



City of Charleston  
Design Review Board  
Minutes  
June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
4:30 p.m.

A meeting of the Design Review Board was held at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 2 George Street and adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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

**Board members present:** Erica Chase, Chair, Dinos Liollo (left at 4:55 p.m. and returned at 5:15 p.m.), Ben Whitener, Andy Smith (left at 4:55 p.m. and returned at 5:15 p.m.), Erin Stevens, Ashley Jackrel (joined at 4:33 p.m.), and Stephanie Tillerson (left at 5:31 p.m. and returned at 5:41 p.m.)

**Staff members present:** David Meeks, and Patrick Carlson, recording

Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m., introduced Board members and Staff, stated that Andy Smith and Dinos Liollo would be recused from **Application (2.)** on the agenda, 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. 3588 Maybank Hwy.– TMS # 279-14-00-039 | DRB2023-000000**

Requesting approval for demolition (after-the-fact) of a structure over 50 years of age

Owner:	George Gratzick
Applicant:	George Gratzick
Neighborhood/Area:	John's Island

Presenter: George Gratzick, Charles Branks

Project Detail: George Gratzick said that the property had been unoccupied since 2017 and had bought the property last January. He said that the old building needed significant work and had a new building designed that incorporated the original sides. Upon removing the exterior surfaces, the construction team discovered the base plates and framework had decayed and Mr. Gratzick introduced his contractor, Charles Branks, to justify the demolition in question.

Charles Branks said that, even without demolishing the original structure, 90% of the walls would have been essentially replaced anyway after examining the affected facades and windows. He came to understand that the City should have been contacted at the point of discovery. However, they had continued by demolishing the original structure in order to adhere to the project's timeline.

David said that before construction began, the team had submitted a request to remove a newer addition to the back of the structure, which had been approved by the City.

Public Comment: Carlene Sessions asked about the projected square footage of the new building, because it would affect the number of available parking spaces. Erica said that the DRB was only discussing the demolition approval and referred her to David for all other inquiries.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Board Comments/Action: Dinos asked David if the DRB would not have been made aware of the application if the size of the project had fallen under City staff jurisdiction. David confirmed his speculation and said that the renovation was under 3000 sq. ft. so it was not automatically categorized for DRB consideration initially.

Dinos said that it appeared as if there was no demolition plan in the original documentation, but contained a series of notes on the topic throughout the application. Dinos asked the DRB what they would be asking the applicant to do if they denied the demolition (after-the-fact) request.

**Executive Session pursuant to SC Code 30-4-70(a)(2) regarding DRB appellate matters.**

On a motion of Andy Smith, seconded by Dinos Liollo, the Design Review Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:42 p.m.

On a motion of Dinos Liollo, seconded by Andy Smith, the Design Review Board voted unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 4:51 p.m.

No action was taken.

MOTION: Approval

MADE BY: DL SECOND: ST VOTE: FOR 6 AGAINST 1

**2. 2015 Wildts Battery Blvd.– TMS # 313-00-00-337 | DRB2023-000152**

Requesting preliminary approval for a new Fire Station #23

Owner:	City of Charleston
Applicant:	Liollo Architecture
Neighborhood/Area:	John's Island

Presenter: Jennifer Charzewski

Project Detail: Jennifer Charzewski said that she would be speaking on the updated architectural design of the property after incorporating previous suggestions from the DRB. The focus of the changes centered on streamlining the site and achieved that goal by simplifying the exposed roof structure, overall building geometry and proposed landscape additions. The materials and floor plan were essentially the same as the approved conceptual plan, with the notable exception of creating space for two cisterns compared to the originally proposed singular, larger, cistern.

Erin asked if the wetland in the front-facing portion of the property was going to remain undisturbed. Ms. Charzewski said that the plan was to keep the existing plants and create a cast-in-place concrete retaining wall along the backside of the area.

Erin said the area around the generator was labeled as exposed mulch and asked for more information about that landscaping choice. Ms. Charzewski and David said that the plan was to mulch the surrounding area and leave it exposed so that the forest floor litter layer eventually returned. The area in question needed access

from all sides for testing, maintenance, and refueling purposes so any intentional plantings would be significantly damaged over time.

Ben asked why the mechanical well was moved outside of the building. Ms. Charzewski said that it was because the dedicated outdoor air unit was too large to be placed on the roof. As a result, they split the system into two components and positioned the air handler element inside, to extend its lifespan, and placed the condensing unit outside in a smaller enclosure.

Public Comment: None

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Board Comments/Action: Erin said that she understood the need to facilitate a low maintenance landscaping plan, but suggested the addition of more vegetation in some areas to loosen up the overall rigid lines of the proposed layout and create a more naturalized look.

