

**DERRY TOWNSHIP DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015**

The Monday, September 28, 2015 meeting of the Derry Township Design Advisory Board was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Vice Chairwoman Joyce St. John in the Meeting Room of the Derry Township Municipal Complex, 600 Clearwater Road, Hershey, PA.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Joyce St. John, Vice Chairwoman; Pam Moore; Brian O'Day; Ted Herman; Jennifer Harnden

Members Absent: Sandy Ballard, Secretary

Also Present: Brandon Williams, Assistant Director of Community Development; Chuck Emerick, Director of Community Development; Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary

Public registering attendance: Matt Luttrell, THYNK Design; Charles Huth, *The Sun*; Jim Snyder, Brandon Harner – Snyder, Secary & Associates; Bill Hoy, Shaner Hotels; Jess Demopoulos, The Chocolate Avenue Grill; Justin Engle; Jim Kwon, Chafia; Plako Ghinos, Shaner Hotels

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Member Herman, seconded by Member Moore, and a unanimous vote, the minutes of the August 31, 2015 meeting were approved as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Consideration of the replacement of a walk-in cooler/freezer on the property located at 114 West Chocolate Avenue (Tim and Jessica Demopoulos; DAB #366)

Brandon Williams explained that the applicants will be replacing the existing cooler/freezer with a larger one in the same location along the side of the building.

Vice Chairwoman St. John asked where the new door will be located. Jessica Demopoulos responded that it will be at the rear of the unit.

Motion

Member O'Day made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Member Moore and passed by a unanimous vote.

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b. Consideration of alterations to the building located at 150 West Chocolate Avenue (Justin Engle; DAB #367)

Brandon Williams stated that the applicant is proposing to replace the awnings, and construct a handicapped-accessible ramp on the west side of the building. They are also proposing accent lighting on the sides of the building.

Vice Chairwoman St. John asked if any new signage is proposed. Matt Luttrell, THYNK Design, answered yes, but it will be submitted at a later date.

Member Herman asked Mr. Luttrell to review the proposed changes, such as which awnings will be anodized aluminum, what color the aluminum will be, and the color of the railing for the ramp. Mr. Luttrell responded that the modifications are occurring primarily on south, west, and north elevations. On the north elevation, they are proposing to widen the windows on either side of the two existing doors to allow more visual access from the street into the café area. On the west elevation, they are proposing to widen two of the windows on the first floor and add the new ramp. The existing blue canopies will be replaced with black canopies on the upper level. The line established by the porch on the north elevation will be carried to the west elevation with the aluminum awnings. The hand rails on the ramp will be wood. The south elevation will no longer be an entrance point but a conference room that can be accessed and used by patrons of the café as well as others in the building.

Member Harnden asked what the reasoning was for the change from aluminum to wood on the ramp railing. Mr. Luttrell replied that it presents a better visual accent. Chris Brown, Derck & Edson, asked if the proposed ramp will be similar to the wood and metal ramp configuration at Desserts, Etc. Mr. Luttrell answered yes.

Member O'Day asked if there will be a change in the hardscaping. Mr. Luttrell stated that the only additional hard area will be the ramp on the west elevation, and there is already sidewalk in that location. The landscaping is not proposed to be altered at this time.

Member Herman asked if any consideration was given to matching the color of the aluminum awnings to the proposed black awnings on the upper floor, instead of using a neutral color. Mr. Luttrell stated that the first floor awnings are depicted as an anodized aluminum (a light grey color) to better match the existing colors on the north and south elevations, but there have been discussions as to whether the awnings should be black instead. It was decided that although black is more contemporary and will match the second story awnings, it will not work with the pedestrian scale that they are trying to establish. Vice Chairwoman St. John stated

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that she likes the light color because it matches the white frames of the windows.

Mr. Brown asked if the sconces will be in the same alum color. Mr. Luttrell answered yes. They will be dark sky fixtures as opposed to low voltage, and will be 100% cutoff. Mr. Brown commented that the lighter aluminum awnings on the first story provide a nice balance with the black awnings on the second story.

