

MINUTES

**HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
February 7, 2022
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
BASEMENT, SUITE 1**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trina Gribble, Chair
Anne Montgomery, Assistant Codes Administrator
April Rucker
Camille Bennett
Kali Tennis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director
Isaac Gaylord, Senior Deputy City Solicitor
Bruce Henry, Deputy Codes Administrator
Stephen Ekema-Agbaw, Senior Deputy City Solicitor

OTHERS PRESENT: See Sign-In Sheet

CALL TO ORDER: 6:03 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Bennett moved, and Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion, to Approve the minutes from the January 3, 2022 meeting without corrections. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote (5-0).

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. 1201 North Front Street, filed by Dimit Architects, to perform various alterations and updates, including: construction of a new pavilion along Front Street, reconstruction of the outdoor seating and construction of a new walking path along 2nd Street, installation of new signage and site lighting, a new storefront entrance, staining the existing brick, and installation of new windows.**

Mr. Knight gave a brief overview of the proposal, noting that it had previously been reviewed at the January 3, 2022 HARB meeting, and that the Board had requested that revisions to the proposal be made and re-reviewed. He noted that while he had not attended the January 3rd meeting, he had reviewed the meeting audio and was familiar with the discussion of the project; based on that discussion, he felt that the revisions proposed by the Applicant adequately addressed the concerns of the Board.

Mr. Knight noted that the requested revisions primarily addressed four aspects of the project: pavilion, pergola, seating area, and accessory aspects around the site such as lighting and signage.

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He referenced updated plan sets for Board member review, and outlined the proposed changes; this included the removal of the pergola from the eastern stairwell entrance; the reinstallation of a seating along the pathway on the eastern side of the site; the use of smaller-scale, eight-foot-high lamp posts along the pathway on the eastern side of the site; the removal of proposed signage that was not in conformance with the Zoning Code; and a redesign of the pavilion to better match the existing architecture of the site.

Mr. Knight stated that base on the previous recommendation of the Planning Bureau and the Board’s discussion at the previous month’s meeting, the proposed revisions maintained a more residential theme of the property that reflected the nature of the site and neighborhood, and featured design elements that better reflected the existing architectural character of the building. He stated that due to these revisions, the Planning Bureau was supportive of the proposed project.

The case was represented by John Tellaisha with Dimit Architects (the project architect), 14414 Detroit Avenue, Suite 306, Lakewood, OH 44107 (aka “the Applicant”). He handed out large-scale plan sets and a summary of the changes incorporated in the revised design for the Board members’ review.

The Applicant noted that they were retaining the planting area with seating along the eastern side of the site; he noted that the existing planter had deteriorating wood, and that they were proposed a low, brick-walled planter that would match a similar element near the main entry of the building. He noted that the lighting along the pathway from North 2nd Street was redesigned from a taller, streetlight-style design to more pedestrian-scaled designs that reflected some of the bollards on-site. The Applicant stated that the new site lighting would be at a 3000K temperature, LED lighting, which was warmer and more amendable to the site. He also confirmed that the pergola around the eastern stairwell entrance would be removed.

The Applicant referenced the proposed lighting for the parking lot on-site, and noted that new lighting would replace the existing light poles, so that there would be no new lighting sites. He noted that the existing poles appeared to be 25-foot-high, wooden poles, and that the new fixtures would be approximately 20-foot-high metal poles and would feature shields to prevent light spillover onto properties to the south. He stated that they would feature the same 3000K temperature, LED lights.

The Applicant noted that the revisions included the removal of the free-standing sign in the northwestern corner of the site, as well as the free-standing sign at the Cumberland Street entry to the parking lot, leaving a single free-standing sign at the North 2nd Street entrance. He noted that this sign would be smaller, lower, and more horizontal than the previous design, and incorporate brick elements to better reflect the architecture of the building. The Applicant stated that the wall signs would feature ten-inch-high lettering over the main entrances to the building, and would reflect the existing wall signage on-site.

The Applicant discussed the changes made to the pavilion; he noted that the project had team had considered a flat-roofed design, but that it created the appearance of a gas station canopy. He noted that the project had team redesigned the supports to feature fewer, brick columns instead of more

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numerous wooden columns, which better matched the existing building and surrounding neighborhood. He also noted that the color palette was revised to better match the existing building.

Mrs. Gribble stated that she felt the revisions addressed the Board's comments in a satisfactory manner. She stated that while the Board had not recommended that the pergola be removed entirely, but rather redesigned; the Applicant stated he agreed that the proposed pergola was a non-compatible element of the design and that he felt the new planter seating area would be a more appropriate and attractive design elements along the eastern side of the property. Mrs. Gribble stated that she appreciated the revised color palette better connected all the elements on-site.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether any of the other Board members had questions or comment regarding the revisions. Ms. Tennis stated that her primary concern was the proposed free-standing sign along North 2nd Street, noting that she felt the scale was too imposing for the site. She asked whether there was an existing sign at that location; the Applicant confirmed that there was, but Ms. Tennis stated that the existing sign didn't impose itself on the site, as the proposed sign did. She asked about the size of the existing sign; the Applicant stated that it was an approximately six-foot-tall, free-standing sign that featured two posts. Mr. Knight noted that the existing sign was obscured by tree branches, and noted that the project renderings indicated that the tree would be removed; he noted that the proposed location and design would make the driveway entrance more visible.

The Applicants confirmed that the intention was to make that signage more conspicuous, while creating a lower-profile sign that reflected the building design. Ms. Tennis stated that she felt the design was still too commercial. She noted that the issues might seem minor, but felt that the redesigned signage did not satisfactorily address her concerns. Ms. Tennis also noted that the proposed wall signage over the building entrances had a different appearance, and thus that there was no cohesive approach to the design of signage on-site. She inquired as to the size of the lettering on the proposed free-standing sign; the Applicant confirmed that the largest letters on that sign would be approximately six inches, which was typical for other signage of this size, although they noted that the ultimate decision was up to the property owner.

Ms. Rucker asked whether the free-standing signage would be illuminated; the Applicant confirmed that there would be two ground lights directly illuminating the signage face, and noted that the current signage was not illuminated. Ms. Tennis noted that the lighting would contribute to the commercial appearance of the signage.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether there were any other questions or comments regarding the signage; there were none from the Board members.

Mrs. Gribble noted that another issue raised during the previous month's review of the project was the proposed pavilion, and noted that the project had been redesigned to better integrated with the architecture of the existing building on-site, by proposed brick columns with a lower-sloped roof. She asked whether there were any questions or comments from the Board members regarding the revised proposal; there were none from the other Board members.

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Mrs. Gribble noted that the proposed revisions discussed at the meeting appeared to address the Board's previous comments and concerns, and asked whether there were any other issues or comments that Board members wanted to address. Ms. Tennis reiterated her objection to the proposed free-standing sign. Mrs. Gribble stated that she felt the height and design of the sign reflected the horizontal banding that would be created on the building by staining some of the brick. She stated that she did not feel as though the proposed signage was too imposing from the street.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether any of the other Board members had questions or comment regarding the free-standing sign. Ms. Montgomery stated that the building code required that signage be large enough to read the address, which the proposed signage did. She stated that she did not have any issues with the signage. There were no other comments.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether the Board wanted to add any additional conditions to their resolution. Ms. Tennis stated that she recognized that since she was the only one concerned with the appearance of the signage, it would be acceptable to support it as proposed.

Mrs. Gribble asked the Planning Bureau staff to clarify all the conditions in the case report; Mr. Knight referenced the conditions and noted that one of the conditions was a prohibition on painting the brick, but stated that he was also aware that there were appropriate materials that could be used which allowed the brick to "breathe" and that so long as those were used, the Bureau would not have issues with that aspect. He read through the rest of the conditions and noted that it seemed they had been addressed during through the revised site plan and through the discussions at the current meeting.

Ms. Montgomery moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to Approve with modified Conditions; the modified conditions were that only Conditions #1 & #6 from the initial case report would be adopted. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

2. 1917 North 2nd Street, filed by Accessibility Solutions 360, to install a vertical platform lift (VPL) along the front elevation of the front porch necessitating: changes to the front yard, including the partial removal of the retaining wall and low, metal fencing along the sidewalk and the installation of a concrete access ramp with block retaining walls to the base of the lift; and modifications to the porch, including replacement of a portion of the baluster and rail system with an electronic safety gate, and installation of a raised turning platform and ramp on the porch deck.

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following condition(s):

1. The proposed turning platform and ramp on the porch will be comprised of the same materials in the same design as the existing porch deck, and be painted to match the existing deck, to minimize its appearance from the street.
2. The Applicant will install low-metal fencing along the CMU retaining walls of the proposed ramp to the lift that matches or is similar to the existing fencing on-site.

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3. The Applicant should remove the entire rail and balustrade system on the western elevation and save this architectural element for re-installation by future homeowners, so they can reconstruct the historic appearance of the building. A new rail and balustrade system will be installed on the western elevation to accommodate the lift and should match the existing historic features in material, size, style, appearance, and texture.
4. The Applicant shall submit a Floodplain Development Permit Application and receive approval from the City's Floodplain Administrator prior to construction.

The case was represented by Jim Heisey with Accessibility Solutions 360 (the contractor), 240 Stony Creek Way, Millerstown, PA 17062 (aka "the Applicant").

Mrs. Gribble asked the Applicant if they had anything to add to the Planning Bureau's case report; he stated that they were intending on using a railing design that matched the portion on the side of the porch, per conversations with Frank Grumbine (the previous Historic Preservation Specialist), and confirmed that they had made efforts to locate a lift on the southern elevation of the building, but that the side yard was about a foot too narrow to accommodate any manufacturer's lift product. Mrs. Gribble asked whether the Applicant accepted the conditions of approval in the case report; he responded that they were acceptable.

Mrs. Gribble referenced the conditions of approval, and inquired as to the language regarding a new ramp wall. Mr. Knight noted that the existing wall along the sidewalk appeared to be parged CMU block, and that he felt the new ramp should have a similar design; he also noted that the condition included the requirement that a low metal fence be installed atop the new walls. The Applicant confirmed that the walls alongside the ramp would be CMU block that would be parged.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether the Applicant would be retaining the railing along the front of the porch that would be removed; he stated that it would not be a problem, and that they were considering doing that in the original proposal to install a ramp on the side of the porch. The Applicant stated that there was room in the basement to store the section of railing to be removed.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether there were any other questions or comments regarding proposal. Ms. Tennis asked if the Applicant was only removing a portion of the front railing, or the full length; the Applicant confirmed that they would be removing and storing the entire length of railing along the front portion of the porch, and then fabricate a new railing and balustrade to match the portion of the railing along the side of the porch, with a space left for the safety gate design.

Ms. Tennis asked how much the Applicant was planning on raising the porch floor; he confirmed that it would remain the same, but that an eight-inch-high platform and ramp would be built from the lift to the door threshold. Ms. Tennis asked whether the ramp and platform would be installed on top of the existing deck floor; the Applicant confirmed that was the case and noted that it would use the same tongue-and-groove flooring painted in the same color. Ms. Tennis asked whether the product documentation submitted with the COA application reflected the proposed materials; the Applicant confirmed that was correct and noted that examples of lift designs submitted with the application also reflected installed projects at other locations in the city. Ms. Tennis asked whether they were located in historic districts and the Applicant confirmed that they were not.

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Mrs. Gribble asked whether there were any other questions or comments regarding the project; there were none from the Board members.

Ms. Rucker moved, and Ms. Tennis seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

- 3. 1627 & 1629 North 3rd Street, filed by Harrisburg Commercial Interiors & Associates, Inc., to construct a four-story, mixed-use building featuring an awning over the primary entrance; the structure will feature a brick masonry façade, floor-to-ceiling, storefront windows along North 3rd Street, a large sign illuminated by sconces, and a substantial metal-and-glass awning over the main entrances.**

Mr. Knight noted that the Applicants for the project were not in attendance. Ms. Montgomery asked whether the Applicants were aware that the location of the meeting had moved to the basement; Mr. Knight noted that all the other applicants had managed to find the meeting room.

Mrs. Gribble stated that the meeting would move ahead to the next application on the agenda and that if the Applicants for the proposal showed up, the project could be reviewed at the end of the meeting.

After the final case had been reviewed, Mrs. Gribble again asked whether the Applicants were in attendance; noting that no additional individuals had come into the meeting, she stated that they would move to Table that application until the following month's meeting. Mr. Gaylord reminded the Board members that they would have to take a formal vote on the case, whether they wanted to Continue the review or Deny the application. He asked Planning Bureau staff whether they had received notice from the Applicant that they would not be in attendance; Mr. Knight stated that he had not received notice but that it was possible the request was sent to Frank Grumbine (the former Historic Preservation Specialist). He noted that the project had received approval of the required zoning relief requests and the Land Development Plan, and that the COA application was the final step in the process, so he presumed that the Applicants would want to continue with the project.

