

MINUTES
KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2010
SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM

Present:

Kim Henry
David Dewhirst
Anne Wallace
John Sanders
Joe Petre
Bob Alcorn
Jeffrey Nash
Mark Donaldson
Steve King
Tom Reynolds
Rafik Hanna
Aaron Thompson
Mike Reynolds
Charlotte West

Organization:

APA Representative
Dewhirst Properties
City of Knoxville
AIA Representative
Business Representative
Downtown Resident
CBID
MPC
City Engineering
City of Knoxville
Applicant
Applicant
MPC
MPC

Kim Henry, Chair, called the meeting to order. There was a quorum present, and they introduced themselves. Board members present are shown in italics.

A motion was made by John Sanders and seconded by Anne Wallace to approve the March 17 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 2-C-10-DT

415 S. Gay St - 415 S. Gay Street (revision) (David Randle)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This is a revision to Certificate 9-B-09-DT for the façade renovation at 415 S Gay Street. This request is to modify the second floor window openings because the floor height is above the bottom of the existing window opening. The approved second floor windows require that the existing window openings remain without infilling any portion of the window opening. This requirement is not practical with building code requirements. The applicant is proposing to infill 1 foot 6 inches of the bottom of the window opening with a wood panel, as shown in the attached drawing. The panel will be constructed out of plywood with the trim made out of 1x4 to create the panel look. This will bring the bottom of the window opening even with the existing second story floor level.

Staff Comments

Staff finds that the proposal meets the intent of the guidelines and the direction from the board.

Staff Recommendation

Approve Certificate 2-C-10-DT without conditions.

Mike Reynolds stated that this project has been before us previously and received an approval. This request is a revision to that Certificate of Appropriateness and the proposal is to raise the window sill height to be even with the second story floor elevation. This is necessary for building code reasons.

Rafik Hanna, 415 S. Gay Street, stated he is installing wood windows.

Joe Petre asked how far back in the building the second floor steps-up to the elevation as seen on the front of the building. Mr. Hanna stated that the entire second floor is the same elevation.

A motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Jeffrey Nash to approve the staff recommendation and adding that the windows must be made out of wood. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate No. 4-A-10-DT

428 S. Gay St - Sapphire (Phire Knoxville, LLC)

Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is for a projecting sign that is 2 feet wide by 8 feet tall, or 16 square feet. The sign will be attached to the building vertically by two brackets above the existing awning, between the second floor windows, as seen in the attached images.

The body of the sign is made of metal and the letters will be made of acrylic. There are two layers to the sign which can be seen in the side view in the attached drawings. There will be blue neon between the inner and outer layer to give a halo effect. There will be white neon behind the white acrylic letters, which are on the outer layer.

Staff Comments

This property is located within the National Register Gay Street Commercial Historic District, which means it must meet the sign requirements of Section 1.C.7 Historic Resources (Recommended Signs) and Section 2.B.1 Traditional Grid District (Recommended Signs), of the guidelines. Both sections recommend that projecting signs be no larger than 9 square feet, unless the board feels it is appropriate in context to the surrounding development. There is a projecting sign on the neighboring building that is of similar size and location on the building, as proposed.

The historic resources section also states that signs should not have internal illumination and that signs should be proportional to the building where the sign is located. This sign does have internal illumination but it is done in a fashion that has been acceptable to the board in previous requests (Gridiron Burger and DIA), which is to only allow light to penetrate the sign face to illuminate the letters only. A sign larger than the required 9 square feet should, in general, be

located higher on a building to be in scale with the intention of being pedestrian oriented. This sign will be at approximately the same height as a neighboring sign of similar size which appears to staff to be at an appropriate height.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 4-A-10-DT as the Board determines appropriate for the sign size.

Mike Reynolds reviewed the requested.

Aaron Thompson, 428 S. Gay Street, stated that they chose this size to be complimentary with the Downtown Brewery sign next door. This sign will bring more attention to my restaurant.

Bob Alcorn asked if it is higher than the Brewery sign. Mr. Thompson replied that it will be in line with the Brewery sign. The signs will not block each other.

Anne Wallace stated that the board evaluates each sign individually.

Jeffrey Nash stated that he should get approval from the owner before installing the sign. Mr. Thompson stated he has received approval from the building owner.

A motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by John Sanders to approve the sign as submitted. The motion carried with David Dewhirst recusing.

Other Business

Mr. Hanna asked the board about adding a faux brick façade over the existing façade at 415 S. Gay Street. He presented a sample and the board was not receptive to this option. Mr. Hanna felt that the existing brick was in such poor condition that it could not easily be fixed and would rather not paint the brick, which the board has agreed to allow. John Sanders said he could not use the faux finish brick and has to use real brick if he installs new brick. This is not appropriate brick. Mr. Sanders wants him to repair the brick first.

David Dewhirst stated he used to own this building and thought about painting it but did not. It is the cheapest option. Because it is in a National Register Historic District, Mr. Hanna would have to look at the National Park Service guidelines for cleaning and repairing masonry. Mr. Hanna has a copy of these guidelines.

Anne Wallace stated that if you add the faux brick, it would damage the existing brick and cover the historic character. She thinks painting the existing brick would be appropriate.

Jeffrey Nash asked Mr. Hanna what the problem is with the broken brick. Mr. Hanna replied that the brick in the lower part of the façade is damaged. Mr. Nash stated that a sign board could be placed over this section of brick between the 1st & 2nd floor that would cover the damaged section and allow the rest of the brick to be maintained without paint. Mr. Nash stated Mr. Hanna could come back to the board with a suggestion of a combination of both cleaning the brick work and repointing above and below or maybe using stucco or paint on the lower level.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.