

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 2021

The Design Review Board (DRB) met via Virtual Zoom Meeting on Tuesday November 16, 2021 at 5:30 pm. The following Board Members were in attendance: Kevin DeMark, Lucy Lynch, Tori Wallace-Babcock, Lauren Rogers, and Carolyn Schoepf. Representing the City staff: Martin Livingston, Community Development Director; Tia Keitt, Planner II; Nan Zhou, Planner I; and Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant. Also attending was Craig Lewis, the City Design Consultant. City Manager Chris Story also attended the meeting.

Roll Call

Mr. Kevin DeMark, the Chair called to order the Design Review Board for this day, the 16th of November, 2021 at 5:30 PM. The notice of this meeting was posted and provided to the media 24 hours in advance as required by the Freedom of Information Act; and he went over the procedure for the meeting. He said all five Board Members were present; which constituted a quorum. He had the Board Members introduce themselves for the microphone.

Mr. DeMark moved the agenda for tonight's meeting be approved and he was seconded by Ms. Schoepf. The motion as approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. DeMark asked Mr. Livingston to introduce the first New Business Case.

New Business:

The Design Review Board has received a request regarding Preliminary Conceptual Approval of the building's form, massing, and placement on the site for a proposed new mixed-use development, located in the DT-6 District at 127, 131, 143, 145, 147, 149, 153, 155, and 163 E. Main Street (Tax Map Parcels: 7-12-21, Lots 029.00; 030.00; 030.01; 030.02; 032.00; 033.00; 037.00; and 038.00 from Applicant Mark Peters, M Peters Group.

Mr. Livingston said so the first project is regarding preliminary conceptual approval of the building's form, massing, and placement on the site for a proposed new mixed-use development, located in the DT-6 District at 127, 131, 143, 145, 147, 149, 153, 155, and 163 E. Main Street (Tax Map Parcels: 7-12-21, Lots 029.00; 030.00; 030.01; 030.02; 032.00; 033.00; 037.00; and 038.00 from Applicant Mark Peters, M Peters Group. He said Mr. Crabtree would be presenting.

Mr. Craig Lewis, the City's Design Consultant said Mr. Chair, if I could just clarify that for this evening, they are not requesting preliminary approval. They are specifically requesting the design exceptions regarding height and setback along Main Street. Preliminary approval will occur at a subsequent meeting.

David Crabtree Okay. Well, thank you, all. I will focus on the setback and the height. There are layers of this, analysis and things like that, so we'll emphasize that through all of the various slides and hopefully put the greater context into play. But we are absolutely focused on those two items and anticipate additional coming back to the Board for the full preliminary review, which would get us further along. The goal for the M Peters Group is to have enough security that the mass and scale in this, so they can just build on their performance. What is the land worth, and if they can put an appropriate amount of residential and mixed-use development there that then justifies that.

So, today will be just about broader master planning strategy, if you will. No conceptual design; when we show imagery of like and kind projects to give you a sense, it's not that our project will look exactly like one of those, they're just good scaler references and it'll all make sense as I go through it.

With that, I'll start. For us, success is really about building upon the creative energy that you guys have in the local craft and the character of Spartanburg. That's something that we'll carry with us throughout this process. The design for the pedestrian experience and granularity. The things that you already have happening in some of the really cool alleyways that exist and the pocket parks and things like that. That's what we want to build from, develop around this idea of comfortable density.

So as we add layers of density to the city, how do we do it in a respectful way that's community focused around livable buildings and human connection and a living ecosystem. How do we also become a catalyst for downtown that's durable and transcends time. Using quality materials beyond just a beautiful design story that this is a legacy investment for Mark Peters and the Peters group. This is not something that they're coming in to turn and flip. This is, they are long-term holders, and really feel like residents, if you will, of the community, and build upon overall goals of your comprehensive plan and teaming with your accelerator program. So there's other layers beyond what we build; it's how we behave. And those would all sort of unfold in the future. But those are our core values. After many vision sessions, and in looking at this site, that's what the Peters Group believes in, and we also believe that resonates with your goals.

With that, you know and we know Spartanburg; but some of the things that we're building from: The scale of Spartanburg, the texture, and the history that's grown there in a very incremental way, and how do we build from that. There's also this idea of the undulating skyline. There's a few moments that peak above the buildings and look towards nature and towards the mountain views, as well as the rolling hills. And so, we want to capture that.

