

City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
January 18, 2000

Minutes

Present:

Jane Fenton (Chair)
Brent Nelson (Vice Chair)
Jay Oschrin
W.G. Clark
Ken Schwartz
Joe Celentano
Linda Winner
Jesse Hook

Also Present:

Tarpley Vest

At 5:00 p.m., Ms. Fenton convened the meeting. She indicated that the minutes needed to be approved and asked if anyone had any changes or amendments.

The following amendments to the minutes were submitted:

On the September 21st minutes, in the fifth paragraph on page 2, it should read "would allow" instead of "to allow." Ms. Vest also wanted language inserted indicating she asked if "they would be comfortable denying some applications."

Mr. Oschrin suggested a spelling change on page 5 to the word "butt out."

Mr. Celentano indicated he was not present at that meeting.

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the minutes as amended.

Mr. Oschrin seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

316 East Main Street

Ms. Fenton indicated Ms. Vest would give the initial presentation, after which board members would be free to add comments.

Ms. Vest presented background on design guidelines for cafe furniture on the downtown mall. The Hardware Store Cafe furniture complies with most of the guidelines, except for the color of the chairs.

Ms. Vest recommended that the cafe's certificate of appropriateness application be approved anyway, as the furniture had been in place prior to the adoption

of the guidelines, and because the guidelines themselves will soon be up for review.

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the Hardware Store Cafe's application.

Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

1205 Wertland Street

Staff presented the report.

Richard Boyd, with Daggett and Grigg Architects, stated that their plans for the new complex were intended to be subtle, to blend in well with the Wertland Street streetscape and to comply with the guidelines.

Ms. Fenton opened the meeting up for questions.

Mr. Oschrin asked if the parking plans were for one and a half stalls per unit.

Mr. Boyd indicated that it depends upon the unit size. He said that the total requirement for the entire complex would be under 69 spaces.

Ms. Vest indicated that the code requires 2 spaces for a 3 bedroom unit, four spaces for a 4 bedroom unit, and one space for a studio.

Mr. Nelson asked if the architects were using true divided lights on the windows.

Mr. Boyd indicated that they were.

Mr. Nelson then asked if all sides of the buildings would use the same construction material.

Mr. Boyd indicated in the affirmative.

Concerning the site plan, Mr. Nelson asked if the drawing showed an existing or a proposed retaining wall.

Mr. Boyd indicated that it was an existing wall, part of which would be torn down in construction. They would try to retain as much as possible.

Mr. Nelson asked what the reason was for the buildings not being parallel.

Mr. Boyd said this was to avoid a long, straight expanse of parking space.

Ms. Winner asked for more information on the vinyl

siding.

Mr. Boyd indicated the siding is the same as that

used on a project just down the street that was approved not long ago.

Mr. Schwartz said the application indicated wood siding, but the plans indicated vinyl, and asked for clarification.

Mr. Boyd confirmed that it was vinyl.

Ms. Fenton called for board members to voice their opinion on the use of vinyl siding.

Mr. Schwartz pointed out that vinyl is a non-traditional material and that this complex would lie within the historic district. He indicated that there would need to be a compelling reason to use this material, and cost basis may not be enough, as the buildings would be in close proximity to the University of Virginia. He indicated he remembered the approval of vinyl on the buildings down the street was based on their not being very visible from the public right of way.

Mr. Boyd indicated these new buildings will likely be even less visible.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that it would be important to show this in the presentation drawing.

Ms. Fenton called for questions from the public. There being no questions, Ms. Fenton called for comments from the board members.

Mr. Nelson commented on what he liked about the design of the complex, but added a concern about the angle of the buildings in relation to each other. He indicated that their present position is awkward, and that he thought there were better options available to break up the massing of the parking lot.

Mr. Oschrein asked about the height of the wall.

Mr. Boyd indicated that the one closest to Wertland is about two feet high.

Mr. Celentano asked how these buildings get built back behind the other properties. He asked if each of the individual properties had been bought, and if each were on their own lot.

Mr. Boyd indicated that that was so now, but that the owner would abandon the dividing property lines.

Ms. Vest added that the four lots were being reconfigured.

Mr. Oschrin asked how this is done by right.

Ms. Vest indicated that it is possible based on the zoning.

Mr. Schwartz confirmed that this was by right, in that R3 zoning allows for a certain density per acre. Mr. Boyd added that this could not be done in R1 or R1-A.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the front buildings have been preserved with the understanding that they could then make their money on the back.

