



COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
Department of Community Development
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ARB MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 18, 2019

Time: 1:00 PM

Meeting Room: Lane Auditorium

Members:

Frank Stoner: Present
Frank Hancock: Present
Bruce Wardell: Absent
Stan Binsted, Chair: Present
Dade Van Der Werf, Vice-Chair: Present

Staff:

Margaret Maliszewski
Stephanie Banton
Marsha Cutright
Marsha Alley

Applicant Speakers:

Scott Collins
Jack Degane
Bob Hay

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Binsted called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

DISCLOSURES

Mr. Binsted invited disclosures. Hearing none, the meeting moved to the next item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Binsted invited public comment. Hearing none, the meeting moved to the next item.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

a. ARB-2019-9: Brookhill, Block 8A - Initial Site Plan

Motion: Mr. Stoner moved for approval of the Consent Agenda. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 4:0. (Mr. Wardell was absent from the meeting and vote.)

REGULAR REVIEW ITEMS

There were no regular review items.

WORKSESSION

c. ARB-2018-153: Longhorn Steakhouse

Ms. Maliszewski presented the staff report in place of Heather McMahon, who was absent from the meeting. She stated that:

- The ARB had reviewed the initial site plan in October 2018, with the layout centering building in the portion of the area to be developed.
- The location is adjacent to the Route 29 Entrance Corridor at the northwest corner of the Fashion Square Mall parcel.
- The applicant provided a rendering and architectural drawings, at the recommendation of staff, to get ARB comments early in the process. The staff report focused on the architectural style's appropriateness for the region.
- Staff had recommended changes to the proposal at a preapplication meeting in July 2018 to make the design more consistent with EC guidelines, but it did not appear that the design was adjusted to address those comments. The architectural comments made in the staff report related to the trademark quality of the design and lack of reference to local historic architecture.
- Staff expressed additional concerns related to siting, and at the meeting the ARB recommended approval of the initial site plan to the site review committee, with a number of recommendations to be addressed for final site plan submittal:
 - o Revise the architecture to reference building traditions and context of Albemarle County; further study the front elevation; replace the orange stucco with stone; resolve the top of the wall and the piers to reference traditional building.
- The initial site plan was reviewed by outside reviewers. The Site Review Committee recommended that the applicants provide a pedestrian connection from Route 29 east into the site along the entrance drive to Fashion Square Mall and to connect the proposed restaurant to the street via the sidewalk, which would require the applicants to seek a special exception.

- The applicant submitted a second initial site plan, scheduled to be reviewed in January 2019 but the application was deemed incomplete and the applicants chose to defer indefinitely.
- Staff did a cursory review of the revised submission and expressed concerns from Planning and ARB staff regarding the pedestrian connection location as shown, because it was straight off of Route 29 up a steep slope, requiring ramps and stairs that wouldn't be appropriate for the EC.
- A second ARB initial site plan review was deferred since December, and the applicants called for this work session to speak about the building design and seek guidance on reconfiguration of the pedestrian connection now proposed at the northernmost part of the site.
- The applicants supplied a site plan, a landscape plan, and four architectural renderings for this work session. The building has been moved to the NW corner of the parking area.
- The pedestrian connection would end up at a point at the retaining wall.
- Staff has not had sufficient time to review the landscape plan included, and has only done a cursory review of the architecture; the entrance and the revised submission have been moved from the left to the right; the crumbling stone has been removed; the stone veneer has replaced the stone veneer on the arched parapet element.

Staff read the ARB's comments from the last review:

- Revise the architecture to reference the building traditions and context of Albemarle County.
- Further study the front elevation.
- Replace the orange stucco with stone.
- Resolve the top of the wall and piers to reference traditional building elements.

The applicant's representative, Scott Collins, provided answers to questions from the ARB:

- The applicant has made concessions and deviations from its typical approach to comply with Albemarle County's architectural preferences. By moving the building up to the northern part of the property, it created the potential for a pedestrian connection that could continue a corridor that would tie the building into Route 29 and Fashion Square, with ADA accessibility.
- The building has three horizontal bands with towered vertical elements, with the façade similar to the Gander Mountain building, along with awnings. The architectural banding was similar to BJ's Brewery at Stonefield.
- The proposed landscaping would follow what BJ's had done, taking the requirements for the sites and clustering the landscaping that seals out the parking elements but still leaves a few open corridors for passersby to view the front of the buildings. There are limitations as to the amount of screening that can be done with trees where the existing mall sign is.

The ARB had comments and questions answered by staff and the applicant:

- A pedestrian connection was required for this building to Route 29, per the site review committee.
- For the location identified, it made sense in terms of grading and access, and the separation between the building pad and road grew as the site went south.
- The applicant meets parking minimums at the top of the site, and the extra would be left over for the mall and was denoted on the site plan that way. Some of the parking was being removed with the new building, which introduced the need for more parking in that area -- but some of the mall stores leaving could offer space. The northern parking was screened by the building in the earlier location, but the building still had parking on all sides.
- The east side of the building had deliveries and waste disposal.
- The site plan was much improved from the previous version, particularly the location of the building on the street and consistency along Route 29 with the Vitamin Shoppe building. The pedestrian connection is more practical.
- The intent of the design guidelines was to provide street trees fairly uniformly -- 35 feet on center, along the frontage. There may be a species selection that would help increase visibility, with BJ's using some smaller understory trees and a few in front that have some shrubbery -- but not larger street trees as there were with Gander. Most of the view is along the edge of the lower parking, with limited time after the grade-separated interchange to view the site.
- The overhead power/utilities were prohibitive on this site, so compromises may have been made to accommodate them.
- The buildings immediately to the north, with a palette of brick and white trim, clearly fit into a local palette along the corridor, and perhaps brick could be used on this building to tie it more into those traditions. The shops at Rio with simpler façades were generally more successful, and removing the fake piers helps with the design. The aesthetic is improved with fewer materials.
- Longhorn Steakhouse can use stucco/stone or brick/stucco; stone/brick are not mixed. It would be cleaner to use fewer materials with a simpler design that still retained the theme. The high, rounded roof element was a parapet and did not translate to the south elevation.
- When the mall was redeveloped, there could be a network of interior streets that were more important than the Route 29 frontage, and when buildings were set to front 29, the rear was facing what could be a more important pedestrian and/or vehicular corridor.
- ARB members inquired as to a precedent for freestanding signage, but staff did not know if there was one available for this site. The applicant agreed that it would help to have a monument sign as close to the street as allowable.

d. Guidelines update

- Staff led the ARB in a discussion about historically significant buildings as precedents for appropriate color, material, and treatment of blank walls in the ECs, noting why some were appropriate examples, and why others were not.
- Staff stated that it was challenging finding local historic precedents for appropriate treatment of blankness, and the examples found in Washington, D.C. were of a huge scale. Some of the buildings at Stonefield were used as examples, such as the Regal Cinema, Target, CVS, Toys-R-Us, Holiday Inn, and others.
- There were other ways to relieve blankness besides windows. The richness of materials can also help carry blankness.
- Murals used needed review to avoid looking like the graffiti wall at 5th Street Station; a mural would only be considered a sign if it contained images of products for sale.
- There needed to be different standards for different areas, and there were currently 15 districts in the county, all with different character. There are also cost considerations.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. SDP-2019-02: UVA Tennis

Staff stated that the UVA tennis facility came to the ARB in summer of 2018, and the consensus was that staff-level review of the site and architecture was acceptable, based primarily on the distance from the road, but the ARB requested an update on the lighting issues. The applicant was not ready to move forward with the architecture for the tennis building, but was asking for final site plan review now, and staff review of the architecture for the building later. After considering the proposal, it was the consensus of the ARB that it was acceptable to delay approval of the architectural design of the tennis building until after site plan approval.

b. Stonefield Townhouses

Staff reported that the blocks as presented (highlighted in yellow) were the ones the applicant wanted to build next, but they wanted to make design changes -- particularly a reduction in the amount of brick and reduced detailing compared to what was previously approved for the site. After considering the proposed revisions, it was the consensus of the ARB that the revised townhouse design was too different from the approved and constructed design to achieve a consistent appearance along the corridor. The board indicated that the design should remain as originally approved, or it should be modified in a way that maintains a compatible, consistent appearance along the EC.

Next ARB Meeting: Monday, April 1, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m. to the next ARB meeting on Monday, April 1, 2019 in Room 241, Second Floor, County Office Building at 1:00 p.m.