

Board of Architectural Review  
Minutes  
December 16, 1997

Present

Joan Fenton  
Dawn Thompson  
Ken Schwartz  
W.G. Clark  
Jay Oschrin  
Brent Nelson

Absent

Linda Winner  
Todd Bullard  
Jessie Hook

Staff Present

Satyendra Huja  
Tarpley Vest

Ms Fenton, Chair, began the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the board has agreed to allow members of the public to raise issues or submit proposals not formally on the agenda, limited to five minutes, at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Fenton then indicated that Mr. Madison Spencer of Train and Spencer Architects wished to submit a proposal for a garden shed at 1204 Rugby Road.

Mr. Spencer presented the project, indicating that the property, Stonefield, is an individually designated property in the City of Charlottesville, and therefor falls under the review of the BAR. Mr. Spencer indicated that the owners wish to remove an existing storage shed and replace the shed with a 180 square foot board and batten garden shed. He indicated that the existing shed is deteriorating and an eye sore. Mr. Spencer indicated that the garden shed would not be visible from Rugby Road, but would be visible from Mason Lane. He indicated that Mason Lane is a private road, maintained by the property owners of Stonefield.

Ms. Vest indicated that Mason Lane is public right of way, although not publicly maintained.

Mr. Spencer indicated that the garden shed would be of a board and batten construction and would be painted to match the house in chalk yellow.

Mr. Clark asked how the location of the backyard buildings related to backyard setback requirements.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Spencer if the shed would have a compacted dirt and stone floor and if it would be set on a concrete slab.

Mr. Spencer indicated that it would not be placed on a concrete slab, and that the floor would be a dirt and stone surface.

Ms. Fenton then asked the board members to comment on the proposal.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that the proposal was good.

Mr. Clark agreed that the proposal was good, contingent upon the shed meeting zoning and setback requirements.

Mr. Nelson, Ms. Thompson, Mr. Oschrin, and Ms. Fenton each indicated that they agreed the proposal was good.

Mr. Clark made a motion that the proposal pass contingent on its meeting the zoning requirements for the property.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

The motion unanimously passed with Mr. Oschrin abstaining.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the first item on the formal agenda was the Crestar Bank property at 408 Park St.

Staff presented the report.

Mr. Bob Matney, building engineer for Crestar bank, indicated that the brick used to infill the drive up teller wall would match the existing brick. He indicated that the bank is currently using a tube system instead of a teller at the drive-up location.

Mr. Nelson asked the applicant if the new ATM machine would be a walk up ATM and if the drive-up window would still be used.

Mr. Matney indicated that the new ATM machine would be a walk up ATM machine and that the existing drive-up window would be infilled with brick and the tube would be used for drive through transactions.

Mr. Nelson asked the applicant what the reason was for removing the canopy.

Mr. Matney indicated that the adjacent building has been sold and the new owner does not want the two buildings to be joined.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the existing drive-up teller window is a confusing design element.

Ms. Fenton asked the board members to comment on the proposal. Each member present indicated that they had no problems with the proposal.

Mr. Oschrin made a motion to accept the proposal as written.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

It was unanimously approved.

### **Oak Lawn**

Staff presented the report.

Mr. Doug Gilpin, applicant, gave a background on the building and the project. He indicated that building is unique and is an architectural landmark built in 1822 by builders believed to have worked for Thomas Jefferson. He indicated that the building has been in the Fife Family since 1847. He indicated that the porches are non original, post civil war porches. He indicated that he is working with the owners of the property to rehabilitate the structure and expand it for modern functions. He indicated that the owners wish to remove the two non original porches and build a first floor family room on the SW quadrant of the house, which is visible from 9th St. He indicated that the brick piers will be constructed of Old Virginia Red Brick, the same color being used currently on the Court Square rehabilitation. He indicated that the woodwork will be painted the same color white as the existing building. He indicated that the building addition will include a flat roof which will not be visible from the street. The windows are to be outswinging windows designed to mimic what is there now.

Mr. Oschrin asked about the lattice.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that there is lattice treatment covering solid panels and there are six window panels.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that Bill Crosby, Staff Architect for the VDHR has indicated that the proposed addition does not jeopardize the building's designation on the State and National Registers.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that the building is beautiful and historically significant and that adding to a historically significant structure is an exciting idea. He agreed with the idea of making the structure livable and evolving over time rather than freezing history in place. He indicated that this house is a classic symmetrical plan from its time. He indicated that there is a real dilemma between the condition of the historic fabric of the building and accommodating the buildings' use over time. He indicated that the Guidelines say that new additions should be distinguishable from the existing building but also compatible to the building. He indicated that this is difficult.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that the challenge in this case is not to mimic or duplicate. He indicated that the building already has an addition from the early 1900's, so it is already slightly asymmetrical. He indicated that his challenge is to add something contemporary to the building and to be sure that what's put on will not damage the historic character of the site. He indicated that the addition has been designed so that it could be removed at some future date to restore the building to its original design.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that there are stairs underneath the porch which lead to the basement.