The regional craft that you guys are growing from, the really boutique vibe, small storefronts, the local community-built retail versus large scale national chains: those are things that we would continue to build from. This idea of the parks and the alleys and the vistas in the corners that really celebrate the pedestrian experience. Those are the things that we would like to continue to build from. And then, rejuvenating history: how can we preserve and update some of the existing facades so they become a new living history of the city.

For us, our site, the freight yard is at this location, and we're looking at all of these properties here. These are Google Earth views and they were pre-freight yard, if you will. If you're looking from Broad Street, we see Broad Street as a main street, if you will. Our goal is to connect Main Street to Broad Street. I really enjoy going to Downtown Deli and Donuts, and we feel like there's more room for that kind of porosity and activation along Broad Street. Again, as you're looking from Broad Street, our property starts from here, it goes up to here, and these are some of the facades, just existing conditions, and you're well aware of them. But just to know that we are from Venus' freight yards, it sits here, along Main Street, Diamond Jewelers. In terms of those things, those facades, we'll share with you which ones we think are great to preserve, which ones may be updated, and which ones might just need more repair than they can be saved.

This is similar along Broad Street. We've done a site inventory in trying to understand the quality of facades there and how we can reuse those in a positive way. Again, Diamond Jewelers here. So, for us, some of the analysis that we've done is understanding everybody's well aware of the Denny's Building. I

think it's 250 foot tall, 18 stories. We are nowhere proposing anything like that. But there's an interesting undulating rhythm along Main Street and all other blocks, as well, and so how do we build from that. And then, these red arrows indicate, how do we connect from Main Street to Broad Street.

How do we, if you look at these quarter mile walkability, eighth mile, quarter mile, this site is ideal for being able to walk to other parking. So we don't have to put as much parking on our site. We can walk to other retail; other retail folks can walk to here. So it's really in a great centralized location, as you guys are aware.

Thinking about solar exposure, sun is coming from our south. Main Street here, Broad Street here, and we'll share some more of those studies. Some of the current patterns of folks walking through: the crosswalk here and getting to the public parking, we have some other additional public parking here. And so again, our site being here, there's adjacency to great- While a freight yard isn't a public park, it has some of those types of qualities and, clearly, over by Denny's, there's good accessibility to public space nearby, which we find extraordinary. We've again, inventorying some of the facades in yellow versus green versus red. The ideas in the orange tone are the ones that just needed a good amount of work, so we're not sure how well those could be saved and repurposed.

Our site to be more specific is around 315 foot. This is, again, Main Street here. This is Broad Street here, and about 190 foot of depth. It's fairly even. There is some gradation, but these little markers here, 805 and 804 and 803, that's the elevation of the street, and that is pulled from GIS data, and then, 797, 802, and 806. So it's fairly flat between here. However, there is a little bit of a drop over here. And just to give you a sense of the height of this facade is a little bit taller when you're perceived as a pedestrian.

Our zoning does allow for up to 16 stories by your approval and the setbacks are the portion that we're trying to look for in terms of structures within 60 feet of Main Street. We're looking to encroach in some of that space, and we've done the series of studies that can show you why we think that still works.

So to give you a sense of what that looks like: we have turned the building perpendicular to Main Street to build upon that undulating heights. We've put our taller building in the middle and the modest scale here to the left and to the right to buffer them from the neighbors. We've turned them perpendicular, as well, to preserve some light and view coming through, rather than turn the building parallel to Main Street. We felt like there's a history of these undulating verticality's along various streets, but making a long building wasn't as favorable, because it actually would have to be a much taller building because of the length that's allowed. So turning it perpendicular gives porosity of view and some street frontage variation.

So what does that look like at the ground. Imagine Main Street here; again, Broad Street here. The yellow zones are areas where we feel people can cross through the site. When this says retail, for example, we don't imagine this one giant big box retailer, if you will. That would get broken down subsequently further. It very well may have passageways cutting through in multiple areas, but that's another level of detail that we'll get through once we better understand what we can and can't do. But the main goal is, again, to have folks being able to pass through. This is on access with the current walkway that connects to the parking deck, for example, that's up here.

You could imagine what's really interesting is the history goes back to the original theater building that's here. The original theater building that's here was actually a courtyard building. You walked into a galleria and it had open air and had stores on the left and right. So we thought we were actually being really smart here and doing something unique. It just so happens that one of the buildings on the site was already doing that, not dissimilar to the sort of gallery that you have where Downtown Deli and Donuts is.

