

**Downtown Design Review Board
December 19, 2007
4:00 p.m.
Small Assembly Room**

- Welcome, Agenda Review, and Introductions.

Amy Haynes, Chair, called the meeting to order. There was a quorum present, Board members present are shown in italics. Everyone introduced themselves.

Present:

Anne Wallace
Amy Haynes
Finbarr Saunders
Joe Petre
Kim Henry
Madeleine Weil
David Dewhirst
Gregg White
Bob Alcorn
Mark Donaldson
Tom Reynolds
Bill Lyons
Rick Burnett
Pete Zarring
Jerry ?

Organization:

MPC
Resident
Historic Zoning Commission
Conversion Properties
SITE, Inc.
City of Knoxville
Dewhirst Properties
GWE, LLC
Bob Alcorn, Architect
MPC
City of Knoxville
City of Knoxville
SignCo Inc.
Knox Cigar Co.
Knox Cigar Co.

- Introduction of Ex Officio Members and Visitors
- Approval of November 21 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Kim Henry and seconded by Finbarr Saunders to approve the November 26 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 12-B-07-DT

116 & 118 S. Central St. – Signco Inc. (Jana Sheckles/Rick Burnett, Applicant) for Knoxville Cigar Company
Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This request is for installing a projecting sign, with neon lettering. The sign includes three faces with what would be considered 36 sq. feet of signs. This project is located in the Southern Terminal and Warehouse National Register District.

Staff Comments

The base, C-2, zoning will allow up to 3 times the linear feet of a building for commercial signs. Because the ward map still shows two parcels at these addresses the sign area is calculated based on individual parcels for that specific parcel. So at 116 the allowable sign area is 24 feet times 3, equal to 72 square feet. The proposed sign is only 36 sq. feet. The use of neon is compatible in this district, see page 38, 1d. For other sign information see page 26 of the Guidelines.

Bob Alcorn asked about where the face of the sign showing the address and words “Cigar Bar” would be on the sign. Anne Wallace clarified that it would be parallel to the street. She also mentioned that the sign size was calculated by the City based on one face plus the parallel section as opposed to both faces. Joe Petre mentioned that he was involved with the sale of these properties and was pleased with the improvements to the property.

A motion was made by Gregg White and seconded by Madeleine Weil to approve the application. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board thanked the applicants for this application and the improvements to the Old City.

Staff Report:

Anne Wallace presented the following CoAs to the Board for their information.

Issued Certificates of Appropriateness

11-A-07-DT, 416 Cumberland Ave. – Board Approval, 11-26-07

11-B-07-DT, 510 S. Gay St. – Board Approval, 11-26-07

11-C-07-DT, 200/202 W. Jackson Ave., 11-26-07

12-A-07-DT, 411 S. Gay St. – Staff Approval, 12-11-07

12-C-07-DT, 117 S. Central St. – Emergency Repair, 12-10-07

Other Business:

Discussion related to the “Knoxville Central Business District Alleyways Recommended Policy and Guidelines” – by Chris Sayer, ET CDC.

Anne Wallace provided a handout to the Board including a list of points from this document to be included in the guidelines regarding alleys. Finbarr Saunders asked about what is the process regarding this document. Anne Wallace stated that if these guidelines were to be included as part of the Downtown Design Guidelines an amendment to the document would have to be made and brought to MPC and City Council for adoption. These guidelines are meant to facilitate discussion with the City about alleyways and to offer support to private individuals who are interested in improving the alleys associated with their buildings. Madeleine Weil stated that she sees these guidelines as providing guidelines and assistance to developing alleys, not creating a new requirement for approval, but providing guidelines and assistance for features that developers might want to consider. Ms. Weil commented that the Board would not likely provide stipulations regarding alleys, but providing assistance to those who were interested. Kim Henry questioned what the role of the alley recommendations should be and whether or not they

would be in conflict with any other regulations. A point of concern was requiring a screen on recessed doorways, but if we don't require plans to show treatment of the alley how would the Board determine if this guideline was being met and how could we enforce it?