Mr. Celentano stated that traditionally, the historic buildings would not have buildings of equal scale behind them, only service buildings. He indicated that this was an unusual situation.

Mr. Boyd indicated this was why they were trying to keep the complex design subtle, so it would fade in behind the historic buildings.

Mr. Celentano asked if landscaping would be used to facilitate this, and Ms. Fenton echoed this concern. Mr. Boyd indicated that the landscaping was being planned.

Ms. Winner commented that she thought the use of vinyl siding should be reconsidered.

Mr. Oschrin suggested making the existing wall higher to hide the vehicles behind the historic buildings, or having the parking lot be lower.

Mr. Oschrin asked what the line below the wall line represents on the site plan.

Mr. Boyd indicated that it was a grading line, five-twelve.

Mr. Schwartz suggested adding a site section and an elevation, to indicate what one would see from eye level on the street. He also echoed the vinyl concern.

Mr. Clark indicated that presentation requirements will ask that the context be photographed, and that a site plan that shows the relation of the buildings to surrounding structures would be very valuable.

Staff presented the report.

Mr. Celentano spoke on the specifics of the proposal for the addition to the Water Street parking garage, emphasizing the following points:

- The proposed addition will not show the ramps, which are on the second bay.
- The present version of the addition is distinguished by its angle, which follows the angle of the railroad tracks, and a notch in it that recalls the alleys or midblock spaces.
- The stair tower in the corner will be designed to mediate between the railroad tracks and the city.
- No consensus has been reached about how to treat the ground plane and the pedestrian scale of a part of the street.
- There is a proposal to pull the security screen out to the edge of the site, to make it both the fence and the security screen.

Ms. Fenton asked about the purpose of the security screen.

Mr. Celentano indicated that it is to keep people from getting into the garage.

Ms. Winner asked if the existing screen would be pulled out to the edge of the property.

Mr. Celentano said that would not be necessary on the existing screen.

Mr. Celentano continued with the presentation, adding that the materials used would match the existing garage.

Mr. Oschrin asked if there would be any retail around the back.

Mr. Celentano indicated that it would be pure parking space. He then added that it would be important to maintain the current street level parking arrangement.

Mr. Nelson asked what would be done with the triangular area that is created inside the new addition.

Mr. Celentano indicated that there might be something interesting hung in that space, but that its main purpose was to make light and open space in the middle of the garage.

Mr. Nelson asked how this new design differed from what was initially proposed.

Mr. Celentano indicated the difference was in the placement of the ramps.

Ms. Winner commented that she was charmed by the design of the tower.

Mr. Oschrin expressed concern about the appearance of concrete on the new addition, considering the housing units that are planned nearby.

Ms. Fenton called for comments from the board.

Mr. Clark commented that he disagreed with the location of the tower. He said the orthogonal is violated only when the railroad cuts it, so the west façade has more responsibility to the street than it has to the geometry system of the railroad. He also added that it is difficult to treat the ground plane. He indicated that the tower could be absorbed into the façade.

Mr. Nelson commented that the back of the building is not attractive and that he welcomes plans for change. He added that he did not agree completely with Mr. Clark, and that he liked to see variations in the orthogonal scheme in cities. He agreed that it is difficult to put the front angle space to use.

Mr. Schwartz commented on design considerations, adding that there might be logic to keeping the brick system going, so that the transition occurs on the corner and at the back. He is more comfortable with a subtler expression of change, and a greater degree of consistency along the side elevation.

Mr. Celentano commented that the brick edge has to do with holding the street, and on his reasons for putting the structures at right angles to each other. He suggested continuing the brick language across at the first floor level.

Mr. Schwartz commented on elements of the strategy that he found effective and attractive.

Mr. Oschrin commented that he thought this parking

garage was the nicest one he had ever seen. He suggested continuing with the existing scheme and not

making more of the structure than what it is.

Mr. Celentano commented that in earlier plans where they had done that, he felt they were making a mega-block of parking, and so he wanted to articulate the addition differently.

Mr. Schwartz suggested bringing a portion of the structure back to the street, letting the "quirky corner" happen but in less of a proportion with the new garage.

Mr. Celentano suggested pulling the brick across at the base level.

Mr. Clark asked if Mr. Celentano was going to return with a model. Mr. Celentano said he would if the BAR asked for it.

