

Downtown Design Review Board
February 20, 2008
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:

Amy Haynes
Finbarr Saunders
John Sanders
Bob Alcorn
Madeleine Weil
David Dewhirst
Joe Petre
Mike Reynolds
Bill Lyons
Jeffrey Nash
Michelle Hummel
Buz Johnson
Mike Carberry
Charlotte West
Anne Wallace
Tom Reynolds
Chuck Griffin
Chad Boegter
Angela Berrier
Christina Geros
Joe Hawk
George Daws

Organization:

Resident
Historic Zoning Commission
AIA
Fletcher Architects
City of Knoxville
Dewhirst Property
Conversions Property
MPC
City of Knoxville
Courtland Group
CBID
MPC
MPC
MPC
City of Knoxville
City of Knoxville
Barber McMurry Architects
Barber McMurry Architects
Barber McMurry Architects
Barber McMurry Architects
ES&H
City of Knoxville Engineering

- Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Finbarr Saunders and seconded by Joe Petre to approve the January 16 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 02-A-08-DT

127 S. Central St. – The Courtland Group (Jeffery Nash, Applicant)
Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This request is for the installation of a new storefront. The previous storefront was removed before the application was submitted. This project is located in the Southern Terminal and Warehouse National Register District. A 30 inch by 30 inch window sign is also requested as part of this project.

Staff Comments

This storefront design is not the same as the design of the previous storefront (see attachments). The guidelines recommend storefronts and entrances as follow: a) *restore and maintain storefronts as they were originally* (page 22), and b) *establish recessed entries, either rectangular or with slightly canted sides, which are appropriate in storefronts*. The original storefront was symmetrical with canted side windows on either side of the door. The new storefront will have the front door to the right of center and have a rectangular entrance, inset two feet.

The proposed window sign will be constructed of transfer lettering that will be adhered to the inside of the far right storefront pain. This property is zoned C-3, General Commercial District. The minimum allowable signage in this district is 50 square feet. The proposed signage will be 6.25 square feet.

Mike Reynolds has talked to Ann Bennett and Jeffrey Nash about the lower transom, and Ann suggested that he remove it. The only signage will be affixed to the inside of the storefront to the right of the entrance. Jeffrey stated that the reason for changing the storefront design from the original was get more space at the front of the building.

Madeleine asked why work has been done before review of this board. Jeffrey responded that an owner can demolish a store front without this committee's O.K. He added that water was pouring in, and the front glass was broken, but he did not get a permit. Amy stated that based on the photo, Mr. Nash is not maintaining the same façade as the building next door. Ann Bennett had suggested the entrance be recessed instead of a flat front like he was initially planning. David Dewhirst asked if the committee should look at the guidelines to see if each item complies with them. This storefront would fit other places. John Sanders asked if the transoms could be equal sizes. Mr. Nash stated the transoms are the same size, but because they moved the door, the transoms look like they are different sizes. He thinks the framing is structural around the entrance, which is requiring the transom to be slightly smaller.

A motion was made by David Dewhirst and seconded by John Sanders to approve the application, and for Mr. Nash to keep the vertical mullion lines consistent across the top. The motion carried unanimously.

Madeleine stated she is concerned about demolition taking place before an applicant comes before the board and suggested that concern be looked at.

Certificate No. 02-B-08-DT

430 Union Avenue – Home Federal Bank (Barber McMurry Architects, Applicant)

Pre-development meeting: January 25, 2008

Description of Work

The proposed project is a four story office building for Home Federal Offices, with two stories of underground employee parking on the block between Union Avenue and Clinch Avenue along Walnut Street. The total area of the building is 59,000 +/- square feet, and area of the parking garage is 34,000 +/- square feet. There is a two story portion adjacent to the Grand Union Building which may have a roof terrace/garden. The main entries are from Union and Walnut with a canopy that wraps the corner of the building. The entrance to the upper level parking is from Walnut Street, with the entrance to the lower level parking and the surface lot from Clinch Avenue.

