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June 23, 2009

DRB Memorandum #2009-07

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – June 22, 2009

The Monday, June 22, 2009, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:32 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall. Members Janet Winston (Chair), Kathryn Grandonico, and Jonathan Salvon were present. Jim Wald arrived at 6:40 p.m. Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner; Chip Secco for Gypsy Dog Gallery; Jenny Scott and Alexander Papouchis for Living Routes; Aresh Hashemkhani for Moti's; and Duncan Ferguson for Urban Exchange.

The Board turned to **Appointments**.

Appointments

DRB #2009-00018, 103 North Pleasant Street, Christopher (Chip) Secco for Gypsy Dog Gallery – install two wooden and copper signs, one on the brick façade next to the door and the other on the wooden fascia

Recommended approval, with conditions

Mr. Secco presented the application. He would like to install two wooden signs, one of which will be 2' x 4' and the other will be 2' x 6'. The smaller sign will be installed on the brick wall on the left side of the entry to the gallery. The larger sign will be installed on the wooden fascia of the covered walkway that runs in front of the gallery space. The smaller sign has already been made. Mr. Secco presented it to the Board. The sign consists of an oak plywood panel that has been stained a maple color and then lacquered. The letters are cut from copper flashing and have been nailed to the panel. The letters have been treated so that they have a patina which contrasts with the color of the wood panel.

Mr. Secco would like to temporarily install the smaller sign on the wood fascia over the entry until the larger sign has been made, at which time he will install the larger sign on the fascia and the smaller sign on the brick wall.

Ms. Grandonico suggested that a sign that is perpendicular to the building wall would help to catch the eye of passersby. She noted that signs that are flush with the façade will not be easily seen from North Pleasant Street.

Mr. Secco stated that there are hooks located in the ceiling of the covered walkway and that he could hang a sign of approximately 1' x 3' from these hooks.

Ms. Winston suggested that the small sign have a white background with copper lettering to catch the eye, since the area under the covered walkway may be dark.

Mr. Secco described how he would attach the signs to the brick and wood surfaces.

Mr. Secco presented a drawing showing where he proposes to mount the signs. The drawing also shows that the larger sign will have slightly different letter placement than the smaller sign.

Ms. Grandonico asked about lighting. Mr. Secco noted that there is a streetlight close to the building, but it has been out for a while and needs a new bulb. There are also lights along the walkway. He does not plan to install additional lighting.

Conditions:

1. The applicant should consider installing a small hanging sign, 1' x 3', from the hooks in the ceiling of the covered walkway. This sign should have a white background with copper lettering so that it can be seen from the street.

DRB #2009-00019, 284 North Pleasant Street, Jenny Scott and Alexander Papouchis for Living Routes – install a replacement wooden sign on the existing post in front of the building

Recommended approval, with conditions

Ms. Scott presented the application. She showed a photograph of the existing sign for Dr. Howard T. Ewert and presented a drawing of the proposed sign which will be 1' x 4', the same dimensions as the existing sign. The words "Living Routes" will appear at the top of the sign in dark green. The words "Study Abroad in Ecovillages" will appear along the bottom of the sign and will also be dark green. Between the lines of lettering will be a wavy line that will be brown. The background color of the sign will be a light wood color. There will be no other signs.

Ms. Scott noted that there are not many "walk-ins" to this office. Usually contact is made over the phone or the internet and then people come to visit.

The Board discussed whether there should be a darker colored border around the sign as there is on the existing sign. They determined that there is no need for a border.

Ms. Winston suggested that the lettering for "Study Abroad in Ecovillages" should be thicker so that it can be read more easily.

Conditions:

1. The applicant should consider making the lettering for "Study Abroad in Ecovillages" thicker so that it can be read more easily.

DRB #2009-00021, 25 North Pleasant Street, Aresh Hashemkhani for Moti's – replace the existing Rolando's sign with a smaller sign that fits within the existing sign band on the building

Recommended approval, with conditions

Aresh Hashemkhani presented the application. Kathryn Grandonico recused herself from the discussion because her family owns the building in which Moti's will be located.

Mr. Hashemkhani explained that the existing sign panel for Rolando's will be removed. The new sign for Moti's will be painted on the sign band of the building, like the "Bucci's" sign is painted. The colors will be gold lettering on a black background, again similar to Bucci's. The sign will be approximately 2' x 8'. The existing black goose-neck lamps will remain and will shine down on the sign.

Mr. Salvon suggested that the lettering for the new sign should be larger to fill the space allotted to it and to more closely match the size of the lettering for Bucci's.

Conditions:

1. The lettering for "Moti's" should be larger to more closely match the lettering for "Bucci's".

DRB #2009-00020, 55-57 South Pleasant Street, Duncan Ferguson for Urban Exchange – remove existing awning and sign and install three new signs at the former Jeffery Amherst Bookshop

Recommended approval, with conditions

Duncan Ferguson of Ferguson Signs presented the application. He explained that the existing signs for the Jeffery Amherst Bookshop were oversized. The storefront façade is approximately 225 square feet, which would have allowed 22.5 square feet of signs, or 10% of the building wall that faces the Common. Mr. Ferguson asserted that the existing signs were 35 square feet (panel sign) and 36 square feet (awning) plus two more signs to the right of the bay window (each measuring 2' x 4') for a total of approximately 87 square feet of existing signs.

His client is hoping to take advantage of this non-conformity and install signs on the front façade that are also larger than the 10% of wall area allowed by the Zoning Bylaw.

Mr. Ferguson explained that the new store will be a clothing store. His client is particularly eager to have signs that are easily seen and that clearly state what is being offered.

The existing awning, with the words “Jeffery Amherst Bookshop” and the existing sign panel with the words “Jeffery Amherst Bookshop” will be removed. There is also a small panel sign, displaying the hours of operation, to the right of the window that will be removed. In addition, there had been another sign above the “hours of operation” sign that read “Books”. There is also another sign attached to one of the posts of the stairway, visible from the sidewalk, that reads “Books”. All of these signs will be or have been removed. The total area of the existing signs exceeded the 10% sign limitation allowed in the Zoning Bylaw.

Ms. Brestrup noted that the Design Review Board is an advisory board and is not a permit-granting body. The DRB members should focus on reviewing the application based on the criteria that they are charged to consider. [Section 3.20 of the Zoning Bylaw] It will be up to the Building Commissioner to determine whether the new signs meet the dimensional requirements of the Zoning Bylaw, whether the applicant can take advantage of the fact that the existing signs are non-conforming and whether a Building Permit should be issued.

The proposal includes the installation of three new signs:

1. A new 2 ½' x 12' panel sign over the main entryway;
2. A new 24" x 36" sign to the right of the bay window;
3. A new 24" x 36" sign on the side wall, facing north.

The signs are to have an ivory background, with gold-leaf accents and black lettering. The largest sign will have a black border and a black band at the bottom with ivory lettering. The large lettering stating “Urban Exchange” will have a beige-colored shadow. The smaller signs will not have a black border but will have a gold-leaf pinstripe set in from the edge of the sign panel.

Mr. Ferguson noted that the new panel sign over the front door will be compatible as to size and color with the large white panel sign for Kamins Real Estate.

The smaller signs are proposed to catch the eye of pedestrians walking along the sidewalk, since the pedestrians will probably not notice the large panel sign above the door. The large panel sign is meant for drivers and for pedestrians approaching from across the street.

Mr. Salvon commented that the design of the signs was excellent but that he questions the number of signs. It is an intense sign plan for such a small spot. The two small sign panels will be doing the same thing.

Ms. Winston agreed that either of the small sign panels would be acceptable but not both.

The Board members noted that more lighting under the overhang that leads to the front door would help in making the entryway more welcoming.

The Board members agreed that the large sign over the front door and the panel sign on the north side of the building would be enough draw attention to the store.

Conditions:

1. The applicant should consider limiting the signs on the building to two signs:
 - a) the large panel sign over the door and
 - b) one of the two smaller panel signs, preferably the one on the north wall since it will draw attention to the store from people passing on the sidewalk.

Future Meetings

The Board scheduled its next meetings as follows:

Mondays, July 13th and July 27th
Monday, August 17th .

Ms. Winston stated that she would not be available on July 27th.

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

Cc: Janet Winston, DRB
Anita Licis, DRB
Jim Wald, DRB
Jonathan Salvon, DRB
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB
Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner
Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
Aaron Hayden, Select Board Liaison
Christopher Secco, Applicant
Jenny Scott, Applicant
Aresh Hashemkhani, Applicant
Duncan Ferguson, Applicant