

Board of Architectural Review
Minutes
August 16, 2016

Location: City Council Chambers-City Hall

Members Present: Chair Melanie Miller, Vice-Chair Tim Mohr; Carl Schwarz, Kurt Keesecker, Laura Knott, Stephen Balut, Justin Sarafin, Whit Graves (arrived late)

Staff Present: Mary Joy Scala, Preservation & Design Planner and Carolyn McCray, Clerk

Absent: Emma Earnst

Call to Order: Chair – Melanie Miller calls meeting to order at 5:30

A. Matters from the public not on the agenda

B. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes July 19, 2016 Regular Meeting
July 18, 2016 Worksession

Motion by Mr. Sarafin seconded by Mr. Schwarz, to approved the minutes of July 19th and July 18th, motion passes 7-0

C. Previously Considered Items

2. Certificate of Appropriateness Application
BAR 16-06-04
1211 West Main Street (Dinsmore House Inn)
Tax Parcel 100059000
1817 House LLC, Owner/Ryan Hubbard, Applicant
Removal and Replacement of Side Porch, Streetscape and Yard
Renovations

The applicant is requesting to demolish the existing two story side porch and replace it with a new brick addition to provide a café bar and expanded café seating, a commercial kitchen, and two new guestrooms.

Ryan Hubbard spoke as applicant on: transient lodging for the community as a local experience, upgrading lodging, University of Virginia Corner district; a closing furniture store. Removal of failing side porch to move forward with this project.

Jim Boyd, architect, said the proposed addition is quite modest, traditional character.

Questions from Board

Mr. Mohr asked about the indentation with the double hung windows, and the box should be more of a fin.

Mr. Hubbard said the east facing windows are proposed to continue that style around to the side. He said the he would like to leave the fin wall since it does a good job concealing the HVAC from the Battle building across the street.

The muntins bothers Mr. Mohr.

Comments from the Board

Mr. Keesecker said it is well-done.

Mr. Balut said the windows could be harmonized better. They conform to the guidelines. The rendering are helpful.

Ms. Miller said the railing should be lighter. The scale is great and agrees that the building needs to work. She also complimented them on the packet and the transition and the colors. She said the project is a huge improvement.

Mr. Sarafin said he can support the demolition of the porch.

Mr. Balut said he likes the way the building is designed.

Ms. Knott said it is a great landscape plan and is something Charlottesville should be proud to have back in the public access. She said she was a little uneasy about the east facade, we should not rely on plant material to fix what maybe perceived as a weak point in building and whether or not there are trees there, the building should be able to stand on its on because plant material will come and go.

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for Demolitions, Mr. Sarafin moved to find the proposed porch demolition satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in the West Main Street ADC District and that the BAR approves the application as submitted, seconded by Mr. Mohr motion passes 7-0. The BAR requested that the applicant photograph and draw the porch before demolition, which documentation is to reside with Preservation Piedmont.

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for New Construction and Additions, and for Site Design and Elements, Mr. Schwarz moved to find the proposed new addition and landscaping and site changes in concept massing and scale satisfy the BAR's criteria and are compatible with this property and other properties in the West Main Street ADC District and that the BAR approves the application as submitted with further details to come back to the BAR, seconded Ms. Knott. Motion passes 7-0. The BAR further clarified that their approval was not a COA.

Whit Graves arrived at 6:20.

D. New Items

3. Certificate of Appropriateness Application

BAR 16-08-02
450 Rugby Road
Tax Parcel 090004000
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Owner/ Sanford Wilcox, Church
Administrator, Applicant
Addition of Solar Panels

Sanford Wilcox, applicant wishes to install an array of solar panels on the church kitchen's flat roof, to reduce the church's carbon footprint by generating a portion of its electrical service needs through an onsite solar energy collector.

In staff opinion the proposed location is appropriate.

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for Rehabilitation, Mr. Keesecker moved to find that the proposed addition of solar panels satisfies the BAR's criteria and guidelines and is compatible with this property and other properties in the Rugby Road-University Circle-Venable Neighborhood ADC District, and that the BAR approves the application as submitted, seconded by Mr. Balut, motion passes 7-0.

4. Certificate of Appropriateness Application (Historic Conservation District)
BAR 16-08-03
801 Rugby Road
Tax Parcel 050015100
Diane Jacques, Owner/Applicant
New Fence along Rugby Road and Fendall Avenue

The applicant is seeking BAR approval after the fact for a solid wood board fence located along the two road frontages intended to create privacy and to mitigate road noise.

In staff opinion, the fence generally complies with the 3.5 feet guideline. Probably in an ADC district, the guideline would also be applied to the side street, but because this is a non-contributing structure in a historic conservation district, staff believes the district intent is met.

