

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Tuesday, August 1st, 2023 at 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers

The Design Review Board (DRB) on Tuesday, August 1st, 2023 at 5:30pm. The following Board Members were in attendance: **Lauren Rogers, Tori Wallace-Babcock, Lucy Lynch, Alexander Newman and Lukas Hauser.** Representing the City of Spartanburg's Planning Department was **Martin Livingston, Community Development Director; Nan Zhou, Planner II, Tia Keitt, Planner II and Oksana Holbrooks, Administrative Assistant.** Also attending was **Craig Lewis, the City's Design Consultant.**

Roll Call:

Ms. Rogers: Lauren Rogers
Ms. Babcock: Tori Wallace Babcock
Mr. Newman: Alexander Newman
Ms. Lynch: Lucy Lynch
Mr. Hauser: Lukas Hauser

Ms. Lynch: Per the Freedom of Information Act, public notice of the Design Review Board meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the City of Spartanburg Zoning Ordinance. And so, now we need to approve tonight's agenda. If anyone has any questions or would like to make a motion to approve tonight's agenda.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Ms. Rogers and second by Ms. Babcock, the agenda was approved by a vote of 5 to 0

Ms. Rogers: A motion to approve
Ms. Babcock: Second
Ms. Lynch: All in favor?
Attendees: Aye.

Ms. Lynch: We also have two sets of minutes from November 1st, we could do November 1st, and the only people that were present Lukas and myself, so do you want to motion to approve those minutes or?

Approval of Meeting Minutes for November 1st, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Hauser and second by Ms. Lynch, the agenda was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Mr. Hauser: Kevin was here as well, but that's alright, I looked them over other than some small dictation typos from the software the general adjust of it looks accurate and I motion to approve those.

Ms. Lynch: Okay and I'll second that. And so those are approved.

Ms. Lynch: As November 22nd minutes Tori, Lauren do you?

Approval of Meeting Minutes for November 22nd , 2022

On a motion by Ms. Babcock and second by Ms. Rogers, the agenda was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Ms. Rogers: I'll make a motion to approve.

Ms. Babcock: I'll second.

Ms. Lynch: All in favor say aye?

Attendees: Aye

Old Business: None.

New Business:

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Preliminary conceptual approval of a buildings form, massing and placement on the site for the proposed Spartanburg County Public Library – Headquarters Expansion and Planetarium located in the DT Zone (Civic District) at 151 S. Church Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-21-074.00). Owner: Spartanburg County Library / Applicant: Adam Flynn and Sarah Stevens, McMillan Pazdan Smith.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed civic building expansion project is on a 4.99 acre parcel at the corner of Broad Street and South Church Street.

AUTHORITY

This project is zoned DT-6. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required.

Because of the unique characteristics of the Civic/Landmark Building, it shall be subject to Design Review in accordance with Section 2.4. As part of this review process, the applicant may request modifications from the applicable district standards. However, all such modifications shall otherwise conform to the general principles for Civic/Landmark buildings below:

- If indicated on the Downtown Master Plan, they must comply with the recommendations therein.
- They should be sited to terminate a street vista whenever possible and must incorporate appropriate prominent features, designs, and entrances to celebrate a visual termination.
- They should incorporate detailing and materials that are authentic to the intended style.
- A pedestrian plaza, courtyard, or similar landscaped area may be substituted for a required building frontage and minimum setback line.
- Building entrances for civic buildings may be raised above the street elevation and accessed via a monumental stair.
- They should respect the character of the fronting streets through the provision of a pedestrian-friendly orientation including clear entrances from the street and permeable street walls with adequate windows (no blank walls).

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

- Application complete

EXCEPTIONS

- 3.3.2.a Front Building Setback – Maximum setback of 6 ft – *Setbacks range from 7 ft 9 in to 35 ft*
 - *Approval Recommended: The proposed pedestrian plaza is consistent with Civic/Landmark building principles*
- 6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls – Expanses of blank walls may not exceed 20 feet in length – *Proposed blank wall along Broad Street is 28 ft*
 - *Conditional Approval Recommended: See our notes in the Additional Comments section*
- 6.4.4.c Transparency Zone – Glazing (transparent windows or doors) must extend at least 60% of the total façade width – *Proposed glazing along Broad Street is less than 60% (primarily due to the 28 ft blank wall)*
 - *Conditional Approval Recommended: See our notes in the Additional Comments section*
- 8.1 Streetscape – Minimum 16 ft zone with trees in wells – *Some existing sidewalk zones that would remain substandard along both Broad and Church*
 - *Modification Requested: See our notes in the Additional Comments section*

CODE REVIEW

A. Use Standards: The proposed use is permitted by right.

B. District Standards:

- **3.3.1 Lot Configuration:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.2 Primary Building Standards:** *Maximum setback of 6 ft is proposed to be exceeded*
- **3.3.4 Building Height:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** *Not applicable*
- **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** *Shopfront - permitted*

C. General Standards:

- **4.1 Civic/Landmark Buildings:**
 - If indicated on the Downtown Master Plan, they must comply with the recommendations therein. – ***Compliant***
 - They should be sited to terminate a street vista whenever possible and must incorporate appropriate prominent features, designs, and entrances to celebrate a visual termination. – ***Compliant***
 - They should incorporate detailing and materials that are authentic to the intended style. – ***Compliant***

