

City of Charlottesville
Board of Architectural Review
November 21, 2000

Minutes

Present:

Joan Fenton (Chair)
Preston Coiner
Lynne Ely
W.G. Clark
Wade Tremblay
Joe Atkins

Also Present:

Tarpley Vest
Ally Cheesman

Ms. Fenton called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. She asked if there were any items to be presented by the public that were not on the agenda. Seeing none, she closed that portion of the meeting. By agreement of those members present, the approval of the minutes was deferred until further members of the BAR arrived.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION BAR 00-11-43
706 Lyons Court

Ms. Fenton explained the rules of procedure to the applicant, and then turned the floor over to Ms. Vest to make a brief presentation.

Ms. Vest indicated that this property was an individually designated historic property. According to the City records, the house dated back to 1858. She stated that the applicants were the new owners and were seeking permission to remove everything that was not original to the house, and to put on a new front porch and rear addition. She explained that she had requested the applicants to submit plans showing the existing original structure, the existing additions to be removed and the proposed new building. She then distributed some color

photographs to members of the BAR. She stated that the applicants had three different scenarios for the

front porch, and were requesting approval for all three so that they would have some flexibility. Staff recommended approval of the overall plan, with the request that the applicants go with the simplest front porch design.

Mr. John Binder, one of the applicants, stated that they were not yet owners of the property, but they had a contract to purchase it. Concerning the porches, he indicated that their preference on the porch was for the first design drawn by the architect. He then indicated that the blue lines on the drawing showed the outline of the original structure, which would not be demolished or changed. He stated that they did plan to replace the windows, but there would not be a visible difference. Referring back to the drawing, he indicated that the green outline showed the existing structure with its present additions, and added that they did not plan to demolish the gabled part of the house on the end; rather, that part would be added to. He stated that the pink outline on the drawing indicated the footprint of the new construction, which in all cases was inside the existing shed addition, with the exception of the small porch stoop shown on the left of the drawing, where the pink line went outside the green. He commented that a gravel driveway would come up to that area, where there would be a back doorway. Since the house was at an ample setback for normal construction in the city, he did not foresee objections from the City Building Department. Lastly, he added that the addition behind the house that they planned to remove was substandard and was likely not what the BAR would want to see attached to an historic structure.

Ms. Fenton asked if anyone had questions for the applicant.

Mr. Coiner asked if the old chimney on the east side of the house would come off, and the applicant confirmed this, adding that they were going to have to repaint and add brick to that side of the house and do masonry work across the top.

Mr. Coiner then asked what the applicants' reason was for not removing the concrete block porch. Mr. Binder indicated that they wanted that porch there,

since there was very little outside space. He stated that they planned to cover it with brick and add some brick steps, after removing the poorly done front stairway.

Mr. Coiner asked if the skylights on the left would be visible from the street. The applicant indicated they would be visible from the lot behind the house, but not from the street.

Ms. Fenton commented that it looked like most of the additions would not be visible from the public right-of-way.

Mr. Atkins asked if there was any indication of what kind of porch had been on the house originally. The applicant indicated that according to the present owner, the previous porch was similar to the top elevation, but it was not clear whether that was the original porch or not.

Ms. Fenton asked if there were any further questions for the applicant. Seeing none, she called for comments from the BAR.

Mr. Coiner commented that he did not have a problem with any of the demolition, and Ms. Fenton echoed his opinion, adding that it did not appear there was anything there that needed to be saved. Mr. Coiner then indicated that from a non-technical point of view, he favored the Number 1 front elevation over the others.

Mr. Tremblay asked if the applicant was going to put standing seam copper on the body of the original house, and the applicant confirmed this. Mr. Tremblay asked the applicant about the shingle he was planning to use, and then commented that he had had very good luck with the Grand Manor shingle, a forty-year shingle that very much replicates the look of slate. The applicant asked if a substitution of that nature was something that could be approved by Staff, and Mr. Tremblay indicated it could be, since

it was an upgrade from what the applicant was proposing.

Ms. Ely commented that she wanted to commend the applicant on the application, and indicated that she preferred the first front porch scenario.

Mr. Atkins asked the applicant to clarify the areas that would have the standing seam metal roof and shingles. The applicant indicated that one of the drawings was incorrect, in that it showed the lower rear roof as standing seam, where it should show shingles; but otherwise, everything else on the drawings was standing seam, including the main roof over the house, the small gable on the top elevation and the small gabled front porch.

Mr. Atkins made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Tremblay seconded the motion.

