

AGENDA

KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

MEETING OF MAY 15, 2019 - SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM, 4:00 P.M.

- ♦ Call to Order
- ♦ Introduction of Ex Officio Members and Visitors
- ♦ [Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting](#)
- ♦ Certificates of Appropriateness
- ♦ Staff Report
- ♦ Other Business

Certificates of Appropriateness:

1) [Certificate No. 4-C-19-DT](#)

137 S Central St - Merchants of Beer (Michael Versen / Michael Versen & Associates)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is for a garden courtyard to the rear (north) of the Merchants of Beer building over a portion of the existing parking lot. Last year the board approved a similar garden courtyard on the west side of the parking lot (9-F-18-DT).

- 1) Install 3 inches of compacted stone (Vulcan No. 10 Riverside) over the parking surface. (See description on sheet L-3)
- 2) Remove the asphalt on the north and southeast sides of the garden courtyard so the compacted stone will be flush with the adjoining asphalt surface.
- 3) Three raised seatwall planters will be installed for seating and the planting of large specimen trees. The seatwalls will be approximately 1'-6" tall and constructed of Belgard concrete block.
- 4) Install Belgard wall with removable wood top and river slicks on the northeast side of the existing building, west of the existing patio. The wood panel is at seating height and is removable to provide access to utilizes. (See detail D on sheet C-2)
- 5) Re-purpose the existing patio metal fence to be installed in the wall/fence opening along the S. Central Street frontage. Additional fencing and metal gates will be fabricated to match as needed. The fence will be mounted to a new concrete curb. (See sheet L-2 and detail A on sheet C-2)
- 6) Install new black aluminum fencing along the north, west, and southwest sides of the garden courtyard that will have a similar design as the S. Central Street fencing. (See sheet L-2 and detail B on sheet C-2)
- 7) Install a concrete accessible ramp from the S. Central Street sidewalk to the existing patio. (See sheet L-1 and C-1)
- 8) Accent lighting within the tree planters will provide additional illumination and aesthetic effect.
- 9) A food truck will be installed at the west end of the site. This is intended to be a non-operable vehicle that remains as a "permanent" fixture/structure on the site. (See the image of the food truck to be used on sheet L-3)
- 10) Site furniture will include picnic table seating and yard games (bocce ball and corn hole).
- 11) Additional landscape along the perimeter will be installed along S. Central Street and screening on the west side. (See sheet L-1)

Staff Comments

This property is not located within a National Register Historic District, so the Historic Resources section of the guidelines does not apply.

The installation of permanent or semi-permanent fixtures or structures, such as the non-operable food

truck in the garden courtyard, is not addressed by the guidelines. Staff reviewed it as a structure for the purposes of considering the recommendations of the guidelines. The size and placement of the food truck is similar to that of an accessory structure. The board needs to make a determination on whether the food truck and its location meets the intent of the design guidelines. If the board is inclined to approve, the first condition staff recommends is for such. Otherwise the board must approve a modification to the proposal or provide reasoning for denial.

There are potential building code issues that could impact the food truck proposal, such as having to meet the International Building Code and connecting to a grease trap. If it is operable and properly licensed, it will not need to meet these standards. This plan may need to be brought back to the board for approval if it is modified significantly to meet the applicable code requirements.

Being that the area where the garden courtyard is proposed is currently a parking lot, there is a vehicular entrance to the site that will no longer be used. The City of Knoxville Department of Engineering may require that this curb cut and driveway apron be removed and the sidewalk and curbing along S. Central Street be repaired to match the existing. This will be considered during permitting and since it is within the public right-of-way, this general maintenance can be completed without board review as long as the repair matches the existing condition.

Once the existing parking lot is converted to a new use it will lose its status as non-conforming in regard to the recommendations of the design guidelines and the design standards of the zoning ordinance. In order for the parking lot to be reestablished, the design must conform with the adopted zoning regulations and obtain approval from the board.

Applicable guidelines:

Section 1.A.1. (PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST SAFETY)

Consider pedestrians first, then transit, then the automobile in designing and developing downtown places. Public utilities and streetscape amenities should be located to support safe, convenient, and unimpeded pedestrian flow. Due to the nature of the narrow downtown streets with low traffic speeds it is relatively safe to bike within the downtown area. However, bike lanes and greenways leading to downtown, and places to store bicycles once downtown should also be considered. For more information, please see the Knoxville Regional Bicycle Plan (2002).

GUIDELINES:

1g. Consolidate curb-cuts and locate driveways near mid-block, when necessary; alley access should be provided for service and parking, if feasible.