Laurelle Jacques spoke on behalf of the applicant.

Ms. Knott will not be able to support this with the hedge without the certificate of appropriateness. The 8 foot fence should be changed to a 6 foot fence.

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for New Construction and Additions in Historic Conservation Districts, Mr. Graves moved to find that the proposed fence satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in the Rugby Road Historic Conservation District, [given the Guidelines and the fact that the historic district is not an ADC district] and that the BAR approves the application as submitted, seconded by Mr. Balut motion passes 6-2. (Ms. Miller and Ms. Knott opposed)

5. Certificate of Appropriateness Application (Historic Conservation District)

BAR 16-08-04
510 Locust Avenue
Tax Parcel 540004100
Greg Horridge, Locust Realty LLC, Owner/Frederick Wolf, Architect,
Applicant
Second Story Addition, New Front Door, and New Concrete Wall at
Driveway

The applicant is requesting approval to amend the 2014 approval because the client has decided to enlarge the second story addition and in doing so, the massing changed, including the need for a stair on the rear that serves as a second exit from the upper floor as required by code. The previously approved design for elevations, plan and perspectives are attached.

Comments from the Board

Mr. Mohr said he likes it better than before, and he likes the painted bricks.

Mr. Balut said he likes it. The scale is done really well, the variation of textures, colors, and the wood is warm in that context, he said it is well done.

Ms. Miller said unpainted wood is not what you see anywhere.

Ms. Knott agrees that it is well done. She agrees with Melanie on the exposed wood although she likes everything else

Having considered the standards set forth within the City Code, including City Design Guidelines for New Construction and Additions in Historic Conservation Districts, Mr. Keesecker moved to find that the proposed new addition satisfies the BAR's criteria and is compatible with this property and other properties in the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Historic Conservation District, and that the BAR approves the application as submitted. seconded by Mr. Balut, motion passes 6-2 (Ms. Miller and Ms. Knott opposed)

6. Preliminary Discussion
BAR 16-08-01
118 West Main Street
Tax Parcel 280016001-280016009
M&O Corporation, Owner/Jim Boyd, Grimm and Parker, Applicant
Proposed Rooftop Additions

The applicant is requesting preliminary comments on a proposal to expand some existing residential units upward. The proposal will add two loft additions, one on the rear of the (3 story) Mall building; and one on the (2 story) rear addition along with an elevator tower and an enclosed hallway connecting the elevator to the existing third floor of the Mall building. A new exterior stair will connect the roofs. The exterior elements will be visible from 2nd Street SW and from the upper levels of adjacent buildings, but will not be visible from the Mall.

Proposed materials are: tan color cementitious lap siding; brown color cementitious flat-panel siding; unpainted vertical metal siding; anodized aluminum storefront glazing; and black EPDM roof to match existing.

The applicant is requesting a preliminary discussion, so no motion is needed.

The BAR made suggestions and asked the architect to bring back a final design.

Some comments were: Show more context, including precise perspectives where viewable, massing model; needs more human scale, intrigue, could be jewel-like and fun; not so utilitarian; use stepped parapet wall as a cue, or step away from it.

E. New Construction

7. Certificate of Appropriateness Application (Preliminary Discussion)
BAR 16-08-05
NW Corner of Ridge Street and Cherry Avenue (William Taylor Plaza)
Tax Parcel 290147000, 290146000, 290145000
Cherry Ave Investments LLC, Owner/ Management Services Corp.,
Applicant
New Construction of Residential Building

The current owner is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for Phase Two of a new mixed-use Planned Unit Development on the corner of Ridge Street and Cherry Avenue. The proposed project will be built on a total of 2.9 acres.

Public Questions and Public Comments

Tristan Cleveland said she lives here in the city. She asked many questions in dialogue:

1. What is the setback currently from the sidewalk to the side of the buildings from the site plan that is here today. Mr. Houchens said to the left you can see the 5 ½ foot planting strip and the 6 foot sidewalk.
2. She said the widest setback that she is seeing is 10'1" at the far right hand corner and the narrowest is 1'9". He said that is correct.
3. She said to Ms. Scala that the typical setback in this areas, for the neighborhood is between 12 and 15 feet, correct? She said it typically said 12 – 15 feet was shown on the PUD plan. It said planting strip between rear sidewalk to building is typically 12-15 feet and she assumed that was on Ridge Street, but wasn't really clear.
4. She then asked where are the residence parking. Mr. Houchens said under the building.
5. She asked how units per entry are there and she is wondering about the mass of traffic moving in and out. She said is there primary or secondary entries. Mr. Houchens said the central entry piece is where most of the upper floor residents will likely enter and that is where the elevator and the stairs both which goes from the parking level to all floors. He said all of the units except for the upper two apartments are elevator accessed.

