

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission Wednesday, January 16, 2019

Commission Members Present: William Krauss (Acting Chair), Sandy Dolan, Stuart Baron, Peter Jennings

Staff Present: Rose Tassone-DiNardo, Law; Pat Maley and John Kurth, Planning

Administrative Business

Reading of procedures

Acceptance of Minutes - Motion to accept was made by Peter Jennings, seconded by Stuart Baron and approved unanimously

New Business

Permit Referral DR-1597: 713 (formerly 711-713-715) North Market Street. Request for newly combined parcels to be renovated for first floor retail, and upstairs use as multiple apartments. Changes also occurring on the Shipley Street facades. Market Street City Historic District. Resolution 32-18.

Paul Guggenberger, AIA and Rob Snowberger of Buccini Pollen Group made the presentation using Planning's power point slides. They have re-subdivided three buildings into a single parcel to allow them to change the internal configuration of the buildings to allow 13 apartments to be constructed above the first-floor retail.

The store fronts of 713 and 715 will be rebuilt as retail fronts.

The upper levels of the front of 711 will be repaired and repainted.

715 Market's upper floors – 2 applications have been submitted to the National Park Service for evaluation for the Investment Tax Credit program because of the 1931 renovation to the building which had installed glass block in the upper floors, which subsequently had been covered by concrete panels. This applicant's original drawings based on 1931 renovation described above; however, earlier images were discovered which showed bay windows, which the applicant has stated they prefer, but their final decision will be based on what NPS will allow to qualify for the Tax Credit program.

William Krauss noted that the Federal government shutdown has certainly hindered a decision on the applicant's request for choice of allowable design from NPS.

Mr. Krauss stated that he likes the 1915 design and thinks it is ambitious project which will be a marked improvement to the block.

Sandra Dolan agree about the preference for the 1915 (bay window) version.

There were no public comments.

Commission deliberations agreed on the above preference.

Sandra Dolan called for acceptance as written.

William Krauss read the resolution as written with the condition about masonry test patches. It was seconded by Peter Jennings and approved unanimously.

Permit Referral DR-1603:1712 Lovering Avenue. Renovations to existing gas station; specifically remove and replace underground tank system, install a canopy over gas dispensers and install a double pole ID/price sign to meet franchise branding requirements. Forty Acres Neighborhood Conservation District. Resolution 01-19.

Stephen Kessler ESQ– representing applicant made the presentation, joined by members of development team Matt Galasso and Mike Scheider.

The proposal is to renovate the existing station, strip paint from old brick, use brick on unbricked places. Install new tanks and pumps, new canopy, new signs, some landscaping.

Planning presented the case PowerPoint and the Commission deliberated.

Mr. Krauss stated he liked it, and from having lived in the area long ago this proposal is quite an improvement.

Peter Jennings agreed that it will make it look a lot nicer. He asked about lighting and was told there would be down lighting (LEDs) in the canopy, safety security lights above the door and one on the Scott Street side. They do not want light spill.

Peter Jennings questioned regarding landscaping. This led to a discussion with mention of the re-landscaping the existing wall on east side of the property. On the Scott Street side near the white tank there will be some landscaping at the back wall. Concrete will be fixed.

They will try to retain the tree on Scott Street, but that is dependent on what must be disturbed by the removal of the existing underground tank.

Peter Jennings noted that he approved their idea if they were what was expressed on the submitted drawings.

Community Comment

Sean Goodrick –Highlands Assoc rep expressed comments of support from his residents, calling the project a welcome improvement. Her asked if there had been any discussion about potential trees added to Lovering façade of property? The applicant answered that no trees had been planned, just bushes.

Other issues covered -

The new sign is comparable in size (old sign - 55 sq. ft., new - 53.3 sq. ft)

Bud Freel, Council member for the 8th district stated that this property has been a long-time eyesore, with problems in 2011 and 2012. He was pleased when he found that the station was changing hands and is happy for the upgrading investment. His only disappointment is that the community had not able to meet with the developer before tonight's meeting.

He verbalized a list of items of concern to the community-

Remove white rusted tank – yes

Place to remove pay phone – yes

Replace all broken side – yes

No posted adverts on windows or posts, etc – yes

Not install roll down sec gate –yes

Siding on gables end- yes

Sign is shorter and coverage less – yes

Lighting of sign – lit all night? Can be turned off when store closes

Conceptual of sign – same place? Yes

Air pump moved to remain where is

Landscaping along wall (Coogan) and back

Landscaping will stay the same

Replant areas - mulch, etc

At the end of his questions, Mr. Freel noted that they were pleased to see this moving forward and asked for clarification on the timeline?

Applicant state that they were waiting on DNREC approvals, and the construction period should be about 3 months once started and if there is not exorbitant contamination.

Mr. Freel requested that he and the community be kept in the loop of information regarding the progress, and that he was in support of the project.

Mr. Krauss called the exchange very productive.