1k. Repair pavement surfaces (asphalt, brick, concrete, etc.) to original standards when underground utility or other repairs are necessary.

Section 1.A.4. (DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION)

Beautifying downtown can occur through many different elements including architecture, landscape architecture, horticulture, art, and performing art. These elements provide expressions of local history and culture. They contribute to local identity and unique qualities of downtown. Public spaces should be designed to include art and beautification.

GUIDELINES:

4a. Foster downtown beautification with landscaping and plantings, public art, and public open space.

4b. Establish performance spaces for the arts including opportunities for artists to perform, display, or create work.

Section 1.B.2. (BUILDING LOCATION)

It is important to establish a strong relationship among buildings, sidewalks, and streets. This is typically accomplished through consistent setbacks that locate buildings on the same line.

GUIDELINES:

2b. Consider using landscape elements to define the sidewalk edge where a building is to be set back from the sidewalk.

2d. Limit grade separations above or below the sidewalk, generally no more than 3 feet. Allow for clear sightlines into and out of buildings and plazas.

2e. Design private plazas to be pedestrian-friendly. Provide human-scale amenities and include landscaping.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 4-C-19-DT subject to the following:

- 1) The proposed food truck must be located as shown in the attached plans (near the western property line of the garden courtyard) and meet all applicable requirements of the City of Knoxville Department of Plans Review and Inspections and the Knoxville Utilities Board for the use of a vehicle as a permanent (non-operable) food truck in the garden courtyard.
- 2) Meeting all applicable requirements of the City of Knoxville Department of Engineering for proposed or required improvements within the public right-of-way.

2) [Certificate No. 5-B-19-DT](#)

505 S Gay St - Embassy Suites (Craig Peavy / Tinker Ma, Inc.)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is a modification to the renovation plans approved by the board in August 2018 (8-H-18-DT) and is for a modification to the ground floor doors and a portion of the Gay Street storefront. There are other minor modifications that are also noted on the plans.

Gay Street elevation:

- 1) Replacement of the ground floor doors because it was determined the existing doors were not able to be retained. The main entrance to the hotel, below the new balcony, will have a sliding door and metal storefront system with clear glass to fill in the remainder of the building opening. This replaces two sets of double doors. On the left (south) side of the elevation, there used to be two sets of double doors that went into the lobby of the former office tower. Now that the building is being used as a hotel, number of doors into the elevator lobby is not needed. The proposal is for a single full glass door with metal frame on the right side of this storefront opening and the remainder being infilled with a metal storefront system with clear glass. The area behind the new storefront will be used as a glass conference room.
- 2) The balcony has been shifted to the left (south) on the elevation several feet because it could not be attached to the corner of the building as anticipated.

Union Ave. elevation:

- 1) Replace the existing single double door with glass side lights with a sliding glass door that fits within the existing building opening. The glass will be clear.

Rear (alley) elevation:

- 1) Removal of the previously proposed windows on that were to be installed on the first and mezzanine levels of the building. NOTE: This change is listed for informational purposes only. It does not require approval from the board since the windows do not existing today and there were no other changes to this façade that would otherwise make the building less conforming with the design guidelines.

Krutch Park (south) elevation:

- 1) The sidewalk from the emergency exit is moved 3' away from the building because of the need to locate a gas meter on the side of the building.

Rooftop addition:

- 1) Installation of an elevator overrun enclosure on top of the penthouse roof. It will be clad in metal siding that is the same as approved for the rooftop stair extensions on either side of the elevator penthouse. The metal siding will be painted to match the brick below.

Staff Comments

The replacement of the existing ground floor doors was determined necessary because of their deteriorated condition when removed. The new doors and storefront infill is compatible in design with the remaining storefront system.

Applicable guidelines:

Section 1.B.4. (ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER)

Buildings should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. A building should express human scale through materials and forms that were seen traditionally. This is important because buildings are experienced at close proximity by the pedestrian.

GUIDELINES:

- 4a. Encourage first floor uses that draw walk-in traffic; businesses that do not require pedestrian traffic should be located on other floors.
- 4b. Enhance pedestrian interest in commercial and office buildings by creating a largely transparent and consistent rhythm of entrances and windows.
- 4c. Scale first floor signs to pedestrians.
- 4d. Differentiate the architectural features of ground floors from upper floors with traditional considerations such as show-windows, transoms, friezes, and sign boards.
- 4e. Design top floors to enhance the skyline of the block through cornices and details that are harmonious with adjacent architecture.
- 4f. Encourage the use of 'green roofs' and other sustainable practices, while minimizing the visual impact from the street.

