

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2020

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 5:30 P.M., with the following members in attendance: Ricky Richardson, Kevin DeMark, and Tip Pitts. Carolyn Schoepf was absent. Representing the Planning Department were City Manager Chris Story and Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant. Craig Lewis, Stantec Consultants also attended the meeting.

Roll Call

Mr. Richardson, the Chair, called the meeting to order and stated that notice of this meeting was posted and provided to the media 24 hours in advance as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Richardson said three members of the current four member Board were present, constituting a quorum; and he went over the procedure for the meeting.

Mr. Richardson announced the Agenda for tonight's meeting that was on the screen had previously been amended and it was approved by acclimation.

Disposition of the Minutes from the January 7, 2020 Design Review Board Meeting:

Mr. DeMark had one change regarding his first name in the first paragraph of the minutes. The amended minutes were approved by acclimation.

Old Business:

Review of Mechanical Screening not acceptable for previously approved Northside Mixed Use Project.

City Manager Chris Story came forward and said the question related to the Northside Commons project on the northeast corner of College & Howard Streets. He referenced a slide and said the longer massing of the building aligned with Howard Street, and then turned the corner to go up College Street. The request had been approved by the DRB in the summer of 2018; and he said construction was nearly completed. The City Manager said the question that had been raised was in conflict with the intent of the Code regarding the rooftop mechanical was visible from various points; and he explained the Ordinance read rooftop mechanical was not to be visible from nearby streets. He pointed out the key words there was "from nearby streets". He said there was no hard definition of what nearby streets meant in terms of what was far enough away. The rooftop units were not visible from the immediate front facades on College and Howard; but they were visible from a distance to the west on College, as well as from a distance to the north on Howard, and from Raindrop to the rear of the property. There was some question as to whether the intent of the Code related to the primary visibility frontages which were the subject of most of the discussions on the project for the College and Howard faces. City Manager Story said what Staff's recommendation would be was, that they would try to have some clarified language for future projects. He said he would be happy to answer any questions; and also that Craig Lewis was also present and could make any comments or answer any Board Questions.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Craig Lewis if he had any comments about this matter.

Mr. Lewis came forward and said he drove by the site today; and it was kind of unusual in that it did have such a long view. He had never run in to this situation before; and he said he would need to think about it.

Mr. DeMark felt as they amended the Plan, going forward they should at least address things like this. He said the intent was they did not want to see mechanical units. He knew they were needed, but there were ugly and should not be seen.

New Business:

Preliminary Conceptual Review and Approval of the proposed building's form, massing and placement on site for proposed new mixed-use project "The Danmor", located in the DT-5 District at 203 S Daniel Morgan Avenue, TMS#7-12-14; 042.00 from Royce Camp, Owner, Midtown Properties, LLC.

City Manager Chris Story came forward and said this was a mixed-use to be located at the southeast corner of Daniel Morgan Avenue and Harris Place; and Harris Place was the first block of what they all thought of as Henry Street. He showed a location map and oriented everyone to the site. The project was intended to occupy the corner with a commercial-retail, and the balance would be residential. Slides were shown of the different views from the site; floor plans, and elevations.

