

**CITY OF SONOMA
DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
November 19, 2013
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Tippell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Comms. Anderson, Barnett, Johnson, McDonald,
Randolph, Tippell
Absent: None
Others Present: Associate Planner Atkins

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: None.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Late mail for Items 3, 5, and 6.

ITEM #1 – SIGN REVIEW: Consideration of a new wall sign for a furniture consignment business (Vignette) located at 565 West Napa Street. Applicant: Naghmeh Alikhani.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Naghmeh Alikhani, applicant, was present to discuss the application. She came to the DRC over a year ago and is returning with the changes requested. The proposed sign would help her business tremendously. The building's side faces the street and the parking lot faces the mass of the building, which would also be visible to traffic. This location has been a struggle to attract business, and she has tried everything to draw attention to the business. She would be willing to give up one of her signs, if necessary, in order to have the proposed sign.

Comm. Randolph confirmed the proposed sign will be facing traffic coming from the west to the east.

Comm. McDonald asked the applicant which sign she would be willing to give up. She responded that the one over the front window is not as important to her as the proposed sign. The monument sign currently in place is the only sign that faces both directions. Comm. McDonald asked the applicant if she would be willing to make the monument sign larger; she responded that this would be a financial hardship.

Comm. Barnett confirmed with staff that this property is allowed 45.6 sq. ft. of signage, and with this proposal there would be 51 sq. ft, with three signs instead of two.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. Anderson stated that this is a tough site to try to market, as visibility is difficult. The proposed sign seems reasonable, even though it is slightly over what is allowed. The proposed sign would enhance visibility for customers, and he could support this application.

Comm. McDonald concurred. The proposed sign is just a wall sign, with no lighting, and the design is attractive. He would be supportive, but would prefer that the window sign above the door be removed.

Comms. Barnett and Randolph concurred, as did Chair Tippell, and they did not have an issue with the sign over the door.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #2 – SIGN AND DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of a projecting sign, four awnings, four awning signs, and two wall signs for a commercial business (Schein & Schein Old Maps) located at 149 East Spain Street. Applicant: Schein & Schein Old Maps.

Associate Planner Atkins stated that this item will be continued to the December meeting.

ITEM #3 – SIGN REVIEW AND DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of new awnings, new awning signs, and new signs for a real estate company (Coldwell Banker Brokers of the Valley) located at 34 West Spain Street. Applicant: Bill Dardon.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff’s report and noted that this application was submitted due to a code enforcement action.

Comm. Anderson asked if the “office open” and “homes for sale” signs are counted in the aggregate sign area or are considered to be wayfinding signs. Associate Planner Atkins noted that these removable signs are considered in the aggregate sign area.

Comm. Randolph confirmed there are five signs – the wording on the front of the awning valance, the Coldwell-Banker wording on each side, and the two projecting signs. Comm. Barnett confirmed that all the signage is currently in place.

Comm. McDonald questioned whether building permit plans were submitted and approved for the awning. Associate Planner Atkins stated no building permit had been issued for the awning. The awning was in place previously and was recovered utilizing the same frame.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Bill Dardon, applicant, was present to discuss the application. He has had a business on the Plaza since 1987. The original awning was installed with a permit in 1992. In July of this year Coldwell-Banker merged with his real estate company. The “homes for sale” and “office open” signs were installed instead of utilizing an A-frame sign and protrude 6’-6” above grade. They are located over benches and removed at night. The awning color was changed from green to blue. Mr. Dardon submitted a certificate signed by the Fire Marshal confirming the fire-retardancy of the awning material.

Comm. Barnett questioned why the awning was installed without approval. Mr. Dardon admitted he made a mistake in not coming before the DRC and also for not obtaining a building permit prior to the work being performed.

Comm. Anderson confirmed with the applicant that the previous awning also had lettering on the front.

Comm. Randolph asked the applicant about the change in awning color from green to blue. Mr. Dardon stated the blue color was chosen by Coldwell-Banker and is part of their corporate branding. Comm. Barnett asked the applicant if it was possible to change the color, as the blue color is very bright, does not blend in with the building, and is unlike anything else around the Plaza

Mr. Dardon stated the blue color was much brighter, but darkened when treated with flame retardant. He stressed the need for the awning, as the office is too bright and hot without it. Comm. Randolph asked if the fabric is Sunbrella. Mr. Dardon replied in the affirmative, and noted the fabric will not fade.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. Barnett does not have an issue with the number of signs; however, he feels strongly that the awning color is too bright and does not match the building. He is frustrated that the awning has already been installed.

Comm. Anderson does not have an issue with the awning color. He feels this is a reasonable application, as the removable blade signs act as wayfinding signs and the two logos and signage on the front of the awning read as one sign.

Comm. McDonald noted it is difficult to have applicants come before the Design Review Commission “after the fact” and feels business owners should be aware of the requirements. He is not necessarily a fan of the blue color and would be interested to see it after several months of weather. Given the size and prominence of this building, he doesn’t feel this particular blue is appropriate. He feels the projecting signs could be done in a more tasteful manner that would be more compatible with the architecture of the building.

