

MINUTES
KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2012
SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM
4:00 P.M.

Present:

Kim Henry
Anne Wallace
David Dewhirst
Mike Reynolds
Joe Petre
John Sanders
Carol Montgomery
Christi Branscom
Melvin Wright
Durance Rowery
Anna Yarbrow
Samantha Trueheart
Patricia Lowcry

Organization:

APA Representative
City of Knoxville
Business Representative
MPC
Business Representative
AIA Representative
Historic Zoning Commission
City of Knoxville
City of Knoxville, Inspections
Student, University of Tennessee
Student, University of Tennessee
Student, University of Tennessee
Student, University of Tennessee

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kim Henry. It was established that there was a quorum present and the Board members introduced themselves. Board members present are shown in italics.

Ms. Henry noted there were journalism students from the University of Tennessee and welcomed them to the meeting.

Action: A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by John Sanders to approve the March 21, 2012 Minutes. The Motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 10-H-11-DT

710 Walnut St - 710 and 712 Walnut (Total Demolition Services, Inc.)
Pre-development: 10/18/2011

Description of Work

Demolition of 710 and 712 Walnut Street and removal of all structures, foundations and footings.

Add new landscaping, fencing and pedestrian gateway as shown in the attached plans. There will be a courtyard that is accessible by the public.

Staff Comments

These two buildings are not in a National Register Historic District or individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, so Section 1.B.8 (page 19) of the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines would apply. The Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines state that "The demolition of buildings... may be appropriate when in compliance with the guidelines". It also states, "If a building is demolished, all visible unutilized building material must be removed and the site must be vegetated or otherwise brought into compliance with the guidelines".

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 10-H-11-DT as submitted.

Discussion: Kim Henry stated that the Applicant had requested a postponement in order to continue discussion about alternatives to total demolition.

Action: A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Carol Montgomery to postpone the Application until the next meeting. The Motion carried unanimously.

Certificate No. 3-C-12-DT

301 Wall Ave - Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union (Neon Service Co.) Pre-development: N/A

Description of Work

Add a new wall sign to the face of the building adjacent to the alley. The sign is 3 feet 5 inches wide by 6 feet 1 inch tall, or approximately 21 square feet. The sign will be internally illuminated and have an embossed acrylic face.

Staff Comments

The Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines recommends wall signs to be located in the sign board area. The rear elevation of this building, which faces Market Square, is visible because the neighboring building sits back substantially from the street edge. The sign board area for the rear elevation is considered the same height as the area between the storefront and second story windows on the street facing facades. There are street trees that obstruct the view of the rear elevation when leaves are on the trees. Another option for signage would be to do a projecting sign and/or wall sign along Wall Avenue on the sign board.

Staff Recommendation

APPROVE Certificate 3-C-12-DT with the following condition: The sign shall be installed in the sign board area on the façade facing Wall Avenue or the sign board area on the rear elevation facing the alley.

Discussion: Kim Henry noted that the Applicant was not present. Ms. Henry noted this was a pre-submittal from last month's meeting. She stated it appeared that the Applicant had complied with the Board's request to redesign and shrink the size of the sign. Mike Reynolds stated the staff recommendation had not changed, clarifying that in keeping with the guidelines, the sign should be installed in the sign board area on the facade facing Wall Avenue or the sign board area on the rear elevation facing the alley. Mr. Reynolds also noted that the Applicant did respond the Board's request to make the sign smaller in size and more in line with the windows facing Wall Avenue. The proposed sign is now 6 feet 1 inch tall and 41 inches wide. Mr. Reynolds clarified that he felt the Applicant could also meet the guidelines with a hanging sign. It was also clarified that the Applicant wants to go with this type of sign and is aware there are other sign options that do meet the guidelines.

It was noted that the proposed sign was plastic and internally lit. Mr. Reynolds clarified that this building is not in a National Register Historic District and subsequently this type of sign is allowed. It was further noted that if located on the sign board area, an internally lit sign would be allowable. Anne Wallace also stated that placement of the sign on a sign board area was discussed with the Applicant at last month's Board meeting.

Discussion ensued surrounding the fact that currently there are noncontributing buildings in the district that are part of the district, for which district guidelines do not apply. David Dewhirst stated that he felt districts and subsequently application of their guidelines should be contiguous, and that there should not be buildings that do not conform. Mr. Reynolds noted that the Board could consider the development of a separate district, for example a Gay Street district, as opposed to using whether or not a building is in a National Register of Historic District. This could encompass an area where the majority of the buildings

are in a National Register Historic District and where other properties would need to meet the same guidelines. He further noted that with respect to signs on Market Square, the guidelines used by the Board are actually more stringent than those of the Historic Zoning Commission.

Action: A Motion was made by David Dewhirst and seconded by John Sanders to deny the application based on the fact that it does not meet the guidelines.

Further Discussion: Ann Wallace stated that the Applicant's logo is in a portrait format and they did not want to have to redesign it. Further, the Applicant was looking to make the sign and ATM more visible to the public. David Dewhirst noted that most downtown businesses are challenged with meeting the guidelines.

John Sanders noted that the Board could look at being very specific with recommendations to an Applicant when first approached with an application to be put on the Agenda. This would result in there being less uncertainty with what will and will not meet the guidelines when the application is presented to the Board. Mr. Reynolds stated that staff was working towards being more proactive with the Applicant earlier in the application process.

The Motion carried 4-1, with Kim Henry voting Nay.

Staff Report: None

Other Business:

Discuss amending the Administrative Rules and Procedures to allow an application to be "tabled".

Discussion: Mike Reynolds began the discussion by stating that this Agenda Item was for discussion only and that the Board would not be taking any action today. He then stated that currently the only actions the Board can take are to approve as requested, approve subject to conditions, approve a modified application, deny or postpone.

Joe Petre arrived at the meeting.

When an application asks for their application to be postponed to a later date, the only way to do so is for the board to take action on the request and postpone the item to a specified future date. Another option for the Board to consider is to "table" the application, which removes it from the Agenda until which time the Applicant requests it be put back on the Agenda for consideration. When ready to proceed, the applicant would come before the Board with a request to put their application back on the Agenda. The Board would then vote to take the application off the table and it would then be placed on the Agenda to be heard at the following Board meeting. It was noted that this would also prevent the public from thinking there might be action taken on an item that is going to be postponed.

Mr. Reynolds clarified the "postponement" and "tabling" language was taken from the Metropolitan Planning Commission's Administrative Rules and Procedures, with minor modifications. General consensus from discussion was that the Applicant should initiate tabling an item, not the Board.

The procedure to adopt changes/additions to the Downtown Design Review Board Administrative Rules and Procedures would be for the Board to vote on them upon which time they would then go before the MPC for final approval and adoption. Mr. Reynolds stated he would bring a final version of these proposed changes to the next meeting.

Action: A Motion was made by John Sanders and seconded by Carol Montgomery to adjourn. The Motion carried unanimously.