We don't know that these would all be enclosed. We actually would like to have them more open air. You could imagine the idea of surprise and serendipity of being along the sidewalk and coming through a building and finding a courtyard, and imagine a cool pop-up local retailer that is there. You would not see a parking deck, for example, from any sides; it would be screened. We would screen that with some finer type of elements and pop-up, start-up retail folks, and those could be additional donut shops. They could be coffee shops. They could be a service retail, people selling goods and wares.

We imagine there could be a food hall-like quality to some of the vendors. So, again, that gives us scalability from smaller folks to somebody that might have a need for 2,500 square foot. Most of your retail tenants aren't going to be much bigger than 2,500 square foot. There are some exceptions, but I think you'll find that's pretty common sizing along all of Main Street, probably 1500 to 2500. We would be in keeping with that.

The parking deck is nestled in here. We've put minimal amount of parking just to have some on site and there would be access from here. We are preserving some of the facades that would screen that. However, in this zone here that is currently a parking lot. So we would be putting additional screening in front of that portion, where we can't reuse older facades. This'll make more sense when I get to the imagery. Again, we're giving you more detail beyond the setbacks and all that so you can feel some comfort of, we've got to this level of master planning through a great deal of thought and interaction.

As you move up from the upper levels, you could imagine those buildings are pulling back and these become sort of rooftop overlooking Main Street. You're at a couple of stories of height at that point and that creates a nice connection of pedestrian to rooftops. That's as you move up, and then, as you go to the residential level, what we're looking for is a 40 foot setback for our tallest building. We have 20 foot here and we have 15 foot here. These are where we really need to be to get the balance of residential units versus cost of land without getting any taller, if you will.

So what does that feel like. This is, again, looking from Main Street. You see the Denny's Building; this is not a design. This is just for referential purposes, right. To give you a sense of the scale. All of these facades, and this is a nature of when we put something in, this was put directly into Google Earth, for example, and so the existing facades remain. This is just to give you a sense of what the scale of that starts to look like. We'll have additional images as well. As you go from Broad Street, just the sense of scale, and, again, allowing some light and view cutting through there, versus turning the buildings parallel to Broad, which would make a much longer, more wall-like building. We prefer this as the development approach.

Now, as we start to look at some of this, and I'll zoom in here, to give you a sense of along Main Street. What we've denoted in orange are the facades. This is currently Venus. That facade just has a lot of work that needs to be done. So we would propose new infill there. What we've shown in the lighter blue, we feel those facades are the most probable to be revitalized, reused, and repurposed. And so, the older theater facade is one of those. There is some chance that we get in here with further investigation

and find that some of these have more damage than our ability to save. But our goal is really, we want the character. We really want that ground floor to have the history of Spartanburg. But then here, again, in the orange zone, these are areas where we would have new infill.

You see the one cut here, for example, that's one of the alleyways cutting through and, again, that might have some facade element or might have a canopy or some things that come out. All those would be designed with your urban design guidelines. We're just trying to give you the sense of the overall strategy. These, for example, translucent boxes we're showing up here; that's not to indicate these would be all glass. There would be another scale and character that would come along there. This is just for massing, if you will, particularly up above. For the ground floor, also, while those are currently two stories, in the future development- and they may be counted by two stories, by the way, planning and zoning needs to consider that- those will very likely be single story retail because the ground floors are very low, and if you look at Spill the Beans, for example, that's a very high bay retail. That's what people look for. 24 foot floor to floor height would be ideal. So we're really looking at the ground floor more like a single story, although it'll have a two story character.

As I move around, and spend a little bit of time as you're looking at Broad Street, for example. Again, the items in orange are where we just feel like those facades had too much data damage that we know those aren't going to be the best to save. This portion here in orange, that's currently a parking lot, and that would be screened with new facades so nobody's looking at a parking deck. The items in the lighter blue are where we feel like those facades had the greatest possibility to be revitalized. What that feels like as a section, as you cut through that, again, you can get the undulating height, you get the space between the buildings; it's allowed light, daylight, and views to come through. That gives you just some general sense, and then this, for example, is the comparison if you took a slice through Denny's, through the park, then through the corner, and then got to our site, and then Freight Yard being here, that's just a longitudinal section.

