be sealed and resealed. What we would like to do is tear that terra cotta off and roll that vinyl up and then put the aluminum coping on top of that. Of course we'd use dark brown. If you flip to the next page, it's basically showing another view of the roof. Some of the pieces are missing; they're broken. Frankly it's hard to find replacement parts that would just fit in to what we have now. On the next page, this is on the stairwell on the fourth level. When they renovated the building, they used the metal coping like I talked about. That's what coping would look like. It would be darker than that- a dark brown. On the next page what we're asking for is what they put on the Pemberton Lofts when they finished those out. I went ahead and mentioned in my letter that we were talking about doing the second and the fourth level. We're not going to do

the second right away, but I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone. I'll be glad to answer any questions.

Mr. Lackey stated I have a question. I understand the desire to run that up the wall, but why wouldn't you go back with terra cotta?

Mr. Manasco stated number one, terra cotta is extremely more expensive; and if you can look at it, you can see that it's pieced in sections that are four feet. Every one of these would be a potential leak at some point,

Mr. Lackey asked but if you ran the vinyl up over it would it still leak?

Mr. Manasco stated we're talking about tearing that completely off, rolling the roof up, and putting the new coping down on top of it.

Mr. Lackey stated if you did that could you not put the terra cotta back on top?

Mr. Manasco stated well we could. I guess what I'm asking there is that we not have something that has a seam in it of four feet.

Mr. Ranson stated we've talked about taking the old vinyl out over the coping so then it has a seamless barrier.

Mrs. Nicholas stated the terra cotta would be purely aesthetic.

Mr. Manasco stated I understand it would maintain the aesthetic but as manager here, I've spent half my time on that roof. When you get up there- and I've been up there with six different companies- there's no way to find where the leak is. It could be coming in 20 feet over there and running down. We've got four units now this past week from where it rained so hard they've had leaks. This is something we need to address in the very near future, but in my opinion if we were to go back to the terra cotta we'd be back to the same point that when we're looking for a leak it could be under that four foot section or that one or the next. I have learned that no matter how long a roofing company has been in business or no matter how experienced they are, you don't just walk up on the roof and find the leak. It's like somewhere in this 40 foot area. It's really frustrating.

Mr. Ferrell stated we're having that same issue so I understand. Are there any historic precedence that says it doesn't meet regulations with what he's trying to do?

Mr. Manasco stated the building's code our historic tax credits have expired; we're past that. I guess my only question would be if you had a problem forcing us to maintain the terra cotta, then what about the Pemberton Lofts across the street? What about our carriage house? It was approved in 2007. It's got what we're asking for.

Mr. Ranson stated we did not exist in '07 so we did not approve it. I don't know that anybody did.

Mrs. Nicholas stated there were no guidelines then.

Mrs. Burton stated right but in 2007 they took advantage of the rehabilitation tax credits.

Mr. Manasco stated some of those I can tell you about. We had 112 year old windows and the wind blows through and the blinds fly off the wall, but that's what we were forced to use. I probably would be back soon asking for permission to change the windows to something that's modern and insulated.

Mr. Ranson stated well that's another day. What about the idea of two birds with one stone? You're saying that they're just going to redo part of it, but in the future you want to redo the rest of it and you want to do the same thing?

Mr. Manasco stated right when we do the second floor level.

Mr. Ranson asked is that going to be next year or so?

Mr. Manasco stated it's going to be within the next year I'm sure because we don't have as many problems on that level, but we had one this past week when it rained really heavy. Hopefully he's gotten that repaired within the last couple of days. The only real area at the Burton that shows from the public area would be the front of the building. If you were standing on Bridge Street, the fourth floor level you can see the front and you can see left side of the front. The rest of it really is not visible at all from any public area and that would include the whole second level we plan to address in the future.

Mr. Whitfield stated I think what he's saying is they can kill two birds with one stone as long as they do the second level within a year when it runs out. If they don't get it done within a year then the Certificate of Appropriateness runs out.

Mr. Lackey stated I apologize for being dense, but I'm still not understanding why the terra cotta with the membrane over it would be any different in terms of leaks as opposed to the metal with the lining under it.

Mr. Manasco stated well the metal is modern construction. You can put that metal there as a 20 year roof and the metal will be there 20 years from now with no problem.

Mr. Ranson stated the metal roofing has also got joints.

Mr. Manasco stated it's got joints but not joints that high with concrete in them. It's still silicone. The terra cotta would have to be sealed with cement and it would have to be painted over like we've been doing four or five years from now. You still look confused.

Mr. Lackey stated but it's still sitting on an impermeable membrane. I know that there's a difference in its permeability and the metal, but once it gets through that it's an impermeable membrane. I guess it provides you some kind of protection, but the real protection is under- the copings.

Mr. Manasco stated that's true but the membrane would have to be sealed. When you roll it over the top, you've got to seal it and penetrate that membrane when you do that with screws.

Mr. Lackey stated ok that's what I was trying to figure out is why you found one to be more leak preventive than the other.