Mr. Dwayne Wood, GPN Architecture came forward and was sworn; and said there would be a total of five stories, and the first floor would only be accessible from Daniel Morgan; and the other four would be accessible from Harris Place. He referenced a slide of the massing; and said the intent due to the location of the property midway between Main Street and the start of the residential; that the building capture and use materials that were found in both. He said so the intent was the mass be an urban mass, but the character at the street level be very pedestrian along Daniel Morgan. Mr. Wood explained the Daniel Morgan side would be accessible only from Daniel Morgan; and it did have the potential for four; but they were only envisioning two commercial spaces – one on the corner and one adjacent to it. He said the balance on the ground floor would be two ADA accessible apartments; and above would be a combination of one (two-bedroom unit, with the balance would be one bedroom units). It was all for the most part one bedroom units. The fact there was a long vista all the way down from Main Street; their thought was to anchor the corner with something visual to focus your eye on as you would walk down the street. The proposed materials were envisioned to be a combination of cast-stone, for institutional on Main Street; brick siding capturing the transition to the residential neighborhood beyond and masonry character. Mr. Wood said the massing represented about 22,500 sq. ft.; a footprint of approximately 50' along Harris Place, and 90' along Daniel Morgan; with about 4500 sq. ft. per level and there were five levels. The commercial spaces each, represented about 1500 sq. ft. each; residential about 750 sq. ft. ea. and the 2 bedroom about 1500 square feet. The building would essentially occupy all of the site. They had met with the Building Codes and Planning Department for their comments. The Building Department had given them a very favorable review; so they were prepared to develop this concept further and the idea was to envision it as an anchor for that end of Daniel Morgan.

Board Questions:

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Wood if everyone who lived there would park on the street.

Mr. Wood showed a slide and said there was available parking along Daniel Morgan; and they would have two accessible units available for disabled people at the curbside immediately in front of the Building.

City Manager Chris Story said Mr. Craig Lewis had some notes on the project; and he just wanted to clarify something said at the beginning of the meeting that they were seeking preliminary conceptual approval to the massing as far as the placement on the site, and maybe some additional questions about materials and sod details and the like that would come later.

Mr. Wood said they had taken spot elevations particularly in the area of interest to him which was the intersection of Henry Street and Daniel Morgan; and what they would see from that intersection and vehicle. Based on the elevation changing grade at that intersection was about 765'; what you would be looking at eye level would be into slightly above the ceiling of the second floor, below the floor of the third floor. Overall the massing towered about 75 tall to spire. The build of the massing was about 65' above the lowest corner at Harris Place and Daniel Morgan, so it was a compact building (50' x 90' x 65') with the tower extending 75'.

Mr. Richardson asked was there an elevator in the building.

Mr. Wood said no. He said that is one reason they met earlier with the Building Department to discuss their proposal to do this without an elevator.

Mr. DeMark said the application said DT-5; and Mr. Lewis comments referenced DT-6; and he asked which zone was it in.

Mr. Camp said it was in DT-5.

Mr. DeMark wondered if that would change anything regarding Mr. Lewis comments.

Mr. Richardson said he was not an architect, but he liked the proposal.

Mr. Pitts asked if Mr. Wood could describe the overall materials; and he asked was that hardi board at the top, then brick and stucco.

Mr. Wood referenced a slide and said what that suggested was a cast stone base – smooth round faced polished stone; the darker material was brick, and the lighter material in the center was cementitious laptop siding (hardiboard) with corners accented by ACM Metal Panels. The storefront windows, doors, were wood. He said on the residential portion was Juliette balconies on the Daniel Morgan side which was the bedroom side of the unit. He pointed out on the slide the center portion projected about 2' to give the building some shadow.

Mr. Richardson said he was in favor of Mr. Lewis' comments regarding the ceiling height of the rooms, particularly for the commercial space.

Mr. Wood explained.

Mr. DeMark asked was there a podium and then wood above.

Mr. Wood said it was all wood frame.

Mr. Richardson asked about any landscaping/streetscaping.

Mr. Wood said they had not gotten that far into the project as yet; and if they received conceptual approval tonight; they would embark on that at another meeting.

