

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 ZOOM Meeting

Commission members Present: Peter vonGlahn, Edie Menser, Sandy Dolan, Stuart Baron

Staff Present: Pat Maley, John Kurth, Herb Inden, Planning

Administrative Business:

Meeting began with Commission Chair vonGlahn reading the rules of DRPC procedure, and how the group would navigate through the Zoom meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting were deferred until later.

Old Business

Permit Referral DR-1584: 200 block of King / Market Street demolition and new construction. Request from BPG Real Estate Services to extensively change the King Street elevation design previously approved by DRPC. Lower Market Street City Historic District. Resolution 05-20.

The presentation was made by Sarah Lamb of Buccini Pollen Group who discussed the requested change in the design of the King Street façade for the new Cooper Building. Briefly, they proposed to reduce the number of ground floor arches, move to larger window openings, vary the elevation of the roof line at mid building, and place the building's name "The Cooper" at the southern end of the new roof line.

The PowerPoint annotated slides were narrated by Pat Maley. They illustrated the reduction in the number of bays (18 approved in the 2019 design, now reduced to 10 window bays in the 2020 design), the 2019 arches became rectangles in the 2020 design, and one arch remained to announce the main King Street entry. The signage was new to the design, as was the rooftop garden.

Peter vonGlahn noted that he was disappointed that the Commission had not been involved in the 2020 redesign, especially since they were so heavily involved in the 2019 design efforts.

Sarah Lamb said she thought the new design was better, less busy with fewer windows. She noted that the Cooper signage balances well with the lone arch on the northern end of the King Street façade.

Sandra Dolan stated that she liked the new signage, and the transitional harmonious nature of the new (2020) construction with the 233 King St. adjacent building.

Edie Menser stated that she liked the larger windows.

Peter vonGlahn called the current presentation a "Sticky wicket" because the demolition permit was issued predicated upon the approval of the original 2019 design. It was also noted that the Law Department might need to weigh in.

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission

May 20, 2020 Zoom meeting

p.2

Sara Lamb responded that the initial approval was based upon “Massing” and not specific elements. Mike Hare took issue about the presumption that the impetus for the design change was “value engineering” not cost-based.

Sarah Lamb noted that the constructability with all the arches in the original design blew up the budget.

The representatives from design firm DIGSAU joined the discussion, agreeing with the design diagonal between the signage and the entry arch – he noted the train station traffic - and larger windows related better in that perspective.

Regarding the utility door, Peter vonGlahn stated that a non-black tone might be a better choice than what was shown on the drawings. The Digsau representative said that a metal decorative screen will hide the loading dock door.

Peter vonGlahn summarized that the sense is that the new design can be approved as submitted, but precedence needs to be vetted with the Law Department. Mike Hare took issue with the predicate for demo permit.

Peter vonGlahn explained that in a broader sense that the approved design for a revision or upgraded design needed something to prevent “rubber stamp” syndrome AKA, “if BPG did it, why can’t we?”

Mike Hare responded that if the Commission didn’t like the design, they wouldn’t approve it.

Peter vonGlahn clarified that “this started with a rejected design and the improved design is ok.”

Sarah Lamb noted that previous projects have been revised for both BPG and other applicants, so it is not precedent setting.

Peter vonGlahn crafted a caveat for the prepared resolution as follows:

The new 2020 design retains massing and scale and materials of the previous 2019 design.

Peter vonGlahn then read (moved) the prepared resolution with the caveat, it was seconded by Sandra Dolan and unanimously approved.

New Business

Permit Referral DR-1642: 1022 Delaware Avenue. Request from the Willis Group to remodel existing convenience store (Dash In); exterior signage and awning. Cool Spring Tilton Park City Historic District. Resolution 06-20.

Presentation was made by Jason Bett of the Willis Group who was proposing minimal exterior renovations, specifically to remove the red “eyebrow” on the façade, infill the areas of attachment with matching brick, insert a new storefront system; power wash the split face brick, build a new fence around the dumpsters, add new awnings on the front façade and new wall pack lighting and new signage using the new corporate logo type face.

Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission

May 20, 2020 Zoom meeting

p.3

After seeing the PowerPoint presentation, Peter vonGlahn noted that the major change is the Van Buren (side) Street signage, and the rest of the changes are minor.

Sandra Dolan called the project an improvement.

Stuart Baron stated it was good design and the changes were improvements.

Peter vonGlahn moved Resolution 06-20 with no changes, it was seconded by Edie Menser and approved unanimously.

Permit Referral DR-1643: Brandywine Zoo, 1001 North Park Drive. Request from the State of Delaware, DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation to demolish two small buildings and construct a new facility to be used to quarantine sick zoo animals. Referred under the demolition provisions of § 48-36 (D). Resolution 07-20.

Presentation was made by Kevin Rycklicki of DNREC.

The Brandywine Zoo is 115 years old. It has been an accredited zoo since 1986 which is the “Gold Standard” with only 286 out of 3000 zoos in America.

The zoo is requesting the demolition of two small storage buildings along Park Drive to make way for a building which will serve as a medical facility for the animals in the zoo. The materials chosen and the massing and scale will harmonize with the existing zoo buildings and blend into the vegetative background. The building will be mostly one story, and the materials will be stone, stucco and cedar siding with discrete lighting over the entrances. It will be sited by Park Drive to keep the sick animals distanced from the zoo’s general population.

Peter vonGlahn noted that regarding the demolition permit, the proposed structures for demolition are basically temporary storage sheds, one on slab, one on concrete blocks. He expressed pleasure at the proposed design.

Sandra Dolan called it a well-done application and a welcome change.

Stuart Baron said he did not think anyone will miss the sheds and the horizontally stuccoed design was very nice.

Peter vonGlahn moved Resolution 07-20, it was seconded by Stuart Baron and approved unanimously.

In the absence of other business, Stuart Baron moved for adjournment; it was seconded by Edie Menser and approved unanimously.