Francis Fife, owner of the property, indicated that the porches on this end of the house have changed over the years. He indicated that he has seen pictures of older porches and that the current porches are unattractive and need to be replaced.

Ms. Fenton then asked the group to comment on the application.

Mr. Clark indicated that the design represents an evolution of a series of porches. He indicated that he had no problem with the proposal.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he would like to commend the owners for doing this project. He indicated that this was a good thing for the building, the neighborhood, and the city as a whole. He indicated that he had no problems with the proposal and that it is a handsome addition to the house.

Ms. Thompson indicated that because the addition could be removed and the house could be restored to its original form, she had no objections to the proposal.

Mr. Oschrin indicated that the intent of the proposal was reasonable. He indicated that the West Elevation seems to contain four separate patterns that have too much going on in such a small space.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that this portion of the house is not visible from a public right of way.

Mr. Nelson indicated that some of the treatment is visible from 9th St.

Ms. Fenton asked if there was a reason for including the lattice in the design.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that in time vines may grow up on the lattice and that there are unique vines already present on the property.

Ms. Fenton suggested that a committee be formed to review the lattice and specific material details of the addition.

Mr. Huja asked Mr. Gilpin if the lattice was necessary.

Mr. Gilpin indicated that without the lattice the wall would be a large panel that lacked character.

Ms. Thompson asked if the lattice was intended to support plant material.

Mr. Gilpin answered yes.

Ms. Thompson indicated that plant material on the lattice would introduce a whole new character to the wall.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he is pleased to see the improvement and investment being made to the property and he feels that this is being sensitively developed. He indicated that he doesn't feel good about filling in one corner of the building with the addition. He indicated that the addition does not improve the historic fabric and that he would like to voice distress. He indicated that this is not a delicate porch but a major introduction and change to this lovely and delicate structure. He indicated that he sees the dilemma being faced and recognizes that serious work has gone into this proposal but that he is ultimately uncomfortable with the application.

Mr. Oschrin asked Mr. Schwartz if he would feel better if this addition was phase I and another addition was planned to balance the other side.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that he would not feel better, because his concerns are about the scale and about transforming the structure. He indicated that the project is well intentioned and well thought through.

Ms. Fenton asked Mr. Huja if there were other projects comparable to this in Charlottesville.

Mr. Huja indicated that this house and project are very unique and that this is a very special house.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the application subject to subcommittee approval of the material and detail of the trellis and railing.

Mr. Clark indicated that he would prefer to have the applicants come before the whole board twice, rather than creating small subcommittees for approval.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the board has 60 days to approve or deny an application and that waiting until the January meeting to make a decision is an option.

Mr. Oschrin indicated that he would like to take a tour of the property before the next meeting.

Mr. Clark indicated that he would like to see photos of all four sides of any structure where an application involves demolition.

Mr. Fife, property owner, commented that a great deal of consideration and thought has gone into the decision to move into the house. He indicated that he considered selling the house and property and considered developing the land. He indicated that he would like to move ahead on this project and that the porch addition is essential. He indicated that he and his wife are not interested in moving there without the addition. He indicated that there have been a series of porches on the property. He indicated that Doug Gilpin is the major architect in this area for this type of project. He indicated that the kitchen is an addition from the original house. He asked

the Board if they found this project a reasonable thing to do. He indicated that he would like them to go ahead and approve the project.

Mr. Huja indicated that if the board objects to the concept of the addition, that is one thing, but that they should be aware that this is on the back of the house and it is removable. He urged the board to take action one way or the other.

Ms. Fenton indicated that she had a sense that the board has viewed additions as fine in the past, but that it is the scope and balance of this addition that causes some people to feel concerned.

Mr. Oschrin indicated that this is not just another house, that it is very significant and that the board should not treat it lightly. He indicated that he needs more information, including a tour and photographs.

Mr. Huja indicated that the BAR had a complete set of drawing for a week prior to the meeting.

Ms. Fenton pointed out that the application falls within the guidelines and that to deny it would be inappropriate.

Mr. Nelson made an amended motion to approve the application contingent upon resubmital of materials and details for the trellis and railing.

Mr. Clark seconded the motion

The motion passed with Ms. Fenton, and Ms. Thompson voting in favor, Mr. Oschrin opposed and Mr. Schwartz abstaining.