Mr. Craig Lewis, Stantec Consulting Services came forward and was sworn; and said he felt it was an exciting project because it helped to sort of connect the neighborhood to the downtown. He felt it started to fill in a gap in which they would later see other pieces of that begin to move along over time; and this would be the first of many projects they would probably see along this road. The massing was really good in that area and it was nice to see a little bit of density there, and they were maximizing the use of the site. He felt its overall presence on the site was really good. Mr. Lewis said it's always mainly about details which was what this Board was all about. Mr. Lewis said there were some exceptions that would be required by this Board as the project moved forward as follows:

- 1) Excessive number of materials and colors: The building is not that big, and doesn't need all that many material changes and probably did not need all of the ins and outs it had; and he thought it could be designed a little more efficiently, and the materials could be a little more coherent around that whole side of the building. He would encourage the developer to try and calm down the complexity of the building. As the Board had seen in many other projects, when you got down to the materials, it all came down to construction detailing, how they matched and joined. He said simpler could also be better.
- 2) Residential units on the ground floor, on his set it looked like the ceiling heights were 8' floor to floor; and he would strongly recommend a different ceiling height – something that gave that ground level a little more sense of entry. When they had residential entries on the ground floor, the way the Code currently read, it suggested there needed to be raised entries. So he said if they wanted to do something different; that would be another exception they would need from this Board. He also did not know if a building of this size would be required to put in accessible units or if they were just doing this from a marketing standpoint.

Mr. DeMark asked Mr. Lewis did he mean like a stoop.

Mr. Lewis said a stoop or like a step-up. Mr. Lewis said he strongly recommended there be a differentiation between those residential units and commercial space. There were some more items listed on his comments he would not address right now; but he did not feel that the project was ready for conceptual approval at this time.

Mr. Lewis referenced the elevation slide; and he said another thing he felt was important regarding this project; was when you turn around from the rear of the site from Harris on the back side would be something they would need to take a hard look at due to all the visibility. He said it may be perfectly O.K., but felt the Board Members need to take a look at regarding blank walls, which may or may not be

a problem, if it was truly treated as the rear of the property. Mr. Lewis said something that referred to a site plan for the project – that the streetscape that was required along Daniel Morgan was one thing where they would typically be looking for a little bit wider sidewalks, and said the one that was there was installed by the City which was a minimal amount; but they would be looking to try and enhance that.

Mr. Wood said it was drawn to scale at about 12' wide.

Mr. Lewis said that would be close; but the real challenge would be over on Harris Place.

Mr. DeMark asked Mr. Lewis if there would be parking on Harris.

Mr. Lewis said it would be nice, but he did not think it was necessary.

Mr. Pitts asked wasn't Harris Place previously a one way street.

City Manager Story said it was; but they were hopeful there would be enough width there to do some on-street parking. They would work with the Design Team to see if they could have the dimensions in order, to see where they would be regarding that at a future meeting. He explained it may be a trade-off between streetscape, zoning & width and the desire for on-street parking.

Mr. Richardson asked the City Manager if the City owned Harris Place.

The City Manager said yes.

Mr. Richardson asked the City Manager if they could make or keep it a one-way street and put on-street parking on it; and he said he was thinking about the rest of the block should it ever be developed.

The City Manager said what they were thinking now, was if they went down to eleven foot travel lanes, they may be able to keep it two-way and put on-street parking.

Mr. Lewis said he would suggest then going down to ten foot travel lanes.

Mr. Lewis said the last thing which was part of the purview of this Board was to take a look at the overall architectural design; and material choices; and was what was proposed an appropriate composition for the downtown area. He said the corner element was sort of the other piece to it; and he said the Board Members needed to take a look at it. He was not sure it was as well developed as it needed to be. It would have good visibility from both directions; and you did not have to over-do this corner because of the way it was situated. He said the corner element introduces material selection, roof type in that area, and it was an unusual corner element. Overall, as he mentioned earlier; it was a pretty small building. This was not the type of building that needed to break down a mass, did not have to share store-fronts, etc. He thought simple was better, as well as less costly.

Board Questions:

Mr. DeMark asked about where there was to be some commercial space on Daniel Morgan; there did not seem to be a place for a sign or anything for whomever might want to use that space.

Mr. Wood showed a slide and explained the proposed entrances for each unit.

Mr. Richardson suggested they might could put a couple of small pendant signs on the awnings.

Mr. DeMark spoke about two units on the first floor that appeared to not have any windows. He said that was not really in their purview; but he did not think that would make for a good living situation.