Mr. Manasco stated I've been involved with commercial roofs since I bought my building on Main Street and I've spent many hours on a roof with experts. It's not a simple matter just painting over. It doesn't go away.

Mr. Lackey stated I do understand it needs to be fixed I'm just trying to understand the difference in effectiveness of each fix and why one that is not historically accurate should be approved versus the one that is historically accurate. Along those lines, has any consideration been giving to doing the terra cotta where there's public visibility?

Mr. Manasco stated no there has not been. I recently found out that we needed to come to you all. Plan B we would not be enthusiastic about that, but rather than doing the parameters of the back and sides, if we got to do just the front it would alleviate that.

Mrs. Chaney Closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

- 2. A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new wall signage at 341 Main Street. The signage "River District Plaza" will be displayed on 3 sides of the building (Market Street side, Old Glenmore Clothing side, and Patton side). The signs will be placed above the first floor level façade.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on behalf of the request.

Mr. Whitfield stated we may have a late notice problem. I got late word that they may not know this hearing was occurring today.

Mrs. Chaney closed the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Chaney asked no questions? Does anyone want to make a motion?

Mrs. Nicholas asked we don't have a picture to look at do we?

Mrs. Chaney stated yes.

Mrs. Nicholas stated we see the location, but it's not supposed to look like that.

Mrs. Chaney stated actually it's pretty close to it.

Mrs. Nicholas stated okay. I follow.

Mr. Ferrell asked my I ask a question? This is the school board building.

Mr. Whitfield stated it is the building in which the school board has its offices; it is not owned by the school system. It's owned by a private developer that leases to the school system.

Mr. Ferrell stated that answers my question. I knew the school board didn't own the building, but I knew they had their sign up.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. Mr. Lackey read a statement acknowledging that he abstained from voting due to conflict of interest. The motion was approved by a 4-0-1 vote.

3. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct wooden steps at Newton's Landing. Work includes the construction of 10 wooden steps 6" high and 10' wide with 3 hand railings.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

No one was present on behalf of the request.

Mrs. Chaney closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey asked I would like to ask staff are there wooden steps in other places in the River District?

Mrs. Burton stated I don't know of any other locations.

Ms. Teague stated just think of this as a phase 1 to a larger project. There needs to be some kind of connection between Newton's Landing and Bridge Street without having to walk around buildings, so this is what would be an immediate resolution until larger plans can be arranged and drawn out.

Mrs. Chaney asked so basically they're temporary until they can be changed out into something more appropriate?

Mr. Lackey asked may be or will be?

Mrs. Burton stated the plan is to be. Could be.

Mr. Lackey stated that's one of my concerns, and I may have the wrong vision for what wooden steps look like. I have this construction vision in my head. The City has applied these guidelines and put them in place for private citizens I tend to think the City should go overboard in trying to comply with the guidelines; and I don't think wooden steps fit the character of the River District. My question was where are these other wooden steps? I may be wrong, I just can't think of any.

Mrs. Nicholas asked would the steps be stained? Would they be made to look nice?

Mrs. Burton stated these will be treated lumber so they will have to be stained or painted, but I suspect stained.

Mr. Lackey stated you should say may be stained.

Mrs. Nicholas stated what I hesitate to vote on is something that may be three years from now there had been no motion on it and then they'll start to deteriorate and rotten.

Ms. Teague stated and there are wooden steps in front of Pemberton.

Mrs. Chaney stated which are painted.

Mr. Lackey stated if there was a plan in place that was a temporary fix then that would make more sense to me or they could be permanent.

Mrs. Chaney stated we could make the stipulation that they be stained or painted.

Mr. Whitfield stated I think you could as part of the Certificate of Appropriateness require that they be stained or painted.

Mrs. Nicholas made a motion to approve the request with the condition that the wooden steps must be stained. Mr. Ranson seconded the motion.

Mr. Lackey asked is it within our purview possible to ask that they not be a permanent fixture?

Mr. Whitfield stated I don't think you have that within your purview.

Mr. Lackey asked so we could not say this is for a one year thing then they have to replace?

Mr. Whitfield stated I don't think so. It's a little bit different than a wheelchair ramp or something like that. It clearly is temporary but once you approve them, they're there until the City comes before the board and asks to replace them.

Mr. Ferrell asked the steps that are in front of the Pemberton, do the steps fall under historical contents?

Ms. Teague stated they are original to the building.

Mr. Ferrell stated so we're dealing with the direction the River District is going and the history of the Pemberton being compared. When it's time to move, and it may not be moved for another ten years but it still has to be maintained. I just question the direction of the River District and putting wooden steps in front instead of something that's more historical.

Mrs. Nicholas stated maybe they don't have the funding to do something else, but in the meantime want to do something convenient to connect the two.

Mr. Ferrell stated my next question is there enough traffic that this is required?

Mrs. Nicholas stated with new restaurants opening downtown they need access to that downtown parking lot.