### **First and Water Street: Preliminary Conference**

Staff presented the report.

Mr. Steve Von Storch, applicant, indicated that they agreed with staff concerns about setting the building back from Water Street due to the city owned lot.

Mr. Von Storch presented a slide show depicting the design concept for this site. He indicated that they recognized the need for a hard street edge and indicated that the original idea was for a building running the entire block from Water St. to South St.

Mr. Von Storch indicated that the City Market is important and that the market can fit in this design where it has always fit. He indicated that they have considered including services for the market within the building.

Mr. Von Storch indicated the concept allows for phased development and that the building widths have been studied in response to the needs of the City Market. He indicated that the building is designed to be respectful of history while also creating a modern office space. He

indicated that modern office buildings need light and that the narrow building will produce more light. He indicated that the design includes double hung operable windows. He indicated that drawings depict tenant driven retail space, creating an ad hoc quality at street level.

Mr. Oschrin asked if the building would require an elevator.

Mr. Von Storch replied yes.

Mr Von Storch indicated that the building was designed to be accessible from the street and to respond to the sloping conditions of the hill.

Ms. Fenton asked if this plan was in the exploratory phase.

Mr. Von Storch answered yes.

Mr Von Storch indicated that the building could support residential space on the upper floor, such as an old loft style apartment.

Mr. Oschrin indicated that he would like to applaud that the board has received information from this applicant. He indicated that he would like to see this standard used as a model for following projects. He indicated that he likes the scale and scope of the proposal.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Huja about the status of the City Market. Mr. Huja indicated that the City Market is run by the Parks and Recreation Department. He indicated that a plan has been presented to put the market along both sides of 1st Street. He indicated that the applicant has tried to show how these goals of the market could be accomplished within this proposal.

Mr. Clark asked how much space is necessary for the market. He indicated that he questions whether widening a city street such as First St. is a good idea.

Mr. Huja indicated that the street would be designed to accommodate parking and a public plaza.

Mr. Clark asked if this would be surface parking while not being used for the market.

Mr. Huja answered yes.

Mr. Nelson indicated that one purpose of locating the market on First St. is to make a better connection to the mall and that a building fronting First St. may contain businesses supportive of the market, such as bakeries.

Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Huja what he could say about city plans for these two blocks.

Mr. Huja indicated that these two blocks are important because they are the last two blocks in downtown to be developed. He indicated that the city is in the process of developing a master plan for these two blocks and they are currently thinking of ways to promote viable development

of both blocks in a comprehensive manner. He indicated that the process is now proceeding and that part of the process is to discuss plans with the property owner.

Ms. Fenton asked if the plan included additional parking.

Mr. Huja indicated that Charlottesville Parking Center owns a lot on Water Street and wants to develop parking.

Mr. Nelson asked if there was a master plan for the two blocks.

Mr. Huja indicated that it is in the conceptual stage but that the plan incorporates both blocks entirely.

Mr. Clark asked who was working on the plan.

Mr. Huja indicated that the city is working with William McDonough Architects on the plan.

Mr. Nelson asked what the time frame is on the conceptual plan.

Mr. Huja indicated that there is no time frame at this time.

Mr. Huja also indicated that the concept allows for the two blocks to be developed incrementally.

Mr. Clark asked if the concept would include structured parking.

Mr. Huja answered yes.

Mr. Von Storch asked if McDonough's firm was working for the city.

Mr. Huja indicated that the information is not public at this time.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that it is difficult to comment on Mr. Von Storch's proposal because the BAR does not have the full picture and that the comments are limited in usefulness. He indicated that this is a logical, sensible approach to phased development which meshes with the market and the street system. He indicated that he commends the integrated attitude about how the block will evolve. He indicated that he hopes that the applicant and the city can come together. He indicated that there are questions about parking and how it will mesh.

Mr. Von Storch indicated that Charlottesville has a history of older buildings that are narrow and deep and that these buildings create variety along the street. He indicated that he finds the East West application of the parking garage to be a little too rigid.

Tom Hickman, property owner and applicant, indicated that he and the city are working towards the same end. He indicated that the concept is shifting, and that he is open to orienting the building in an East West orientation along South Street. He indicated that the reason they came



to the BAR was to get general feedback on the design of the building. He indicated that he recognizes that this building will need to work within the larger master plan for the area.

A resident of South Street asked Mr. Huja if the city could take property to widen First St.

Mr. Huja replied yes.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he wants to urge the City Council to work with Mr. Hickman on this project. He indicated that this block is the crown jewel of the downtown area. He indicated that he feels the block needs to be planned as a whole unit. He indicated that the strongest feature of this site is the change in topography. He indicated that he has concerns that the current building proposal serves to block the change in topography.

