



City of Charleston
Design Review Board
Minutes
April 3rd, 2023
4:30 p.m.

A meeting of the Design Review Board was held at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, April 3rd, 2023 at 2 George Street and adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

Board members present: Erica Chase (Chair), Andy Smith, Dinos Liollo, Erin Stevens, Ben Whitener, Ashley Jackrel.

Staff members present: David Meeks and Patrick Carlson, recording

Chair called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m., introduced Board members and Staff, and explained protocol for the meeting.

Applications

The following applications were considered:

(NOTE: Unless otherwise remarked, Chair voted all items, Copy of complete staff comments/recommendations are attached. Copies of all recusals/letters/emails/petitions mentioned during this meeting are on file.)

- 1. 3030 Maybank Hwy. – TMS # 313-00-00-004, 023, 006 | DRB2023-000150**
Requesting conceptual approval for a new townhome community with 72 units.

Owner:	Maybank 3030 LLC
Applicant:	Vinyet Architecture
Neighborhood/Area:	John's Island

Presenters: Jenny Horn, Bill Senst, Tony Berry, and Josh Lilly

Project Detail: Jenny Horne said that she would begin by addressing some of the staff comments from the last DRB meeting when this project was presented. She said that the staff had requested for a more special entry to the site and restudy how the layout and landscaping of the property could be improved to include the full limits of the development within code compliance. She said that staff had also requested that the proposed pond become a more organic shape and to potentially reorient the location of the development's mailboxes. She said after consideration, they had developed a more site-oriented landscape that served to present a more pleasing façade that addressed all of the stormwater concerns. The streetscape sought to capitalize on the spaces between townhome units and introduce more sable palmettos and native grasses. The mailbox structure had also been moved closer to the entrance with a parking area that was more accessible as you entered the development.

Bill Senst said they had also adjusted the number of materials used in the buildings and manipulated the elevations of several architectural features by removing some vertical boarding and using horizontal bands to visually separate levels and potentially add different tones for the facades.

Ashley asked if there were any attainable or workforce housing units in the proposal and if they had considered how the rear areas of the building could have privacy screening.

Mr. Senst said there were not any workforce housing units in the development and they had only looked at creating more inviting balcony space and window placement patterns.

Dinos asked if they considered adding canopies to the balcony doors.

Mr. Senst said they would consider it and would make a final decision based on lighting and the ultimate architectural form.

Dinos asked if the presented color schemes were the ones they were planning to use.

Mr. Senst said they were the anticipated color palettes and the goal was to have the different buildings look and feel like separate areas.

Public Comment: Cynthia Davis said that she wanted to learn more about the entrance to the development and asked if it was going to be on Maybank Highway or Sailfish Road.

Mr. Berry said that the entrance will be off of Maybank Highway, but there would be an additional internal connection that could link to Sailfish Road via the adjacent properties in the event those properties were also developed in the future.

Staff Recommendation: Conceptual approval

Board Comments/Action: Erin asked if the internal connection road would be paved and simply end at the property line.

Mr. Berry said that road was a component of the zoning for that property and they would pave the internal road with asphalt up to the property line.

Dinos said he had issues with the enclosed backyards, which Ashley agreed with and said it still needed work-even with the additional landscaping.

Erica agreed and said if the future neighborhood covenants prohibited fencing that could also pose a problem.

Andy said that there should be some privacy between property lines but it should be able to look like what the resident finds aesthetically pleasing.

Dinos said the architectural design direction was positive and liked the direction of the development's evolution. He said the applicant should remember to consider the policy of window placements as they designed the next stage.

Ben said he liked the green space in between the units but any fencing would create condensed yards. He suggested that the applicant should explore reorienting the units to preserve as much landscaped area as possible.

Dinos said that the mailbox area was an opportunity to create more of an entrance statement and highlight arriving into the development with greater detailing and expanding the property features.

Andy said that there was an opportunity to develop the entrance using landscaping and reorienting the initial focal points of the site as they looked ahead to the next stage of development.

MOTION: Approval

MADE BY: DL SECOND: AS VOTE: FOR 6 AGAINST 0

2. 345 Folly Rd. – TMS # 424-00-00-023 | DRB2023-000156

Requesting conceptual approval for the renovation and small addition to an existing building. Converting what was a Subway restaurant, to a Dairy Queen.

Owner:	Sovereign
Applicant:	Coast Architects, Arnie McClure
Neighborhood/Area:	James Island

Presenters: Arnie McClure, Matt Cline, and Katie Zimmerman

Project Detail: Arnie McClure said that he would be speaking about the site history and proposed architecture. He said the applicant was in negotiations for a lease on the property and the owner had stipulated that the existing larger street sign remain.

Matt Cline said that the goal of the site plan was to finish the parking lot in order to secure adequate parking and create a more fluid drive-through for the business. He proposed strips of landscaping on the north and south property lines, primarily populated with shrubs and sweetgrass. The district required a 12 ft. wide sidewalk, but the proposal proposed an approximately 5 ft. sidewalk within the property buffered by areas of grass to allow for an alternative direction that didn't pass through the street sign and fire hydrant. He said he believed the DRB had the purview to allow for this sidewalk size and orientation. On the street-facing side of the building, the proposal called for a line of integrated bench seating that presented complimentary masonry, but also shielded some of the outdoor eating space and additional landscaping. The back side of the property had a 45 ft. wide access drive next to a 20 ft. residential buffer that doubled as a wet drainage easement. They did not propose any landscaping in that section because it served as a conveyance for large amounts of stormwater.

Mr. McClure said that the plan was to demo the majority of the interior space, but retain the majority of the exterior walls and masonry after making space for new access points. Several additional building components would include ADA-compliant restrooms and walk-in freezers. The grassy area to the north of the building would also be further developed into an outdoor eating area that would connect to the integrated benches to the east. The exterior would have an additional coating layer with brick bases added in order to create a more genre-appropriate aesthetic for the proposed business that utilized different types of colors and glass. He said they had not decided on the final colors for the stucco and brick layers, but there will only be one for each material.

Erica asked, considering all of the improvements to the property, if the monuments sign had to come into code compliance-regardless of its grandfathered status. She said, traditionally, when at least 50% of a property's value is improved, the entire site had to be brought into code compliance.

Ben asked what would be the potential trigger for that scenario. David Meeks said it was a 50% appraised value improvement threshold but he did not know the appraised value of the entire site.

Ben asked the applicants if they were going to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for review. Mr. McClure said they already had been approved by the TRC because of the proposed site work.

Ben asked about the size of the addition. Mr. McClure said they were proposing to add less than 500 sq. ft. of enclosed building space.

Erica asked if they had received approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to remove the onsite trees. They said they had not received approval at that point.

Erica said that they did not hear proposals or presentations until BZA approval had been secured. As such, they were going to continue the meeting through the feedback phase, but would not take a vote or a motion on the application at that point in time.

Public Comment: Andrew Borgman submitted an online comment supporting more landscaping involving oaks and changing elements of the existing signage.

Katie Zimmerman said, as the Executive Director of Charleston Moves, that she supported the multi-use path requirement of a 12.5 ft. wide sidewalk that sought to create a more dynamic and safe walking experience along Folly Road and linking it to other transportation building projects across the City. She understood the restrictions some properties posed, but was certain that at least an 8 ft. path could be negotiated for this site.

Discussion: Ben asked the applicants if they had considered splitting the sidewalk into two 5 ft. paths.

Mr. Cline said that the sign sat approximately 7.2 ft. off the street and a sidewalk in full compliance would encroach on that space and cover half of the required 25 ft. buffer zone. It would also disjoint the already limited landscaping proposals in an effort to navigate the path around power poles, fire hydrant, and the existing signage.

Ms. Zimmerman said that the intent behind the ordinance was to prevent user conflict. By shrinking the path size down, it was increasing the chances of collision and conflict between patrons navigating the path in different manners.

Erica said the consensus of the board was in support of a multi-use path that needed to be studied before the final site proposal.

Erin asked about the proposed diagonal site walls near the front of the property. Mr. McClure said that it was an attempt to help screen some of the parking areas but it could be adjusted to accommodate different pathway layouts.

Andy said that he would also consider the shape and form of different native plants in order to fill out the area in different ways.

Ashley said that this situation was similar to a West Ashley property proposal that had been reviewed by the DRB. Plan West Ashley also called for a 12-ft. multi-use path, but it felt inappropriate to put that entire expectation on the backs of private property owners. She said it felt beyond the purview of the DRB to enforce that rule and asked for clarification on what was required by the Code in question. She said the multi-use path was a great idea. However, it became difficult upon considering easements, setbacks, and right-of-ways across different corridors to expect private property owners to develop such an ambitious project for the public. She asked for ordinance clarification before the DRB reviewed the next stage of the project.

Dinos said that he liked the overall architectural direction, in particular the linear feel of the fenestration. His only suggestion was to try and find a way to visually break up the south elevation.

Andy said it was important to think about the visual space in the front of the property because it was already very small and any downsizing adjustments would decrease its impact further.

Ben said, in the event the BZA does not approve tree removal and/or the sign has to be adjusted, if they did not do as much site work as proposed, the project would not trigger a TRC approval requirement.

Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the 3/20/23 meeting

MOTION: Approval

MADE BY: DL SECOND: AS VOTE: FOR 6 AGAINST 0

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Patrick Carlson
Clerk of Council's Office