So, again, not an elevation for design, but to refocus you on how we're trying to step back our upper facades from the lower facades, but still preserving the ones now in orange, in the blue, would be for new infill and passageway porosity for people to get through the block. This would take you through a little bit more of how we would foresee the facades in blue are where we would be infilling in with new design, so that's all along Main Street. This is that walkway that connects you to the parking deck, so that's a good place for that to be coming through. This is on Broad Street. The items in blue are where we are seeing new facades being inserted. We are on the right here. It has a very nice character and we'd love to be able to save that and reuse it as screening because our parking deck, for example, would slot behind that.

So, again, for scale and view, what you have here long sort of views, if you will, and I'll zoom in to each of these. As you're looking west, you would see just these guys, how they rise up above. As you're looking from the east, Denny's Building down here for reference, you can see, again, some of the heights rising and falling, and then a little bit closer and looking west away from it, you could imagine Spill the Beans just behind my right hand shoulder. You being standing in the middle of the street, maybe at that crosswalk, and looking down the street. That would be the sort of volume that you would see. And then, again, looking to towards the Denny's Building, this is the freight yard on our right hand there; these would be new facades that we would come in, yet to be designed. Those are placeholder colors to let you know that's where we would be putting something new in.

These are more photo shopped. Again, this will be looking west. The Denny's Building and you can see the scale. You can, again, see Denny's Building here, and the scale of those guys rising up. And then, this is looking from the east. As you're further away, your tree-scape really doesn't show it, so we've indicated in ghosted lines here where that actually exists. You don't really see it coming from the east. As you get a little bit closer, as you move towards the corner, then these buildings show up. As you're further to the right, interestingly enough, the old historic buildings here actually screen the view of our building. It's interesting how it works on the site from various views. This is a little bit closer. Again, looking from walking, if I just left Spill the Beans here, and I was walking down the sidewalk, then this is the mass and scale of that. And then, again, looking from Freight Yard, being right here, back towards Denny's, those are the sort of scale that you get there.

Now, something that in looking at the site we did want to study is the shade and shadow. And what we have found is ... This is in the summer time. You can see the projected shadows. Here's the projected shadow of Denny's; here's the projected shadows of the existing buildings. The massing is not made by us. That comes from a GIS mapping system. So it's as good a data as that we can get. Similar data is used by Google Earth, for example. It's open-source data. So at 9:00 AM, if no additional projections onto the street at summer at noon, no additional real projections on the street. And you can kind of see some of the historic buildings here, some of the shadows starting to show up. Of course, it's summertime and it's going to be higher in the sky, so less depth of the shadow. And then, later at 3:00 PM, again, the shadows staying pretty well within our site.

As you get to spring and fall, the Equinox, you could get a sense of the shadows produced by our adjacent buildings, here and here, and so, we're all pretty comparable, if you will. Then, you have the further extreme of the Denny's Building, that you see the projection there. As you get towards noon, again, very similar projection of shadow between our buildings and the adjacent buildings to our left. Then, later at 3:00 PM, again, you see the projected shadow. Still a good amount of street light based on sidewalk, on daylight.

At wintertime, things are lower. So pretty much all the buildings are projecting pretty long shadows at that point. Again, this is the lowest point in the sky. This gives you some sense of what 9:00 AM is going to look like and all the projected shadows. And then, as you get, again, at noon o'clock, you have some shadows coming across. You do see the benefit of them turning the buildings because you do get some moments of light hitting, versus one long continuous building, and then, again, at 3:00 PM.

What does a character look like. This is not a design. I'm not saying that everything we do is going to look exactly like this, but what would it feel like. We were trying to find examples that felt like something you might also experience in Spartanburg and have the scale and character. This project is a project that builds over top of and preserves existing facade. They did make this a singular story retail, for example. It's in a four to five story downtown environment, and so it has some compatibility to what we're all looking at. They didn't go quite as high as us, but it's pretty one, two, several handful of stories coming up. There's also some new infill.

But what they did is, this is an alleyway here cutting through. What does it feel like to be in that alleyway. This picture here is what you could imagine some of those activated alleys that we're describing feeling like, or coming through them and finding a courtyard as you're approaching from Main Street to Broad Street; that's the type of character that we really want to foster. When you imagine some of the interior dining that might happen, not dissimilar than you're already doing on some

of your alleyways, that's the kind of scale and character. You see just a little bit of the rooftop terracing that looks over.

