



TOWN HALL
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February 1, 2011

DRB Memorandum #2011-01

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – January 11, 2011

The Tuesday, January 11, 2011, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:32 p.m. in the Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall. Design Review Board members Janet Winston (Chair), Jonathan Salvon, Derek Noble, Michael Hanke and Kathryn Grandonico were present.

Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner; Louis Katchen and Jeffrey Wan for Lime Red Teahouse; and You-Pan Tzeng (Applicant), Hillary Black (of The Home Store), Alan St. Hilaire (of Eagle Crest Management) for 79 Taylor Street; and Bob Tancredi (of 57 High Street) and Ed Wilfert (of 48 Gray Street), neighbors of 79 Taylor Street.

DRB 2011-00012, Raymond Lee for Lime Red Teahouse – 50 Main Street – Review of proposed signs

Recommended approval without conditions

Ms. Grandonico recused herself.

Mr. Katchen and Mr. Wan presented the application. They are proposing four signs: 1) one box sign that will be interior lit, will be mounted above the door, 2) one box sign that will also be interior lit and mounted as a blade sign, on the west side of the windows, 3) one poster sign that will be mounted on the inside of the window to the right of the doorway and 4) one sign made up of vinyl letters that will be adhered to the window on the left side of the doorway. The poster sign in the window will be 13” x 19” and will be on a white background.

In response to a question about the type of restaurant, the applicants described a teahouse with bubble tea and hot tea as well as Asian desserts, like steamed dumplings.

The applicants are aware that the total area of the signs cannot exceed 10% of the exterior wall area that is controlled by the business.

Mr. Noble commented that he liked the colors and that the signs were well-designed. Other Board members were equally complimentary and all recommended approval.

SPR 2011-00006/M7471, 79 Taylor Street, You-Pan Tzeng – At the request of the Planning Board, review in accordance with Design Review standards and criteria, of proposal to create a two-family detached dwelling in the R-G Zoning District (Map 14B, Parcel 78)

You-Pan Tzeng presented the application, along with Mr. St. Hilaire and Ms. Black.

Ms. Brestrup explained that the Zoning Bylaw was recently changed to allow two-family dwellings with Site Plan Review by the Planning Board in the R-G and R-VC zoning districts. As part of this change, the Planning Board is required to use the Design Review Board standards and criteria set forth in Sections 3.2040 and 3.2041 of the Zoning

Bylaw, in reviewing the application. In this case the Planning Board requested that the Design Review Board review the application as to architectural and landscape design and report its recommendations to the Planning Board.

Mr. Tzeng acknowledged that the style of the house that he has proposed is different from houses in the surrounding neighborhood. He welcomed suggestions from the Design Review Board.

Ms. Winston suggested that Mr. Tzeng consider adding a porch roof over the front door of both units to break up the flat façade.

Mr. Hanke presented a series of photographs of houses in the neighborhood. The surrounding houses have “intact” landscaping and the original architectural features, such as the window frames and shutters. The house at 79 Taylor Street has lost its original architectural details, probably when new windows and asbestos siding were installed several decades ago.

Mr. Tancredi stated that the existing house is about 160 years old, based on information provided by Mr. Wilfert.

Mr. Hanke commented that this is a rich corner. The house at 79 Taylor Street is probably the most altered house in the area.

There was discussion about whether Mr. Tzeng would keep the asbestos siding. He noted that it is safe and effective if it is not disturbed. There was discussion about whether the asbestos siding should be replaced with vinyl siding with a 4” reveal. Ms. Black noted that the new siding on the addition is proposed to be 4” vinyl siding.

Mr. Salvon noted that asbestos siding will look different since it has an 8” to 9” reveal. He suggested that one way to make the existing and new buildings more compatible with the surrounding buildings would be to trim all the edges – add corner boards and skirt boards and add a trim piece to each gable end. He also suggested giving the windows and eaves a more traditional look. He suggested raising the roof on the proposed addition so that the distance between the top of the windows and the eave line would be the same on each building. Board members also discussed the possibility of emphasizing the window frames on both buildings.

