



TOWN HALL
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May 26, 2011

DRB Memorandum #2011-07

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – May 24, 2011

The Tuesday, May 24, 2011, meeting of the Design Review Board began at approximately 6:35 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Salvon who served as chair in Ms. Winston's absence.

Design Review Board members Jonathan Salvon, Derek Noble and Michael Hanke were present. Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, and applicants, as follows:

- Andy Yee and Attorney Jim Heffernan for Johnny's Tavern;
- Thomas Moore and Kaitlin Moran for Vita Nova;
- Duncan Ferguson for Mango Mango;
- E. J. and Bobby Barkett for White Hut;
- Stacey Lennard and Amilcar Shabazz for Youth Action Coalition;
- Paul Hathaway for 178 North Pleasant Street (Chez Albert).

DRB 2011-00020 – The Amherst Restaurant Group, LLC for Johnny's Tavern, 30 Boltwood Walk (former La Piazza space), – Review of new exterior signs, awnings, lighting, seasonal outdoor dining

Recommended approval without conditions

Attorney Jim Heffernan of Bacon & Wilson, and applicant, Andy Yee, presented the application. Mr. Heffernan gave a summary of the proposed changes to the building and the site. He presented renderings and swatches showing the proposed design and materials for the new restaurant which is to occupy the space currently occupied by La Piazza.

Seasonal outdoor dining will be offered on the patio where this activity currently occurs. There will be new lighting along the façade, illuminating the sign. The lights will be gooseneck style. There will be four frosted "etchmark" vinyl medallions or emblems on the front windows and one over the entranceway. In addition to the sign on the front of the building with the words "Bar & Grill", "Johnny's Tavern" and "Dining Room" there will be a sign on the south side of the building near the entrance with the words "Johnny's Tavern". The lettering will be "stud-mounted dimensional aluminum letters in the color of brushed aluminum". The existing gray awning material will be replaced with material in tan and dark brown. The colors of the building will be cream, dark olive and dark beige. The outdoor dining tables will be cedar-topped tables with wrought iron bases. The outdoor chairs will be wicker with bent wood or bamboo frames.

Mr. Yee noted that he has been working in the restaurant business since he was five years old. His family owns and operates the Hu Ke Lau Restaurant in Chicopee, Johnny's Bar and Grill in South Hadley and Johnny's Tap Room on the campus of Mount Holyoke College. He described the new restaurant as a "melting pot" and a "gastro pub". It will be an upscale, moderately-priced restaurant, serving casual cuisine. Eighty percent of the business at the South

Hadley establishment is local residents. The restaurants don't aim for the college crowd. They are celebrating their 48th anniversary and 3 generations of the family have worked in the business.

Mr. Yee explained that the outdoor dining will be essentially the same as what is there now. It will not be expanded. Planters mark the edge of the area now. There are no plans to install a fence. The flow into the patio area will be through the dining room. The new restaurant will not have any lattice work.

Mr. Hanke complemented the applicants on a skillful presentation. It is clear that they are not aiming at the college crowd, he said.

Mr. Yee noted that Peter Niemitz, the designer for this restaurant, designed all of the Legal Seafood restaurants and also Max's Tavern at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. He is an experienced designer who has designed restaurants all over the country.

Board members complemented Mr. Yee on a very nice color palette, noting that the lighting on the sign will help to draw people to the restaurant. The furnishings are pleasant. The whole presentation package is nicely put together.

Mr. Yee noted that he would like to offer soft music outdoors during the holidays (around Christmas time). Ms. Brestrup suggested that he include this request in his presentation to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

DRB 2011-00021 – Vita Nova, 65 North Pleasant Street – Review of two A-frame signs to be used on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Recommended approval with conditions

Thomas Moore and Kaitlin Moran presented the application. Although the application had stated that they were seeking review of two A-frame signs to be placed outside of the Monkey Bar, the applicants changed their plans. They now want to put vinyl lettering on the door of their office at 65 North Pleasant Street, rather than have the A-frame signs. The door to the office is located to the left of the door to the Monkey Bar. The design for the letters on the door will be the same as that planned for the A-frame sign, except that there will be no "Current Series Title". The vinyl letters will be placed on the glass of the door leading to the upstairs office. There is also another business upstairs called "Full Extent Fitness" which will have letters on the door as well. This will limit the size of the sign for the Vita Nova Church. The vinyl sign for Vita Nova will be approximately 12" x 16" in size.

