

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Tuesday, February 4th, 2025, at 5:30 PM
Dr. TK Gregg Recreation Center

The Design Review Board (DRB) on Tuesday, February 4th, 2025, at 5:30pm. The following Board Members were in attendance: **Lauren Rogers, Jean Crowther, Tori Babcock, Alexander Newman, and Lukas Hauser.** Representing the City of Spartanburg's Planning Department was **Fredalyn Frasier, Planning Director, Nan Zhou, Planner II, and Oksana Holbrooks, Sr. Administrative Assistant.**

Roll Call:

Mr. Newman: Alexander Newman
Ms. Crowther: Jean Crowther
Mr. Hauser: Lukas Hauser
Ms. Babcock: Tori Babcock
Ms. Rogers: Lauren Rogers.

Ms. Rogers: With the Freedom of Information Act Compliance, public notification 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. We'll move to the the approval of the agenda.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Ms. Rogers to approve and seconded by Board Members, the minutes were approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Ms. Rogers: Motion to approve.
Board Members: Second.
Ms. Rogers: All in favor?
Ms. Rogers: Aye. Everyone.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 7th, 2025.

On a motion by Ms. Rogers to approve and seconded by Board Members, the minutes were approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

New Business: None.

Old Business:

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Full and Final Approval for the proposed building, Danbury Commons located at 203 Fremont Avenue. (TMS # 7-12-01-080.00). The property is currently zoned for DT-4 (Downtown Urban District). Owner: Dialysis Clinic Inc. / Applicant & Agent: Field Goodlett, Connelly Development, LLC

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 1.96 acre site is bound by Fremont Avenue to the north and is surrounded primarily by one and two-story detached house and is immediately adjacent to a single-story, four-unit apartment building

to the west. There is an existing single-story, commercial building on the site with a small parking lot to the rear.

The proposed 48-unit, four story multi-family building will include parking to the rear and a new detention pond. On December 3, 2024, the Design Review Board (DRB) voted to give preliminary conceptual approval for the project.

AUTHORITY & APPLICABILITY

This project is zoned DT-4. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required.

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

- Application is complete.

FINDINGS- EXCEPTIONS

- None expected

CODE REVIEW

Deficiencies noted, or exceptions or deviations required, are noted in *blue italics*

A. **Use Standards:** The proposed use (multi-family) is permitted by right.

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: *Compliant*
- 3.3.6 Building Frontage: *Common Lawn - permitted*

C. **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*
- 5.1.4 Setbacks: Front and side setbacks must be consistent with those of surrounding buildings. *Compliant*

D. **Utilities and Trash Containment:**

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

E. **Building Standards:**

- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Connectivity:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Downtown Should be Urban:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.5 General Design Principles - Put People First:** *Compliant*
- **6.2 Required Building Design Standards:**
 - o **6.2.1 Architectural Style:** *Compliant*
 - o **6.2.2 Compatibility:** *Compliant*

- o **6.2.3 Proportions:** *Compliant*
- o **6.2.4 Wall Materials:** *Compliant*
- o **6.2.5 Façade Treatment:** *Compliant*
- o **6.2.6 Building Entrances:** *Compliant*
- **6.3 Specific Building Design Standards for Mixed-Use and Commercial Buildings in D-T5**
 - o **6.3.1 Roof and Eaves:** *Compliant*
 - o **6.3.2 Façade Design:** *Compliant*
 - o **6.3.3 Building Entrances:** *Compliance Presumed*
 - o **6.3.4 Garages:** *Not Applicable*
 - o **6.3.5 Materials:** *Compliant*

F. Parking:

- **7.1.4 Parking Area Access:** *Compliant*
- **7.2 Bicycle Parking:** *Not Shown. DRB may permit approval by the staff prior to the issuance of a building permit.*

G. Streetscape and Site Landscaping:

- **8.1 Required Streetscape:** 11 ft streetscape zone with a minimum 5 ft sidewalk and street trees in a 6 ft wide planting strip. *Compliant*

H. Signage: Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

- None

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommendation of Final Approval of the application with the following contingency:

- The required location and number of bicycle parking spaces is confirmed prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Applicant:

Field Goodlett, Connelly Development, LLC

Public Comments: None.

Discussion:

The board requested additional perimeter lighting, with staff working with the builder and the city on implementation. A preference for warmer lighting was noted. Concerns about corner material colors were addressed as rendering error. The board emphasized integrating street lighting as previously discussed, with the staff coordinating plans with Public Works.

A motion was made by Ms. Babcock, seconded Mr. Newman for Full & Final approval, with the condition upon meeting biking requirements and staff review of full metrics for potential extension toward the street by a vote of 5-0.