Mr. Williams stated the Design Advisory Board guidelines recommend that bare concrete not be exposed. He asked what kinds of finishes were considered for the side walls of the proposed ramp. Mr. Luttrell stated that they have not completely decided on a final material, but one of the options is brick to match the building. Mr. Brown thought that brick might be too permanent of a solution. A simple stain might be a better, plus there is landscaping in the side yard that will block most of the ramp. Vice Chairwoman St. John agreed and thought that something more muted to match the gray stonework below the ramp would be better. Mr. Luttrell commented that a stain would be maintainable, visually pleasing, and the most appropriate solution.

Member Moore asked if the area in the back will be enclosed. Mr. Luttrell responded that it will not.

Member Harnden questioned if consideration had been given to lowering the sill of the southernmost window on the west elevation to match the other windows. Mr. Luttrell stated that they matched the existing opening. The window will be in the proposed conference room, and most of the alterations were focused on the café. Mr. Brown commented that if the sill on the southernmost window were to be lowered to be in line with the other windows, it would end up being below the railing of the ramp, which could be an awkward interface.

Motion

Member Herman made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the proposal as presented, with the condition that some type of stain or material be used to cover the exposed concrete on the side walls of the ramp proposed on the west side of the building. The motion was seconded by Member Harnden and passed by a unanimous vote.

c. Consideration of the construction of a 120-room hotel, a 40,000-square-foot medical office building, and a 3-level parking garage on the properties located at 515, 555, and 565 East Chocolate Avenue (Chafia Capital Partners, LLC; DAB #368)

Bill Hoy, a registered architect with the Shaner Corporation, explained that the hotel is proposed to be a 'Courtyard by Marriott'. Regarding the hotel elevations, they are trying to incorporate the stone and other elements of the downtown Hershey area for

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the lower level; the second and third floors are proposed to have an oversized, colonial-looking brick that will be an earth-tone red; and the upper areas are proposed to use a frame system with a synthetic stucco material. The applicant is proposing stone banding on first floor and on the under level of the fourth floor windows. Most of the rear elevation of the building will be synthetic stucco because of the large trees that screen the rear of the property. The louvers will be painted to match the brick. There will be a modern porte cochere that will include a lot of elements one might find in the historic Hershey area. The building will have quoining on the corners, keystones on top of the windows, and sandstone across the lower level. Mr. Hoy went on to explain the floorplan of the hotel.

Vice Chairwoman St. John asked if the signage proposed for the hotel meets Zoning Ordinance regulations. Brandon Williams responded that many of the signs do not comply, and he thinks the applicant should remove this aspect from consideration and resubmit at a later date. Mr. Hoy estimated that they will return to the Design Advisory Board early in 2016 for signage approvals for all 3 proposed buildings.

Member Herman asked if exterior lighting is included this submission. Mr. Hoy answered yes. Jim Snyder of Snyder, Secary & Associates, stated that since this is a land development plan for the entire property, including 2 other buildings, the applicant would like the Board's focus to be on the hotel and not so much on the other 2 buildings, since they have not been finalized architecturally.

Vice Chairwoman St. John asked if there will be consistency in materials across the 3 structures, or if they will be independent of each other. Mr. Snyder responded that they would like the theme of the hotel to continue across the entire property. He added that when the Zoning Hearing Board granted relief for the project, one of the conditions was that the applicant provide a 3' structural element to shield the headlights of vehicles from East Chocolate Avenue. Member Harnden noted that most of the structural element proposed is only 8"-12" off of the ground. Mr. Snyder stated that they planned to incorporate landscaping into the structure instead of it being a solid buffer because they interpreted the condition as 'screening', not 'blocking' the headlights. Vice Chairwoman St. John asked if the landscaping proposal for the screening structure will be submitted to the Board for review. Mr. Snyder answered yes, but at this point they have not decided on the materials. He asked if screening is acceptable, or if the Design Advisory Board is looking for something that completely blocks the headlights. Vice Chairwoman St. John responded that this Board would prefer some form of landscaping to visually enhance the structural element that will be used to block the headlights.

Chris Brown noted that a lot of stone and lighter materials are proposed on the ground floor of the hotel. Since the Zoning Hearing Board's condition regarding the wall (the structural element) does not specify what material it has to be made of, he

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would advise against landscaping for the wall because it will create a long-term maintenance problem. The material used for this screening wall should complement the hotel, but should also be consistent across the entirety of the property.

Member Harnden stated that she preferred the screening wall to be the color palette of the sandstone shown on the base of the hotel instead of the brick that is shown in the rendering.

Member Moore asked if the Zoning Hearing Board listed any specific requirements for the screening wall. Mr. Williams responded the condition states that the structural buffer is required within the 1' setback that is proposed from East Chocolate Avenue and it is to be a minimum height of 3' for the purpose of screening vehicle headlights from shining onto East Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Snyder clarified that the wall along frontage of entire property (whether it is the screening wall in front of the hotel or the retaining wall in front of the medical building) will be consistent in appearance, even though it was not presented that way on the renderings.

Vice Chairwoman St. John questioned if the Zoning Hearing Board would consider the fence and brick proposed in front of the hotel to be adequate screening for the headlights. Mr. Brown did not think so.

Member Herman verified that the wall would not extend further east than the medical office building, because that is not how it is currently presented. Mr. Snyder acknowledged this discrepancy and stated that it occurred because there were two architects working on the project. He is proposing taking the Board's guidance and comments and returning with different options for the screening/retaining wall at a later date, along with specifics on the sign package. At the moment, the applicant is primarily concerned with receiving approval for the design of the hotel.

Member Herman commented that the Board is being asked to consider aspects of the project that are not represented on paper.

Vice Chairwoman St. John suggested that the screening/retaining wall could match the appearance of the limestone wall along the frontage of the property of 19 East Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Brown agreed with her suggestion.

Mr. Hoy asked the Board to provide direction on the hotel renderings to make sure the applicant is on the right track, and then they can begin to refine the working drawings based on what the Board wants to see. They would be able to present the

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detailed rendering of the hotel at a future meeting, along with the specifics on the screening/retaining wall and the sign package.

Member Herman asked what the applicant's inspiration was when designing the hotel to have stone on lower level, and if they discussed whether limestone or sandstone should be used. Mr. Hoy stated that they looked at the stone in the original corporate headquarters and the downtown architecture and tried to incorporate those elements into the hotel rendering. They have not decided on an exact stone material for the lower level of the hotel. That material could be presented at a future meeting.

Member Herman asked if Township staff has any concerns with the design as presented, in terms of the building footprint. Mr. Williams responded no, the footprint is depicted the same in these renderings as it is in the land development plan.

Mr. Hoy explained that the reason why they handed out Option 2 of the hotel rendering during the meeting is because they are considering eliminating the PTAC units shown in Option 1, and doing that will require different mechanical equipment on the roof of the building that would have to be screened with a penthouse. Member Harnden noted that there is less brick and more stone on the lower level in Option 2, and she thinks that ties in better with the existing limestone features in the downtown area. Mr. Hoy stated that the applicant's preference is for Option 2.

Member Herman asked if the hotel can operate without the parking structure and additional surface parking on the medical office building site, since the Board is only focusing on the design of the hotel at this meeting. Mr. Snyder responded that it would need more surface parking. Chuck Emerick stated that the land development plan is being processed for all three proposed buildings, so the land development plan could be approved but the Certificate of Occupancy could not be issued for the hotel until all of the necessary parking is present.

Motion

Member Herman made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for Option 2 of the hotel design, as presented. The motion was seconded by Member Moore and passed by a unanimous vote.

Chris Brown asked the Board to provide the applicant with some direction regarding wall materials and lighting standard colors for the hotel. He suggested that the light poles which are not proposed to be decorative should be a darker color, such as a dark bronze or black so that they recede into the landscape and are not as visible at night. If decorative lighting is proposed along the frontage of the property, he would suggest something different to match the rest of the downtown. Mr. Hoy stated that

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the light poles will not be decorative.

Member Herman noted that the Board expects to see options for the screening wall, signage, building lighting, and overall site landscaping at a future meeting.

Mr. Emerick asked for confirmation that the Board is comfortable with the site layout for the entire project as depicted on the land development plan. The Board agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Vice Chairwoman

Jenelle Stumpf,
Community Development Secretary
(stenographer)