Board members noted that the dark color of the letters probably won't work on the glass door. Nor will the more delicate, moss-like portions of the design. They suggested using lighter vinyl lettering – either white or gold – and eliminating the moss-like appendages on the letters.

Ms. Brestrup noted that the applicants would need a Sign Permit to install the vinyl letters.

Condition

- 1) Consider using white or gold vinyl lettering on the door rather than dark green, to increase visibility.
- 2) Eliminate the moss-like appendages on the letters.

DRB 2011-00022 – Mango Mango, 61 Main Street – Review of installation of new sign over door and new blade sign (awning to be removed)

Recommended approval without conditions

Duncan Ferguson presented the application. The owners of Mango Mango wish to remove the existing awning and install two signs. One sign will go on the frieze above the doorway and one will be a blade sign to be mounted on the corner of the building.

The sign above the doorway will be approximately 16" high x 16' long. It will be made of aluminum and will be painted black with the words "Mango Mango" in white lettering and the logo of two mangos in the center, between the two words. The blade sign will be two-sided, measuring 18" x 24". It will hang from a metal bracket. It will

have a white background, with the two words “Mango Mango” and the logo and the words “Eclectic Lunch and Dinner”.

Mr. Duncan reported that the two signs taken together will cover approximately 8% of the building façade controlled by the tenant. He noted that the owners of Mango Mango plan to remove the paper signs that clutter the window, but they plan to leave the floral design.

Board members commented that the signs had a nice clean look and that the removal of the awning and the papers in the windows will allow people to look inside and see what’s going on in the restaurant. This will tend to attract more customers, since people like to be able to see inside.

DRB 2010-00005, Clearwater Restaurant, (soon to be Chez Albert), 178 North Pleasant Street, –
Review of revised landscaping plan and review of sign to be relocated from Chez Albert currently located at 27 South Pleasant Street (sign previously reviewed under DRB 2005-00007)

Recommended approval without conditions

Paul Hathaway, the owner of Chez Albert, presented the application. He is planning to relocate his restaurant from 27 South Pleasant Street to 178 North Pleasant Street. This location was already approved as a restaurant location for Clearwater Restaurant, in 2010. Mr. Hathaway intends to move the sign at 27 South Pleasant Street to the new location. The Board members reviewed photographs of the existing sign. Mr. Hathaway stated that he may wish to install a logo in between the words “Chez” and “Albert”.

In addition to the installation of the sign, the applicant also presented a revised Landscape Plan, as required by the Site Plan Review for Clearwater Restaurant. The revisions include substituting a mixture of low shrubs for higher shrubs and flowering trees along the south side of the parking lot, behind the building. The reason for the substitution is that the low shrubs will respond better to snow plowing. In addition, the land slopes up on that side of the parking lot, so the land itself provides screening of the parking lot.

Board members commented that the request seemed very straightforward. They did not note any issues with the proposal.

DRB 2011-00023 – E.J. Barkett for White Hut Amherst, 1A Boltwood Walk – Review of relocating door and windows, installing handicapped accessible ramp or lift, installing sign on existing overhang, placing outside tables, painting, replacing handrail on porch, installing blade sign, stairs, exhaust pipe, trash receptacles

Recommended approval with conditions

E. J. and Bobby Barkett presented the application for White Hut. Their family has been in the restaurant business for 75 years. They like the fact that there is so much going on in the Boltwood Walk area and are happy to have found a space there.

Initially they had thought about installing a ramp to provide access to the door, which is 30 inches above grade. However, they have now decided to install a lift. The lift will take up less space than the ramp. It can be located under the existing overhang to protect it from the elements. They showed photographs of the proposed lift and a plan and rendering of the north side of the building, illustrating where the ramp will be located, where the stairs, door and windows will be and how they are planning to treat the façade.

There will be tables placed outside for dining – two regular tables and one handicapped-accessible table. They presented photographs of the tables that they plan to use, with red tops and white and gray frames and seats.

Lincoln Realty owns the other tables that are in the patio area behind Bueno Y Sano.

The applicants would like to install a blade sign in the alley way, to attract patrons from the Main Street sidewalk. The blade sign will be approximately 6 square feet. It was initially proposed to be a white box sign with the White Hut logo. The applicants discussed options for the blade sign with the Board. The applicants will submit plans for the blade sign once it has been designed. They are currently considering alternatives.

