

**City of Charlottesville  
Board of Architectural Review  
July 20, 1999**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Brent Nelson (Vice Chair)  
Jessie Hook  
Linda Winner  
Joe Celentano  
W.G. Clark

**Also Present:**

Tarpley Vest

At 5:00 Mr. Nelson convened the meeting. He stated that Ms. Fenton, the Board Chair would not be present and that he would be chairing the meeting. He indicated that minutes from April through June meetings needed to be approved.

Ms. Winner suggested that each set of minutes be approved individually because each board member was not at each meeting.

The following amendments to the minutes were submitted:  
Mr. Clark indicated that he was present at the April meeting.  
The May 18 Minutes should read May 18 not May 19.

Mr. Nelson submitted written amendments to the minutes.

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the April 20, 1999 minutes, as amended.  
Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.  
The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the May 18 1999 minutes as amended.  
Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.  
The motion was approved with Mr. Nelson and Mr. Celentano voting in favor and with Mr. Clark, Ms. Winner and Ms. Hook abstaining.

Ms. Winner moved to approve the June 2, 1999 minutes as amended.  
Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.  
The motion was approved with Ms. Winner, Mr. Celentano, and Ms. Hook voting in favor and with Mr. Nelson and Mr. Clark abstaining.

Ms. Winner moved to approve the June 15, 1999 minutes as amended.

Ms. Hook seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with Ms. Hook and Ms. Winner voting in favor and with Mr. Clark, Mr. Celentano and Mr. Nelson abstaining.

### 1314 Rugby Road

Mr. Nelson indicated that there would be a staff report followed by periods for questions and comments from the public and from board members.

Staff presented the report.

Belinda Reeder, architect, indicated that the proposal was approved excluding the application of the stucco to the base of the front block. She indicated that the design intention of the addition is to articulate the base of the Georgian structure, primarily at the back façade. She indicated that there is no articulation of the base now. She indicated that the detail of bringing the base around to the front of the building was not approved. She indicated that it is a detail and it is covered by landscape. She indicated that although it is not something that is readily seen she thinks that it is really important because it is really the only thing that pulls the front and the back together. She indicated that the base is brick now and is articulated with a projection. She indicated that the base of the 1980's addition was not articulated. She indicated that the stucco is a traditional three-coat plaster. She indicated that this was a traditional building element in Virginia in the early 1800's. She indicated that Jefferson used it because it was difficult to get stone up to Monticello. She indicated that Montpelier also has it. She indicated that she has seen this element a lot in the Warrenton area. She indicated that although this is a change to the front façade, it is a change that would have been in keeping with the style of the house. She indicated that although this house was built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it was meant to emulate the Georgian style of building of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. She indicated that this is completely in keeping with the style of the building and the traditional construction methods. She indicated that she is asking the board to reconsider the detail. She indicated that it is a detail that most people won't even notice, but that as an architectural statement it is important to her.

Mr. Celentano asked if there is stucco on the side of the front projecting stair.

Mr. Reeder indicated that the sides of the stairs are concrete. She indicated that they are going to repair the sides. She indicated that they considered changing that to limestone, but that they will retain the concrete.

Mr. Celentano asked what the material of the stairs is now.

Ms. Reeder indicated that they are concrete and they will not be stuccoed.

Ms. Winner indicated that she thinks that this is a compelling appeal. She indicated that this does not conflict with the guidelines for foundations. She indicated that the historical aspects of the project have integrity. She indicated that there may be a conflict between two perceptions of good. She indicated that she is willing to support the proposal.

Mr. Celentano indicated that there are two issues. He indicated that the first issue is whether the stucco was applied to houses at the time that this house was built. He indicated that it was applied

at the time but that it was not applied to this house. He indicated that he understands the idea of bringing elements from the back to the front. He indicated that it does not look like it goes far enough in doing that. He indicated that it does not turn the corner onto the side elevation.

Ms. Reeder indicated that the idea is to take the main block, which has a base that is articulated, and just subtly strengthen that so that the whole thing will seem as one. She indicated that she understands what they are saying about subverting the house. She indicated that she is a preservationist but that she thinks that it is important that the addition does not seem foreign.

