

MINUTES
KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MEETING OF AUGUST 17, 2011
SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM

Present:

Kim Henry
Joe Petre
Chad Boetger
Bob Alcorn
David Dewhurst
Mike Reynolds
Steve King
Mark Donaldson
Michele Hummel
Todd Jackovich
Joe Herman
Jana Sheckles
Charlotte West

Organization:

APA Representative
Business Representative
Downtown Resident Representative
Downtown Resident Representative
Business
MPC
City of Knoxville
MPC
CBID
Marble Alley/Stonehenge
Davis Architects
Signco, Inc.
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 David Dewhurst and seconded by Chad Boetger to approve the July 20 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 8-A11-DT

State St. – Marble Alley Apartments (Todd Jackovich)
Pre-development N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is for a 5 foot front setback variance for a future multi-dwelling structure at the corner of State Street and Union Avenue. The variance is requested for both State Street and Union Avenue. While the building will not project into the front yard setback, the balconies and stairs will which is the need for the variance. It is not anticipated that the balconies will extend over a public sidewalk.

Staff Comments

While stairs are allowed to project into a front yard setback, balconies are not. The only mechanism for allowing balconies in this case is to grant a front yard setback variance, which the board has the authority to approve in order to respect the historic context of the block, provide greater pedestrian activity at the sidewalk level or meet other provisions of the guidelines. The design of the building, along with the balconies, will be a separate approval at a later date.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 8-A-11-DT as submitted, granting a front setback variance of 5 feet to allow the balconies and stairs.

Mike Reynolds reviewed the request.

Todd Jackovich, is the applicant representing Stonehenge, and Joe Herman from Davis Architects. Mr. Jackovich stated that their goal is to build apartments called Marble Alley Apartments at the corner of State Street and Union Avenue. The project has gone through the platting process and the property is now one lot. They have established a visibility easement at the corner of State and Union at the request of City Engineering. They looked at how far back they could push the building back on the property but are restricted because of utility lines that run to the rear of the property. They have kept the structure inside the property line, but want a variance to allow balconies to extend into the front yard. The balconies will be elevated 4 feet to 13 feet off the ground on the first level, and the decks will not protrude over the sidewalk. They have worked with the city to provide a 7 foot wide sidewalk. There will be landscaping around the building. This development will have four stories of apartments and 1½ stories of parking. There will be a leasing office and amenities area for the building in the storefront of the building. It is not intended to have leasable retail/office space on the ground floor of the building. There will be two courtyards for the tenants of the building; one facing State Street and the other facing Central Street. The courtyard along State Street will be elevated, so there will not be direct access from the sidewalk.

Kim Henry asked city staff in the audience if there are any issues with allowing the setback variance. There were no comments.

David Dewhirst stated that on behalf of Knoxville, we are looking forward to this. To clarify, all we are just asking for the balconies and stairs to be built within the 5 foot setback. He asked Steve King if they are prohibited from having balconies over sidewalks. Steve stated that City Council would have to approve that instead of the Design Board. David is looking forward to seeing the final plans and encouraged Mr. Jackovich to try to make it an urban feel.

Joe Petre asked what they plan to put in the courtyard. Joe Herman responded soft landscaping, a garden and water feature. Todd Jackovich stated the courtyard along State Street will be raised about 6 feet above the sidewalk.

Bob Alcorn asked how many units there will be. The building will be 147 units, four stories on top of one and half stories of parking.

David Dewhirst encouraged the developers to design the building as urban as possible, and to be mindful of the type of materials used.

A motion was made by David Dewhirst and seconded by Bob Alcorn to approve the setback variance. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificate No. 8-B-11-DT

517 Union Ave. – Union Avenue Books (Signco, Inc.)

Pre-development N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is for a hanging sign below the canopy of the Daylight Building. The sign will be 3 feet by 3 feet 8 inches, or 11 square feet. The sign will have a clearance with the sidewalk no less than 10 feet. The green background of the sign will be metal with white push through plastic for the graphics. The sign will be internally illuminated.

Staff Comments

The existing signs under the building canopy have stayed under the maximum of 9 square feet, as suggested by the guidelines. The building canopy extends over the entire width of the sidewalk limiting the location of signs vertically on the building. Being that the existing signs are modest in size and that the large canopy creates a fairly unique situation downtown, staff recommends that any new hanging sign under this building canopy should also be consistent with the guidelines and be proportional to the existing signs.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 8-B-11-DT subject to the following condition: The sign shall be no larger than 9 square feet.

Mike Reynolds stated that since all the existing signs are under the canopy are less than 9 square feet, all hanging signs under this canopy should be a maximum of 9 square feet. The canopy creates a unique condition downtown and a large sign could be overpowering. He added that the guidelines only recommend sign be no more than 9 square feet, but the board could approve a bigger sign.

Jana Sheckles, a representative from Signco, Inc., is here to answer any questions. She stated that she brought a new version of the sign that is 9 square feet and would like to submit it for consideration.

Joe Petre asked if the board had approved any other signs for this building that was greater than 9 square feet? Mike Reynolds stated that the existing signs do not exceed 9 square feet.

Joe Petre asked if the 9 square feet maximum is in the guidelines? Mike Reynolds stated that it is in the guidelines as a maximum but the board can approve something larger if it feels it is appropriate for the location.

Mike Reynolds stated that the new sign submitted is the same design as they submitted previously but it is dimensionally smaller.

Chad Boetger asked if the owner is comfortable with the smaller sign. Jana Sheckles stated that they are fine with size.

A motion was made by Bob Alcorn and seconded by Chad Boetger to approve the staff recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Report:

- 504 S Gay Street (8-C-11-DT) – Sign for The Market.

Mike Reynolds stated that the sign was already installed when we got the application and the sign meets the guidelines.

Other Business:

There was no other business, and the meeting was adjourned.