The applicants would like to paint the façade white, but the landlords have expressed concern about this proposal. Therefore the applicants have proposed to install HardiePlank siding on the facade and paint it white. The siding can be attached to the brick wall and is removable.

Board members expressed concern about attaching anything to the brick wall. When the fasteners are removed the wall will need to be patched. Board members recommended painting the wall instead. Board members also objected to the addition of another material such as HardiePlank given the fact that the building already has brick and stucco surfaces.

Board members enthusiastically support the design of the main sign, with a red background and white and red block lettering emphasized by neon lights. They heartily approved of the letter style and neon lights, suggesting that the same style be considered for the blade sign.

Conditions

- 1) Consider using the same letter style and design for the blade sign as on the main sign.
- 2) Consider painting the façade white rather than attaching HardiePlank siding to the façade.

DRB 2011-00018 – Stacey Lennard for Youth Action Coalition, Amherst Cinema Building, 28 Amity Street –
Review of plaque (sign) for mural proposed for west side of building

Recommended approval with conditions

Stacey Lennard and Amilcar Shabazz presented the application. They would like to install a plaque next to the mural proposed for the west side of the Amherst Cinema Building, to describe the images on the mural, to give information about the artists and to recognize the sponsors. The mural was reviewed at the May 10th DRB meeting. The plaque will be painted plywood. The applicants consider it to be an extension of the mural. The sketch that was sent to Board members is limited because it was done with markers. The real plaque will be painted in colors that are similar to the colors used in the mural. The final color of the background will be determined once the mural has been finished.

Ms. Brestrup noted that Planning Department staff had expressed concerns as follows:

- The plaque as shown in the sketch and in the composite photograph may be too prominent with respect to size and color in relation to the mural; it may compete with the mural for attention;
- The shape of the plaque as shown may compete with the shape of the mural;
- The location of the plaque on the wall might be better at the lower right hand corner, similar to plaques in museums;
- The background color of the plaque may be better if it were more similar to the color of the wall.

She also noted that John Kuhn, an architect and owner of one of the office condominiums in the building, and Carol Johnson, co-owner of the building with Barry Roberts, had agreed with staff comments. Ms. Winston had also sent an email stating that she agreed with staff's comments.

Mr. Shabazz noted that purple or yellow were under consideration for colors on the plaque and that the colors of the plaque would be reflective of colors in the mural, possibly earth tones. He explained that the large size of the plaque was important, so that the plaque could be read from a distance. He noted that it is difficult to paint small letters with a paint brush.

Mr. Salvon agreed with staff comments with respect to size and suggested that the plaque could be smaller.

There was discussion about placing the plaque at eye level so that it can be more easily read by people standing up.

With respect to placement of the plaque on the wall, Mr. Shabazz noted that there is more space available on the left side than on the right.

Mr. Hanke expressed concern about the placement of the plaque on the wall with respect to the high level of activity in the parking lot. If people are reading the plaque will they be subject to being hit by cars, he wondered? Maybe the plaque should be placed somewhere less hazardous.

Mr. Salvon noted that people in a museum will appreciate artwork from further away, but will come close to read the information card or plaque on the wall. Therefore the plaque doesn't need to be large enough to be read from a distance.

Mr. Noble commented that the plaque is also a legend for the mural. It needs to be large enough to act as a legend. It is an extension of the piece of artwork. Therefore it should be placed so as to appear to be part of the work of art. He suggested tucking it in near to the mural and making it graphically smaller. He also suggested that the lettering be done with markers rather than paint brushes, so that the lettering can be more easily done and so that it can be smaller. The surface of the plaque can then be finished with a protective layer.

Conditions

- 1) Consider making the plaque smaller;
- 2) Incorporate the plaque into the artwork; make the plaque less a separate piece, less of a sign and more part of the artwork.
- 3) The Board expressed no preference as to which side of the mural the plaque should be located.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.

Cc: Janet Winston, DRB
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB
Jonathan Salvon, DRB
Derek Noble, DRB
Michael Hanke, DRB
Jim Wald, Select Board Liaison
Jeff Bagg, Senior Planner
Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
Jim Heffernan, Applicant's Attorney
Nate Cartel, Applicant
Duncan Ferguson, Applicant
E.J. Barkett, Applicant
Stacey Lennard, Applicant
Paul Hathaway, Applicant
Barry Roberts, Applicant