Again, open air markets, things that help populate and move people from Main Street to Broad Street and in between, so it's not all just enclosed storefronts and retail. You could imagine some of your local artisanal folks, whether there may be bakers, they might be farmer's markets, and all of those things can be populated. This would be a great place to build upon your live music folks that are on various corners. Do you bring music in here, again, to draw people into the space and through it. So those are the success stories that we've seen someplace else. It's not a one to one and, again, we want to be respectful to Spartanburg and mine some of these ideas from there. But this is just a good case story.

So, again, further case story, on the same street is called Chophouse Row. You can see the existing buildings around it and as they set their buildings back, again, those aren't 60 foot back from the facade, but they set back some. You get how that starts to work with new and old being contrasted with one another. This is the context of which this happened. That's that same facade here. So it's got a similar scale and, again, just giving you a sense of why we've looked at as a great case story for us to look at.

Now, other examples of when people build something new over something old, and none of these are exactly what we would be doing, but it just gives you a sense of it was important in our earlier review, planning and zoning, just to share who all is doing this and how will it be done and so on and so forth. You can get a sense of how people are integrating new and old together. You're always trying to balance compatibility materials, but there's depth and scale that you can see that people are trying to put into these. These are just some interesting examples that are happening around similar scale areas that are developing.

Some of the characteristics of this sort of activated vistas and courtyards; so how does it have some of that very authentic kind of vibe. It's not all perfectly shiny and brand new. While it is new, it has some of the aged and patina that you've come to find. Do you have planters and things like that to bring things to life and landscape and greenery and a place for two or three people to sit, versus a place for a handful of folks. These are just some of the character of indoor-outdoor movable doors to have that quality of life as you move from between those forced alleyways that we're proposing.

Some other qualities of materials where folks have used, whether it's stone or whether it's brick or whether it's wood or what have you, similar materials, we would be coming back for additional reviews and all that as we get into design. These are the product, really, what you're seeing, of several months of the vision sessions and internal design and study. So, again, more than what you're asking for in terms of setback and height, but hopefully giving you really the sense of bringing you into our process and how we really want to be a part of the fabric of Spartanburg. That's all I have.

Mr. DeMark said Great, Craig, can you provide your guidance.

Mr. Lewis said Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board. This is an unprecedented project for both Spartanburg and in many other places. It's rare when you can reclaim urban facades and inject a lot of new life into that block. These are very deep blocks by all standards and the redevelopment of those blocks has been a challenge for a very long time as a result of that. So the fact that the applicants-

I think is a very interesting and important interjection of density in the downtown. The 2007 Downtown Master Plan was all about bringing residential into the downtown. It was all about bringing compact, critical mass, really, people, and the vibrancy that comes with people living and working in the downtown, and really focusing on Main Street as that framework from which a lot of things are going to happen. And they have been happening for a very long time.

This definitely fills a gap in vibrancy that we don't have. Things peter out at that point along Main Street, because the facades have been vacant facades or underutilized facades for some time. And then we get to the park, which is another blank space; a very pretty blank space, but a blank space that's not activated at night. There's nothing really going on around it. So it's exciting to have all of this coming into the downtown.

Fundamentally, the question that is before the Board this evening is one of mass and scale, and the original code picked up on a previous zoning requirement that requires that all buildings along Main Street be set back a minimum of 60 feet. That was intended to reflect the historic scale and patterning of the downtown. It was also, importantly, part of an original consideration as to whether or not this would ultimately be a historic district. It never was. It never became that. We've had a lot of changes that have happened. We've lost some things in the process. But I think it's important to note where that rule comes from. So it's not one that was scientifically put together. Why 60 feet. It was one that was just historically brought forward.

So what the applicants have done is they proposed a series of masses that's set back behind the current facades so that the facades themselves and the historic facades that they're proposing to keep are really the feature elements that people, pedestrians, experience. And I think Mr. Crabtree's views, and we worked with them to get the appropriate views, as a human being, walking along the sidewalk, how you would perceive these buildings. It's going to be very challenging, unless you're right in front of the buildings, to actually perceive the height of the buildings right in front of them and looking up. But really from either end, I think what Mr. Crabtree's study showed is that we get glancing views because they're in mid-block, the massing itself breaks down, and they've done an excellent job, I think, at showing different structures. The light comes through; there's different setbacks for each one of the structures.