6. She said of the 27 units what is the ratio for the number of bedrooms.

Mr. Houchens said it is about half.

7. What green or open space is provided for the tenants.

He said there is the layer of landscaping walkway and entry courts forward and to the back, those areas are divided in half and the outdoor grade level terraces to foot the total of four apartments. He said all of the apartments have an outdoor covered terrace, with balconies contained within the massing.

8. Is the arboretum to be shared by the guests of the hotel so you are saying there is no outdoor courtyard space or shareable community space for the residence of the apartments.

He said within the site there is a very large arboretum.

9. She said so a arboretum, a natural gathering area as opposed to any sort of courtyard, grill space, picnic tables.

Tristan Cleveland – if you are comparing these housing to the existing houses on Ridge Street, you will notice the existing houses are built with a more symmetry of the windows or approximate asymmetry of the house on the far right hand side has a balance between the section of the house that is projecting toward the street, and the section of the house that is falling behind and if we are looking at the massing and the break-up of the puncture of the windows into the proposed development it's symmetrical unto itself as a three unit item as opposed to if we are to break up saying one two three four items. The center two items are balanced between each other but not within themselves. (if you are getting what she is saying) The line of symmetry is going directly down the center between the two. So perhaps balancing those that way they stand alone as individual structures might also help to visually break up this large mass into more of the scale of whats on the rest of Ridge Street. Also the rest of Ridge Street, the historical significant buildings have front porches and all of these porches are recessed into the mass of the building as opposed to projecting. She said I know there is a balance of you are trying to have green space, a sidewalk which she think if also important for matching the character of Ridge Street but the rest of Ridge Street has porches and she thinks these buildings do not fit into that context the way they currently are. The profile of these buildings, the way stairs end up connecting they are quite solid; she doesn't know if there is a way to make the stairs a little more transparent but it contributes to an overall feeling of the mass. You have done a good job of breaking up if you look down in plan view and when you are looking at I in sections reading as one large block partially because of those stairs and just how solid they are. An element that might be able to be incorporated into this building that many of the other buildings on Ridge Street have are the bowing out the bay windows; rather it be a window or it be a architectural element. It is repeated several times along this street and maybe there is a way to incorporate it into these buildings. Maybe not on one of the buildings but not the other buildings but a way to continue the idea that it is not one solid unit, different units and perhaps that could be some of the difference. She talked about the window sharp of the longated horizontal windows versus the vertical windows, she doesn't think that fits in with what the rest of Ridge Street is if you are trying to fit this into the context.

Jean Hiatt – important to get rid of the long roof line between the two central buildings. It is really unpleasant to see and it is important to have

each separate building a line of symmetry. She just read an article about that which she will send to the BAR. That would make a big difference in avoiding using horizontal windows would be wonderful. Another thing that is missing is the feel of a front door. It just looks like apartment buildings. She would like to see something that looked a little more like Queen Charlotte. What else bothers her is there are some brick in one place and not in another. She said she wonders if it could all be brick just to have each one be just a little bit different like Ridge street. She is on the board of Preservation Piedmont, and she also originally was involved with the group Preservation Piedmont when we first formed and one of our major efforts were to get Ridge Street designated a local historic district so it is really important to her that something is built here that works well with the rest of the street and is a positive instead of a negative, a large building that has very little articulation and she would like to see some more work done on it.

No motion made. The BAR made comments:

Ms. Miller stated overall, this site is way more important than the hotel site, in terms of its relationship to the historic district, and I think taking cues from Ridge Street are important. The overall massing and setback is still too much for the site and the historic district. The historic district has a feeling of verticality and space between the existing structures and your plan attempts this to an extent, but this feeling should be increased. Also, the feeling of a front door needs to be incorporated into the plan. In addition to the verticality look at larger bay windows and the idea of a front yard. The stair areas need to be lighter and more transparent, although that could just be your rendering. Also, I am not sure how this works into the scheme; there are a lot of hipped roofs, and that might help bring down the massing on some of the edge pieces. I think it is a nice thing to have all of the units (except for 2) to be accessible, but is that making this more difficult to deal with because of the connectivity?

Mr. Schwarz said he agrees with a lot of the thing that Melanie [Miller] said. Some smaller things, I am wondering where you have the two outer buildings that have the gables, but don't step back from the gables, if a small stepback (even 4-8 inches) would create a break in the façade and help articulate it a bit more. I wouldn't have window boxes, because you can't make people plant flowers, and you have no idea of knowing what is going to be there. The columns on the porches, an entire stucco language makes it feel commercial and takes away from the residential feel. If you have more wood trim, creates a change in material, which would help create a residential sense in the structure. The parapet idea on the north edge has me a little bit worried that is not a place you want to bring the wall up any higher than it already is, so I would reconsider how you handle that flat roof and the mechanical equipment. I think you tried with the two and a half story thing to work, but I think you could go a bit further.

Mr. Keesecker said he thinks it is the appurtenance like details that make Ridge Street district interesting. I think it is that mixture of details found on the historic homes that makes it visually appealing. I don't know how you do that in a larger footprint, without making it seem like a false front fake façade, but that is the key. I remember from the PUD that there were some outdoor areas dedicated to gathering, and I think all of those [outdoor]

spaces that can be occupied will also aid in blending into the neighborhood. The façade that faces onto the courtyard, in context with the hotel should also be revisited. I think mixing up the rhythm of the facades would help tremendously, making it less symmetrical.

Mr. Balut said he is going to start from a general design standpoint which I am confused about, it seems like it is between this new modern building and old late 19th century homes. I am having a hard time understanding the aesthetic identity of the building, I feel like it is in this in between place, and because of this it is not resolving a number of issues. Specifically, you are saying it is breaking down into volumes, but I feel like it is going to read as one volume, from the front and the back. I think varying the rooflines could help a lot with that. Currently, the spacing between the masses is not enough that it breaks the buildings apart. I think focusing on the little details and on symmetry versus asymmetry is minor, because the overall structures are lacking a cohesive identity and massing concept, if you could articulate what you trying to accomplish with the massing of the building that could inform a lot of these details. The human scale seems to be taking place on the interior of the building, but it might be nice to have something on the exterior that speaks to this scale.

Mr. Sarafin said to put a few specifics to what you are talking about, I remained unconvinced that the gable is the roof form of choice here. I am having a hard time moving beyond this roofline.

Mr. Mohr said one thing he thought would help is to have a longer rendering of the street, so you could see the overall sense of the street. What if conversely you take that center section, pull those two things apart and make it more like a courtyard entry? The amount of wall to window ratio on the older houses is much less glass with simpler punctures, the scale of the openings feels almost 3/4 scale even though it is taller because they have a greater wall to window ratio. Maybe taking a totally different approach with the center building would help break up the massing a little bit. The only other thing is on the courtyard elevation, get rid of that opposing gable and extend the roof the whole way through.

Ms. Knott said I am not hearing enough of how your design was influenced by the precedence of the physical characteristics of the district. I made a list of things that I saw on Ridge Street a consistently large set back, a layering of spaces from public to private, variety of roof lines, windows centered in different parts of the building, bay windows, porches, defined entrance with a clearly prominent front door, etc. What I am seeing here is a lack of concept. Another point, in the PUD drawing, it really reads as individual townhouses and it is more of a residential cluster of buildings, and I think this design lacks that residential feeling. Also, in terms of the setback it seems simple to achieve a graceful setback by setting the northern most building back by about 8-10 feet, that way it doesn't create such a hard edge, and then the third volume could setback 5 feet. That way there is a more acceptable setback that allows for more layering of spaces with the streetscape. The last point I wanted to make is the stairs in between each section remind me of the stairs you would see on the back of the buildings on Ridge Street and it doesn't seem appropriate on the street front. I would prefer a treatment like the center opening where the main entrance is rather than seeing those stairs there because it reminds me of a back door.

F. Other Business

8. PLACE Report: Blue Ribbon Commission talking about development pressures and gentrification; 3D modeling is pressing forward; Form-based Code discussion.
9. Guidelines review: BAR will first tackle Historic Conservation District Guidelines, then ADC Guidelines. Ms. Scala will send out a Word doc with Guidelines so each member can work individually on revisions, then have a collective discussion.

Ms. Scala asked about a possible bench with plaque to honor Sage Smith, to be located at the bus stop near Amtrak where she was last seen. The BAR prefers a traditional design of black metal; they said to check with Rhodeside and Harwell for guidance, the Chair wants PLACE to be tasked with a style guide.

Ms. Scala will meet with Mr. Mohr and Ms. Knott to look at Mall lighting near Freedom of Expression Wall on Thursday August 18 at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Scala said to save the dates for:

- Tuesday August 30- Work Session starting at 5:30 p.m. in NDS Conference Room for 501 W Main Street new hotel project;
- Thursday Sept 1 at 5:30 p.m. in City Space to hear Historic Resource Committee's proposal for naming the west end of the mall as Vinegar Hill Park; also
- Sunday October 16-Monday October 17 for the Preservation Virginia statewide annual conference to be held in Charlottesville.

G. Adjournment 9:30 p.m.