Mr. Celentano indicated that the brick is a higher material than the stucco. He indicated that the stucco does not have the same quality and the stucco would seem applied to that surface. He indicated that he thinks that there is enough connection in the type of openings. He indicated that he thinks the addition works without it and that the brick is a nicer material to have at the base.

Mr. Nelson indicated that there is a design guideline that deals with the replication of style. He indicated that the guidelines are something that they are charged with using as a part of their decision making. He read the guideline as follows: "New additions should not be an exact copy of the design of a historic building. If the new addition appears to be a part of the existing building, the design is compromised and the viewer is confused over what is historic and what is new. The design of new additions can be compatible with and respectful of existing buildings without being mimicry of the original design." He indicated that this is a design guideline that it a good one and he will have to keep that in mind in making his decision.

Mr. Clark indicated that he agrees with Mr. Celentano and Mr. Nelson.

Ms. Hook indicated that she agrees with Mr. Celentano and Mr. Nelson. She indicated that she finds the house to be beautiful as it is. She indicated that adding another element to the fabric would be a detraction.

Mr. Clark moved to deny the request.

Mr. Celentano seconded the motion.

The motion passed with Mr. Clark, Mr. Celentano, Mr. Nelson and Ms. Hook voting in favor and with Ms. Winner voting against.

#### 104 East Jefferson Street: United Methodist Church

Staff presented the report.

Samuel Darnell, architect, stated that the church was built in 1924. He indicated that there was a parsonage on the side of the church where the parking lot is today. He indicated that the parking lot has resulted in the side exit becoming more of an entrance to the church. He indicated that they are creating a significant entrance from the parking area. He stated that the one story addition would include a welcome center. He indicated that the new addition would provide an entrance from the parking as well as an ADA accessible entrance. He indicated that there are about a dozen different floor levels within the church and they have located things in the best place. He indicated that the addition also creates grade level entrances. He indicated that the circulation for the parking lot will be improved. He indicated that the idea is to be able to come off of 2<sup>nd</sup> street and be able to maneuver and unload. He indicated that it incorporates handicap parking and landscaping. He

indicated that the goal is to give it more of a park setting than a parking lot. He indicated that they haven't committed to the specific planting yet. He indicated that the light fixtures will be submitted and that they will also come back with a sign identifying the church from the side. He indicated that they have tried to match materials and the design elements of the existing building.

Preston Coiner suggested that signage be placed in the parking lot reinforcing that 2<sup>nd</sup> street is a one way street and there is no left turn. He indicated that the entrance is directly across from Queen Charlotte and he has seen people turning the wrong way down the street.

Ms. Hook asked how many parking places will be removed.

Mr. Darnell answered 12. He indicated that the church is studying available parking in the area. He indicated that there is an ongoing dialogue with the downtown ministers and the city. He indicated that they are trying to approach it as a connected and parallel issue. He indicated that the new parking design will allow people to be dropped off at the entrance more easily and that this will be more appropriate than trying to park the whole congregation right next to the church.

Mr. Nelson indicated that the rendering shows a low wall at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and High Street. He asked if a new low wall is part of the proposal.

Mr. Darnell answered yes. He indicated that there will be planter boxes.

Mr. Clark suggested that they consider some really large scale plantings in the parking area. He indicated that the parking lot could benefit from some overstory.

Mr. Nelson asked about the filled in brick windows.

Mr. Darnell indicated that this is the location of the elevator shaft.

Ms. Winner indicated that she lives near this sight and she is delighted to see the improvements. She indicated that the improvements will enhance the exterior of the site.

Mr. Celentano indicated that he agrees with Mr. Clark about the size of the trees. He indicated that he was looking for some way of moving the parking over to create more of a buffer from the sidewalk. He indicated that it would be nice if there were big trees in the middle.

Mr. Darnell indicated that he really had planned that the trees might be crepe myrtles because they have trunks down low and foliage up high.

Mr. Celentano indicated that they are suggesting deciduous trees with a canopy high enough to see under.