I think that they've done an appropriate job, one that retains the integrity of the storefronts. The next phase of conversation is ensuring that those storefronts are not just mere facades, but, in fact, used as active storefronts. I know that they'll do a great job with that, but that's a subsequent conversation. But, importantly, I think that they have shown that the massing of the towers above is appropriate to an evolving downtown that has long been moving towards taller structures over time, and one that reflects the character and the authenticity of the main street as it is, but brings the new life to the area. So, again, I think that they've done an excellent job at mitigating those key elements, the things that are worth having the conversation about.

There will be a number of other things that we'll talk about with the next application when we'll talk about the full architectural package. I just encourage folks, if you've got any thoughts or comments related to those, those are going to be really important, and you're welcome to share those ideas with us tonight. But know that we'll have a subsequent meeting where there can be a lot more detail for the applicants to consider that they'll be presenting to us to consider at that point. So, with that, I do recommend approval of this application as they have submitted to you, and recommend that the setback be granted and that you grant the exception for the additional story to go from 10 stories to 11 stories in height. And with that, I know, Mr. Chairman, I have a weak internet connection apparently in

my house. So I know it cut out at least two times while I was making that. But I think you probably got the context of everything. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. DeMark said Great. Thanks, Craig. You did cut out, but I think we got the gist of what you were saying. So I want to open it up to the Board with any thoughts or questions or comments. I like the project a lot. I think the scale is appropriate. I would ask that the M. Peters Group think about the Broad Street facade, as well as the Main Street facade. I think we got some feedback from folks that live along the Broad Street side that we don't ignore them. I drove that street a couple of times this weekend and think it is a road that does cross through downtown Spartanburg, and I think it's important to keep a connection there, as well, but also tastefully do the parking garage so that it doesn't look like a parking garage. Maybe there is some retail not really shown in the plan today, but some retail that does face Broad Street, I think that would really help that facade in some way to draw attention from that side.

I know David talks about creation of the vias that are drawing people into and towards Main Street. But I think it's important to have something on that side as well that will be a beacon. I look back to the, execution of the Wall Street Pocket Park and retail that starts at the turret and then brings it down that entire street and activates it. I think that's very important towards the design effort of this project. But those are my thoughts. Lucy or Tory or Lauren or Carolyn, any other that you all have.

Ms. Schoepf said I think it's a great proposal. I think for downtown Spartanburg, this a great beginning. My concerns are Broad Street, that if we're going to make this another Main Street, that we do have storefronts on Broad Street and not just the parking facades.

Ms. Rogers said I have some thoughts. I think this is a great update to the conversation that we had last time. I think this is really exciting. I've heard lots of optimism about it around town the last couple weeks since it came out. I think people are excited about it. I think there's lots of questions and this project involves a lot of current business owners and tenants and neighbors and a lot of people adjacent to this; and I think all those people have questions and want to just make sure that the Broad Street side is going to be as attractive as the Main Street side. I've heard some questions like that, but I think this is great. I think that we should give it the exceptions that they need and let the team move forward.

Ms. Babcock said a couple of my questions ... I'm not sure who to direct this. I guess, David, are these three separate buildings or are they connected by a terrace level above the retail. How, I guess, does that exactly work.

Mr. Crabtree explained they are really connected by the ground two-story plane, if you will, and if you imagine that, while we might have what I've called high bay retail, that's 24 foot, that still feels like two stories to you on Main Street, right. That at a roof level, there would be connectivity. There could be possibilities where we try to bridge between the couple of buildings, because that becomes a design feature. I have no perfect answer to your question because we hadn't got through all of that yet. So actually I'm thinking on my feet here, but the idea is to keep that level of connectivity between the two. So while there could be some pedestrian bridging the various residential buildings there, it's really to keep them sort of separate, but together. They're really connected at the ground floor where people can connect. And then, also, at the intermediate second story-ish level of around 24 to 30 foot of height, where that's a roof terrace level, some amenities would be there, like clubhouse type stuff, where they might have some of their gathering spaces and things like that.

Ms. Babcock said- Just so you know, I asked that because you showed us a lot of beautiful outdoor spaces out of alleyways that didn't have a roof over them, and part of my concern is making sure that as those alleyways cut through the block, which I really do like, is if they have a roof on them or they're too narrow without a roof, they can just feel out of scale as a pedestrian and not be inviting. That was part of my question.

The other one is, are we approving three buildings, or are we approving one development. Because it looks to me like only one building really needs the height variance, while all three of them need the setback variance.

Mr. DeMark said I think it's since its one project, we are approving this variance for the one project; and he asked Mr. Livingston if that was how he saw it.