The intent of the alleyway study was to have the City address key blocks with improvements. Anne Wallace asked Madeleine Weil if it would be appropriate for the Board to make a recommendation to the City to pursue these "model blocks". She responded by saying that the City has a repaving schedule and then it would be appropriate to make recommendations regarding materials. Public input would be required to move the process forward more quickly. Mark Donaldson commented that the Board has the ability to enlighten applicants and make recommendations regarding alleys. Amy Haynes mentioned that it might be appropriate for the applicant to include information regarding the rear of buildings and how to deal with all sides. One concern is the problem of lost opportunities, for example, the 100 block of the Fire Street alley with TDOT's improvements. Finbarr Saunders recognized that a major issue for alleys is the safety for pedestrians. Someone needs to be responsible for safety, but the Board's purview is the design of the alley versus the uses associated with it. Joe Petre mentioned that there is a conflict of the Fire Code requiring doors opening out onto the alley. Kim Henry commented that if an applicant is not planning any design work on the back of the building, can the Board reasonably ask them to deal with that.

David Dewhirst mentioned that the City Code will not allow owners to put gates on recessed entries. As a building owner or developer, how do you go about using the alleyway guidelines, since the alleys are public right-of-ways. Is there a lease program set up? Madeleine Weil responded that there is not currently a process for this situation, currently the most similar situation would be the Sidewalk Use Agreement. It could be extended to alleys. Issues associated with access for fire and service issues. Mark mentioned that the next step by after talking to the City would be to apply for a CoA that would trigger the appropriate review from the various City agencies. Joe Petre asked whether or not the backs of buildings are considered part of the building. Anne Wallace mentioned that the study make recommendations to avoid blank walls and provide points of interest but didn't specify requirements. Additionally, there are two types of alleys 1) service alleys, 2) pedestrian alleys or a combination thereof. A service alley could be treated differently than a pedestrian alley. The City does have guidelines for air rights above public right-of-ways.

Amy Hanyes mentioned that this discussion raised good questions, should the Board move forward to amend the guidelines? If so how do we deal with 1) Is the developer doing anything with the rear of the building? 2) Are there any constraints on someone who does not deal with the back of the building? 3) Are these recommendations for the developer or to the City? Gregg White felt that this should be part of an educational process prior to development. Mark Donaldson said that due diligence to develop a project downtown would include making the developer aware of the overlay and its requirements. Kim Henry asked if TDOT had a copy of the alley guidelines as they redevelop the Jackson Avenue and Fire Street alley. Joe Petre mentioned that in a lot of cases the issue is owners not developers and that constraints on developers should be

limited. Kim Henry also mentioned that there is a challenge for people who lease a building or are not developers who want to make façade changes. There is a possibility that these people would have more of a detrimental affect on downtown.

Amy Haynes recommended that the alley way recommendations be included under a section titled “Other Considerations” within the guidelines. This should be an encouragement.

Another topic came up for discussion. Amy Haynes mentioned her concern regarding the Copy Center sign at 317 N. Gay Street. The problem of no permits applied for or issued, so now what? An action can be taken by owners more quickly than the City could respond to. She recommends a packet for people purchasing property downtown. Kim Henry mentioned that it is not uncommon for people not to have the appropriate information given to them at the time of ownership. Tom Reynolds mentioned that the City will issue a stop work order for violating these ordinances and if that is violated then the City can and will take them to court.

It was recommended that the information regarding alleys continue to be discussed and that it be included in a list of recommendations that will be forwarded to City Council at an appropriate time.

Bill Lyons addressed the group regarding a Public Art Task Force that has been established to create a policy regarding public art and how to fund it, how to place it, consideration of decommissioning, and other issues.

An updated schedule for the following year was distributed to the Board.

Another note of concern was that the Regions Bank sign package that was approved was not implemented, because the time and temperature clock at the street level was removed. Joe Petre is working on this situation and will address it with the Board in January.

A motion was made by Gregg White and seconded by Bob Alcorn to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.