



TOWN HALL
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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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November 9, 2009

DRB Memorandum #2009-11

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – November 3, 2009

The Tuesday, November 3, 2009, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:30 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall.

Design Review Board Members Janet Winston (Chair), Jonathan Salvon (6:35 p.m.), Kathryn Grandonico, Anita Licis and Jim Wald (7:00 p.m.) were present.

Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner; Mary Moore Cathcart of The Claw Foot Tub; Dave Williams of IAT Partnership LLP, and his wife, Marion Williams; Kyle Wilson of Archipelago Investments, LLP; Aaron Hayden, Select Board Liaison

DRB 2010-00004, 30 Main Street, The Claw Foot Tub (Mary Moore Cathcart) – remove existing awning and install a sign and two goose-neck lights that currently are located at 321 Main Street (former location of The Claw Foot Tub).

Recommended approval, with conditions.

Ms. Cathcart presented the application. The Claw Foot Tub was formerly located at 321 Main Street and has moved to 30 Main Street. The existing sign at 321 Main Street may not fit in the sign band available at the new location, between the cove molding and the molding for the window. The applicant proposes to have a new sign made that is slightly narrower and slightly longer, but has the same square footage as the existing sign. She would like to remove the existing awning and install the sign where the awning is currently located. The Board viewed photographs of the existing sign and the storefront where the new sign will be installed.

Board members commented that the design of the existing sign and the font used on that sign are appropriate for the business and the sign is well-designed.

Ms. Cathcart plans to relocate the two existing gooseneck lights at 321 Main Street (or purchase new ones that are exactly the same) and to mount them over the sign at 30 Main Street. The lights will have fluorescent bulbs for energy savings.

Ms. Grandonico asked if there would be a perpendicular sign for viewing by pedestrians walking up and down the hill.

Ms. Cathcart stated that she does not plan to install a perpendicular sign, but she would like to install window lettering, the same as that on the other stores in the vicinity, such as Clay's.

Ms. Winston commented that Clay's used white lettering in the windows and asked Ms. Cathcart about the proposed color of the lettering. Ms. Cathcart plans to use a light color, possibly ivory, in lower case "American Typewriter" font, similar to the main sign.

Ms. Winston asked if the sun would present a problem if the awning is removed. Ms. Cathcart plans to install an "old-fashioned crank-out awning" next year and will submit the proper applications at that time. The awning will be very subtle. Right now the store will have an existing tree for shade in the summer.

The new sign above the door will be located in the middle of the windows. Ms. Licis noted that the second floor windows are symmetrical but the first floor window arrangement is not symmetrical. Ms. Cathcart plans to install the sign so that it will be balanced between the symmetrical arrangement of the second floor windows and the asymmetrical arrangement of the first floor windows and door. She also plans to clean the sign band (cornice) and paint it in the spring.

The Board agreed by consensus to recommend approval of Ms. Cathcart's application to install the sign and lights and to recommend approval of the proposal to paint or adhere lettering to the windows and install a small paper sign, containing the hours of operation, in the window.

Conditions:

- 1) The new sign shall be the same as the existing sign at 321 Main Street (with reference to design, color and materials), except that it may be slightly narrower and slightly longer, but shall be of the same square footage;
- 2) The two lights mounted over the sign shall be the same style and color as the black, gooseneck lights currently in place at 321 Main Street;
- 3) The lettering on the windows shall be lower-case, American Typewriter font, of a light color, such as white or ivory, and the letters shall be the same size or a smaller font than those in Clay's window;
- 4) The hours of operation may be displayed in the window on a small piece of paper, with lettering in American Typewriter font, in keeping with the style of the store;
- 5) The combined signs [main sign, window lettering and paper sign] shall not exceed 10% of the facade controlled by The Claw Foot Tub.

DRB 2010-00002, 43-51 North Pleasant Street, Archipelago Investments, LLP for Boltwood Place – construction of a new, mixed-use, LEED-certified building in downtown Amherst on the lot with Judie's Restaurant; ground floor to be retail/commercial with eleven (11) residential units above.

Recommended approval, with conditions.

Mr. Williams stated that the Planning Board will be holding a continued public hearing on this proposal next week [November 10, 2009]. The architects have been refining the design of the project and have submitted revised renderings. They have also submitted photographs showing samples of their work in other locations, including various techniques to add texture to building facades and various ways of handling the streetscape and entry courtyards for urban buildings. Mr. Williams presented these submittals. He mentioned the possibility of using vines on the exterior columns on the first floor, permeable pavers and plantings in the entry court and various ways of treating the rear entranceway to Judie's Restaurant.

Mr. Williams presented renderings of the proposed building showing clapboard wrapped around the north side of the building and a series vertical wooden "sirms" or screens used to give texture and dimension to the formerly

blank upper walls of the north and west façades. He showed examples of the type of wooden screens that the architects have used on other buildings and that they are proposing to use here. The material most commonly used in this type of installation is a treated hardwood known as “Accoya”. Wood treated in this manner can last for up to 50 years. It is suited for use on the upper stories of the proposed building because of its ease of maintenance.

The architect is proposing to introduce color by painting the wall of the upper story and installing a series of screens, made of vertical wooden pieces (probably 2 x 2’s). The vertical wooden pieces would be painted or stained lighter tones. The color of the painted wall will be visible through the overlapping layers of wooden screens. The balcony railings will not be solid (as previously proposed) but will have vertical members, regularly spaced, and the appearance will be more transparent and give a lighter impression.

Accoya is produced by Titan Wood of Canada, among other producers. It has been used throughout Europe. Window manufacturers have been using Accoya because of its weather and pest-resistant qualities.

The Board members noted that they appreciated the architect’s attempt to put a little color and texture into the building.

Mr. Wilson noted that the architects would like to use a material that looks like clapboard for the lower portions of the building, in keeping with the materials of some of the surrounding buildings.

Ms. Winston stated that she would like to see some of the color proposed for the upper walls move down to the lower portion of the building.

Ms. Grandonico commented that in the new renderings the building looks less like “an entity unto itself” and there is more of a warm color showing through.

Mr. Williams stated that he sees the building as being a “21st century building” that blends with the sky and clouds.

Ms. Liciis stated that the building design has changed since the last time the Board reviewed it. It now has a “lightness” that it didn’t have before. There is a “playfulness” to the south side because the window openings are not regular.

Mr. Wilson presented design ideas for the entry courtyard, and discussed details for columns and overhangs.

Ms. Grandonico asked about the possibility of extending the overhang. Mr. Wilson stated that he will discuss this idea with the Building Commissioner, Bonnie Weeks.

The Board discussed the following issues with the applicants:

- How the rear entry to Judie’s would work;
- How much space there will be on the first floor for retail;
- How the two sets of egress stairs and the elevator in the proposed building will work;
- The need for egress stairs from the second floor of Judie’s;
- Signage for the commercial space on the ground floor, including signs on the glass and signs on the pedestrian overhang.

Ms. Winston noted that the resolution of the design of the formerly blank, flat [north and west] walls has been successful.

Conditions:

- 1) The detailing of the wooden screens and surface treatment of the facade shall be presented to the Design Review Board for review;
- 2) The color of the wall and the screens (in the slatted or screened area at the top of the building) shall be presented to the Design Review Board for review;
- 3) A sign plan shall be presented to the Board for review; (an example of a successful sign plan is the one prepared for the Amherst Cinema Building);
- 4) An exterior lighting plan shall be presented to the Board for review;
- 5) A plan for the treatment of the site, including the entrance courtyard, landscaping, paving and site furniture (if any) shall come back to the Board for review.

Ms. Winston MOVED to recommend approval of the plans and renderings, as presented, with the conditions as listed above. Mr. Salvon seconded and the vote was 5-0 to recommend approval of the plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Future Meetings

Tuesday, November 17

Tuesday, December 1

Tuesday, December 15

Note: Ms. Winston will not be available to attend the December meetings.

Cc: Anita Licis, DRB
Janet Winston, DRB
Jim Wald, DRB & HC
Jonathan Salvon, DRB
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB
Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner
Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
Aaron Hayden, Select Board Liaison
Larry Shaffer, Town Manager
Jason Skeels, Town Engineer
Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works
Kyle Wilson, Archipelago Investments, LLP, Applicant
Mary Moore Cathcart, The Claw Foot Tub, Applicant