Mr. Wood pointed out on a slide; and he asked if that was the area he had just referred to.

Mr. DeMark said yes.

Mr. Wood said they were studying those areas; and they were working on ideas on how to introduce light into those two areas.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Wood to tell him a little bit regarding on the back elevation (lower left); and he asked were those walkways to the doors or were they windows.

Mr. Wood explained about the walkway.

Mr. DeMark asked so it would be a covered balcony outside.

Mr. Wood said yes; and that it would be very similar to the Wall Street Project.

Mr. DeMark said to follow-up on Mr. Lewis' comments; he felt it was important as they moved beyond preliminary approval, that the Board Members needed to understand exactly what they were talking about regarding materials; understanding what the railings would look like; etc. He did not understand the clock or the really high sign tower or whatever they were trying to depict on the slide; and he did not know if anyone would even be able to see the view of the pointed tower. Mr. DeMark felt that in at least the two elevations they had seen in the massing study that you really did not read that in his opinion.

Mr. Lewis said he did not recommend giving preliminary conceptual approval at this time.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Wood if there was anything else he wished to say regarding the project.

Mr. Wood referenced on a slide of the rear of the building and explained how they were proposing to introduce daylight to an area as to not impede the walkway.

Mr. Richardson opened the public hearing and asked anyone who wished to speak in favor of the request to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson asked anyone who wished to speak in opposition to the request to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson asked anyone that had any questions they wished to ask to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson closed the public hearing.

Board Deliberation:

Mr. Richardson said as much as he liked the project; he felt it needed a little more refinement.

Mr. DeMark agreed with Mr. Richardson, and with Mr. Lewis' previous comments.

Mr. Richardson informed Mr. Wood the Board would like for them to do more work on the refinement regarding their suggestions tonight; and they would look forward to the project coming back before them in the near future.

Discussion only of Village at Creekside Townhomes – Proposed project that will be comprised of eleven properties on College Street and Manning Street in the DT-4 District that are either owned by Northside Development Group or City-owned to be combined into one parcel. Joe Lauer, Clerestory Projects Group, Agent, on behalf of Tammy Hoy Hawkins, Northside Development Group. (No public hearing and no votes will be taken). Project supposed to have a public hearing at April Meeting.

City Manager Chris Story came forward again and said this was a new proposed project called Village at Creekside and would be a residential development on the north side as part of the North Side Initiative. He said he would let the Design Team talk about this project.

Mr. Paul Mills, Engineer, Site Design, Inc. of Spartanburg, SC came forward and was sworn; and referenced a slide; and explained to the Board Members they planned to put approximately between 30 to 32 homes on the properties. He said this plan showed 31 homes; and he informed the Board Members they were still making some refinements to the plans; and they had been trying to purchase an additional parcel at the corner of College and Brawley Street, but had to take that out at the moment. They had been anticipating building approximately 36 homes if they were able to acquire the one additional property. Mr. Mills pointed out on the slide they would have single family homes on the left and right sides; and he pointed out where the Butterfly Greenway was, and where the townhomes would be and Brownstone homes would be. He said one thing they had looked at was potentially rotating one of those and moving some up and extend the park all the way to their private alley, which they were still thinking about; and they were still trying to work some things out.

Mr. Richardson asked what was his thought on obtaining the corner property he had mentioned.

Mr. Mills explained that was probably not going to happen.

Mr. Richardson said he went out and looked at the properties; and he hated that it did not include the corner.