Mr. Livingston said yes. This is one project.

Mr. DeMark said Okay. Lauren, any thoughts.

Ms. Rogers: Not at the moment, Kevin. Just to you the team, the M. Peters Group team, I think you all have done a fantastic job thus far. Being a lifelong resident of Spartanburg, I know that this has been a vision for a lot of people for a long time and bringing this to fruition, I think is a good step forward in our One Spartanburg initiative.

Mr. DeMark said since there were no further comments from the team; he would open it up for public hearing. If anyone is here to speak in favor of this project, please raise your hand from the participants' stand, and Martin will promote you so that you can speak.

Mr. Livingston said we have Robert Richardson.

Mr. Robert (Ricky) Richardson said Hello, gang. I hope y'all are doing well. It's been a long time and, boy, is this exciting. To quote Craig, this is an unprecedented project for downtown. Again, David, thank you so much for bringing this opportunity to us. My internet went out when Craig was talking, so I'm not familiar with the setback, and I think it had to do with feet, which I don't really care about. My question is in the original Design Code, if you went above either four or six stories, there were at each successive story additional things that needed to be done. I don't remember if it was bicycle racks. I don't remember if it had to do with environmental issues or whatever. But, Craig, can you perhaps re-enlighten me, a little bit of about what those things were and are they being adhered to and are they exceptions to this or are they being taken care of by David and his team.

Mr. Lewis said yes. Thank you, Ricky. It's a good question. When the code was originally written, we had height exceptions that permitted additional height subject to lead certification, or something equivalent to that. A lot of folks are doing that normally these days, but also, it's just one option. One of the additional things that was put in there was for mixed use buildings and really trying to encourage more mixed use buildings and not just single use individual offices or just residential like structures. The 10 story height was always part of the height limit in the Downtown DT6 zone. It dropped down dramatically once you got out of that district. It goes down to four stories and allows you to pop back up. So they're really just asking for one additional story over that current permitted height that we have right now.

Mr. Richardson said I guess the conclusion is they're jumping through all the hoops and its all good. Okay. I see your head nodding. That all sounds good. Yep. I do. I just think it's a project that we could all love. It looks like it is taking the pedestrian account tremendously. It increases density. And to my favor, it really energizes the eastern end of Main Street, which, as you pointed out earlier, next to the Denny's Tower has the two parks on both sides and it, the dang thing, Main Street, just stops. I think this is a tremendous opportunity. Anyway, I have no doubt that they will design something that looks really great. But as a citizen and a former chair of the DRB, I think it looks great. Thank you.

Mr. DeMark said Martin, are there any others.

Mr. Livingston said we have Don Bramblett.

Mr. Don Bramblett: Hello, everyone. I'd just like to say that I wanted to echo other folks thoughts that this is a tremendous opportunity for our uptown area. There's a couple things I would like to say that echo what several Board members and the gentleman from Peters said about focusing on Broad Street. I feel like Broad Street has long been an unnoticed road. In other words, Main Street has been like the front door and the back door of most businesses is Broad Street. I would like for the designers to get away from that idea of the back door. When Jerry Richardson was planning, back then it was called Flagstar building in the late eighties, he wanted the building to be 360 degrees. He wanted people to be able to approach that building from any direction and feel like they were walking into the front door. I would like to see Broad Street.

The sidewalks are in rough shape. They need to be wider. And as this project progresses, I hope that the city will get on board and just do a total up-fit change to the sidewalk situation from South Commerce Street, all the way to Church Street, is desperately needed. People park off from Broad Street and then they have to walk all the way around to get to some buildings. They have to walk all the way around to Main Street. The businesses that go from Main Street all the way to Broad, it would be so much better if more of them had another front door on the Broad Street side. I would like for that thought to be incorporated in as this project unfolds in his design.

The second thing Jerry Richardson did, he realized he was building an 18 story building and would bring a lot of people to the downtown, and since there's not a lot of public transportation, most of them would be bringing their own car. So I would like the developers to think about a tunnel under Broad Street, some parking south of Broad, just like the Denny's Building has for its employees, and then a tunnel underneath Broad Street that comes up and provides access to these new residences that are being built. It wouldn't be for the general public, just like the tunnel at the Denny's Building is not available to the general public, but it would be available to the residents of the living spaces there. That's all I have. I think it's wonderful. It's going to work out and certainly, like Ricky said, it should bring some attention to that end of our uptown business district. Thank you.