Dennison Hatch, President of the Highlands Community Association echoed Bud Freel's comments and added that he appreciated that change. He further noted that he would like the applicant to understand the importance of the landscaping along Lovering Avenue, saying that the Highlands is an upscale community, and Lovering is a busy thoroughfare and that it would be beneficial for all parties to put nice landscaping. He did note that the previous female owner maintained it nicely.

Matt Glasso calls up LA plan, which led to an exchange from Peter Jennings that he was told that the landscaping would be what was on drawings. Discussion ensued that noted the plan did not specifically denote Landscaping on Lovering Avenue, but they could do like what is proposed on the current drawing – using Holly bushes, 4 along Lovering and mulch that out.

Dennison Hatch asked that they make that Landscaped strip as long as possible, which led to a discussion of 40' x 20' landscaped plot // Whole side to be reconstructed // along Lovering, or possibly parallel to Lovering. Again, it was verbalized that this would be mutually beneficial and appreciated by the community.

There were no further additional community comments.

Peter Jennings noted that they will need to add a caveat regarding what is not on drawing now.

Mr. Krauss asked him to author that caveat and read the resolution. This resulted in a resolution with this caveat:

1. Add 4-6 more of the holly specified in the rest of plan on the property edge along Lovering Avenue.

Peter Jennings read the resolution with addition of the one caveat, it was seconded by Sandra Dolan and unanimously approved.

Permit Referral DR-1604: 805 North Shipley Street, 803 North Shipley Street. Proposed demolition of Shipley Street half of the 805 building, and creation of multiple window openings in the north wall of the 803 building for retail use and entrance into new courtyard. Referral under the demolition provisions of 48-36(D). Resolution 02-19.

The BPG Team presentation was made by Rob Snowberger, Rob Herrera (architect) and Sarah Lamb.

It was explained that the project was never meant to be a demolition; however, after they started demolition of 807 Shipley, they created a party wall that became exposed and structurally unsound. This outcome was not the only thing that made project

unfeasible – contractor who had the solo bid for the project tanked on another job for BPG, coming in \$300K over budget and 6 months late, and despite the overrun in time and cost the final project did not meet National Park Service requirements to enable them to claim the Investment Tax Credit for the project.

Because of this poor performance on the other project BPG chose to jettison the contractor because the Shipley Street project had become financially unfeasible.

Their new plan is a compromise, to leave as much as possible - keep 803 Shipley and repair what is there. The proposed consideration for the party wall – this is a different building with different (sturdy) architecture (CMU).

They are no longer seeking tax credits because the project is too small. They are only requesting the Shipley street side for demolition – 804 Orange side will remain, and brick will be repointed, and in-kind windows used.

Their bottom line is that financial and structural concerns compel the demolition.

Planning's Power point slides were shown.

Commission discussion

Mr. Krauss – in the case analysis, there are 2 elements noted as required in City Code section §48-36 D 5-b.

Recordation (requires a meeting with staff).

When he said that the Commission may wish to see any renderings, Mr. Snowberger noted that BPG had already lost \$70K because of the set back.

Sandra Dolan stated that, based on previous submissions, she is comfortable with what they have submitted to Planning and the Commission.

Mr. Krause stated he also was comfortable with what was turned in.

Stuart Baron noted that he did not think that BPG will do something horrendous to their own block, and Peter Jennings agreed with that logic.

Mr. Krauss had two comments on the renderings – regarding the concrete block walls and then a fence illustration on Shipley Street side – will they really be block walls?

Mr. Snowberger stated that they originally put those on the drawings because of parts of code (generator and transformer) but they have since learned that they can do more attractive.

Mr. Krauss asked, “so this is to be determined?” and was answered that the detail had not been determined “at this time.”

Mr. Snowberger further noted that fencing is shown on early rendering to get a liquor license – they are proposing a bar, and the area must be enclosed to get a liquor license.

He continued that they want to submit for building permit at least the back with the renderings they have provided- aluminum clad windows, garage door on back, repointing. He asked regarding landscaping whether it is in DRPC purview.

This led to a discussion about the concrete block wall, also a concrete block wall on Orange Street side, what is coming down? Will it have a brick wall, which will need serious footers, what about the party wall.

Mr. Snowberger noted that “CMU is not our choice,” and that they will carry steel post and wood slat between generators.

Mr. Krauss suggests that they add a caveat:

Applicant will submit to Planning the specifications for fencing and the “walls” of steel and wood for Planning’s consideration.

No other additions or deletions to the prepared resolutions were called for.

Mr. Krauss crafted the caveat:

CAVEAT

2nd Applicant is to submit specifications and renderings of fence design to include design with height and length and material and wall design to include height and length and material.

No public was in the room to comment.

Mr. Krauss read DR-1604; Resolution 02-19 with the above caveat. It was seconded by Sandra Dolan and approved unanimously.

Move to adjourn was made by Peter Jennings, seconded by Stuart Baron and approved unanimously.