Comm. Randolph does not have an issue with the number of signs, but is concerned with the awning change-out “after the fact.” She asked the applicant if Coldwell Banker would be willing to work with him to make a different awning.

Chair Tippell concurred with her fellow Commissioners. She feels the awning is slightly unattractive in this location and the color, although a branding issue, looks slightly dated

Associate Planner Atkins informed the Commission that they could deny the application or continue it and have the applicant return with alternative colors.

Mr. Dardon stated he would like to return to the Commission with alternative colors. He will check with Coldwell Banker regarding their color branding and see if a solution can be reached.

Comm. Barnett gave Mr. Dardon photos of other Coldwell Banker offices that don't utilize the corporate blue color for their awnings.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to continue this application to a future meeting at a date to be determined by applicant. Comm. Randolph seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM #4 – DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of design review for a restaurant (Top That Yogurt) located at 531 Broadway. Applicant: Top That Yogurt.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report. Application submitted in response to code enforcement. Staff observed a projecting sign, balloons, and portable freestanding sign and asked the applicant to remove.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Eric Solis, owner of Top That Yogurt, was present to discuss the application. The window trim was painted pink in an effort to draw attention to the front of the building. He was unaware that changing the paint color required design review.

Comm. Anderson asked what the trim color was previously. Mr. Solis stated that the trim was white, then they painted it black. Comm. Barnett confirmed that the awning was approved in 2009.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. Randolph has no issue with the pink color and it looks good with their logo.

Comm. Barnett noted that the trees in front of the building block the façade and the pink color already exists on the awning. He has no issues with the application. He reminded the applicant of the necessity of going through the design review process for any changes to the building's exterior. Comms. McDonald and Anderson concurred, as did Chair Tippell.

Comm. Tippell made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #5 – DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of design review for a new detached single-family residence located at 157 West Spain Street. Applicant: Amy Alper, Architect.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Barnett was curious to know why staff determined there was no historic significance for any of the buildings on site. Associate Planner Atkins stated that just because a building is 50 years or older does not mean it has historic significance. The existing structure on the property wasn't reviewed by the League in their 1979 survey, although the League indicated it is listed on the survey with little information.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Amy Alper, architect, was present to discuss the application. She displayed elevations and a color board. In designing this project, she looked at the context of the neighborhood. There are no windows impacting the neighbors. The proposed colors are warm grays and taupe that will blend into the area. It was important to provide maximum rear yard space, hence the advantage of the L-shaped plan.

Comm. McDonald asked the applicant to explain the difference between the windows. Ms. Alper responded that the exterior profile is a bit more contemporary and utilizes the Colby windows, which were their first choice; however, she is requesting approval on both proposed window types due to budget. The profiles will have painted cedar trim with a smoother finish on the stucco.

Patricia Cullinen thinks the design is lovely; however, she is concerned about the cavalier statement in the staff report that there is no historical significance, which is why she wrote a letter on this subject.

Les Waller, owner of Inn to Remember, has no objection to the design. He would like to request that construction hours begin later in the morning, suggesting 8:30 instead of 8:00, so the Inn's guests could sleep in.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. Barnett would like to hear from the other Commissioners. Although there are elements of the design he likes, he is concerned about the height and the historic significance of the site.

Comm. McDonald appreciates the thoughtfulness of the design, but is still not convinced it's compatible with the buildings that abut it, and the more modest bungalows along Church Street and the Craftsman bungalow itself that faces West Spain Street. Although he has no issue with the design, he expressed concern that some portions are set higher than those immediate around it. He also has reservations about the façade of the building, as there is no first-story element facing the street.

Ms. Alper noted that the water table in this area is quite high and a slab-on-grade would be cost prohibitive. She feels the two-story structure relates well to the

neighboring structures and the lower level will be a background for lush plantings. She will provide a landscape plan at a later time.

Comm. Barnett asked why the discussion of colors was not necessary. Associate Planner Atkins stated that the Design Review Commission doesn't review colors for a single-family residence, only commercial properties.

Comm. Randolph appreciated the presentation and the applicant's attention to detail and feels the new building fits well into context and mirrors other design elements on the street.

Associate Planner Atkins noted that when the application was submitted, it did not occur to staff to have any type of historic evaluation because it was a new structure. She is uncertain if any type of review would have been triggered if the city were a certified local government (CLG).

Comm. Anderson stated that the architect has responded well to the neighborhood. If this building were on the streetscape, it would be a different discussion. He suggested the carriage house/barn be photo-documented and provided to the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation.

Chair Tippell complimented the applicant on the excellent presentation. She likes the contemporary, modern look, as well as the colors and materials. The structure will be set back far enough that it will blend in.

Ms. Alper questioned how the Commission could potentially impose criteria that have not been adopted by the City.

Associate Planner Atkins mentioned that the Commission has the option to continue this item and staff could do further research to see if the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements were met.