Mr. Celentano indicated that the rendering is very useful in understanding the design. He indicated that it suggests a strategy of detailing to match the quality of construction of the existing building. He indicated that he hopes that they will carry through with that intent.

Mr. Darnell indicated that they will carry that through.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he agrees with all the comments that have been made so far. He indicated that he would like to see some more tree canopy if possible. He indicated that they are pretty limited in the areas that they can plant but that he would like to see an effort to do that. He indicated that what they have proposed is a very appropriate project.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he had a suggestion about the parking lot. He indicated that he hopes they will consider putting up a 4 or 6 foot high brick wall to delineate the edge of the parking lot from the street.

Mr. Darnell indicated that the other aspect of his profession is the cost and that such a wall would be very expensive.

Mr. Celentano indicated that even a three-foot wall would really help.

Ms. Hook moved to approve the application as submitted with the following items to be resubmitted for final approval:

1. Information about the materials of the new doors.
2. Information on new plant materials to be used.
3. Specific manufacturer's information on the lampposts to be installed.
4. Review of a brick sample.

#### Lee Park: Plantings at Base of Statue

Staff presented the memo.

Mr. Clark asked if the seasonal bulbs and groundcover were approved for the base of the statue. Hallie Boise of Gregg Bleam's office indicated that the groundcover and bulbs were approved by the BAR. She indicated that there are four boxwoods and Japanese Holly near the statue. She indicated that the plan proposes eliminating the cobra heads and the Dawn Redwood tree. She indicated that these changes will allow greater visibility from East Jefferson Street. She indicated that the other trees in the park were dedicated and they were asked not to remove those trees. She indicated that Lee Park has a history of dedicated plantings.

Brandon Smith indicated that on the Lee Statue in Richmond the railing was removed and there is no landscaping and the statue is pretty elegant looking. He indicated that he thinks that shrubbery in urban parks is a waste of time and causes a lot of complications. He indicated that flowers are OK and trees with a higher canopy are OK. He indicated that he thinks that the low hanging trees need to be pruned. He indicated that he thinks that a little minimalism could go a long way.

Gregg Bleam indicated that they looked at various precedents for equestrian statues and the precedent is really for a plan base. He indicated that the idea of a horse moving through space is very important. He indicated that there is also the issue of the garden. He indicated that they were trying to maintain the spatial effect of the statue while also accommodating the bulbs.

Mr. Clark indicated that he thinks that there is a propensity on this county towards guiding the lilies. He indicated that in Europe so often the best sculptures are not surrounded by any plantings. He indicated that if Lee should not running through a boxwood garden then he should not be tip toeing through the tulips either. He indicated that this plan should be as sparse as it can possibly be.

He indicated that there are many competing interests in the park. He indicated that he learned along time ago that you can't satisfy everyone.

Mr. Blead indicated that this issue relates to the Lewis and Clark and Jackson statues as well. He indicated that the Jackson Statue will be looked at as part of the Court Square project. He indicated that the statues have beautiful bases that should be exposed.

Mr. Celentano indicated that the other reason to pave up to the statue is that being able to get up to the base of the statue and sit down next to it makes it part of the experience. He indicated that in Italy almost every piazza has a focal point that is accessible.

Mr. Blead indicated that there is an issue of scale. He indicated that the whole park is really the setting for the sculpture.

Mr. Nelson indicated that, whereas he does think that the vandalism is a big concern he does think that the four proposals are inappropriate from a design standpoint and they would not keep the vandalism away. He indicated that he thinks that they would really be loosing out if they went in that direction. He indicated that he thinks that the ground lighting would help a lot. He indicated that, not only are the cobra lights unattractive, but it is dark up there at night. He indicated that he thinks that the elements of the plan that have not been implemented will help to deter vandals. He indicated that it seems like they are jumping ahead. He indicated that he remembers when the plan was presented there was an interest in placing the benches around the perimeter of the park. He indicated that this would make it easier for the general public walking by to monitor what is going on in the park. He indicated that he has always had concern about the highly vandalized checkerboard tables. He indicated that he is in the park every day with his dog and those tables tend to attract some people with a bad attitude. He indicated that he would like to see the tables taken out because they are very unattractive. He indicated that, at the very least, he would like to see them moved to the perimeter of the park. He indicated that he would like to see the Dawn Redwood taken down. He indicated that it is not only inappropriate, but it does block the visibility to the statue. He indicated that he thinks that there are a lot of things that could be done to help the situation before doing something as drastic as the suggested plantings.

Mr. Clark stated that the board may wish to pass a motion that the landscape architect's original ideas be carried out.

Mr. Clark moved that the board recommend that the landscape architects intentions be followed with the exception that all the plantings near the statue be removed in favor of pavement.

Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.  
The motion was unanimously approved.

#### Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Ms. Vest indicated that this is the annual meeting of the BAR and that the board must elect a chair and vice-chair for a one-year term. She explained the responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair.

Mr. Celentano nominated Ms. Fenton for chair and Mr. Nelson for vice-chair.

Mr. Clark seconded the motion.  
The motion was unanimously approved.

#### Other Business

Mr. Nelson indicated that he and Ms. Fenton have discussed the need for a worksession to deal with some issues that have not been resolved within the timeframe of the regular meeting. He indicated that the new Director of Neighborhood Services would be coming on board soon and this would be an opportunity for the board to meet him. He indicated that this new director would essentially function as the Director of Planning.

Ms. Vest indicated that the department of Planning and Community Development is merging with the Divisions of Building and Life Safety and Engineering into a new Department of Neighborhood Planning and Development Services, with a focus on service delivery to neighborhoods and one stop shopping for development review. She indicated that Jim Tolbert will be the Director of the department and Ron Higgins will remain the head of the Planning and Community Development division.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he and Ms. Fenton are also interested in exploring the administrative approval process. He indicated that he wants to find out how others feel about the idea of having the chair or vice-chair involved in each administrative review. He indicated that he and Ms. Fenton are willing to put in the time to do that.

Ms. Hook suggested that a member of the board review the applications, rather than the chair or vice chair. She indicated that, while the current chair and vice-chair are situated downtown future chairs may not be.

Ms. Winner asked if there is an issue around what the ordinance will allow.

Ms. Vest indicated that the current ordinance requires any change visible from a public right of way be subject to design review. She stated that changes requiring a building permit must be approved by the Board of Architectural Review and any change that does not require a building permit must be approved administratively by the Director of Planning. She indicated that any change to that wording would require a zoning text amendment, which would go to both Planning Commission and City Council for approval. She indicated that this provision was added to the ordinance in the early 90's in an effort to streamline routine approvals and ease the burden for both the board and the applicants. She indicated that in 1998 about two or three times as many applications were reviewed administratively by staff as were reviewed by the board. She indicated that the primary issues will be the time involved for the board member and timeliness for the applicants. She indicated that they could work out a system where applications are reviewed every couple of days. She indicated that, right now, people are used to being able to walk in and get an answer within a day. She indicated that there is a level of expectation within the community right now.

Ms. Winner indicated that, from an organizational standpoint, it seems that the reason there is a professional staff is to help with the routine matters. She indicated that personally she would prefer if they decide which of those things they feel comfortable with and delegate as they can. She

indicated that if there are issues around it, they need to address those issues, rather than overlaying another layer of organization.

Mr. Clark indicated that he agrees with Ms. Winner. He indicated that staff should be in a position to request professional expertise of the chair and vice-chair in making administrative decisions.

Ms. Vest indicated that currently if it doesn't require a building permit it may be approved by the director. She indicated that if the director has doubts he will send it to the board. She indicated that that there are cases where advice has been sought from individual experts on the board. She stated that, for example, during a tree replacement in a historic district the director asked the advice of a landscape architect on the board. She indicated that when a concrete wall was replaced in a historic district an architect was consulted because it was a very subtle aesthetic issue. She indicated that they have pulled on these resources informally. She indicated that it is not foolproof but that is what they have tried to do.