The exterior of the building is granite, limestone, brick, with copper panels inset in a painted steel window system and copper parapet wall. The building will house office space for Home Federal Bank, but will not have any banking facilities or automated teller machines. The mechanical consists of three air handling units screened from view on the roof. The roof will be a thermo-plastic membrane roofing system.

Staff Comments

The proposed structure and site plan meet the guidelines for new structures except for the following guidelines in question:

- *A.1g – Consolidate curb-cuts and locate driveways near mid-block, when necessary; alley access should be provided for service and parking, if feasible.*
 - There are two proposed parking lot entrances, with each providing access to different levels of parking. There is one entrance near the intersection of Walnut and Clinch and one mid-block along Walnut.
- *A.3a – Create parking garages that do not contain blank walls. Allow for future commercial uses that may not be feasible at the time of construction.*
 - As seen in the attached site plan and perspective (pages A.1 and A.8) from Union and Clinch, there is “Surface Parking” to be built on the corner of Clinch and Walnut. This is actually a ramp that will provide parking and access to the ground level of parking under the new building. This ramp is open and does not have a blank building wall but it does have a small retaining wall that will create a void. The ramp will also reduce the feasibility of future commercial uses on the corner of Clinch and Walnut. There is already one other corner at this intersection that has a blank wall and very low probability of commercial use.
- *A.3c – Locate surface parking lots to the side or rear of building. No surface parking lots should be created in front of buildings. (page 7)*

- In relation to the “Surface Parking” as mentioned above, though this parking is behind the building as the guidelines prescribe, the parking and access is along a parallel avenue and pedestrian connector.
- B.2a – *Set buildings back five feet in order to provide wider sidewalk space when new construction in non-historic areas is to be more than half the length of the block.* (page 12)
 - This building will occupy a little less than half the block. The C-2 zoning district requires a 5 ft front setback along vehicular streets (Article 4, Section 8 E.1). The D-1 Overlay District does allow for the Downtown Design Review Board to reduce this requirement when a development has been conceived to respect the historic context of the block, provide greater pedestrian activity at sidewalk level or meet other provisions of the guidelines (Article 4, Section 26 C). The sidewalks are adequate for tree planting and clear pedestrian passage.
- B.4a – *Encourage first floor uses that draw walk-in traffic; businesses that do not require pedestrian traffic should be located on other floors.* (page 14)
 - This building is currently planned solely as office space for Home Federal. This building will not have a bank branch or ATM.

Chad Boegter with BarberMcMurry Architects stated that the public will not have access to the parking area. Finbarr asked since this property is a parking lot now, how will you get into the garage. Chad stated there will be an entrance from Walnut. Finbarr asked what is located on the west elevation. Mike Reynolds answered that this is an entrance ramp to the lower parking level. You can park on the entrance ramp. There will be landscaping along the parking ramp wall facing Walnut. Home Federal will also landscape in the islands and continue the trees along Union. All the glass in the building is clear.

Anne Wallace suggested that since a landscaping plan is not included today, she would like it to be written into the certificate, and they would not have to come back to the board.

Mike Reynolds stated that the C-2 zoning require a 5’ front setback but the plan does not meet this requirement. However, as long as it meets the historic context of the rest of the block, the board can approve the plan as submitted. John Sanders asked about the gap between the two buildings. Chad answered that the buildings will appear to be connected because the front façade of the new building will touch the Grand Union. There will not be gap along the sidewalk.

Madeleine stated that this is the first new construction this board has seen.

David Dewhirst stated that this is the first new construction that has gone through this process, and he has concerns. The surface parking lot on the corner of Clinch and Walnut is going to be with us forever. We are trying to eliminate surface parking lots especially on a corner. He asked Chad if they talked to the bank about the desirability of using the first floor for retail. This is a very critical issue with this building. Chad referenced the design

guidelines with Home Federal about retail, and they did not want to put retail on the first floor. In the design of the building, they have left the door open to use for retail some day. The lobby spans four bays along Union and two bays could be retail. Home Federal could easily add retail as part of the large lobby.

