

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024, at 5:30 PM
Dr. TK Gregg Recreation Center

The Design Review Board (DRB) on Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024, at 5:30pm. The following Board Members were in attendance: **Lucy Lynch, Alexander Newman, Tori Wallace Babcock and Lauren Rogers.** Representing the City of Spartanburg's Planning Department was **Martin Livingston, Community Development Director; Oksana Holbrooks, Administrative Assistant and Nan Zhou, Planner II.**

Roll Call:

Mr. Newman: Alexander Newman

Ms. Lynch: Lucy Lynch

Ms. Rogers: Lauren Rogers (Late arrival)

Ms. Babcock: Tori Wallace Babcock

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. Okay if we could approve tonight's agenda unless there are any changes.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Newman and second by Ms. Babcock, the agenda was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Mr. Newman: Motion to approve.

Ms. Babcock: I second

Ms. Lynch: All in favor say aye?

Attendees: Aye.

Ms. Lynch: The motion carries. Okay the minutes from March 5th, 2024, if everyone has had a chance to look through those and would like to approve?

Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 2nd, 2024

On a motion by Ms. Babcock to approved minutes from March 5th meeting and second by Mr. Newman, the minutes was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Ms. Babcock: Motion to approve minutes from March 5th meeting.

Mr. Newman: Second.

Ms. Lynch: All in favor of approving the minutes from February 6th?

Attendees: Aye.

Old Business:

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Full and Final Approval for conversion of residential on the first floor located at 249 E. Main Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-19-002.00). Owner/Applicant: Brandon McKillop. The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Full and Final Approval for conversion of residential on the first floor located at 249 E. Main Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-19-002.00). Owner/Applicant: Brandon McKillop.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The applicant is seeking to convert an existing one-story commercial building into a two-unit dwelling along Main Street between Broad Street and Dean Street.

AUTHORITY

This project is zoned DT-5. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required because of the requested change in use on the ground floor along Main Street from commercial to housing. The Board has previously approved the location of residential on the ground floor facing Main Street at their October, 2023 meeting subject to additional design scrutiny for consistency with the intent of the code.

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

- Application is complete for Final Approval Review

EXCEPTIONS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL

- 6.1.2.B Key Principle: Housing – Housing should not be placed on the ground floor frontage in D-T6 and along Main Street. – *Approved by the DRB subject to design review*

CODE REVIEW

A. Applicability Matrix: This is a substantial modification where the improvements are greater than 50% of appraised value. Full compliance is required to the extent practical. Full compliance is required without exception for expansion areas and landscaping standards.

- **Use Standards:** The proposed use is permitted by right (though not on the street facing side). *Approved by the DRB subject to design review*

B. District Standards:

- **3.3.1 Lot Configuration:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.2 Primary Building Standards:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.4 Building Height:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** *Not applicable*

- **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** *Shopfront – permitted – awning or canopy required (see Table 1) – applicants have requested an exception to not install any canopy or awning*

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*

E. Utilities and Trash Containment:

- **5.2.1 Underground Utilities:** *Compliant*
- **5.2.2 Solid Waste Storage Areas:** *No information provided*
- **5.2.3 Mechanical and Utility Equipment:** *No information provided*

F. Building Standards:

- **6.1.2 General Design Principles - Housing:** Housing should not be placed on the ground floor
- frontage in D-T6 and along Main Street. – *DRB previously approved exception subject to design review*
- **6.1.3 General Design Principles – Mixed-Use Infill and Redevelopment:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.4 General Design Principles – Downtown Should be Urban:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.5 General Design Principles - Put People First:** Ground floor activity is critical to pedestrian comfort and activity. Long expanses of inactivity are strongly discouraged. – *DRB previously approved exception subject to design review*
- **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*
- **6.3 Specific Building Design Standards for Residential Structures/Frontages in D-T5 (option a)**
 - **6.3.1 Roof and Eaves:** *Compliant*
 - **6.3.2 Façade Design:** *Presumed Compliant – Calculation not provided but note on plan guarantees compliance*
 - **6.3.3 Building Entrances: Raised Entries** *Not Compliant – Exception provided by the DRB subject to enhanced design*
 - **6.3.5 Materials:** *Compliant*
- **6.4 Specific Building Design Standards for Mixed-use and Commercial Buildings in D-T5 (option b)**
 - **6.4.1 Roof and Eaves:** *Compliant*
 - **6.4.2 Canopies/Awnings:** *Existing canopy to be removed with no replacement – Installation of a canopy/awning is a requirement of the building frontage (3.3.7)*