Mr. Nelson indicated that the process can work or not work depending on who makes the decision. He indicated that Mr. Higgins has done a very good job of handling administrative approvals and he has asked a number of people for advice on different issues. He indicated that there was another planning director making the decisions in the past who made a bad decision across the street from him on South Street. He indicated that huge concrete storage containers were approved that are a tremendous eyesore. He indicated that it is a matter of process. He indicated that as long as you have a person in there who is doing a good job as Mr. Higgins is then he is comfortable with it.

Ms. Winner indicated that if there is a specific issue with a person, we should deal with that issue rather than adding on this layer of organizational structure.

Ms. Vest indicated that this issue comes up at a time when the department is reorganizing and looking at all of the development review processes. She indicated that they are trying to create a one-stop shop for all building and development activities. She indicated that it is a really good time to look at this process. She indicated that, at the same time, Mr. Higgins will continue to function as the head of planning and will continue to conduct administrative approvals.

Mr. Clark indicated that, as a part of staff's internal examination, it would be a good time to question what requires a building permit. He indicated that that definition carries with it an awful lot of power.

Ms. Hook asked how often administrative approvals come up.

Ms. Vest indicated that it varies depending on the weather and time of year. She indicated that they had several that day and probably over 100 in a year.

Mr. Clark indicated that it is important that they not become a board that is nitpicking. He indicated that it is important that there be an administrative process. He indicated that if too many things are coming about that do not require a building permit, maybe we should revisit what requires a building permit.



Brandon Smith indicated that he is a carpenter and he has done preservation work. He indicated that he would rather see a process put in place. He indicated that, as somebody interested in preservation, he would rather see the process drawn out, not made more convenient for the applicant. He indicated that, as a carpenter he knows that people cheat and that he also knows that developers' interests are in their pocketbook.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he, Ms. Fenton and Ms. Vest would appreciate any input in setting up an agenda for the worksession. He indicated that there are several issues that have been discussed which have not been resolved. He indicated that Mr. Schwartz asked what has become of his request for a community based study of the downtown BAR district. He indicated that the other issue that he wants to find out about is what has happened to the request from the BAR to the City Council to have a consultant do a master plan of the downtown mall.

Mr. Nelson indicated that an issue has come up from members of council and Mr. Schwartz about what the BAR can do to try to improve the quality of design before proposals are actually before the board.

#### Downtown Recreation Center

Mr. Nelson indicated that this was not on the formal agenda. He indicated that it came in after the deadline. Mr. Nelson asked Ms. Vest for some background on the issue.

Ms. Vest indicated that the proposal came to the board as a preliminary proposal at the last meeting. She indicated that the board was so enthusiastic about the proposal that a letter has gone from the BAR to the City Council expressing support for the project and also requesting that the awning on the Market Street entrance be replaced. She indicated that it was very positively reviewed but it wasn't ready for approval yet.

Andy Thomas, architect, indicated that there is a new part of the program that he needs feedback on from the board. He indicated that they are now proposing a new entrance to the east façade of the armory to access a new employee training center in the basement of the building. He indicated that the south entrance to the building is to become more of a pedestrian entrance from the amphitheatre. He indicated that they would like to know the board's feelings.

Mr. Clark indicated that he thinks that both the architects and the board would benefit from some design drawings. He indicated that what has been presented is flat and it is difficult to see what is going on. He indicated that the general intentions are on track. He asked if they are on some sort of break neck schedule.

Mr. Thomas answered yes and no. He indicated that next month would be a fine time for them to come for final approval. He indicated that they want to know before then if they are on the right track.

Ms. Winner asked, based on what can be seen, if there are any design issues.

Mr. Clark answered no but that they would benefit from more drawings. He indicated that most of what they will end up doing they will do because they will have to. He indicated that the details are what is going to come into question.

Mr. Thomas indicated that they will be using a lot of the same materials.

Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund

Ms. Vest indicated that three commercial projects were recently approved by the Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund Committee. She indicated that there is approximately \$100,000 left in the fund. She indicated that the loan would be readvertised. She stated that she wanted the board to be aware that this funding source is still available for property owners in the historic districts. She indicated that it is important to get the word out.

Mr. Clark moved to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Hook seconded the motion.

At 7:00 P.M. the meeting was adjourned.