Amy stated that retail should be on the first floor for walkability to encourage businesses to come downtown. Madeleine asked if a building can be built over the surface parking lot. Mike Reynolds stated that if they build it like it is, it would be a dead corner with a surface parking lot on it for a long time. Amy suggested that a park could be put on the corner. Chad stated that the problem is that Home Federal wants the same amount of parking spaces. Mike stated that guidelines say a parking has to be behind the structure. This is behind but on a main street. Even though their goal is to meet the parking problem, there are two new parking garages already there. Madeleine added that the city parking is full, and new buildings need to add parking. Joe stated that they should accommodate their own parking as much as they can. Union has been designated a walkability area, and he would like to see retail, also.

Bob Alcorn asked what the solution is. Amy stated the board could approve, approve with conditions or disapprove, and there can be an appeal of the decision to MPC. Bob Alcorn added that we should talk to Home Federal and ask why they did not follow the guidelines.

David Dewhirst made a motion to approve the application, including the parking lot design which violates the guidelines, but we will accept it as long as there is accommodation made for retail space on Union. If we approve we are not making the guidelines mandatory and going against them. There was no second.

David made a motion to approve this plan with the condition that we are accepting the violations of the guidelines of the parking lot, but we want the first floor use to follow the guidelines to draw walk-in traffic. We want them to show us where retail space could be available in the future and come back to this committee with a new plan. There was no second.

Madeleine stated we need to show why we feel this location is more important to use than others.

Joe Petre stated that he is not comfortable with this motion. Amy stated the choices are approve, approve with conditions or disapprove. They should design buildings with the guidelines in mind. Mike added that they should be encouraged to put in retail. We should write a letter to Home Federal encouraging retail uses.

Chuck Griffin from BarberMcMurry Architects stated we want to be clear in your message what you want. Change walk-in traffic to “shall” instead of “encourage.” They are willing to work with the board on a solution. The thoughts about the parking are physically impossible.

Amy stated that the front doors are very far apart and maybe windows could be built so they could become doors for future retail.

Bill Lyons stated that words matter, and there is a big difference between “encourage” and “shall.” He is not sure that the parking lot violates the guidelines. We cannot start telling applicants how they use their buildings. City Council is going to review these guidelines in a year. We could have voluntary guidelines with mandatory requirements or mandatory guidelines with suggested requirements.

Joe asked if they could show us now how retail could possibly be put on the first floor. Chuck stated that half of that façade could be retail. We are still in the design phase. Anne Wallace suggested that a letter be written to Home Federal to suggest they consider retail space on the first floor.

David stated that maybe we should be looking to approve the building and have the owner come to the next meeting and encourage them to follow the guidelines. We could send a letter and not hold them up, but let them know what “encourage” means for this use. Amy said she would write a letter that the guidelines were not followed and encourage them to follow the guidelines. Madeleine stated that the ground level space is convertible, and we do not dictate uses.

A motion was made by David Dewhirst and seconded by Bob Alcorn to approve this plan, and add that we encourage the owner to not only potentially designate areas that may be retail and design the building so spaces could easily be converted to walk-in uses. The motion passed 5-2.

Tom Reynolds asked about the setbacks. Mike answered that the setbacks will vary from the zoning requirement, but were approved. Tom discussed the plans and having them stamped along with the Certificate of Appropriateness. He will need something from this board to show the setbacks were approved.

Features of note of the proposal:

- The portion of the building closest to the Grand Union is two stories to allow the windows facing the new building to retain a view.
- There may be a roof terrace/garden on the two story portion.
- There are 2 stories of parking under the building.
- The sidewalks will be no less than approximately 14 ft along Union and no less than approximately 7 ft along Walnut, with the sidewalk mostly approximately 12 ft.
- The upper floor of parking has access from approximately the current surface parking entrance along Walnut Street.
- The ground floor along Walnut will be mainly a lobby which will have a low likelihood of having window coverings. This will for visibility into the building from the sidewalk.
- No signage was submitted for approval.

Certificate No. 02-C-08-DT

502 S. Gay St – Woodstone Enterprises (ES&H, Inc., Applicant)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

The scope of work for this project includes replacement of 98 windows at The H.T. Hackney Co. All windows on Gay Street, Union Avenue (except for 5 windows along bottom of Union Ave.) and State Street sides of building will be replaced with Eagle windows. Window replacement activities will take approximately 6 months. This project is located in the Gay Street Commercial National Register District.

Staff Comments

In the historic resources section of the guidelines it says, *Repair rather than replace historic windows and Replace windows if repairs are not possible with matching windows, including duplicating design, operation, material, glass size, muntin arrangements, profiles, and trim* (page 24).

This project is proposing to replace the existing wood windows with an aluminum clad wood window. As submitted in the application, the new windows are designed to meet the guideline requirements with the following exceptions to the general pattern of the existing windows:

- On the Gay St facade, the second story windows currently have an 8 over 1 muntin pattern; the new ones have an 8 over 8 muntin pattern (window letter G and P in the packet).
- On the Union side of the building, the second floor windows in the middle currently have a 6 over 6 muntin pattern; the new will have a 6 over 1 muntin pattern (window letter A in the packet).
- The remainder of the arched windows (window letters D, F, I, J, & K in packet) currently only have two parts, the lower rectangular and the upper with the arch integrated into the window; the new windows will split into three sections, the lower and middle rectangular and a separate arched window. If you look at the State Street facade picture you can see that there are two windows that have been replaced prior that have been split into three parts. This shifts the division from the middle of the window to lower in the new windows.

Mike Reynolds showed a sample of what the windows will look like. They are true-divided-light windows and are 8 over 8. Ann Bennett has reviewed these plans and stated that as long as it looks as close to what is there now, it would be O.K. She would rather see them replaced with wood.

Joe Hawk, general contractor with ES&H representing H. T. Hackney, stated that Tindell's sold them the windows and are aware of the requirements.

David Dewhirst would like to compliment the person who chose these windows. They are as close to the originals as they could possibly be.

A motion was made by Finbarr Saunders and seconded by Joe Petre to approve the window replacements as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate No. 02-D-08-DT

Summit Hill Dr and Main St – City of Knoxville Civil Eng. (George Daws, Applicant)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

The City of Knoxville is proposing to replace the existing brick crosswalks on Main Street in front of the City-County Building and on Summit Hill Drive in front of the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The proposed crosswalks will be made of dyed, stamped concrete.

Staff Comments

As part of the General Principle in the Downtown Design Guidelines, the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety section say, *Require sidewalks and crosswalks that are accessible to all and are aesthetically pleasing* (page 5).

The proposed crosswalk design is two 12-24” stamped concrete brick courses separated by a smooth concrete surface 10’ to 16’ wide (see enclosed diagram). The concrete will have a dye mixed before pouring. The benefit of this process is that the color is uniform through the concrete slab so if a piece is broken or chipped off the surface the color will remain the same.

George Daws stated that the entire section of concrete will be colored. There was discussion about the bands on the sides and the smooth surface and if the concrete has to be replaced by KUB will the company still be able to match the color. The board wants more stamped concrete than smooth concrete.

A motion was made by David Dewhirst and seconded by Bob Alcorn to approve the certificate with a new design matching the existing design with the exception of a 4-6’ wide smooth center for accessibility purposes and made from dyed, stamped concrete to match the existing brick color. The motion carried unanimously with Madeleine Weil recusing.

Staff Report:

Issued Certificates of Appropriateness

N/A

Other Business:

Discuss the design of the proposed Transit Center.

The Transit Center was not discussed.