- **6.4.3 Encroachments:** *Not applicable*
- **6.4.4 Ground Level Detailing:** *Compliant*
- **6.4.5 Materials:** *Compliant*

G. Parking:

- **Not Applicable**

H. Streetscape and Site Landscaping:

- **8.1 Required Streetscape:** 12 ft streetscape zone with a minimum 8 ft sidewalk and trees planted in wells consistent with downtown standards (40 ft on-center). - *One tree is required if there are no conflicts with underground utilities*

I. Signage: Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

- **Front Unit Entry:** The proposed front façade is consistent with the neighboring commercial properties though we continue to question the direct access entry from the sidewalk into the living space of the unit. The code requires that residential units be elevated to provide a sense of privacy from the sidewalk but no alternate configuration has been provided. We would strongly encourage some type of visual offset or an entry vestibule to provide a more appropriate transition to the private space.
- **Storefront Windows:** The proposed Main Street elevation windows are high-quality but residential-grade and we are not sure whether they are appropriate for a commercial, storefront condition. We have requested that applicants bring samples to the meeting for DRB review.
- **Street Tree required:** Because the application is a change in use, the streetscape is required to be upgraded. Consistent with the downtown standards, one street tree is required, using a tree well.
- **Front Façade Canopy/Awning:** The proposed recessed is proposed in lieu of the provision of building canopy/awning as required by the building typology. The purpose of this requirement along a main street is two-fold: to provide shelter prior to entry and to provide shelter to pedestrian walking by. The grant of an exception is predicated upon a change necessitated by a site-specific condition, building-specific condition or an innovative manner in which to fulfill the overall design intent of this Code. We do not believe that the application shows a building-specific need to eliminate this requirement nor do we think that it shows an innovative manner in which to fulfill the design intent.
- **Privacy Screening:** The applicants have suggested that the individual residents can use a flexible interior screen as a means to provide natural light while keeping curtains or blinds open to avoid a blank wall condition. We do not think that this solution will provide enough privacy to the unit to preclude this condition. Blank walls and dead spaces simply do not encourage pedestrian activity. Great Main Streets have a continuity of active, ground floor spaces that cast light onto the sidewalk at night and provide visual diversity to a pedestrian. The lack of these ingredients causes a well-documented emotional response that is equivalent to stress or fear which discourages pedestrian

activity. As well-intentioned as an interior screen may be, we do not think that it is sufficient to permanently meet the intent of the code.

RECOMMENDATION

While the application addresses many of the DRB's concerns, we still do not believe that the proposed solution for the Main Street elevation will adequately address the need for the tenant's privacy and the importance of providing an active, ground floor. In addition, we do not think that application has established a building-specific need to eliminate the proposed canopy/awning nor have they provided an innovative solution that addresses the intent. In addition, no accommodation has been made for the required street tree.

Because of these two outstanding issues, we are not able to provide a recommendation for approval with specific exceptions granted by the Board as follows:

That the proposed elevation provides sufficient shelter to pedestrians on the sidewalk for comfort and shelter; and

That the proposed design will prioritize pedestrian activity through the provision of an active, ground floor space; and

That the required street tree is not practical to install due to existing site conditions (need to define what these are).

Applicant:

Meghan Teague, AIA; Teague Studios.

Public Comments:

None.

Discussion:

The proposed project has been improved. Architecturally it is a good proposal. The proposed project fits well with the surrounding businesses and buildings. Because of underground utilities and adjacent light pole, the landscaping in front of the building may not be possible and placement of trees may be in disarray of the surrounding properties. The city may alter the sidewalk at a later point in time.

A motion was made by Ms. Babcock, seconded Mr. Newman for full & final approval with the variances of a tree, canopy and pedestrian walkway requested by a vote of 4-0.

New Business:

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Preliminary conceptual approval of the buildings form, massing, and placement on the site for the Grain District Parking Garage located at 344 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-14-005.00) in the DT-5 (Downtown Code) zoning district. Owner/Applicant: Morgan & Henry JOF ESA II, LLC / Agent: Michael Judice; McMillan Pazdan Smith.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed parking garage and surface parking lot is designed to provide parking for the ballpark and a future office building planned along Main Street.

AUTHORITY

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

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

- Application is missing the following elements but may be sufficient for Preliminary Review:
 - Parking and Loading areas – Please show the drives from Daniel Morgan
 - Material Selections and Colors – Please correct page 14 for consistency with the other drawings (no brick shown) – note that final approval will require cut sheets or manufacturer’s photos of the proposed materials
 - Perspective Illustration – *As needed by the DRB to understand the context of the proposal*
 - Description of requested modification/special exceptions including a statement of the unique design considerations that contribute to this request and the proposed design solutions

EXCEPTIONS

- 8.1 Streetscape – Minimum 12 ft zone (preferred 16 ft zone) with trees in wells - **proposal is for a 5 foot sidewalk and a 4.5 ft planting strip**
 - *Subject to DRB approval*

CODE REVIEW

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

3.2.10.b – Parking Structure

- **3.2.10.b.1 Liner Buildings Required:** *Presumed compliant with additional of future office building along Main Street required by development agreement with City*
- **3.2.10.b.2 High-Quality Materials:** *Compliant*
- **3.2.10.b.3 Clear Entries:** *Compliant*
- **3.2.10.b.4 Vents and Utility Openings:** *Assumed compliant – subject to Final Approval review*

B. District Standards:

- **3.3.1 Lot Configuration:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.2 Primary Building Standards:** *Compliant*

- **3.3.4 Building Height:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** *Not applicable*
- **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** *Not applicable*

C. General Standards:

- *Not Applicable*

D. Lot/Site Standards:

- *Not Applicable*

E. Utilities and Trash Containment:

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

F. Building Standards:

- *Not Applicable*

G. Parking:

- **8.2 Parking Area Landscaping (Required Plantings & Parking Area Screening):** *Presumed compliant subject to Final Approval submission*

H. Streetscape and Site Landscaping:

- **8.1 Required Streetscape:** 12 ft streetscape zone (preferred 16 ft zone) with a minimum 8 ft sidewalk and trees planted in wells consistent with downtown standards (40 ft on-center). – *Exception Required*

I. Signage: Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

- **Substandard Streetscape across frontage of parking lot and parking garage:** The proposed sidewalk zone along the frontage of this site is a 4.5 ft planting strip and a 5 ft sidewalk directly adjacent to the building. The sidewalk along the ballpark edge to the immediate south is an 8 ft planting strip, 6 ft sidewalk and a 2.5 ft foundation planting. At a minimum, the code requires a 12 foot zone with an 8 ft sidewalk zone and trees planted in wells. The approved ballpark sidewalk zone is the appropriate treatment for this entire side of the access road and should be extended along the frontage of the parking deck for continuity. We are concerned about the narrowness of the sidewalk and the fact that it is not consistent with the approved stadium area. There is a primary stair tower exiting onto the access road so it can be assumed that many people will egress onto that sidewalk. In the absence of plans for any other building, it is unclear that an additional 3.5 ft precludes any future development. However, to the pedestrians who will be using it and the trees growing in the planting strip (or in the tree wells), it will be of immense benefit.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to approve this application, at a minimum, the DRB will need to grant the following exceptions:

That the substandard streetscape presented is sufficient to satisfy the intent of the code

Applicant:

Michael Judice; McMillan Pazdan Smith.

Public Comments:

None.

Discussion:

The streetscape presented is sufficient. The Board requested more information on the 3D for the proposed buildings, landscaping around the building and inclusion of the plaza to determine how it affects the building location.

A motion was made by Mr. Newman, seconded Ms. Rogers for preliminary conceptual approval with the exception of the sidewalk by a vote of 3-1.

Staff Announcements:

The following DRB meetings will be held at Dr. TK Gregg Community Center going forward. A new Planning Director, Fredalyn Frasier will be joining Planning Department team on April 22, 2024. Board members whose terms have expired will need to renew their terms with the City Clerk to continue to serve on the Board.

Adjourn meeting at 6:27 PM


Lucy Lynch, Chairperson