Comm. Barnett noted that it seems like a majority of the Commission are in support of this application, but he would like to see an historic resource report. Comm. Anderson asked what the report would be on – the property itself, the existing structure on the site, or the carriage house. Comm. Randolph questioned whether there are issues about the possible environmental features of the site on which the new residence will be built.

A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of an archaeological survey of the property.

Associate Planner Atkins stated that staff could go back and make sure the project is consistent with CEQA and if additional reports are needed.

Vicki Beard, professional archeologist and architectural historian, stated that CEQA requires that projects look into cultural resources. It sounds like no archeological survey was required. The old Sanborn maps could be viewed to determine what buildings were there in the past.

Patricia Cullinen noted the importance in striving for consistency. When a plan is reviewed by the City, a determination of historic significance needs to be made. She stressed the importance of following CEQA guidelines.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to continue the application to allow staff to report back on the CEQA requirements. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of design review for a proposed addition to an historic residence located at 663 Second Street East. Applicant: Sidney Hoover.

Comm. Randolph recused due to proximity and left the dais.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. McDonald asked who performed the historic resource report and if they were qualified to prepare the same.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Sidney Hoover, applicant, was present to discuss the application. The entire thrust of the project is to repeat the materials of the existing house. Mr. Hoover confirmed that Juliana Inman, Architect, prepared the historic resource report and is qualified to do so.

Patricia Cullinen has no complaints with the architecture, but is requesting consistency in the process. Although there will be no impact to property, there has been no evaluation of existing conditions and the architect/applicant assumed eligibility. She asked Associate Planner Atkins about Form DPR 523 that evaluates the property for existing conditions, which could then be used as an evaluation of how the proposed changes impact the property.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. McDonald feels comfortable about the modifications and materials. He has no issues with the building design. The DRC must be consistent in requiring complete historic building evaluations when reviewing projects in the Historic Overlay Zone that alter potentially historically significant buildings.

Comms. Barnett and Anderson concurred with Comm. McDonald. While supportive of the architecture, a report is needed to make the findings.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to continue the application until a completed historic evaluation is submitted. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Randolph absent.

Comm. Randolph returned to the dais.

Chair Tippell reiterated to the applicant that this item will be continued to next month's meeting so an historic evaluation of the property can be completed, as the one

submitted was incomplete. Staff will contact the applicant and give the parameters. Comm. McDonald noted this is being done so that a determination can be made that the application meets CEQA requirements.

ITEM #7 – DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of elevation details, exterior colors and materials, lighting, trash enclosure, and a bicycle rack for a mixed-use building (Williams-Sonoma) located at 599 Broadway. Applicant: BVD Cope c/o Williams-Sonoma.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Barnett confirmed that the signage will be reviewed at a later date.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Bud Cope, Chrome Architects, described the application. This is a really special project, as they are trying to restore the original store and enhance the rest of the building. They worked closely with their historian and are not proposing to alter the basic mass. There will be substantial improvements to the back.

Comm. Barnett expressed surprise that no old photographs exist. Mr. Cope stated they will put out a request to find old photographs.

Comm. McDonald asked about the lighting plan. Mr. Cope noted there will be uplights along the front of the building, as well as lights in the trellis to illuminate the culinary center sign.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

Comm. Anderson complimented the applicant on the proposed improvements. This will be a good contribution to the community, and he can support it. Comm. Barnett concurred. It's exciting to have Williams-Sonoma come back to the area.

Comm. McDonald concurred with his fellow Commissioners. This part of Broadway needs to be energized. He is pleased with the architectural design details and is excited to see the landscape plan. Chair Tippell and Comm. Randolph concurred.

Chair Tippell made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the condition that signage and landscaping plans be submitted to the DRC at a later date. Comm. McDonald seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #8 – DESIGN REVIEW: Consideration of the demolition of a single-family residence and detached accessory structure located at 840 West Napa Street. Applicant: Victor Conforti, Architect.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.

Victor Conforti, project architect, was present to discuss the application. The driveway will be located on the west side of property, with one-story units on the east side of the property. This will require that the house be removed, and a resource evaluation has been done and the CEQA guidelines have been examined. This structure is not historically significant based on the CEQA criteria in the report.

Comm. Barnett asked if the Planning Commission has approved the site plan. Mr. Conforti stated that the site plan has yet to be approved, but is in the process.

Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.

The Commission thanked the applicant for his patience and taking the extra time and going through the process

Comm. Barnett made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the following conditions:

- 1) The buildings shall not be demolished until all Planning entitlements and building permits have been obtained/issued for the associated redevelopment project.
- 2) Photo-documentation of the buildings shall be submitted to the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation prior to demolition.

Comm. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ISSUES UPDATE: With regard to the Maysonnave Cottage, Associate Planner Atkins stated that on November 4, the City Council directed staff to move forward with the proposal to have a 20-year lease on the property for a vacation rental. The Council also approved the name change of the Design Review Commission to the Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION: Comm. Barnett asked about the status of the ATM lights in front of Chase Bank. Associate Planner Atkins noted that she had followed up with Chase and they have been fixed.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m. to the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2013.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Design Review Commission on the 17th day of December 2013.

Robin Evans, Administrative Assistant