Ben said the building proposal was excellent, but wished that the mechanical screen enclosure could be repositioned because it disrupted the visual of the screened porch area.

Erica asked Ms. Charzewski about the progression of the application through the TRC process regarding the sidewalk. Ms. Charzewski said that the TRC pre-application stage was complete and they were due to initiate the first TRC submittal within a few weeks.

MOTION: Preliminary approval, with the following board comments:

1. Study ways to soften the landscaping plan around the generator
2. Study all areas with turf, seed, and mulch
3. Consider loosening the overall landscaping plan

MADE BY:   BW   SECOND:   ES   VOTE: FOR   5   AGAINST   0  

**3. 1859 Sam Rittenberg Blvd.– TMS # 351-14-00-001 | DRB2023-000158**

Requesting conceptual approval for a new Tommy’s car wash

Owner:	Carolina Child Care Properties, LLC
Applicant:	Olympus Palms 8, LLC
Neighborhood/Area:	West Ashley

Presenter: Paul Lawler, Trevor Sperry, Ryan Esienburg, Ed Gilmore

Project Detail: Paul Lawler said the property had a shared access driveway with the adjacent O’Reilly Auto Parts, and an additional access point to Gardner Rd. The applicant was proposing a full demolition with an expected main building measuring approximately 110 feet long with multiple entry lanes and 13 vacuum stalls. The proposed landscaping plan incorporated the existing palmettos on the site and introduced additional plantings.

Travis Sperry said that they wanted to brainstorm with the DRB to produce a more locally-inspired design that echoed the community aesthetic.

Ryan Esienburg said he represented the franchiser, Tommy’s Express Car Wash, and thought that the application reflected a design that was meant to reflect the character of the region.

Dinos asked if the architect was present. The team said the architect was not present, but they represented the equipment and facility design team and could answer questions about the proposed plan.

Mr. Lawler said that they had been coordinating with City staff for months on establishing a design perspective and had settled on a series of grey colors with a few highlighted areas.

Dinos asked if they were familiar with the West Ashley Revitalization Commission's recommendations concerning the evolution of design in the West Ashley area. Mr. Lawler said he was not familiar with the plan.

Dinos asked if the proposal was a prototype for the company. Mr. Esienburg said that there were similar structural layouts and components compared to other developments, but the exterior designs and elevations were customized to the West Ashley community.

Erin asked what specific changes, compared to the standard plan developed by the franchiser, were made to the site to better understand how the proposed building was more reflective of the surroundings.

Mr. Sperry said that the footprint of the building and operational layout were standardized, but they had more flexibility in the materials and external facades to adapt to a particular community.

Ed Gilmore said they were willing to change as much as possible that would not alter the customer experience. They compared their original plan to a variety of buildings and car dealerships in the area and had altered the proposal to be more in line with adjacent property visuals.

Public Comment: None

Staff Recommendation: Denial

Board Comments/Action: Ashley asked David if a DRB denial of the application would require the applicant to return with a completely different plan. David said the applicant could return, but any specific changes could not necessarily be anticipated.

Andy said that a DRB denial traditionally signaled that the applicant should initiate the design process over again. Any functional or desirable components should be identified and utilized, however, a denial implied that the application was not developing in a desirable manner.

Ashley said that she acknowledged the application's design issues that were shared between DRB members, but wanted to create as much design direction and clarity for the applicant as possible. She also said that it could be helpful to consider a deferral instead of a denial.

Erin said that if the architecture was reconsidered in a significant way, it could alter the site plan and overall footprint. Therefore, it was important to emphasize looking at the entire layout in order to create as much flexibility for the applicant as possible.

Andy said that the applicant should talk to City staff who had assisted in the development of other related buildings in the area.

Dinos said that he approved of the quality of the material selection, but the building was too stylized to integrate into the context of the neighborhood. He said it was important to create architecture that had a presence and spoke to the Charleston context. By creating foundational buildings in the region, new developments could help inspire future architecture that maintained a local character. He said the applicant risked isolating the site from other developments by stylizing the approach too much. He asked for the author of the proposed design to be present for future presentations in order to answer questions and help expedite the review process.

Ben said the material nature of the building worked well and asked the design team to consider the site and how the project could be laid out and function on the property in question.

MOTION: Denial

MADE BY: DL SECOND: AS VOTE: FOR 7 AGAINST 0

**Minutes**

**1. Approval of minutes from the 5/15/23 meeting**

MOTION: Deferral

MADE BY: AS SECOND: AJ VOTE: FOR 7 AGAINST 0

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Patrick Carlson  
Clerk of Council's Office