

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 5:30 PM
City Council Chambers

The Design Review Board (DRB) on Tuesday, November 7, 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 **Chris Story, City Manager, Bob Coler, City Attorney, John Squires, Storm Water Engineer, Martin Livingston, Community Development Director; Nan Zhou, Planner II, and 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 this 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 if, anyone had the chance to review the agenda, I think we have one change to agenda? Which is the first business item is going to be removed. So, we can approve the agenda as amended.

Approval of Agenda

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

Ms. Rogers: Motion to approve.

Mr. Hauser: Second

Ms. Lynch: All in favor of approving the amended agenda say aye?

Attendees: Aye.

Ms. Lynch: Okay so the amended agenda is approved. Minutes from October 3rd meeting?

Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 3, 2023

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

Ms. Rogers: Motion to approve minutes from October 3rd meeting.

Ms. Rogers: Second

Ms. Lynch: All in favor of approving the minutes from October 3rd meeting?

Attendees: Aye.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Final Approval on the site for the proposed installation of a monument sign located in the DT-5 Zone (Downtown Urban District) at 544 N. Church Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-01-177.00), from Owner: Bishop of Charleston / Applicant: Wofford Newman Center / Agent: Fast Signs.

Comment: The applicant has withdrawn the application.

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 Spartanburg Baseball Stadium located in the DT-5 Zone (Downtown Urban District) at 300 West Henry Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-14-005.00), from Owner/Applicant: Chris Story, City of Spartanburg / Agent: Eric Miller, Johnson Development.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed 3500+ seat, Single-A baseball stadium is located on approximately 14.5 acres at the intersection of West Henry Street and South Daniel Morgan Avenue. It is important to note that this is not a typical commercial building nor is it a civic building. As such, it requires Discretionary Review by the Board.

AUTHORITY

This project is zoned DT-5. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required.

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

- Application is complete for Preliminary Review only

EXCEPTIONS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL

- 3.3.2.a Front Building Setback – Maximum setback of 6 ft
 - *Conditional Approval Recommended: Given the nature of the facility, an increased setback is appropriate along Henry Street. We presume that the setback along Daniel Morgan Avenue is to preserve a building pad for future development. Please confirm.*
- 6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls – Expanses of blank walls may not exceed 20 feet in length – *Proposed blank wall along Henry Street is 273 feet*
 - *For DRB Discussion: 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)*
 - *For DRB Discussion: See our notes in the Additional Comments section*

- 6.4.5 Materials – Metal paneling is not a permitted building material
o *For DRB Discussion: See our notes in the Additional Comments section*
- 8.1 Streetscape – Minimum 16 ft zone with trees in wells
o *Conditional Approval Recommended: 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:

- Not applicable

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. *The primary corner is at West Henry and Daniel Morgan. It is presumed that the corner entry at the access road and West Henry is a function of the ballpark orientation*
- **5.1.3 Pedestrian Entries from Frontage Line:** Buildings must have their principal pedestrian entrances on a frontage line. *Compliant – primary entry is at the corner of West Henry and the Access Road*

E. Utilities and Trash Containment:

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

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:** (B) Ground floor activity is critical to pedestrian comfort and activity. Long expanses of inactivity are strongly discouraged. *Exception required - see additional comments*
- **6.2 Required Building Design Standards:**
 - **6.2.1 Architectural Style:** *Not Compliant*
 - **6.2.2 Compatibility:** *Not Compliant*
 - **6.2.3 Proportions:** *Compliant*
 - **6.2.4 Wall Materials:** *Non-compliant: The darker metal above the brick appears to be heavier - see additional comments*
 - **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:** *Complaint*
 - **6.4.3 Encroachments:** *Complaint*
 - **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.) – *The proposed blank wall along Henry Street is 273 ft - 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:** *The proposed metal siding is not a permitted material and requires a Discretionary Review.*

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). - *The proposed section does not show trees between the curb and the sidewalk. Sidewalk improvements are not shown along Daniel Morgan. Please adjust the plans accordingly.*

I. Signage: Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

- **Blank Wall Condition along Henry Street:** The proposed 273-foot-wide blank wall along Henry Street conceals various back of house areas, bathrooms, and kitchens. It also serves, in part, as a sign wall for the stadium. While having back of house areas is expected for these facilities, the proximity to the sidewalk is what makes it problematic. On other commercial and institutional buildings with much less blank wall, the Design Review Board has required some type of embellishment that minimizes the visual impact of blank wall condition. The DRB has previously suggested the following strategies:

- 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)
- **Use of Metal Paneling as Wall Material:** There is a significant amount of bronze-colored (brown) vertical metal panels along the Henry Street façade, a material that is not explicitly permitted by the Code. The use of metal as a wall material has been permitted by the Design Review Board subject to limiting factors. The Code states that “When two or more materials are used on a façade, the heavier material (e.g., brick) should be placed below the lighter material (e.g., siding) to give the sense of support and grounding.” While the brick is indeed on the lower level, the dark color of the metal and its placement set beyond the façade of the brick (as opposed to an inset condition), makes it appear to be heavier. The fact that this is also a blank wall condition along a prominent street frontage is also problematic. We strongly recommend the use of brick along that entire facade in lieu of the metal panels. Brick is more appropriate to downtown Spartanburg and is better able to receive embellishments that can minimize the overall inactivity include a wall mural.
 - **Substandard Streetscape along Henry Street and Daniel Morgan Avenue Street:** The proposed section does not show street trees, nor does it indicate the treatment of Daniel Morgan. Given the expectation of foot traffic along Daniel Morgan, the current condition needs to be improved along both streets. Street trees should be shown in 6 foot planters strip between the sidewalk and the curb.
 - **Future Development Along Daniel Morgan:** It is presumed that future development will be placed between the stadium and Daniel Morgan, effectively screening that side of the stadium. The DRB may want to consider an interim measure such as supplemental landscaping along that frontage in case those buildings are not delivered in the near term – next five years.

RECOMMENDATION

In general, this is a project that is outside of the norms of a typical commercial building, however the key decision points should be how the building relates to the public realm of the street. The most notable issue is the consideration of the blank wall condition along Henry Street. We recommend that the DRB provide guidance to the applicant team as to their acceptance of the proposed condition or any alternatives. We recommend the issuance of a Preliminary Approval subject to additional design consideration of the blank walls along Henry Street prior to Final Approval.

Applicant:

Chris Story, City of Spartanburg

Agent: Eric Miller, Johnson Development.

Public Comments:

Leroy Jeter – 445 Beacon St, Spartanburg SC.

Joanna Johnson, 100 Mosspoint Circle, Spartanburg SC.

Discussion:

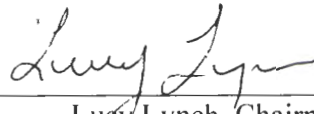
The Board and public discussed the layout of the proposed project, landscape, parking, noise, the design and the flow of traffic. The exterior design material choices chosen for the Stadium are very appropriate and harmonious to the surrounding growing Spartanburg downtown.

A motion was made by Ms. Rogers, seconded Mr. Hauser for preliminary approval of the structure to allow construction to proceed with approval of an exception for the glazing requirements and metal paneling on the walls. Applicant is to return for a full and final approval with all renderings including details for the plaza entry and streetscape, by a vote of 5-0.

Staff Announcements:

A new case for next month First Baptist Church.

Adjourn meeting at 7:17 PM



Lucy Lynch, Chairperson