Mrs. Gribble moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to Table the review until the following months' meeting. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

- 4. 216 & 218 Pine Street, filed by Bret Peters with OPA Architecture, to conduct a rehabilitation project addressing the full building envelope: this project will involve repairs and in-kind replacement of elements on the front façade; the removal of the two-story, CMU block addition and metal fire escape on the rear façade; and construction of a new stair tower on the rear façade. The rear of 216 Pine Street will include a partial roof deck with a metal railing and Supradeck flooring. The new stairwell in the northeastern corner of the building will be clad in Qwikslate tile to match the mansard roof on the rear elevation of 218 Pine Street, and will feature a storefront window system.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending the request be Approved with the following condition(s):

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1. The Applicant will ensure that the bay windows and the slate mansard roof on the rear of 218 Pine Street are not altered in any manner as a result of the stairwell addition.
2. The new windows on the rear façade of the two-story addition of 216 Pine Street should be of a similar design and material to any other window replacements proposed as part of the project.
3. The Planning Bureau would recommend that the design and height of the railing on the proposed deck above the rear, two-story addition of 216 Pine Street maintain a similar design and height, if possible, around the entire deck.
4. The Planning Bureau would recommend that the Applicant consider a façade treatment for the rear and side elevations of the two-story rear addition of 216 Pine Street; this could include painting the CMU block or installing a new siding element that is compatible with existing or proposed façade designs.

The case was represented by Bret Peters with the Office of Planning & Architecture (the project architect), 3001 North 2nd Street, 17110 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mrs. Gribble asked the Applicant to outline the project and describe the proposal through the documentation provided with the application. The Applicant provided additional documentation to the Board members and City staff. He stated that he had discussed the property history with Ken Frew [note: Mr. Frew works for the Dauphin County Historical Society] and noted that they had been constructed as matching buildings in 1857. He noted that the properties had undergone various changes over their lives, such as filling in the attics and adding bay windows; he noted that 216 Pine Street had begun as a drug store before being converted to a parsonage. The Applicant noted that the CMU block addition on the rear of 216 Pine Street had actually been added in 1915, and that the burnished block surface, which was an innovative material to be used at the time, should be considered as an addition which, over time, had gained its own historic significance.

The Applicant noted that 216 Pine Street had at one point had a narrow side yard running along the rear of the building, but that the first floor of this “light court” had been filled in at some indeterminate point, either the 1950s or 1989, which allowed the building more floor space to accommodate offices. He noted that this work had involved the installation of steel supports to help hold the weight of the building roof and upper floors. He stated that the project would involve the removal of the roof above the bay windows in the rear of both properties, and the replacement of a new roof, glass skylight roof which would allow light down into the first floors of the buildings. The Applicant discussed other previous or pending forensic work on the building to identify past architectural and structural features. He also noted that the glass skylight would be strong enough that tenants of the third-floor apartments could walk on them.

The Applicant stated that the building envelopes were generally in good shape and that they would be doing as little work on them as possible. He noted that they would not be replacing windows, although there was some deterioration around the window frames of the front elevation, and that they were planning on having a carpenter repair or replace those in-kind. The Applicant described the work on the rear addition of 216 Pine Street, specifically the filling-in of door openings and the replacement of existing windows with one-over-one windows.

The Applicant noted that the project was focused on a full interior renovation, noting that the property had not seen major investment since 1989, and required replacement of the existing

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mechanical systems. The Applicant noted that the proposed elevation plans illustrated the minimal appearance of the new addition from South Street, and that the project would result in an ADA-accessible entrance to the rear of the building, as the front of the building featured access stairs to the entrances of both 216 and 218 Pine Street.

Mrs. Gribble asked the Applicant if he had any objections to the proposed conditions outlined in the Planning Bureau's case report. He requested that Condition #4, related to the recommendation that a new façade treatment was applied to the CMU block addition at the rear of 216 Pine Street be removed, referencing the age of the addition and the unique material type, relevant to the age of construction, that was utilized in its construction. He stated that the material was not the same CMU block of today, but was intended to be an aesthetic choice.