- A pedestrian plaza, courtyard, or similar landscaped area may be substituted for a required building frontage and minimum setback line. – ***Compliant***
- Building entrances for civic buildings may be raised above the street elevation and accessed via a monumental stair. – ***Compliant***
- They should respect the character of the fronting streets through the provision of a pedestrian-friendly orientation including clear entrances from the street and permeable street walls with adequate windows (no blank walls). – ***Not Compliant on Broad Street frontage***

D. Lot/Site Standards:

- **5.1.1 Lot Frontage:** All lots must front on a street, square, or common open space. ***Compliant***
- **5.1.2 Corner Lots:** Buildings located at street intersections must place the main building, or part of the building, at the corner. ***Compliant***
- **5.1.3 Pedestrian Entries from Frontage Line:** Buildings must have their principal pedestrian entrances on a frontage line. ***Compliant***

E. Utilities and Trash Containment:

- **5.2.1 Underground Utilities:** Compliance presumed
- **5.2.2 Solid Waste Storage Areas:** Compliance presumed
- **5.2.3 Mechanical and Utility Equipment:** Compliant

F. Building Standards:

- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Connectivity:** Compliant with the exception of the blank wall that creates a visual gap along the street frontage.
- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Downtown Should be Urban:** Compliant
- **6.1.5 General Design Principles - Put People First:** Streetscapes should be composed of wide sidewalks for walking, seating, public art, and landscaping. ***Exception required - see additional comments***
- **6.2 Required Building Design Standards:**
 - **6.2.1 Architectural Style:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.2 Compatibility:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.3 Proportions:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.4 Wall Materials:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.5 Façade Treatment:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.6 Building Entrances:** *Compliant*
- **6.4 Specific Building Design Standards for Mixed-Use and Commercial Buildings in D-T5**
 - **6.4.1 Roof and Eaves:** *Compliant*
 - **6.4.2 Canopies/Awnings:** *Compliant*

- **6.4.3 Encroachments:** *Compliant*
- **6.4.4 Ground Level Detailing**
 - **a. Minimize Blank Walls:** Expanses of blank walls may not exceed 20 feet in length. (A “blank wall” is a facade that does not contain transparent windows or doors.) - *Exception required - see additional comments*
 - **c. Transparency Zone:** Glazing must extend from the corner of the front facade for a depth equal to 60% of the length of the building *Exception required - see additional comments*
- **6.4.5 Materials:** *Compliant*

G. Parking:

- **Not Applicable**

H. Streetscape and Site Landscaping:

- **8.1 Required Streetscape:** 16 ft streetscape zone with a minimum 16 ft sidewalk and trees planted in wells consistent with downtown standards (40 ft on-center). *Exception required - see additional comments*

I. Signage: Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

- **Blank Wall Condition along Broad Street:** The proposed 28-foot-wide blank wall along Broad Street contains a stairwell for emergency egress. In addition, this element is the closest point of the building to the public sidewalk. As a result, it presents a less than desirable frontage for pedestrian activity. We strongly recommend consideration of one or more of the following techniques to break up the dullness of the overall wall.
 - Windows in the stairwell (presumably fire-rated) – an irregular pattern combined with LED backlighting could make for a very interesting public art element
 - Brick recess element
 - Signage structure on which banners advertising library or community events can be hung
 - A vegetative element such as a green screen (vines trained to grow up the wall) or some foundation plantings
 - A public art component (e.g., applied sculpture, lighting, mural, video wall)
- **Substandard Streetscape along Broad Street and Church Street:** The code calls for a 16-foot-wide streetscape zone in the DT-6 zone to support a comfortable, pedestrian-first experience in the downtown. The current streetscape along many street frontages was based on existing right-of-way which has left some substandard conditions. To rectify this and continue to upgrade the downtown for the future, we have required all applicants who are doing major expansions or new construction to upgrade their frontage as well.

For this application, there are two locations where the proposed improvements should be modified to better accommodate the preferred end state.

- The existing sidewalk along Broad Street is substandard and is really a bare minimum passageway (4 foot clear). At a minimum we recommend that the proposed retaining wall be pulled back by four feet to permit a 12-foot minimum streetscape section along Broad Street. The balance of the sidewalk zone could be along the building edge.
- There is a small pinch point to the north of the bus turnout where the sidewalk narrows to 5'2". We recommend pulling back the retaining wall slightly to maintain a consistent 6 ft clear sidewalk.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend preliminary approval conditioned on the modifications noted above.

Applicant:

Todd Stephens; Director of Spartanburg County Public Library aka County Librarian
Sarah Stevens; Project Manager

Public Comments:

Stant Asheminic, 155 E Broad St, Spartanburg, SC 29306.

McKay Moore, 268 Holly Dr, Spartanburg, SC 29301.

Stephen Skyes, 205 Woodgrove Trace, Spartanburg, SC 29301.

Discussion:

The elevation of the property, the design, the color of brick, the windows, outside/ inside layout and landscape of the property. The sidewalks and streetscape, parking spaces and architectural design, scope of the project and subject property size of the Planetarium Expansion and Learning Center project. Blank wall should be addressed in the design. Features that may be used for staircases appear odd in the front of the design facing Church Street.

A motion was made by Ms. Rogers, seconded Ms. Babcock the Preliminary conceptual approval of the buildings form, massing with sidewalks wall setback, streetscape dimensions was approved with a vote of 5-0.

Adjourn meeting at 6:31 PM



Lucy Lynch, Chairperson