Mr. Schwartz commented that in his suggested scenario, the first notch would be eliminated. He added that it would be easier to evaluate if there were a three dimensional model.

Mr. Nelson commented that the first thing that caught his eye was the change in materials on the west elevation. He said he was not sure whether or not adding the brick band would make the transition from front to back more smooth.

Ms. Fenton asked if there was a consensus that no approval be given that night, since the board was requesting a model. The board agreed that it was too early to give approval, and that they wanted to see a model and some additional schemes.

Ms. Fenton called for comments from the public.

Mr. Clark Gathright introduced himself as being in charge of the project, and indicated that money was his only concern at that point.

Mr. Celentano commented that there was a dumpster that needed to be moved, as well as a cooling tower.

Mr. Clark commented that no one on the board was against the general larger scale massing of the project.

Mr. Celentano commented that the zoning on Second

Street is the area where they have had the most problems.

Ms. Fenton commented that she wanted to see more detail on what exists on the street where the angle is going to be in the garage.

Mr. Celentano gave a verbal description of what was in that area.

BAR Bylaws

Ms. Fenton asked if there were any more issues to be addressed.

Ms. Vest indicated that there were two issues. The first was the issue of BAR bylaws, which was raised at the November meeting. She indicated that her boss had requested they consider additions to the guidelines as they relate to public speakers, and that there were a few administrative changes to make. She stated that Brent Nelson had pointed out at the November meeting that BAR meetings were at 5 p.m. on Thursdays, not 3 p.m. She also suggested that they consider changing the ten minute speech length guideline.

Mr. Nelson suggested that the annual meeting be moved from July to September, since it is hard to get attendance in July.

Mr. Oschrin commented that the ten minute time includes rebuttal.

A discussion on the ten minute time requirement followed.

Mr. Oschrin suggested that applicants need to be told the time limit up front, with the option to extend the time if all board members agree.

Ms. Vest stated that in the case of the BAR, the requirement that each side have equal time did not apply.

Ms. Fenton said that the BAR meetings do not have sides.

Mr. Clark stated that he felt the time requirement was not useful, especially during a "blockbuster event."

Ms. Fenton stated that the meeting for the first proposal of Wachovia was extremely lengthy, and that the ten minute rule came out of that. She suggested it is better to have a limit that can be extended, rather than starting off with unlimited time.

Mr. Clark suggested saying, "Presentations will be

limited to ten minutes, at the discretion of the chairman."

Mr. Oschrin objected strongly to the language about "sides" in the bylaws, and suggested that it be changed.

Ms. Vest suggested striking out the lines about sides.

Ms. Fenton said she thought the time should be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Clark suggested that comments from people speaking against a project be limited to three minutes. He stated that this need not be written, only brought up when the meeting is crowded.

The other board members expressed general agreement with this.

Mr. Clark then expressed concern that this could lead to possible litigation, if one party is given more time than another.

Ms. Fenton asked if it were better to have no time limit for the general public, but to leave the time to the discretion of the Chair. The board members concurred.

Ms. Winner suggested a five or ten minute time limit for applicants, extendable at the discretion of the chair.

Ms. Fenton called for a vote on the time limit, and a ten minute time was agreed upon unanimously.

Ms. Winner suggested keeping the part of the bylaws that require the speaker to identify name and address.

Mr. Oschrin asked why the address needs to be given.

After discussion among board members, Mr. Schwartz indicated that they should keep the language in the bylaws, as having speakers identify themselves is standard practice in most meetings.

Mr. Clark suggested rewriting item number 4.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the language for application before the Board of Architectural Review as amended.

Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that it would be better for Ms. Vest and the Chair to look at the proposed

changes before it is passed.

Mr. Nelson reworded the motion to be a motion to approve the bylaws as discussed and amended that day and to have Ms. Fenton and Ms. Vest review the changes together.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Fenton asked if there was anything anyone wanted to add to the memorandum about "The Proposal to Require Applicants."

Ms. Vest indicated that the City Council has proposed an amendment to the zoning ordinance requiring a preliminary conference for major applications.

Ms. Fenton asked when the amendment would go into effect.

Ms. Vest indicated it would be by the end of March.

Ms. Fenton asked if they knew what was happening with applications to the board.

Ms. Vest indicated the deadline is closed, and that the Mayor wants to have interviews with the applicants.

Mr. Nelson commented that a lot more applications came in after the deadline was extended.

Mr. Oschrin made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

At 6:10 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.