

## **Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 5:30 PM**

**Dr. TK Gregg Recreation Center**

The Design Review Board (DRB) on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 5:30pm. The following Board Members were in attendance: **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

Mr. Hauser: Lukas Hauser

Ms. Babcock: Tori Babcock

Ms. Babcock: 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.

### **Amend the Agenda:**

**On a motion by Mr. Newman to approve and seconded by Mr. Hauser the case has been moved to the top of the agenda list by a vote of 3 to 0.**

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes for March 4, 2025.**

**On a motion by Mr. Newman to approve and seconded by Mr. Hauser, the amended minutes were approved by a vote of 3 to 0.**

### **Old Business:**

**DRB-24-020-00021 – The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Full and Final Approval for the proposed building, Pearl Street (Homes of Hope), located at 157, 159 W Pearl Street and 571, 579 Vernon Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-01-151.00, 7-12-01-150.00, 7-12-01-164.00 and 7-12-01-148.00 ) with a zoning designation of DT-4 Zone (Downtown Urban District). Owner: Northside Development Corp. / Agent: Jeffrey B Randolph, Homes of Hope.**

### **GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The 0.89 acre site is bound by Pearl Street and Vernon Street. The existing site is cleared of the previous structures and has several trees on the site.

The proposed two 4-unit townhome buildings will include parking to the rear and underground detention in the common area.

### **AUTHORITY & APPLICABILITY**

This project is zoned D-T4. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required.

### **DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS**

- Application is complete.

### **EXCEPTIONS REQUIRED & PREVIOUSLY APPROVED**

- None requested.

## RECOMMENDATION

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The application is complete and compliant for final approval.

## 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:** No setbacks shown but the measured dimensions indicate compliance. Applicant to confirm.
- **3.3.4 Building Height:** Compliant
- **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** Compliant
- **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** Stoop – 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:** Compliance Presumed – to be confirmed prior for Final Approval
- **5.2.2 Solid Waste Storage Areas:** Compliance Presumed – to be confirmed prior for Final Approval
- **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 – 8:12.
  - o **6.3.2 Façade Design:** Compliant
  - o **6.3.3 Building Entrances:** Compliant
  - 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:** Compliance Presumed – to be confirmed prior for Final Approval

**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**

Underground Detention at Vernon and Pearl:

Staff acknowledges and appreciates the Applicant addressing the City's recommendation to for less obtrusive design for stormwater detention previously located at the corner of Vernon and Pearl Streets. However, the proposed underground detention system seems unnecessarily expensive and over engineered for the small number of homes.

As a city-sponsored project, the City is open to exploring a more cost-efficient approach, such as bio-retention, where the back half of the roofs and the alley could be drained to the rear.

Action Requested: Staff & Applicant to pursue potential options for stormwater management on the site.

Planning Department's Technical Advisor, Craig Lewis, provided the following resource for Bioretention Cells: **A reference sheet from Clemson:** <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/bioretention-cells-a-guide-for-your-residents/>

**Applicant:**

Jeff Randolph, Homes of Hope.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Discussion:**

No variances have been requested for this case. The board expressed appreciation for the inclusion of proposed street lighting, which will be funded by the City as part of its partnership with the Northside Redevelopment Group. This collaboration supports the development of affordable housing. The initial site plan included a large detention pond at the corner, which was deemed undesirable from a design perspective. The applicant has since revised the site plan accordingly, which the board greatly appreciates. Final details regarding landscaping will need to be coordinated with the City's Stormwater Division.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hauser, seconded Mr. Newman for Full & Final approval by a vote of 3-0.**

**DRB-25-020-00005 – The Design Review Board (DRB) has received a request for Preliminary Conceptual Approval for the proposed building, First Baptist Church of Spartanburg, located at 250 E Main Street (Tax Map Sheet: 7-12-11-006.00) with a zoning designation of DT-5 Zone (Downtown Urban District). Owner: Chad McAllister / Agent: Burgess Metcalf, LS3P.**

**GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW**

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The application is for various renovations, selective demolition, and expansions to the ~6.4 acre main campus of the First Baptist Church. This is the first review for Preliminary Approval.

## AUTHORITY & APPLICABILITY

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This project is zoned D-T5 and is subject to the Civic/Landmark Building standards in Section 4.1. Formal design review and approval by the Design Review Board is required.

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:

1. If indicated on the Downtown Master Plan, they must comply with the recommendations therein.
2. 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.
3. They should incorporate detailing and materials that are authentic to the intended style.
4. A pedestrian plaza, courtyard, or similar landscaped area may be substituted for a required building frontage and minimum setback line.
5. Building entrances for civic buildings may be raised above the street elevation and accessed via a monumental stair.
6. 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

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Application is complete.

## FINDINGS- EXCEPTIONS

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**The current proposal requires two Exceptions from the D-T Code:**

1. **6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls & 6.4.4.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 along North Dean Street and to have less than 60% of total frontage in ground-level transparent glazing.
2. **8.1 Required Streetscape:** To permit a portion of Dean Street to remain unimproved to the required standard of 12 feet in total width with an 8 foot sidewalk.

## 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-T6.**
- 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.a Building Height:** Compliant
  - **3.3.5 Permitted Parking Location:** Compliant
  - **3.3.6 Building Frontage:** Shopfront – Permitted
- C. **General Standards:**

- **4.1. Civic/Landmark Buildings:** Compliant *except (f) below*
  - a. If indicated on the Downtown Master Plan, they must comply with the recommendations therein. Compliant
  - b. 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
  - c. They should incorporate detailing and materials that are authentic to the intended style. Compliant
  - d. A pedestrian plaza, courtyard, or similar landscaped area may be substituted for a required building frontage and minimum setback line. Compliant
  - e. Building entrances for civic buildings may be raised above the street elevation and accessed via a monumental stair. Compliant
  - f. 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). *See note regarding exception to Section 6.4.4*

**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. – Compliant

**E. Utilities and Trash Containment:**

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

**F. Building Standards:**

- **6.1.1 General Design Principles - Connectivity:** *See note regarding façade transparency.*
- **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:** 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

**6.4 Specific Building Design Standards for all D-T5 Mixed-Use and Commercial Buildings**

- o **6.4.1 Roof and Eaves:** Compliant
- o **6.4.2 Canopies/Awnings:** Compliant
- o **6.4.3 Encroachments:** Compliant
- o **6.4.4 Ground Level Detailing:** 60% Glazing in Transparency. Exception required
- o **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 and trees in wells: *Exception required*
- **8.2 Parking Area Landscaping:** Not applicable

**I. Signage:** Staff level approval

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION**

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**Ground Level Detailing along Dean Street Facade:**

There is a portion of the new transept along North Dean Street that does not have any windows or doors in excess of 60 feet. This condition is caused by a higher finished floor inside the church building relative to the sidewalk in that area and the desire to align the proposed windows along the same datum line as the existing windows. As a result, there is an area that appears to be at least 8 feet in height below the lowest point of the windows – hence the blank wall condition.

**Action Requested:** We do not have any specific design suggestions to resolve that condition, but recommend the Applicant explore further options.

**Required Streetscape along North Dean Street Frontage:**

The existing streetscape conditions consist of an approximately 6-7 foot-wide sidewalk at the back of curb and no street trees. With the expansion proposed to the back edge of the existing sidewalk, this narrow condition is further visually aggravated. There is a segment proposed for improvement close to the corner of Dean and Main Streets which is helpful. It's unfortunate that the expansion area doesn't have the necessary improvements. Staff would want the design team to explore options for mitigation or alternatives as none have been proposed by the Applicant.

**Action Requested:** It's unfortunate that the expansion area lacks the necessary improvements. Staff would want the design team & Applicant to explore mitigation or alternative options, as none have been proposed.

**Street Tree Selection Along Main Street**

We are concerned that the proposed trees along Main Street – Willow Oaks - are too big a tree for such a narrow environment. The code only requires a 12-foot streetscape, but the Willow Oak is known for its shallow root system. As a result, such a small tree well area will likely be too constraining and result in sidewalk heaving with proper root barriers and other below grade systems. At present, there is on-street parking in that area so there is value in having the sidewalk extend to the back of the curb.

**Action Requested:** There appear to be three choices –

1. Select a more appropriate street tree for that constrained condition, or
2. Extend the planting box area to allow for the expected growth. or
3. Consider placing the trees behind the sidewalk. Normally there is value in having trees serve as a physical barrier between pedestrians and moving cars but because of the presence of the on-street parking this goal is satisfied. Further, because of the lawn condition, there is a large space in which the trees can thrive.



## Street Tree Placement in a Sight Triangle

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There are two trees close to the intersection with North Dean Street and East Main Street that may be in a sight distance triangle.

**Action Requested:** Applicant to confirm prior to Final approval.

## ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

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

- **6.4.4.a Minimize Blank Walls & 6.4.4.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 along North Dean Street and to have less than 60% of total frontage in ground-level transparent glazing.
- **8.1 Required Streetscape:** To permit a portion of Dean Street to remain unimproved to the required standard of 12 feet in total width with an 8 foot sidewalk.

## Applicant:

Burgess Metcalf, Burgess Metcalf, LS3P.  
Mark Harder, Pastor at First Baptist Church.

## Public Comments:

None.

## Discussion:

The Design Review Board granted preliminary approval for the proposed project with no exceptions. The board looks forward to seeing refinements that clarify the architectural direction, whether traditional or modern, particularly in materials and landscaping. Key deliberation points included: the alignment of street trees and parking with zoning standards, the proposed 12' setbacks and sidewalk configuration, site lighting, and the building's front facade orientation to Main Street. The board noted the improvements from the previous design and expressed preference for a more cohesive elevation along Converse Street. They recommended softening the design of the new front building and appreciated the City's continued involvement in the project.

For the final submittal, the board expects an updated streetscape plan, including tree wells and two additional trees, one at the transept and one near the main entrance, which has been pulled back. A preferred shade tree near the entry is also suggested. The City may coordinate with Public Works to allow adjustments without encroachment. The board also requests that the final submittal include details on proposed street lighting and how it will relate to the building's design. The board remains open to variance requests and encourages the applicant to explore material and landscaping alternatives.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hauser, seconded by Mr. Newman, to approve the preliminary design with no exceptions granted. The motion passed with a vote of 3–0.**

## Staff Announcements:

Planning is working on sessions on training with all our boards reviewing our procedure of order and business conducts more to come.

**Adjourned meeting at 6:58 P.M.**



Lauren Rogers, Chair