Mrs. Gribble noted that Condition #1 related to the bay window on the rear of 218 Pine Street, and asked whether the proposed condition would be an issue; the Applicant stated that there was no issue with that condition. He noted that the proposed addition would be a three-and-a-half-story tower that would include additional height to locate and screen the mechanical equipment that would be added as part of the project. The Applicant noted that there would be a one-story, glass-enclosed addition between the proposed stairwell and the rear of 218 Pine Street, which would enclose an existing hatch door to the basement, which was drafty and allowed water infiltration; he stated that this would significantly improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Mrs. Gribble referenced another aspect of Condition #1, and asked for confirmation that the proposed stair tower would likewise not impact the mansard roof on the rear of 218 Pine Street. The Applicant confirmed the mansard roof would not be altered and, in fact, noted that a company specializing in slate mansard roof work had done a site visit to develop an estimate for in-kind repair and replacement; he noted that a similar slate material would be used as cladding for the stair tower.

Mrs. Gribble noted that Condition #2 referenced a requirement that the new windows in the rear of the existing addition at 216 Pine Street would match those installed elsewhere on the properties. The Applicant stated that there would be no other window replacements proposed as part of the project. He noted that the existing windows, which were covered by storm windows, had likely been installed during the 1989 work, and that they were in good shape; he stated that the only work would be removal of the storm windows and in-place repair and painting. The Applicant stated that the existing doors on the rear of the existing addition would be filled in and then have one-over-one, wooden sash windows installed that matched others in the addition.

Mrs. Gribble noted that Condition #3 recommended that railing heights be kept consistent between the existing deck and the proposed extension onto the third floor of the addition. The Applicant confirmed they would be kept a consistent height, and stated that they would be simple railings; he also noted that the existing railing was not building code-compliant. Mrs. Gribble stated that she felt the proposed railing design reflected the existing railing on the third-floor deck; the Applicant confirmed that was the case.

Mrs. Gribble asked Planning Bureau staff to confirm whether that would meet the intent of the condition. Mr. Knight stated that he felt it would and noted that the elevation drawing included

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horizontal elements around the proposed deck expansion; he stated that if it was a building code requirement, then it would likely have to remain, but that he felt having a consistent railing design around the entire third-floor deck would improve the appearance from Court Street. He stated that it was difficult to ascertain from the elevation plans whether there were horizontal members, and whether the deck needed to be elevated for structural reasons, which might result in an offset appearance of the railing. The Applicant confirmed that the deck did need to be raised by two steps to ensure it did not adversely impact the existing roof covering.

Mrs. Gribble stated that it appeared the project would address the conditions of approval; she noted that the condition regarding the window installation did appear necessary because it was a bit unclear as to how the existing door would be replaced. The Applicant stated that the sill height of the existing doors was lower than the height of the windows, so the sills needed to be replaced to match the height of the window openings. Mrs. Gribble noted that the application documentation included an “alternate elevation” drawing; the Applicant confirmed that it involved an alternative approach to the project that had been rejected, and that it had been included in error.

Mrs. Gribble asked whether there were any other questions or comments regarding proposal. Ms. Tennis asked whether there would be any changes to the front elevations of the building; the Applicant confirmed there would be no major changes beyond some minor repair work around the windows. Ms. Tennis asked whether there would be any change to the roofline of the building, noting that it appeared there was some flashing represented in the elevation plans. The Applicant stated that there would be minor work on the dormer of 218 Pine Street.

Ms. Tennis asked whether the basement windows would be replaced as part of that project; the Applicant confirmed that there was no work planned on the basement windows as part of the project, unless the issue of water infiltration became a concern. Ms. Tennis noted that there was infill brick between the existing, double-hung windows on the first floor of both properties, and asked what the cause of that work was. The Applicant noted that at one point in the past, both buildings had been retail stores with large storefront windows, and confirmed that they had likely been infilled with double-hung windows separated by infill brick to achieve a more historic appearance.

Ms. Bennett moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to Approve with Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

5. Discussion of Board vacancies

Mr. Knight noted that Jeremiah Chamberlin had submitted his resignation the week before, due to conflicts with his work schedule, and thus there were two vacancies on HARB. He noted that it was important to have a full board to ensure that meetings could still be held if there were excessive absences for whatever reason; he also noted that it would help bring additional perspectives to review of projects undertaken by the Board.

Mr. Knight solicited nominations and resumes of potentially interested parties from the Board members. Mr. Gaylord noted that the positions were mayoral nominations with City Council

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appointments. He asked whether all the statutorily-required positions were filled; Mr. Knight confirmed that Ms. Montgomery was the Codes Officer appointment and Ms. Rucker was the realtor appointment; Mr. Gaylord also confirmed that Mrs. Gribble was the architect appointment. Mr. Knight noted that because the required positions were filled, nominees could come from any background.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:12 PM

Ms. Bennett moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0); the meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.