### Design Guidelines

Mr. Huja indicated that a question had been raised about why the Peyton Pontiac building had been designated as contributing.

Ms. Fenton indicated that it had been included as the best example of a downtown auto dealership in the corridor.

Ms. Martha Stockton, a member of the Urban Design Committee, indicated that there were originally three categories assigned to buildings in the district, historic contributing, non-historic contributing, and non-contributing.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the Peyton Pontiac building was originally designated non-contributing by the consultant and was designated as contributing by the Board.

Ms. Denise LeCouer, who is a partner with the owners of the Peyton Pontiac building, indicated that she does not see any redeeming value to the building and would like to see the designation changed from contributing to non-contributing.

Ms. Thompson indicated that there may be something of architectural value located underneath the existing facade.

Ms. Stockton indicated that it would be better to designate the building than to loose the building, and that a designation of contributing doesn't necessarily preclude demolition.

Ms. Thompson indicated that the designation as contributing wasn't intended to mean that this building is an example of the type of new construction they would like to see on West Main Street.

Mr. Clark indicated that he would hate to see this building jeopardized.

Ms. Fenton indicated that the building represents an important part of the character of this street over the last 50 years and that this is the best building of its type in the district.

Ms. LeCouer indicated that she thinks that McGregor Motors is a better example of a classic car dealership and that the McGregor building is better looking.

Mr. Eldon Wood, a member of the Urban Design Committee, indicated that he was with the group that designated the buildings as contributing and non-contributing. He indicated that this was the only building of character between the bank building and Union Station.

Mr. Clark indicated that if the existing facade was removed, there may be an opportunity to develop something really outstanding with this building.

Mr. Nelson indicated that the current metal siding on the building makes it impossible to really see the building. He indicated that the building is a valued part of the district.

Ms. Thompson indicated that West Main Street has a unique character and that this building is an example of an odd building which adds something to the district. She indicated that the building is a part of the fabric of West Main Street and it tells the story of the street, which is not like any other street as it evolved in history.

Mr. Huja indicated that the board needs to have good reasons for the designation of the Peyton Pontiac building as contributing. He indicated that the consultant recommend that the building be designated as non-contributing. He indicated that he spoke with the historic surveyor hired by the city. She indicated that she has found nothing in her research to indicate that the building is architecturally or historically significant. Mr. Huja indicated that the group must be able to defend their decision to make this building contributing.

Mr. Clark indicated that this building may be one of the most significant buildings in the district with respect to future development. He indicated that the building is old and genuine, and although it may not be stylistically popular, it is significant.

Ms. LeCouer asked if the consultant had designated the building as non-contributing.

Mr. Huja answered yes.

Ms. Stockton indicated that a designation as contributing means that the building will go through a thorough review process like any building in an historic district. She indicated that contributing means that we feel that the building is an important part of the street and that we need to look at this building further. A designation as contributing doesn't necessarily mean that the building cannot be demolished. A designation as non-contributing indicates that the building has been thoroughly evaluated and we have agreed that it can be demolished.

Ms. LeCouer indicated that she would like for the board to amend the designation of the Peyton Pontiac building to make it non-contributing.

Mr. Huja indicated that the Design Guidelines will go to City Council for approval.

Ms. Thompson indicated that the board would want to know what the demolished building would be replaced with.

Ms. Fenton indicated to the board that they should decide whether to keep the designation as contributing for this building or whether to amend the designation.

Mr. Nelson indicated that this is a contributing building. He indicated that the auto industry has a history on Main Street and that the designation should remain. He indicated that he does not want to make the building easier to tear down. He indicated that due to the facade, we don't really know what the building looks like.

Mr. Nelson made a motion to retain the designation of the Peyton Pontiac building as contributing.

Mr. Schwartz indicated that it is an important and contributing building. He indicated that the building could be torn down in the future and that this is not a dead end for the property owner. He indicated that he supports advancing the guidelines as they stand.

Mr. Schwartz seconded Mr. Nelson's motion

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Huja then indicated that the board may wish to discuss the addition of requiring photos as a component of an application, instead of just adding one more requirement out of context.

Mr. Clark asked if files are kept on each property in the Department of Community Development and suggested that 4 photos showing all 4 sides of a building be required with any application and be made a part of public record.

Ms. Fenton indicated that anything brought before the board that is not formally on the agenda should be required to have photographs with it.

Mr. Nelson indicated that photographs cannot replace a site visit.

Ms. Fenton asked the board if everyone agreed that photos should be required with all applications. The board indicated that they agreed.

At 7:15 the meeting was adjourned.