Mr. Mills said the site would have water and sewer; there would be a new sewer line going down the alley, as well as a waterline, and underground retention. He said there had been houses on much of the properties before regarding impervious area, and now they would have more impervious area. They had initially looked at putting some sort of system in the park area so they would have that; but unfortunately people needed to be able to use the park area and children needed to be able to play in the park; and with the amount of rain they had been having (much more than normal) there was a lot of concern about that becoming a wet area that no one would get to play in. So they would end up with underground retention, and he pointed out on the slide where that would probably be. Mr. Mills pointed out where the City owned a property in another area; and the City had said if they absolutely needed to, they could use that property for service potential; although he did not think they would need to do that. Mr. Mills pointed out on the screen which units had garages and the others had surface parking. The surface parking ones would not have any place to put a trash can; so right now they were planning on using a Sutera Receptacle system that was an underground dumpster; and a special type of truck would come in and pick it up so you would not need any screening around it. There would be a little shoot that stuck out, and you opened it and dumped the trash inside. The truck would come out and open the lid and pick up the bag.

City Manager Story said it was not a City truck, but was a system they were starting to see more and more of now.

Mr. Mills said they were getting popular in downtown areas where people did not want a dumpster and there were no room for dumpsters and screening.

Mr. DeMark said Mr. Mills had mentioned garages with some of the homes; and he asked were the white lines on the drawings driveways that went up to the garage.

Mr. Mills said yes that was driveways, which were on the ones that faced the park.

Mr. DeMark asked were the homes attached, and were they townhomes.

Mr. Mills said yes; and he showed the square footages and said some had garages which would only be a one-car garage; and then everyone else would have surface parking.

Mr. Richardson said there were some really attractive places on Brawley Street; and he asked were these going to blend in with those.

Mr. Mills said the Brownstone would be flat-roofed, and he showed the elevations of those units. He said they would be complimentary of the area.

Mr. Richardson asked would all the mature trees on the property leave the site.

Mr. Mills said pretty much.

Mr. Richardson asked about the materials.

Ms. Pat Dilger, Architect, Overstreet Studio, LLC went over to the screen and referenced a slide and pointed out the townhomes that were there and said there was about a 7% slope on the property; so what they tried to do was to create a park that a two-story townhome would look out over. She pointed to another area and said there would be three-story townhomes there. The materials on those would be a combination of siding and batten, and maybe a little bit of cedar shake shingle look. Some of them would have double balconies, and some would have approximately 8' x 12' or 8' x 14' cement porches. She said the Brownstones would be brick on the front and two stories that were located near the neighborhood side of the property; and then there would be three-story as it kind of worked its way downward along College Street. Then they had the taller townhomes on the low side so as to transition nicely. The two-story would be brick on front and a combination of brick and batten on the side, so as to give it a bit of an urban look; but not as expensive. She said this was meant to be an affordable project, and they were trying to save money by not making them all brick, with the more formal looking ones on College Street. The three-stories would have a more flexible space; and she explained about the layouts; and said there was a total of 2.6 acres regarding the project.

Mr. DeMark asked how big the units would be.

She explained about the footprints and square footages, [which I could not understand from the recording).

Mr. Richardson asked would these be for sale or rent.

Mr. Mills said they would be for sale.

Mr. Richardson asked who would qualify to buy them.

Another lady in the audience who was not introduced responded to Mr. Richardson's question but it was inaudible on the recorder

Mr. Richardson felt it was a great piece of property; and he wished for perspective the other project the Board Members had previously approved about a year and a half ago (multi-family) was already built on the corner; and wondered what was going on with that approved project.

Mr. Mills said Mr. Joe Lauer was present and could talk about that project.

Mr. Richardson told Mr. Lauer they would love to hear his comments regarding that project.

Mr. Lauer said he thought there were some site challenges on that one.

Mr. Richardson said they had site challenges from the very beginning.

Someone from the audience said the challenge right now was surface charging the building pad to prevent the future building from settling, and that was why there was so much dirt piled up on the site.

Mr. Richardson asked the City Manager if he knew when the clinic would open.

Mr. Lauer said VCOM was choosing to hold off using it right now.

Mr. DeMark said he knew they were not voting or anything on this project tonight; but he asked Mr. Lewis if the intent for when someone came before them for preliminary or conceptual approval similar to the one for Silverhill; they had kind of given them a blanket approval for everything at that time; or was it the intent they would kind of like what they saw and that was enough on these types of projects.