The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Full and Final Approval for the proposed building, Grain District Office Building located at 245 W. Main St. (TMS # 7-12-14-005.00). The property is currently zoned for DT-5 (Downtown Urban District). Owner: Morgan & Henry JOF ESA LLC / Agent: Andrew McCall & William Gray, McMillian Pazdan Smith / Agent: Michael Swartz & Jon Zubiller, David M Schwarz Architects.

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed 7 story, ~136,000 square foot office building is located at the corner of West Main Street and Batter's Alley adjacent to the 10 story AC Hotel. Below-grade parking is proposed with access from Batter's Alley. It is a part of a larger development that includes the Fifth Third Park and a Parking Garage (both under construction).

On December 3, 2024, the Design Review Board (DRB) voted to give **preliminary conceptual approval** for the project.

AUTHORITY & APPLICABILITY

This project is zoned D-T5 and is a full site redevelopment. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required. Preliminary Approval was granted at the December 3, 2024 DRB meeting. Applicants are requesting final approval.

DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS

Application is complete.

FINDINGS- EXCEPTIONS

- **3.3.4 Building Height:** To permit a 7 story building (maximum height is 6 stories in DT-5) subject to the height bonuses in Section 3.5 (3.5.1 Green Building Height Bonus or 3.5.2 Mixed-use Building Height Bonus) – Exception granted by the DRB at the 12/3/2024 meeting.
- **6.4.3 Encroachments:** To permit the proposed arcade encroachment into the right-of-way.
- **6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls & 4.4.4.c.2 Transparency Zone:** To permit in excess of 20 feet of building that lacks transparent windows or doors not exceeding maximum four (4) feet in height above the sidewalk grade.

CODE REVIEW

Deficiencies noted, or exceptions or deviations required, are noted in *blue italics*

A. **Use Standards:** The proposed use (office) is permitted by right in D-T5.

B. **District Standards:**

- **3.3.1 Lot Configuration:** Frontage Build-Out: 60% except in Side Yard Parking Overlay – *Compliant*
- **3.3.2 Primary Building Standards:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.4 Building Height:** *Exception required for 7 story building (1 additional story over maximum height in DT-5) subject to height bonuses in 3.5. – Exception granted by DRB on 12/3/24*
- **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** *Compliant*
- **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** Shopfront (?) – Permitted; Partial Arcade (?) at corner – Permitted

C. **General Standards:**

- *Compliant*

D. Lot/Site Standards:

- 5.1.1 Lot Frontage: All lots must front on a street, square, or common open space - *Compliant*
- 5.1.3 Pedestrian Entries from Frontage Line: Buildings must have their principal pedestrian entrances on a frontage line. - *Compliant*
- 5.1.4 Setbacks: Front and side setbacks must be consistent with surrounding buildings. - *Compliant*
- 5.1.5 Adjacent Lots: Grading between lots to be sensitively considered. – *Not Applicable*

E. Utilities and Trash Containment:

- 5.2.1 Underground Utilities: *Compliant*
- 5.2.2 Solid Waste Storage Areas: *Further information required to determine compliance*
- 5.2.3 Mechanical and Utility Equipment: *Further information required to determine compliance*

F. Building Standards:

- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Connectivity:** *See note regarding the provision of interesting and active frontages.*
- **6.1.2 General Design Principles - Housing:** *Not applicable*
- **6.1.3 General Design Principles – Mixed-Use Infill & Redevelopment:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Downtown Should be Urban:** *Compliant*
- **6.1.5 General Design Principles - Put People First:** *See note regarding ground floor activity 6.1.5.B)*
- **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. However, corner buildings are encouraged to have a corner entrance.*
- **6.4 Specific Building Design Standards for all D-T5 Mixed-Use and Commercial Buildings**
 - **6.4.1 Roof and Eaves:** *Compliant*
 - **6.4.2 Canopies/Awnings:** *Not Applicable*
 - **6.4.3 Encroachments:** *Exception required - The proposed arcade encroachment prohibited an encroachment into the city right-of-way is required.*
 - **6.4.4 Ground Level Detailing:** *60% Glazing in Transparency. Exception required - Because the ground floor windows are elevated more than 4 feet above the sidewalk, they do not qualify as transparent elements. The proposed retaining wall would be considered a blank wall.*
 - **6.4.5 Materials:** *Compliant*

G. Parking:

- **7.1 Parking Area Access:** Parking must be accessed from a rear alley or a secondary frontage unless approved as a Discretionary Review. (D-T5 & D-T6) – *Compliant*
- **7.2 Bicycle Parking:** *Compliance to be confirmed with Final approval*

H. Streetscape and Site Landscaping:

- **8.1 Required Streetscape:**

- o D-T5: 12 ft zone with 8 ft wide sidewalk: Compliant along Grove Street and Main Street only.

- Exception required – Proposed streetscape along Batter’s Alley is 9 ft 4 in (total) including a 5 ft wide sidewalk. The minimum dimensions are 12 ft with an 8 ft wide sidewalk.*

- o *Applicant to confirm the proposed street tree is the single stem variety to maximize sidewalk space.*

- **8.2 Parking Area Landscaping:**

- Not applicable*

I. Signage: *Staff level approval. Staff will work with the applicant to provide signage as part of the wayfinding system currently being implemented.*

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

New comments in italics

Arcade Treatment: The proposed “arcade” encroachment in the right-of-way for Batter’s Alley is a unique condition that seems to be a hybrid of the historic and practical use of the treatment. The typical arcade does in fact provide additional “air rights” encroachment to permit more building mass than a site would otherwise allow if restricted to a property boundary. Similarly, historic arcades also provided some element of ground floor retail or building entries.

The proposed treatment appears to simply provide the air-rights for the expansion of the building footprint with no ground floor amenity to offset the encroachment. *Lighting has been added as well as some form of an inset panel. Without active space in or near that area (e.g., windows, doors, or some type of interactive elements), staff’s opinion is that the arcade will feel blank and barren.*

Because the encroachment is into the city’s right-of-way, it will require approval of a permanent easement (or similar document) by City Council.

Blank Wall and Building Transparency: The Applicant’s proposed design sets the building at the zero grade along the side street (Grove/Groce Street) and not along the Main Street. The Main Street frontage has been negatively impacted with a series of stairs and retaining walls. These walls are effectively “blank walls” because they do not meet the definition of having transparent windows or doors no greater than 4 feet above the adjacent sidewalk grade (measured using the public sidewalk, not the private sidewalk adjacent to the building). The windows and doors are also approximately 10-12 feet back from the public sidewalk and by scaled estimate and viewing the rendering it is presumed the retaining walls to be between 2 ft and 6 in height.

While it is true that there is a significant grade change across the frontage, there are other potential treatments that could mitigate its impact. For example, in other cities, this type of frontage across the Main Street would utilize a split slab and internal retaining wall (approximately 50 feet in depth) – effectively a basement grade.

That treatment would permit a portion of the Main Street frontage to support viable ground floor retail with higher ceilings (which is generally ideal for retail). It may mean that the Main Street frontage doesn’t access the internal building, which is not uncommon for mixed-use buildings. This condition is like the Main Street frontage of the Riverplace building in downtown Greenville, SC.

The applicant has submitted additional perspective drawings of the retaining walls and planting proposed landscaping.

Streetscape: *The deficiency in the Main Street section has been resolved and the Applicant has presented the justification for the retention of the parking for potential future retail use. The revised streetscape provides a wider sidewalk.*

Main Street Section: *The proposed Main Street dimensions are atypical. A turning template for a truck along with the curb treatment detail is provided. The ROW will be addressed by the city at the site plan review stage.*

Service Yard and Loading Zone:

The Applicant to provide additional detail about the type of equipment in the side yard and the proposed screening. Also, the landscape plan suggests that there is a drive coming off a loading zone. The applicant to address:

- 1. The need for the loading zone. Short term parking in the travel lane for loading is probably fine given the low traffic volume.*
- 2. Consideration moving the sidewalk away from the screening wall and adding some additional street trees.*

RECOMMENDATION

A Final Approval by the DRB will require the following exceptions:

- **6.4.3 Encroachments:** To permit the proposed arcade encroachment into the right-of-way as it is not listed as a permitted encroachment.
- **6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls & 4.4.4.c.2 Transparency Zone:** To permit in excess of 20 feet of building that lacks transparent windows or doors not exceeding maximum four (4) feet in height above the sidewalk grade.
- **8.1 Minimum Streetscape Zone:** To permit a sidewalk zone along along Batter's Alley that is 9 ft (total) and a 5 ft wide sidewalk.

Applicant:

McMillian Pazdan Smith.

Public Comments: None.

Discussion:

The board reviewed planning staff's comments on alleys, parking, and sidewalk compliance. Staff confirmed sidewalk adjustments, eliminating nonconforming sections near Main Street and increasing width along Batter Alley per prior approvals. Loading was clarified as a lay-by for service access, not parking, with utilities housed in a masonry wall.

The board felt the arcade treatment was workaround for sidewalk requirements and encouraged more seamless integration of site constraints in future designs. Lowering planters along Main Street was seen as improving visibility and functionality.

A motion was made by Ms. Babcock, seconded Mr. Newman for Full & Final approval, with the exceptions to zoning code, allowing encroachment into Batters Alley, the blank wall condition

with the outdoor planters, and the minimum streetscape zone in Batters Alley meeting requirements by a vote of 5-0.

Staff Announcements:

None.

Adjourned meeting at 6:32 P.M.


Lauren Rogers, Chair