Section 1.B.5. (GROUND FLOOR DOORS AND WINDOWS)

Entrances and ground floor windows should foster pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation. Not every building in downtown needs to have the same window or entry designs; however, repeating the pattern of historic openings helps to reinforce the character of downtown, differentiating it from suburban areas.

GUIDELINES:

- 5a. Use consistent rhythm of openings, windows, doorways, and entries.
- 5b. Orient primary front entrances to the main street; secondary entrances should be clearly defined and oriented to streets or alleys, as appropriate.
- 5c. Design entrances according to the proportions of the building's height and width.
- 5d. Consider corner entrances at the ends of blocks.
- 5e. All windows at the pedestrian level should be clear.
- 5f. Recess ground floor window frames and doors from the exterior building face to provide depth to the facade.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 5-B-19-DT subject to the following:

- 1) Obtaining approval from the City of Knoxville Urban Forester for the relocation of the sidewalk.
- 2) Obtaining approval from City Council for the modification to the use agreement to allow new location of the sidewalk.

3) [Certificate No. 5-C-19-DT](#)

505 S Gay St - Embassy Suites (Sherrie Bowers / Sycamore Sign Service)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

Installation of three new signs; two on Gay Street elevation and one on the rear (alley) elevation.

Gay Street elevation:

- 1) Projecting (blade) sign that is approximately 30.26' tall by 2.8' wide (84.75 sqft) and will be internally illuminated. The main part of the sign with the name of the hotel will have a solid metal face with routed letter openings. The logo on top will have an acrylic face with green vinyl background. The sign has a clearance with the sidewalk of approximately 39' (bottom of sign will be at the 3rd floor) and will be located on the south side of the main proportion of the building, as shown on the East Elevation sheet.
- 2) Plaque sign that is approximately 2' tall by 2.5' wide (5 sqft) and is non-illuminated. The sign will be attached to the building wall to the right (north) of the main entrance to the hotel, as shown on the East Elevation sheet.

Rear (alley) elevation:

- 1) Install a wall sign that is approximately 7.08' tall by 5.1' wide (36.11 sqft) to the face of the building approximately 13' above the adjacent alley. The sign will be internally illuminated and have an acrylic face with green vinyl background.

Staff Comments

The design guidelines recommend wall signs be located in the sign board area, which is located above a storefront and below the second story windows. The rear elevation of this building, which faces Krutch Park and Market Square, is visible from as far away as the Locust Street and Union Avenue intersection. The sign board area for the rear elevation is considered the same height as the area between the storefront and second story windows on the street facing facades. In situations when a wall sign is placed on a façade that does not have a typical sign board, staff has recommended that the sign have a similar size and location of a sign that would fit on a sign board. The design of the proposed wall sign would not fit on a typical sign board and is larger than staff would typically recommend at the pedestrian level of a building. A sign of this type, size and illumination may be more appropriate higher on the building.

Staff is recommending denial of the wall sign because the location and design does not meet the intent of the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines recommendations. If the board does not approve the sign as requested, alternatives that could be considered are a different location and/or size of the proposed wall sign or installing a projecting sign on the Union Ave. elevation.

The projecting sign on the Gay Street elevation is larger than most signs the board considers for approval but is of similar size as the Hyatt Place sign, which is slightly larger at 94 sqft. The logo at the top of this sign has an acrylic face and staff is recommending approval in this instance because it is a minor component of the overall sign and it is located at the top, about 5 stories above street level.

Applicable guidelines:

Section 1.B.4. (ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER)

Buildings should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. A building should express human scale through materials and forms that were seen traditionally. This is important because buildings are experienced at close proximity by the pedestrian.

GUIDELINES:

4c. Scale first floor signs to pedestrians.

Section 2.B.1. (TRADITIONAL GRID DISTRICT)

These recommendations for signs in the traditional grid district recognize that certain types of signs are more pedestrian-friendly and should be encouraged within the grid district.

GUIDELINES:

1a. Wall signs on sign boards that are above a transom or first story and mounted flush to the building façade.

1b. Projecting signs of modest size (9 square feet, maximum); a larger sign must be approved by the board.

1c. Window signs, less than 30 percent coverage, including neon signs.

1d. Building name sign and/or building directory.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 5-C-19-DT for the projecting (blade) sign and plaque sign on the Gay Street elevation only, and DENY the request for the wall sign on the rear (alley) elevation as proposed.

Staff Report:

1) ***Certificate No. 5-A-19-DT***

126 S. Central St. – Installation of an externally illuminated wall sign on the sign board and a non-illuminated canopy sign.

Other Business:

None