Mr. Lewis explained that was kind of unusual; and most of those had been detached; and so they had let Staff approve those; but because these were multi-family townhomes it was still within the Board's purview to review the elevations. Mr. Lewis thought this was a really cool project and he really wanted them to succeed. He had never seen this level of diversity on this size of a site. Mr. Lewis said the comments he had was because it was an early package and there were some details they wanted to take a look at. He said the architecture was great; and he said regarding the design he wanted to make sure they had a sense of where the materials are, which he was sure they would see. The question he had on the alley detailing which would hopefully come through when they saw the site package and engineering – was seeing what those dimensions were, and he felt there was some push-pull; and he thought there was some opportunity there. The homes along the greenway, it looked like they were going to have two faces to the facades. He can't tell but he was assuming there would be a primary façade along the greenway and secondary entrance off the alley.

Mr. DeMark had a question; and asked so the park would not intersect with the Butterfly thing at all; but would connect more with whatever was across the street on Manning.

Ms. Dilger said it would connect with Manning and the neighborhood. At this point they felt it would work better; and it would really invite the whole neighborhood.

Mr. Mills explained the actual engineering layout plan had sidewalks in those areas to give the neighbors access to go up to Manning Street and come down; and then if they moved some units up toward Manning and then rotated some, it would allow them to extend the park.

Mr. Richardson said it looked like the single family houses that were going to face Butterfly Creed – were they the Brownstone ones.

Mr. Mills said yes.

Mr. Richardson said he was thinking it might be better to put another house down in there at the corner and move the trash somewhere else.

Mr. Mills explained; and said it would make it more difficult to get the truck in to pick up the trash.

Ms. Dilger said like with most plans; the parking specs drove the design.

Mr. DeMark asked if the six spots that were depicted in the plans were really needed.

Ms. Dilger said the three on the right were needed; and she thought two on the left were needed; and the other one might be extra.

Mr. DeMark asked were those the Brownstones.

She said yes.

Mr. DeMark said that was such a prime spot to lose that was up against Butterfly Creek.

She agreed.

Mr. Mills said they could look at that a little more.

Mr. DeMark asked was the alley two-way.

Mr. Mills said no it was one-way; and he explained regarding parallel parking.

Mr. Lewis said the only other thing he had was he felt maybe it would be nice to get some market rate housing mixed in with this; and he felt they were a little small; and asked if they could make some of them a little bigger.

Ms. Dilger said they could put their heads together a little more.

Mr. Lewis asked could they angle the parking.

Ms. Dilger said it could be dedicated.

Mr. Lewis said it did not have to be dedicated.

Ms. Dilger said they could take another look at it.

Mr. Lewis said when the project came back to the Board; for them to remember that flat roofs were only permitted by exception; so it was something the Board Members would need to look at.

Ms. Dilger said they could look at it.

Mr. DeMark asked was the flat roofs just on the Brownstones.

Mr. Mills said that was correct.

Mr. DeMark asked would they see them back at the April meeting.

Mr. Mills said yes.

Ms. Dilger said they would have all the materials and everything regarding Mr. Lewis' comments addressed as well.

Mr. Richardson hoped they received good feedback from the Board Members tonight; and he felt it was a great project.

Mr. DeMark and Mr. Pitts agreed.

Election of Officers for the Remainder of the 2020-2021 Calendar Year

Mr. Richardson said the Nominating Committee met, and had recommended that Mr. DeMark serve as Chair, and that Mr. Richardson serve as Vice-Chair; since his own position on the Board would term out effective June 30, 2021; and that Mr. Pitts' position would term out on June 30, 2020. There was a vote of 3 to 0 in favor of the Nominating Committee's decision.

City Manager Story said hopefully City Council would make one new appointment at their next meeting for the current Board Vacancy; and he hoped they would make another new appointment at the beginning of July, 2020.

Staff Announcements:

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 7:20



Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary

