

Downtown Design Review Board
March 19, 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
Gregg White
Joe Petre
Kim Henry
Mike Reynolds
Steve King
Bill Lyons
Michelle Hummel
Mike Carberry
David Harrell
David Craig
Patti Smith
Aaron Brown
Anne Wallace
Charlotte West

Organization:

Resident
Historic Zoning Commission
AIA
Bob Alcorn Architects
GWE, LLC
Conversions Property
SITE Inc.
MPC
City Engineering
City of Knoxville
CBID
MPC
Vaughn and Melton
Ross Fowler
Resident
Unarmed Merchants
City of Knoxville
MPC

A motion was made by Finbarr Saunders and seconded by Bob Alcorn to approve the February 20 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 03-A-08-DT

129 S. Gay St. – Unarmed Merchants (Aaron Brown, Applicant/Owner)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This request is for a 12 square foot hanging sign (4.5’x2.5’). The sign will hang from a forged steel ornate hanger similar, but not limited too those found on Market Square. The design and placement will be implemented by Ironwood Studios who has similar work on Market Square. The sign will be constructed of wood and will contain elements of inlay, paint, and/or pyrography. The sign will be sealed with an environmental lacquer.

Staff Comments

This project is in the Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District. The guidelines recommend hanging signs be no larger than six (6) square feet (Section 2.B.1b). The City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance (Article 5, Section 10.17) says that a “Sign shall not project from a building a greater distance than ten feet and shall maintain a clear height of ten feet. Where such signs project over public property they shall not extend closer than twenty inches to the curb line”. The hanging bracket is proposed to extend approximately seven feet from the structure, which will be about three to four feet from the curb. The sign itself will hang about 2’ 10” from the building to 6’ 4” away from the building. As you can see in the documentation, this building sits back about two feet from the buildings on either side of it so when walking down the sidewalk the sign will appear to hang inline with the neighboring facades.

The proposed design is over the maximum allowable size of six square feet in the guidelines, however, will meet all other applicable sign regulations.

Aaron Brown, who is the owner, stated that they were not aware that the sign was to be 10’ off the sidewalk. Said they will comply with all regulations.

Joe Petre stated that the doors are 9’6” so the sign would be within 4” of the ordinance.

A motion was made by Gregg White and seconded by John Sanders to approve the sign with conditions that the bottom of sign is a minimum of 10’ above the sidewalk. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate No. 03-C-08-DT

Gay Street, 100 and 200 Blocks – City of Knoxville (Vaughn & Melton, Applicant)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This request is for the streetscape improvements in the 100 and 200 blocks of Gay Street (between Jackson Avenue and Summit Hill Drive). There are structural members underneath both the East and West sidewalks through most of the 100 block that will be either renovated or replaced as part of the project. State Street between Summit Hill Drive and Gay Street will be permanently closed, and the adjacent parking lot will be extended on the Gay Street end. In addition, sidewalks adjacent to Treble Clef Park, a short section of Vine Avenue and some curb, gutter and sidewalk work along Summit Hill Drive at State Street will be included. The work will include grading, drainage, base installation, paving, curb and sidewalk construction, utility relocations, column rehabilitation and structural slab replacement.

The existing pavement and sidewalks from Jackson Avenue to Summit Hill Drive will be replaced, including tree wells, lighting, and sidewalk patterning in keeping with the previously renovated blocks of Gay Street. The proposed lighting is the same as will be

placed in the 700 – 900 blocks of Gay Street, which is underway. The lighting will have the same lighting fixture and arms as the Gay Street Viaduct lighting, but will have a base similar to the lighting in the 300 – 600 blocks (see the attached photos). The proposed benches will be the same as those on Market Square (see attached). The proposed planters will be the same as the metal planters on the 300 – 600 blocks of Gay Street and the precast concrete planters on Main Street (see attached). The sidewalks will be made of a dyed concrete to mimic the color of the existing brick on Gay Street. There will be accent strips at each bulb out on the sidewalk of a lighter tone than the Gay Street brick. The sidewalk concrete will have a brushed finish with a grid pattern scored into it as shown on the plans. The crosswalks will be made of the same dyed concrete. The existing angled parking in the 100 block will be replaced with parallel parking. This will allow for the widening of the sidewalk and the inclusion of bulb outs with trees. The lost parking spaces along Gay Street will be absorbed by additional spaces created by extending the parking lot next to Treble Clef Park.

Staff Comments

The proposed streetscape improvements are in the Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District and are entirely within the public realm. There are four principles in the Public Realm section: 1) Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety, 2) Resident and Visitor Orientation, 3) Parking Facilities, and 4) Downtown Beautification. I will go through each principle with comments as it relates this project.

- 1) Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety – The components that accomplish this principle are pedestrian-scale lighting and benches, sidewalks and crosswalks that are accessible, sidewalks that have visual continuity, and a “furniture” zone is created for a buffer. *Components that do not accomplish this principle are lack of proposed bicycle racks and the removal of a bench at a bus stop in front of Treble Clef Park, along Gay Street.*
- 2) Resident and Visitor Orientation – This principle predominately deals with the creation of a comprehensive and consistent signage program for downtown. *There is an existing wayfinding sign at the corner of Gay and Jackson that is part of a comprehensive wayfinding program, but this plan does not show the relocating of this sign.*
- 3) Parking Facilities – This principle predominately deals with parking and the aesthetics thereof. The extension of the existing parking lot is on public property. There will be landscape screening to separate it from the sidewalk and trees will be added. *However, the guidelines recommend 1 shade tree per 8 parking spaces distributed throughout the lot and there are no shade trees being added to the parking area. There will be 45 parking stalls when complete, and there are 29 parking stalls currently (not including four spaces to be removed on the portion of State Street to be closed).*
- 4) Downtown Beautification – The project will meet this principle by adding landscaping and public open space, and by locating trees in locations that will not significantly alter the setting of, or harm the materials of historic buildings.

Mike Reynolds explained each principle and stated that Ann Bennett has concerns about street trees and their impact in the area. If trees are added to the streetscape it changes the historic setting because there never were trees in the 100 block because it was a warehouse district.

Kim Henry asked why glass block is not being placed in the sidewalk where they have historically been located. Steve King, Director of Public Works and Engineering, stated that it was agreed at a public meeting to not replace the glass block because of cost. The glass block that was recently replaced will be put back in. The city wants to stay within budget. John Sanders asked Steve King if an owner came to them, would they be able to place glass block where they were historically if the owner pays for it. Amy Haynes stated that city should look at what is unique in an area and not change it or should put the area back like it was. David Harrell, City Engineering, stated there are structural considerations to take into account concerning the sidewalk system.

Amy Haynes asked if the trees will have enough dirt to survive. David Harrell stated that the sidewalk will be widened and will be on grade. Amy Haynes asked if the tree roots could cause damage to the building walls under the sidewalk. David Craig, Ross Fowler, stated that the tree roots will not be able to damage building walls because there will be a solid retaining wall which they will not be able to penetrate.

Mike Carberry, MPC, stated that Knoxville has a Street Tree Plan, and wider sidewalks are important in implementing this plan. We looked at other cities with historic districts and how they address street trees. New York has many historic districts that did not historically have street trees but they are implementing a street tree planning program in all their districts, except for the industrial districts.

Patti Smith asked when the bid will be let, when construction will begin and what provisions have been made for parking. Steve King answered that another public meeting will be held, and the City hopes to be open for bids in the summer. After that meeting, discussions will be held about closures and access of each building. Parking would be in the 200 block.

John Sanders asked if there is anything in the plan for media boxes. Bill Lyons stated that Madeleine Weil is looking at this question. Gregg White stated that parking meters need to be addressed. He would like to see a centralized electronic parking meter versus the traditional meters at every parking stall. Kim Henry asked what the plans are for garbage during construction. Amy Haynes stated that the public meeting will address this.

Amy Haynes stated that the bus stop currently has an entire lane, but in this plan there are bulbouts. For a bus to pick up and discharge passengers, they are going to have to block traffic on Gay Street. Steve King stated that a main goal for the project is providing parking for residents or short-term needs. Amy stated that the bus should not block traffic and should be able to move over. Mike Reynolds stated that a bus bulbout as proposed work well and reduces conflicts when pulling out into traffic.

A motion was made by John Sanders and seconded by Kim Henry to recommend City Council and Mayor Haslam to: 1) Allow individual property owners the option of having glass block installed, at the owners expense, as part of the sidewalk renovations at locations where the glass block had historically been installed. This will make the lower levels of the buildings more viable, 2) Consider removing the center bulbouts on both sides of the 200 block to allow large delivery trucks and buses a place to pull over out of the travel lanes, 3) Have a centrally located parking meter pay stations, rather individual parking meters which can clutter the streetscape, 4) Have attractive and purposely placed media centers (newspaper vending machines, etc.), and 5) Coordinate the signage on the blocks with the comprehensive signage program for the rest of downtown. The motion carried unanimously.

Issued Certificates of Appropriateness

Other Business:

- Discuss the design of the proposed Transit Center.
- Discuss the design of the proposed Sentinel Tower.