Ms. Vest suggested that if the BAR wanted to allow the applicants to use the suggested shingle, they should put that in the motion. Mr. Tremblay suggested wording approving use of an architectural shingle.

A vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION BAR 00-11-44 109 Second Street SE

Ms. Vest made a brief presentation. She indicated that the building seemed to have been built around the turn of the century, with the facade added sometime after 1940, and the storefront put up in the 1960s. She stated that the applicant was seeking approval to put up a new aluminum and glass storefront on the side street, with a new entryway. Staff had consulted the design guidelines and found the application to be appropriate, and therefore recommended approval.

Mr. Gabe Silverman, the applicant, commented that he felt the proposed storefront was in character with the design of the building, but he had nothing to add beyond that.

Ms. Fenton asked if one of the windows when it was redone would spill out onto the Live Arts Building, and Mr. Silverman responded that they were not redoing that window.

Mr. Coiner asked how the applicant was going to deal with changing the sidewalk. Mr. Silverman indicated that by bringing the door to the right, they would fill in, which would allow them to make the entrance

handicapped accessible.

Mr. Atkins asked if the new doors would be going into existing openings, and the applicant confirmed this.

Ms. Fenton asked if there were any further questions. Seeing none, she closed that portion of the meeting and called for comments from the general public. None were raised. She asked if the Board members had any comments.

Mr. Atkins commented that the removal of the canopy revealed the awkward thinness of the stucco lintel between the glass block and the doors. The applicant agreed with this, and added that the canopy did not make any sense there. Mr. Atkins then commented that overall, he felt the application represented a nice, modest improvement.

Mr. Tremblay made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Atkins seconded, and the motion was approved, with Mr. Clark abstaining.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION BAR 00-11-45
1120 Wertland Street

Ms. Vest showed examples of the shingle as well as several photos to the Board members, and indicated that Staff felt that the application met with the requirements of the design guidelines.

Mr. Atkins commented that there is a line in the design guidelines that says that one should ensure that the slate is deteriorating enough for re-flashing, and asked if Mr. Tremblay he had tried to fix the flashing and reuse the slate before deciding to go with shingles. Mr. Tremblay indicated that he

was not sure what type of slate it was, but if it turned out to be Buckingham, it would have almost unlimited life. However, removal of slate often results in damage to a fair number of them, and replacement of slate is extraordinarily expensive. He indicated that with this building, they hoped to come up with something with a reasonable resemblance to the detailing of the building at 1205 Wertland.

Ms. Ely asked about the proposed skylights, and Mr. Tremblay indicated they would be located on the south exposure, looking from the back side of the house. He added that every element of the house was visible

from the public right-of-way, but the skylights would be the least visible element.

Mr. Atkins commented that there was some language about fish scale metal, but Mr. Tremblay indicated that no fish scale metal would be used. He added that essentially all the metal detailed would be replacing copper.

Mr. Atkins commented that the building at 1205 Wertland looked good, but he had hesitation about losing slate, particularly because he felt the solidity of the brick and slate went well together. He suggested that the shingle would be more effective on a wood-sided house, and commented that he would appreciate any effort to retain the slate.

Mr. Tremblay commented that he would appreciate \$50,000 to allow him to do that.

Ms. Ely indicated that she had an editorial comment about a problem with this guideline, in that the language "in cases of extreme financial hardship" was not clear and posed a continuing source of confusion. She stated that she agreed with Mr. Atkins that the house at 1205 looked good, but the slate looked even better.

Mr. Clark indicated he shared the sentiments expressed by both Mr. Atkins and Ms. Ely, in that slate was obviously stronger and better than shingle, but he too had trouble with outright denial of the application.

Mr. Coiner commented that it was his understanding that reroofing was not an issue that needed to come before the BAR. Ms. Vest indicated that they were automatically sending all roofs to the BAR, as they had always done.

Ms. Fenton indicated that it appeared everyone shared the same sentiments, but the financial question was coming into play, since it is hard to impose a heavy financial burden on an applicant.

Mr. Clark asked if Mr. Tremblay had the actual figures on the cost difference. Mr. Tremblay replied that he did not, but to the best of his knowledge, keeping the slate would double the cost of going with shingle.

General discussion on the components of the cost followed, and Mr. Tremblay indicated it was a combination of labor and materials. He commented that people often regard slate roofs as maintenance-free, but they are not, and they are expensive to work with.