Mr. Hanke noted that the existing building has “lights” [small windows] on each side of the entry door. This detail might be carried over to the addition. He expressed concern that no other house nearby has vinyl siding. Most of the siding in this neighborhood is wood, except for the existing house at 79 Taylor Street. The current proposal looks like two houses joined together. He suggested attaching the addition more directly to the existing house. He encouraged the applicant to replace the asbestos siding. Board members suggested the use of wooden clapboards or “HardiePlank”, a fiber-cement siding that looks like wood. Vinyl puckers and gets “wavy”.

Mr. Salvon suggested installing shutters, but noted that poorly done shutters will detract from the look of the house. Ms. Winston agreed that installing frames around the windows and corner boards would improve the appearance.

Mr. Hanke showed a photograph of a house on Hallock Street that had recently been restored and expanded as an example of a well-done project. He recommended that if vinyl siding is used, that the trim boards and corner boards should be of Azek or wood. He recommended that trees be planted. The lot is flat and empty, he said. He recommended that the applicant develop a landscaping plan and noted that maintenance of the landscape needs to be kept up.

Ms. Winston noted that the metal railings on the porches are not in keeping with the style of the houses.

Board members recommended that Mr. Tzeng consult an architect to help to make the buildings more compatible with their surroundings.

Mr. Salvon recommended that the applicant study the window pattern and window size of the existing house and make the new house compatible.

Mr. St. Hilaire estimated that it would cost \$20,000 to remove and replace the existing asbestos siding.

Board members recommended that the proposed breezeway should be expanded to become a real porch.

Recommendations

1. Add a porch along the front of the building or at least over the entry doors to break up the flat façade and make the overall structure more compatible with other houses in the neighborhood;
2. Add trim boards, corner boards and a “frieze” or horizontal cross-piece along the gable ends;
3. Replace the asbestos siding on the existing structure so that the siding on both structures will match;
4. Use HardiePlank or wooden clapboards rather than vinyl;
5. Use Azek or wood for trim boards and corner boards;
6. Add more defined window frames and shutters;
7. Make the connection between the two structures more substantial;
8. Develop a landscaping plan for the property, including some large trees;
9. Replace the metal handrails with railings that are more compatible in material and style with the existing structure and the surrounding neighborhood;
10. Study the window pattern of the existing structure and try to emulate it in the new addition;
11. Consult an architect to help make the building more compatible with its surroundings.

Proposed Town Flag – review of revised design concept for a new flag for the Town of Amherst and recommendations to the Select Board

The Board discussed a revised design for the proposed town flag, which now includes a central, circular town seal, a green field on the bottom and a blue field on top, with a central dark line or outline of a mountain range to separate the two fields.

Board members commented as follows:

- The seal is too big in the revised design;
- The flag design should be printed on 11 x 17 paper so that the proportions are more realistic; Mr. Salvon recommended using the traditional proportions of a flag when designing it;
- Ms. Grandonico liked another flag design which included sunbeams;
- Mr. Hanke termed the new design “obvious and underwhelming” and “amateurish”; he thought that the town seal should be redesigned before it is used on the town flag; he suggested having another competition and opening it up to a broader audience, including the colleges; Mr. Hanke noted that the town seal will live on in many manifestations; we need something better than the design that we have.
- Board members suggested that Diana Stein, the Select Board member who has been facilitating the flag design, should talk to the financial sponsor of the flag (the Amherst Rotary Club) and ask for more time to conduct another competition;
- Ms. Winston would like to have more involvement from the schools and the Public Arts Commission in the design of the flag; the competition could be advertised to a list of artists, in the newspapers, on the town website and with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Noble suggested dividing the flag into 4 equal sections and having the seal in the middle, but smaller and off-center; he showed a sketch of his idea.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Cc: Janet Winston, DRB Michael Hanke, DRB You-Pan Tzeng, Applicant
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB Jim Wald, Select Board Liaison Raymond Lee, Applicant
Jonathan Salvon, DRB Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
Derek Noble, DRB Jeff Bagg, Senior Planner