Mr. DeMark said Thanks, Don. Martin, do we see any others.

Mr. Livingston said we have two questions in the chat, but no other raised hands.

Mr. DeMark said Okay. How about any questions you want us to address.

Mr. Livingston said the first question is: "This all sounds wonderful. I realize this is still planning, but what does this look like for current business tenants."

Mr. Travis Paul with the team said, I can take this one. It's still really early to talk about from construction periods and timelines, but there's no immediate impacts. I think the key is we want to work with the current businesses downtown. We want to keep those tenants. We'll start those conversations now that we're moving forward. But what's important is we're South Carolina based. We all live within 25, 30 minutes of the development, maybe 40 minutes at the most. We also have another development happening in Spartanburg County at the Clifton Mill that was announced last night. I think what's key is we really want to spend time with the tenants, understand their goals and how they fit in, and we work on their businesses. So, it's still really early to talk about timelines, but there's no immediate impacts for really the near future right now.

Mr. Livingston said the next question, Mr. Chairman, is: "Love the plan. Understanding that there will be minimal parking. How many total spaces are we looking at versus what is there currently." This is Chris Brymer, Delaney's Irish Pub.

Mr. David Crabtree: I can help answer that. I might not get it exactly right. We'll have approximately 200 spaces. I don't recall exactly how many spaces were on that surface lot in.

Mr. DeMark said your intent, David, is to put approximately 200 spaces. Is that fair.

David Crabtree: That's right. If you imagine we have approximately, I'll just say, around 200 units in addition to retail, ground level retail, and other space. So we are purposefully trying to not over-park this thing, to overburden the site because of, for the example, I think, Don was bringing up, we hadn't thought about tunnels and things like that, but there's other parking lots adjacent to this within just a couple of blocks. So that keeps us at enough parking onsite for residents, because we have some condo and some for rent products, and then there is a lot of additional parking in near walking proximity.

Mr. DeMark said Great. Martin, any others.

Mr. Livingston said I see no raised hands or questions in the chat, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeMark said Great. How about are there any opposition comments. Raise your hand in the chat window, please. I don't see any.

Mr. Livingston said there are no raised hands or questions in the chat, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeMark said Great. Having seen no opposition, I'm going to close the public hearing now, and turn back to the Board.

Can we get a motion to approve preliminarily the project with the two exceptions. This is the key for this evening. The two exceptions are the additional story of height and the setbacks as demonstrated in the preliminary package. Can I get a motion.

Ms. Schoepf moved approval of the two exceptions; and Mr. DeMark seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. DeMark said the motion passes and the project receives preliminary approval for the two items brought to us this evening, the setback and the additional story. Martin, will you and Julie provide that in a letter from the Board tomorrow and issue it to the developer so that they're aware of that. They obviously have more work to do for the preliminary approval, which I know will be in the future, but we're very excited about this project coming to downtown Spartanburg and look forward to working with you on the next steps. Thank you.

Martin: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We'll work on the letter.

Disposition of the Minutes from the October 5, 2021 Meeting:

Mr. DeMark said Carolyn was not present and would need to abstain from the vote.

Ms. Lynch moved approval as presented and she was seconded by Ms. Rogers. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0 to 1, with Ms. Schoepf abstained.

Staff Announcements:

Mr. Livingston said so on the agenda is the status of the Comprehensive Plan. We just wanted to make the Board aware that the conference plan draft plan is available for comments. So if you can review it and let us know if you have any comments, you can send them to us.

Finally, new Board members, we may have mentioned this already at the October meeting, but new Board Members are required to have Continuing Education Training (New Board Member training), and there may be additional Board Members that may need to complete theirs.

Mr. DeMark said Yeah. I actually signed up for the online Continued Education training and I've downloaded it. I just haven't watched it. I will watch this week. Great.

Ms. Schoepf asked do you have that link. I need to get that link because I need to do it as well.

Martin: Okay. We'll try to get it out to you.

Ms. Schoepf said Thank you.

Mr. DeMark said Martin, can you also send around a link to the Comprehensive Plan to the Board Members. So everyone has a chance to find it online and then be able to comment back. And then, if everyone would please take a look at that and shoot any comments back and copy me when you send them to Martin, just so that we know that each of you had a chance to look at it and reviewed it so that we're all on the same thought pattern. Okay.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.



Kevin DeMark, Chair

Minutes edited by Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant