

Board of Architectural Review
Minutes
April 21, 1998

Present:

Joan Fenton (Chair)
Joe Celentano
W.G. Clark
Brent Nelson
Ken Schwartz
Linda Winner
Dawn Thompson

Staff Present
Tarpley Vest

At 5:05 Ms. Fenton began the meeting. She indicated that the BAR had begun using a system whereby brief presentations limited to 5 minutes can be squeezed in at the beginning of the meeting. She indicated that this is used for proposals that are generally acceptable but require approval.

101 3rd Street SE: Advance Auto Building Side Door

Staff presented the report.

Ms. Fenton asked the building owner, Gabe Silverman, about the light above the doorway in the drawing.

Mr. Silverman indicated that they will get approval for the light in the future. He indicated that the light will be chosen to be compatible with the rest of the building.

Ms. Fenton indicated that Mr. Silverman was proposing a second new door on this side of the building. She asked if the board could review the two doors at the same time. She indicated that one door was for the bank and one door was for a restaurant.

Mr. Silverman indicated that there is a long distance between the two doors. He indicated that the two doors are for entirely different uses. He indicated that the door to the restaurant would be the full height of the existing opening.

Ms. Fenton asked if four businesses are using this side of the building.

Mr. Silverman answered yes.

Mr. Nelson asked about the location of the bank door on the drawing.

Mr. Silverman pointed out the bank door and the handicap access on the drawing. He indicated that the restaurant door would be of hard pine and tempered glass.

Ms. Fenton asked for comment from the public. There were no public comments.

Mr. Celentano asked about the door material. He asked if the door was only available in anodized bronze.

Mr. Silverman indicated that the bronze door is currently available. He indicated that this type of door must be metal.

Mr. Celentano indicated that while the bronze finish is like the adjacent building, the adjacent building has different characteristics. He asked if the openings in this facade will have light mullions.

Mr. Silverman indicated that they will probably go to another color. He indicated that he has long range plans to change the colors on the building. He indicated that he will choose a color to be compatible with the openings and colors.

Mr. Celentano asked about the front of the building.

Mr. Silverman indicated that the front has clean anodized aluminum framed doors. He indicated that the front of the building has a very different street use. He indicated that turning the corner of the building there are a variety of uses. He indicated that there is an intentional breakup on the side. He indicated that he is trying to bring the streetscape back.

Mr. Silverman indicated that the architect recommended the heart pine material for the restaurant door because it is closer to the bronze anodized element.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve both new doors on the Advance Building as submitted.

Ms. Winner seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Bashir's Gourmet Cafe

Staff presented the report.

Bashir Kehlafa indicated that his reasons for choosing the plastic furniture over the metal furniture were economic. He indicated that they intend to have an informal cafe space for eating sandwiches, similar to Bagby's.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the furniture as submitted.

Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Lafayette Cafe

Robert Jordan indicated that he would be using the same dark green resin furniture that Mr. Kahlafa submitted. He indicated that it is similar to the furniture existing on the mall.

Mr. Celentano made a motion to approve the furniture as submitted.
Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

512 West Main Street
Rear Deck Addition

Mark Hahn, applicant, indicated that he would like to improve the area in the back of the diner space. He indicated that currently it is wasted space and ugly. He indicated that he would like to construct lattice work to grow Ivy and a small deck. He indicated that the lattice would be installed along the poles. He indicated that the deck would be 85 feet by 22 feet and would be raised off the ground about 8 inches. He indicated that it would be a single framed deck constructed with 2 by 8's.

Mr. Fenton indicated that she would like to see a formal proposal.

Mr. Celentano asked if the deck would be visible from the street.

The applicant indicated the lattice would be visible from the street. He indicated that he understands that this board is to review the aesthetic value of the lattice.

Ms. Fenton indicated that only the lattice and whatever is grown on it would be visible from the street.

Ms. Fenton indicated that she would like to suggest that the applicant present a more formal proposal at the next meeting.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he would also be more comfortable with a more formal proposal.

Ms. Fenton indicated that her sense is that this board is comfortable with decks and with lattice. She indicated that they would need to know specifically what the applicant plans to grow.

The applicant asked what he should bring to the board for review.

Ms. Fenton indicated that they would like to see the lattice color and what they will plant.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he would like to see a formal proposal including a plan of how the area is organized. He indicated that he agrees with Ms. Fenton that he has no objections to the idea, but that it would be helpful to see what they are looking at.

Mr. Clark indicated that a floor plan showing the diner building, the proposed deck and lattice, and the streets, to scale would be helpful.

Mr. Hahn indicated that he had drawn the back of the lot with deck to scale and that he will continue that and draw the entire area to scale.

Ms. Winner indicated that it looks like it will be an improvement.

Vending Carts on the Downtown Mall

Ms. Fenton indicated that she would abstain from making formal comments, as she would be an owner of the carts with the applicant.

Albert Tabackman, applicant, displayed photographs of vending carts he would like to use on the Downtown Mall. He indicated that the carts are presently used at Waterside at Virginia Beach. He indicated that the overall wheel width is 4 feet, the length is 10 feet and the height is 6 feet 6 inches.

Mr. Clark indicated that his current expertise doesn't extend to carts.

Mr. Tabackman indicated that the intent is to improve the look of the vendors on the mall.

Ms. Winner asked if the carts actually roll.

Mr. Tabackman answer yes.

Ms. Fenton indicated that these carts are the type used in an upscale mall.

Mr. Tabackman indicated that they are attempting to set an example for future vending on the mall.

Mr. Celentano asked if they would be used for selling food.

Mr. Tabackman indicated that they would be used for selling general merchandise.

Ms. Winner asked about the material on the top.

Mr. Tabackman indicated that they would use the existing canvas material.

Mr. Schwartz asked if vendors were required to have licenses.

Ms. Fenton indicated that there are 60 vendors currently licensed under the Department of Taxation. She indicated that they have been trying to get the city to upgrade the vending requirements.

Ms. Winner asked where the carts would be at night.

Mr. Tabackman indicated that they would roll back into the store.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he hasn't given it a lot of thought yet but that he would like to think about carts on the mall. He indicated that he doesn't know how he feels about this issue. He indicated that he is caught unprepared and he would prefer to think it over. He indicated that he would like to talk with other people about the issue.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he agrees that he would like a little time to think about it.

Mr. Clark indicated that there are already carts on the mall and that the board is considering cart style, not cart presence.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he agrees with Mr. Schwartz's comments and that this is moving in the right direction. He indicated that they are moving toward making improvements over the skirted tables. He indicated that he would like to be able to give this some more thought.

Mr. Celentano indicated that he is concerned about the possible number of carts on the mall. He indicated that the number of carts is not the board's issue.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he would like to have the carts placed on the formal agenda for next month.

Mr. Clark indicated that he is comfortable either reviewing the carts now or placing them on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to defer the application for the carts until next month.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Clark indicated that he will be unable to attend the May meeting but that he would like to have it noted that he is in favor of the carts.

Bistro Baliene

Staff presented the report.

Ms. Fenton asked the applicant, Martha Susinno, is she was proposing using all existing furniture.

Ms. Susinno indicated that they would use all the previously approved furniture. She indicated that the past restaurant owner had used umbrellas. She indicated that she was not planning to use the umbrellas and that she just wanted approval for the tables for now.

Ms. Winner made a motion to approve the furniture as submitted

Mr. Schwartz seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Jewish Mother Cafe Space

Staff presented the report.

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the application as submitted.
Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

South Street Brewery: New Door
Staff presented the report.

Mr. Michael Stoneking, applicant, indicated that they were specifically seeking a response for the new door.

Mr. Silverman indicated that he likes the proposal and that he would like to see the neon stay.

Mr. Nelson indicated that the photographs help a lot.

Ms. Winner indicated that the pictures are very nice.

Mr. Clark indicated that he would like to complement the owners on not unduly altering the facade of the building. He indicated that the proposal is in character with the original building.

Mr. Celentano indicated that he likes the sign.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he does not think that the sign is appropriate.

Ms. Winner indicated that she likes the sign.

Mr. Clark indicated that he likes the sign.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he likes the sign.

Mr. Clark made a motion to accept the alterations to the South Street facade as proposed.
Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.
The motion was unanimously approved.

909 West Main Street
Staff presented the report.

Candace Smith, applicant, indicated that they will replace the guardrail with a two pipe guardrail. She indicated that at this point they need to proceed with their application for a demolition permit.

At this time, Dawn Thompson arrived.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he would like to complement the applicant on the exhibit. He indicated that the graphics are very appreciated.

Mr. Celentano asked if there were requirements for landscaping.

Ms. Smith indicated that there is no site plan required for this project. She indicated that work associated with the widening of 10th Street will actually help the back of this structure. She indicated that there will be undergrounding of some utilities.

Mr. Celentano made a motion to approve the demolition request.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Fenton indicated that she wanted to add that she would love to see some landscaping.

Ms. Vest indicated that although Ms. Hook was unable to attend the meeting, she wanted to share with the board that she supports the applicant's request for demolition.

Virginia National Bank

Staff presented the report.

Madison Spencer, applicant, indicated that the proposed changes would allow for the needed access to the 3rd floor apartment and would allow for the program and space needs for the bank. He indicated that decisions about the ATM machine were dictated by access. He indicated that ADA accessibility, existing conditions and the structure of the building led to the decisions. He indicated that the only change they will make to the facade is signage. He indicated that on the south elevation they intend to eliminate the bay windows. He indicated that their display includes a photo of the rooftop equipment. He indicated that the project will include replacing the existing unit on the rear of the bubble shop.

Mr. Celentano asked about the ATM light.

Mr. Spencer indicated that the concerns that led to the choice of ATM's were a built in trash receptacle and ADA accessibility.

Mr. Celentano asked if the ATM included a separate light.

Mr. Nelson indicated that the light was part of the surround.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the backlit sign is subject to approval.

Mr. Spencer indicated that they were willing to explore having a raised letter sign which would read as color during the day and would read as edge lighting at night.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the ATM protrudes and that this is OK with ADA requirements. She indicated that a protruding ATM that comes all the way to the ground makes it difficult to clean the area. She indicated that she understands that the backlight and the trash receptacle are necessary. She indicated that her sense is that she is not sure exactly what it will look like.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he thinks it is a great project and that he would like to commend the applicant. He indicated that he looked at the existing door which will be amended for the Williams residence. He indicated that he likes the door and thinks it has been improved even more. He asked about the rear windows.

Mr. Spencer indicated that one of the windows would be replaced with a recessed brick panel.

Mr. Nelson indicated that it is good that they are moving back to an original type of window.

Mr. Clark indicated that he agrees and that he respects the minimal intrusion.

Ms. Thompson indicated that she agrees with Mr. Clark's and Mr. Nelson's sentiments about the project.

Mr. Celentano indicated that his comments relate to the ATM. He asked if there was a reason that the ATM was projecting instead of flush.

Mr. Spencer indicated that the decision to use a projecting ATM has to do with the bank equipment, the pitched street surface, and ADA accessibility. He indicated that the bank researched the ATM at great length.

Mr. Celentano asked Mr. Spencer if he believed that this ATM is better than a more flush ATM.

Mr. Spencer indicated that he does believe the proposed ATM is better.

Ms. Winner indicated that she like the project and that she won't second guess the applicant's ATM expertise.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that the project is encouraging. He indicated that it is a project of minimal intervention. He indicated that it was a good decision to move the ATM to the side. He indicated that it retains the integrity of the Main Street elevation. He indicated that he worries about the ATM sticking out more than it has to. He indicated that it seems there may be some version of the ATM that is more flush.

Mr. Spencer indicated that there is a weathershield condition and that they have moved the ATM as close as they could to projection of the pillars.

Mr. Celentano indicated that Model 1021 is more flush and is a simpler configuration. He indicated that he has a hard time imagining that any manufactured ATM would not be code compliant.

Bill Adams of Train and Spencer indicated that they cannot move into the building space any farther with the ATM. He indicated that room is needed behind the ATM for interior access issues.

Mr. Clark indicated that model #1021 is a better choice than model #1016. He indicated that he worries about nit-picking, but that he does agree with Mr. Celentano and Mr. Schwartz. He indicated that he thinks the project is splendid and that this would make it even better.

Mr. Spencer indicated that they are willing to work towards other options for the ATM.

Mr. Silverman asked if both of the two models have trash receptacles.
The answer was yes.

Mr. Clark asked if it would be possible to make a motion to approve the architectural design with further review of the two ATM units.

Ms. Fenton indicated that that would be possible.

Mr. Mark Giles of Virginia National Bank indicated that there is a feature function issue between models 1016 and 1021.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the board has decided against sub-committees in general, but a sub-committee may be possible in this case.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that this is a wonderful proposal. He indicated that each element is so restrained and sensitive, but that the ATM will stick out. He indicated that he is in favor of Mr. Clark's suggestion for a motion to approve all but the ATM.

Mr. Silverman suggested that the board approved the application with model 1021. He indicated that if the applicant could justify why 1021 was not feasible, the board could consider another ATM.

Ms. Fenton suggested that a subcommittee could look into the feasibility of model 1021.

Mr. Spencer indicated that there is no need for the board to have to research. He indicated that they could find out the details and respond to all the board members.

Mr. Clark made a motion to accept the application as submitted with the exception that the applicant use ATM Model 1021 instead of 1016, as submitted with the following condition:

If ATM 1021 cannot be used, the board will be notified and ATM 1016 will be considered for approval by staff after consultation with board members.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with all present in favor and Joan Fenton abstaining.

Neal Gropen indicated that he had a comment on the sign work. He indicated that the ATM chosen by the applicant does a better job of signage. He indicated that the bank has limited signage and that the signage will have a painted finish. He indicated that the forbidden internally

lit signs in the sign ordinance apply to acrylic or plexi signs. He indicated that he understands that the city needs to refine its sign code. He indicated that he would recommend this sign heavily for this application.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the board needs to look at the sign ordinance to see what it says.

Mr. Clark asked if the BAR could override the sign ordinance.

Ms. Fenton answered yes.

Mr. Silverman indicated that Mr. Gropen has brought up a way to change or improve some of our signage. He indicated that it would be nice in the future to use someone like him to help with possible solutions.

400 Ridge Street

Ms. Vest indicated to the board that a new concrete ramp had been installed at 400 Ridge Street. She indicated that the property owner was working with the Department of Building and Life Safety to ensure that the ramp meets all code requirements. She indicated that the property owners was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness from the BAR for the ramp. She indicated that the ramp meets code, with the exception of needing handrailings.

Mr. Nelson indicated that regarding the railing he would like to see something used that will disrupt the site as minimally as possible.

Ms. Fenton asked if there were any other concrete ramps in historic districts?

Mr. Schwartz asked if the ramp was steeper or shallower than 1/20. He indicated that it is shallower than 1/20 the ground could be built up to the necessary height and the handrails wouldn't be necessary.

Mr. Clark indicated that the applicant will need to submit the handrails to the board for review.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that a gentle way of dealing with it is to bring the slope closer to the sidewalk.

Mr. Schwartz moved to approve the ramp with the understanding that the handrail be submitted to the BAR for review before it is installed.

Ms. Thompson indicated that she is concerned about the precedent that this could establish that somebody with historic buildings can go ahead and install concrete ramps and get approval after the fact. She indicated that there is some danger that other property owners will see the ramp and do the same thing.

Mr. Clark indicated that he is concerned that if an occupant lives there and needs access, there may be approval that supersedes the BAR's approval. He indicated that the legality of access needs may be stronger than the board's authority.

Mr. Celentano asked if the board thinks that concrete is the wrong material?

Ms. Thompson indicated that she does think that concrete is the wrong material and that wood would be the optimal solution.

Mr. Nelson agreed that this is the wrong material. He indicated that this will be there long after the resident. He indicated that represents another situation where somebody did not follow the process and that it happens too often. He indicated that this is something that we can't not address.

Ms. Martha Gleason indicated that the first block of Ridge Street has been destroyed and that this is the beginning of the second block.

Mr. Nelson indicated that if they are to approve this they need to make it clear that the owner must apply to the board for any changes before they make the changes.

Ms. Thompson indicated that she has concerns beyond this specific owner. She indicated that if they approve the ramp than anyone who drives down the street and sees this ramp must assume that it must be fine.

Mr. Nelson indicated that each board member needs to go to the site and then discuss it.

Ms. Thompson indicated that she is uncomfortable retroactively approving it.

Mr. Schwartz withdrew his motion for approval. He indicated that the owner may have to do something temporary to meet code requirements.

Ms. Winner indicated that she was concerned about the owner going a month without handrails.

Ms. Thompson indicated that at one time letters were sent to all property owners in the historic districts explaining the regulations. She indicated that the property owner should know the rules.

Mr. Celentano indicated that it is possible that the owner believes that he did the right thing.

Espresso Royal Cafe

Ms. Vest indicated that the Espresso Cafe has meet all of the conditions of approval except the removal of the two side 1/2 round circles of glass. She indicated that the applicant has requested approval to retain all three 1/2 round circles of glass.

Ms. Winner indicated that she had no problem with the request.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the concern was that it would be structurally difficult to retain the 1/2 circles if the lower glass panes were removed.

Ms. Thompson indicated that the architect didn't believe that the lower windows were structurally sound.

Ms. Winner made a motion to approve retaining all three upper glass panes if the windows are structurally sound.

Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Other Business

Ms. Fenton indicated that a group has approached the city and requested that they re-think the vending situation on the Mall. She indicated that some of the suggestions have included having one or two types of approved carts with a set number of carts in set locations. She indicated that rather than wait for something to happen from within the city, she and her husband decided to buy some carts. She indicated that they plan to put the carts out and see what types of comments they get. She indicated that they think the existing conditions are awful. She indicated that she would like the board to make some recommendations as to what their opinions are concerning vendors.

Ms. Gleason asked if there were carts would there be no tables?

Ms. Fenton indicated that she would like to have no tables. She indicated that the current vending situation gives a look of a downtown in decay. She indicated that the board can make a recommendation about vendors on the mall. She indicated that because it is a historic district vendors can be restricted or banned altogether.

Mr. Clark indicated that he hasn't paid a lot of attention to the vending condition.

Ms. Winner indicated that restricting vendors could be elitist.

Ms. Fenton indicated that vending may be allowed just in certain locations or at certain times.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that by waiting a month to review the carts it will give the board time to look at the vending situation.

Mr. Clark indicated that he likes the look of the cart but he would hate to see too many carts on the mall.

Mr. Celentano indicated that he would hate to see some merchants go because they can't afford the cart.

Mr. Nelson asked if there was some way to make the carts available based on need.

Ms. Fenton indicated that she would like to see the next worksession deal with the sign ordinance, vendors, and cafe seating.

Ms. Thompson indicated that there should be no flapping banners in the historic district. She indicated that there is currently a banner of this type at Papa John's Pizza. She indicated that she felt this rule should be enforced.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he agrees and that it should be enforced.

Ms. Fenton indicated that she suggests that we ask city staff to enforce the existing regulations, particularly for banners and tents in the historic district.

Ms. Vest indicated that specific complaints relating to specific addresses should be submitted to staff.

Ms. Thompson indicated that in the past they have done something to celebrate historic preservation week. She indicated that it would be nice if the board could choose some restoration project that they feel is exemplary. She indicated that this would show the positive side of what they do.

Approval of Minutes: March 17, 1998

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve the minutes form March 17, 1998.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adjourn

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion

The motion was unanimously approved

At 7:00 the meeting was adjourned.