Ms. Ely brought up the approval of the application for 1205 Wertland by the BAR, and Ms. Fenton commented that the Board members had wanted to keep the slate, but could not find support in the guidelines to demand that of the applicant.

Mr. Coiner asked if Mr. Tremblay had looked at the rubber, simulated slate, and he indicated he had, but he had received cautionary statements about it and was hesitant to use it. Mr. Coiner commented that the first generation was not very good, but the latest generation seemed to be better, and was half the cost of slate.

Ms. Ely asked how the use of slate would affect his plans to install skylights, and Mr. Tremblay indicated that he assumed that with the appropriate flashing, one could install skylights in a slate roof. General discussion about guidelines concerning skylights followed, and Mr. Tremblay commented that it was his intention to keep the skylights on the one, minimally visible exposure.

Mr. Atkins made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with an urging that the applicant exhaustively explore the reuse of the slate shingles, if at all possible, and to look at simulated slate as an option to asphalt shingles. He added that the motion included approval of the skylights as described by Mr. Tremblay, and Mr. Coiner seconded the motion.

Ms. Ely asked, if Mr. Tremblay found a way to reuse the slate, whether they would still be talking about reroofing, or whether they would be talking about an historic roof. General discussion followed, and Ms. Fenton clarified that the motion was to approve the skylight, and the BAR would accept the roofing material proposed by Mr. Tremblay, but would prefer that he explore the reuse of slate or the possibility of simulated slate as a viable option.

Ms. Fenton called for further comments, but none were raised. A vote was then taken, and the motion was approved, with Mr. Tremblay abstaining.

Mr. Coiner commented that he hoped Mr. Tremblay would consider using the simulated slate, since the building then could be used as an example for other builders in the city.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION BAR 98-11-52
100 W Main Street

Ms. Vest referred the Board members to the information on the lighting that had been submitted in the October packet, and commented that Staff found the proposed lights appropriate to the design of the building.

Mr. Mark Schuyler, the lighting designer, indicated that the overall concern, from a lighting design standpoint, was that the setbacks in the building not be called out too strongly by over-lighting them or doing anything garish. Using illustrations, he indicated the size and placement of the light fixtures. He stated that some of the lights would be on an astronomical time clock, and would go off around 2:00 a.m., while the others would remain on all night. Above the doorways, he indicated they

would use compact fluorescent lights in a vertical configuration, which would light the inside of the doorway so that somebody standing there could be seen, but which would also keep the glare down. He commented that they wanted the building to look like it had been there for a long time, with simple, geometric fixtures that did not call attention to themselves.

Mr. Tremblay asked what the elevation of the lights were from the ground, and Mr. Schuyler indicated he was not sure, but he would guess about 18 feet.

Ms. Fenton commented that she usually thought of light coming from the windows of retail spaces, rather than from a light overhead. She indicated that it looked fine, but it was unusual. Mr. Schuyler responded that the concern was that when the shopkeeper turned off the lights at 5:00 p.m., there would be a negative space there, and so they wanted outside lights so that anyone standing in that area would be visible.

Mr. Atkins asked about a streetlight midway down the block. Mr. Schuyler indicated that there had been two streetlights in that area, but one had been removed completely and the other was not working. The applicant had wanted to mount a streetlight on the side of the building itself, but for a number of reasons, Mr. Schuyler urged him not to do that. Instead, he proposed putting up a pole, which would be part of the landscape design that would be presented to the BAR at a later time.

Mr. Schuyler commented that the materials were different at different elevations of the building, but the lighting would be congruent.

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the application. Mr. Atkins seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Atkins observed that the ornate keystones that the BAR had not approved at the previous meeting had been installed in the building anyway. He stated that although he did not appreciate that, they did

give some relief to that elevation of the building, and so he would be willing to let go of the option of grinding them down to make them smooth.

Mr. Clark commented that although the keystones were in relief, he did not believe they were the same ones that had been presented at the last meeting.

Mr. Atkins stated that he was not sure what options the BAR had, but he would be in favor of letting them stay instead of having someone grind them down.

Ms. Fenton suggested asking the applicant to reapply for what was there, and letting all of the Board members have a chance to look at it.

Ms. Vest commented that she understood that Mr. Kuttner was planning to bring the matter before the BAR at the next meeting.

General discussion followed. Mr. Clark remarked that the process of bringing items piece by piece for a building, or even after the fact, was a poor way to proceed. He stated he felt the BAR should have the ability to prescribe the manner in which applications were brought to them. Mr. Tremblay commented that

this was like a work of art, and the artist was just going with the flow. Mr. Coiner commented that he had been engaged with this particular project for a long time, considering it on this board and previous ones, and he still found the process confusing.

Ms. Vest mentioned that there was another detail to consider, the material of a storefront that had been proposed. After general discussion about the material and color of the storefront, Mr. Tremblay made a motion to approve the color. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the color was approved.

Ms. Fenton commented that several people had complained to her about the lights that the City had put up to replace the lights on the downtown mall. They had indicated that the light was glaring and uncomfortable.

Ms. Vest stated that she was uncertain whether the BAR could actually rule on the type of lighting used, beyond the fixtures, but she would pass that on as a strong comment.

Ms. Fenton requested that the Board members set a date for the walking tour of Ridge Street. General discussion followed, and they agreed upon January 16, 2001, subject to weather conditions.

Ms. Fenton then asked if there were any changes or corrections to the October 17, 2000 minutes. Mr. Clark indicated that his name had been left off of the list of members present.

Mr. Coiner made a motion to approve the minutes, subject to that correction. Mr. Tremblay seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Fenton indicated the next item on the agenda was discussion/comments on the Corridor Study recommendations. She asked Ms. Vest if an RFP was being put out in January to get somebody to look at the Downtown Mall and come up with a specific plan for the mall area, and Ms. Vest indicated she did not know of a timeline.

Ally Cheesman, with Economic Development, commented that as far as the commercial Corridor Study went, she was not sure any specific dates had been set.

Ms. Vest indicated that she would find out some facts about time frame and implementation, and then would get back to the BAR.

Ms. Fenton asked the Board members if they would like to make suggestions on parts of the Corridor Study recommendations they liked or did not like at this meeting, or if they would prefer to take that up at a Worksession. She stated that personally, she did not like the idea of having all of the cafe chairs uniform on the Mall, but preferred the diversity. She commented that it was essential that the BAR have input into the design recommendations.

Mr. Coiner indicated that there were parts that he did not like either, and he was in support of the BAR acting as consultants in the process.

Ms. Vest commented that any design changes to the Mall would come before the BAR.

Mr. Atkins indicated he was a little confused how the urban design guidelines would sit with the existing BAR guidelines, outside of matters like zoning.

Ms. Vest indicated that the BAR members should express their specific concerns about the guidelines as soon as possible, and suggested that they hold a Worksession or two to go through them.

Ms. Fenton commented that they should look at which of the recommendations they liked or did not like, and which actually worked with the guidelines. If the recommendations did not work with the guidelines, the BAR should consider how to change the guidelines to get them to conform with what the study was recommending.

Mr. Clark commented that he was worried that some of the recommendations were very small in their focus, and he gave several examples to illustrate this. He stated he was not comfortable with the BAR sitting as a group worrying about small issues such as the color of a vending cart.

Ms. Fenton commented that that issue should be part of the whole reassessing of the guidelines, since the guidelines did call for everything on the Mall to be black.

Ms. Ely asked if there was time to take these issues up in a Worksession, as Ms. Fenton had suggested. General discussion followed, in which it was indicated that if they did hold a Worksession, it should be before January.

Ms. Fenton suggested that the Board members go through the Corridor Study and email back comments, and then the concerns and questions raised could be taken up at the December meeting. She stated that

the guidelines could be changed later to accommodate the recommendations.

The Board members discussed several areas of concern to them in the guidelines, particularly the function of the guidelines and the need for language that empowered the BAR to make decisions and yet was not overly prescriptive.

Ms. Fenton indicated that some of the specifics in the Corridor Study were good, in that they would let developers know what they could or could not do. She stated that in many instances, developers have an idea about what will "make it past" the BAR and design according to those expectations, rather than designing architecturally interesting buildings. She stated that they should make it clear to developers that there is more flexibility than they often imagine, and whatever document they come up with, the basic premise should be that the BAR is looking for interesting architecture that will enhance the area.

Mr. Coiner added that developers also have the option of preliminary hearings, to come in and discuss various ideas before they put it on paper, and Ms. Fenton commented that most people do not take advantage of that.

Mr. Atkins commented that the use of photographs with the guidelines is very helpful in illustrating designs that are successful or unsuccessful, but the photographs have to be carefully chosen.

General discussion on the guidelines followed, and Ms. Fenton asked the Board members to make sure that the members who were not present at this meeting were informed about the assignment to read the Corridor Study recommendations and email responses to Ms. Vest.

Mr. Tremblay made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Coiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.