Mr. Lackey stated I could see if this plan was for a one year fix. Whether it's maintained or not, what's in my mind are construction steps. I may be wrong but I have a hard time seeing that there for a long period of time.

Mr. Ferrell stated it's kind of tough to predict what's going to happen, and we have to prepare ourselves for those things.

Mrs. Chaney stated I believe we had a motion and a second on that.

The motion to approve the request with the condition that the steps must be stained was approved by a 3-2 vote.

- 4. A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new wall signage at 610 Craghead Street. The signage "Brewed Awakening" and the company logo will be approximately 27 square feet and displayed along Craghead Street.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. John Hale with Brewed Awakening.

Mr. Hale stated good afternoon I'm John Hale, owner of Binding Time which will now be Brewed Awakening. I'm just here basically to address any questions you might have.

Mr. Ranson asked is this going to be painted on the building?

Mr. Hale stated it's being done by Power Signs.

Mr. Ranson asked so it's going to be a sign that's going to be made and attached?

Mr. Hale stated right but it will be flat.

Mrs. Nicholas asked he wanted to know why you put a flat sign instead of one that came out so passing traffic would be able to see.

Mr. Hale stated we were under the understanding that it might be inappropriate for the neighborhood. We were trying to basically be as conscientious as all the other signage in the neighborhood and did as best as we could.

Mr. Ranson asked will it be lighted?

Mr. Hale stated it will not be lighted.

Mrs. Chaney closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

5. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace existing store front windows, reface an existing sign, and to paint the store front at 531 Main Street. Work includes replacing the store front windows with a full length wood window, reface the existing sign with the same style and size lettering, and changing the store front color scheme to turquoise, black, and white.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on behalf of the request.

Mrs. Chaney closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson asked to whom do I ask my questions?

Mrs. Burton stated we will do our best.

Mr. Ranson stated this picture is the building, but these are divided windows. This may sound odd coming from me but all the other windows along there are just solid sheets of plate glass. That seems to be more appropriate. I assume there was a certain aesthetic there. I would prefer that it be just a big piece of plate glass like all the other storefronts around there. I don't say that lightly.

Mrs. Chaney stated from the Certificate of Appropriateness, it says a full length wood window.

Mr. Ranson stated these look like infilled windows and I didn't know if she was going to fill out the space with tread.

Mr. Holtry stated when I spoke to her she wanted to go with the whole thing. She wanted to make it like the pictures that you have there.

Mr. Ranson stated it appears that was the original situation like all the other storefronts. I just feel like it should be a large sheet of plate glass like all the others are.

Mr. Ferrell made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. Mr. Lackey read a statement acknowledging that he abstained from voting due to conflict of interest. The motion was approved by a 4-0-1 vote.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to add items six and seven to the agenda. Mr. Ranson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

6. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new projecting sign at 601 Main Street. The signage for Commonwealth Silver & Goldsmiths will be two-sided and approximately 30" x 48" and will hang on the storefront near the Floyd Street intersection. The sign itself will be made from a composite material to eliminate maintenance but mimic wood. There will be two external gooseneck lights that will hang from the iron brackets to illuminate the sign at night.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

No one was present to speak on behalf of the request.

Mrs. Chaney Closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Lackey seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

7. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new wall signage at 554 Craghead Street. The signage "Supply Resources" will be displayed on the front façade above the first floor. The material used will be a thin metal plate with solid lettering.*

Mrs. Chaney opened the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. Rick Barker with Supply Resources.

Mr. Barker stated I'm Rick Barker with Supply Resources. When we filed this we thought it might have been too late to be included in your docket, so thank you for making this official. You're probably aware this is a recent tax credit project and interestingly the Department of Historic Resources actually called out in our tax credit application that they must approve the exterior signage on the façade. So we completed the building, we've been occupying the building, and now we're just following up to consider the signage on the façade. I think you were copied to the email on the reply from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources where they suggested that they did not have a problem with the existing sign. The existing design concept, if you look at the photo that shows the original banner in 1897, we're essentially going to leave that there; that will be there to describe the history of the building. So we thought we would drop to the lower cornice and add our brand along with the street number which is not on the building. This is material and color of the signage if anyone wants to see that. If you were on site and saw the cornice is metal. It's over 100 years old and it's a very uneven surface, so it has been recommended to put the sign there and rather than do some aluminum, paint this and attach to the cornice. In addition to the letters and the numbers, you'll see details of some little stars there. That's just a graphic enhancement that sort of echoes the stars that are on the tension rod caps on both sides of the building.

Mr. Ranson asked it's going to be individual letters cut out or would they be attached as one?

Mr. Barker stated it would be one big piece of metal.

Mr. Ranson asked so it will be a long piece of black metal with this written on it?

Mr. Barker stated yes.

Mrs. Chaney closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. Mr. Ferrell made a statement acknowledging that he abstained from voting due to conflict of interest. The motion was approved by a 4-0-1 vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The May 14, 2015 minutes were approved with one correction by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Approved By: