



PLANNING SERVICES

THE UPSIDE of FLORIDA

Architectural Review Board

MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

December 5, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Carter Quina, George Mead, Michael Crawford, Susan Campbell-Hatler, Derek Salter, Anna Fogarty, Nina Campbell

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Brandi Deese, Assistant Planning Services Administrator, Leslie Statler, Planner, Lysia Bowling, City Attorney, Rusty Wells, Assistant City Attorney, Keith Wilkins, Assistant City Administrator, Don Kraher, Council Executive, Trudi Nichols, Chris Johnston

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Grover C. Robinson, IV, Superintendent Malcolm Thomas, Quint Studer, Teresa Hill, Samuel Horton, Steve Jernigan, Keith Wasdin, Robert Fabbio, Danny Zimmern, William Dunaway, Steve Dana, Ed Carson, D. C. Reeves, Oliver Abaira, Drew Buchanan, Ann Hill, Ron Helms, Larry Vosbury, Derek Cosson, Dr. Marian Williams, Alan Gray, Jim Scoggins

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM PRESENT

Chairman Quina called the Architectural Review Board (ARB) special meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with a quorum present. He explained the one reason for this meeting regarding this project was because last month it was really declared that the Board did not take action since we voted 3 to 3 tie against the request to demolish, and so we realized that if we didn't act within 30 days there could potentially be an automatic approval of the demolition request, and so our secretary was able to proceed with scheduling a special meeting.

OPEN FORUM – Chairman Quina asked if there was anyone who would like to speak to the Board in general, and anybody who would like to speak to the Board specifically about this project would have an opportunity to do that. He continued by stating that the Board hopes that you would sign a form in the back of the room to be on the agenda to speak. There was no audience input.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1	213 W. Garden St.	PHBD / GCD
Demolition	215 W. Garden St.	C-2 / C-2A

Action taken: Approved

Steve Jernigan, Bay Design Associates, is requesting the Board reconsider demolition of the existing Escambia County School Administration Building.

EVERYTHING THAT'S GREAT ABOUT FLORIDA IS BETTER IN PENSACOLA.

222 West Main Street Pensacola, FL 32502 / T: 850.435.1670 / F: 850.595.1143 / www.cityofpensacola.com

This structure is a contributing structure within the Palafox Historic Business District and was constructed in 1941. Demolition of this contributing structure would allow for the redevelopment of the site with a mixed-use development. On November 15, 2018, the Board considered this request and the vote tied 3 – 3 on a negative motion. The City Attorney has deemed this does not constitute a decision of the Board. According to Land Development Code Section 12-13-3 (G), the Board must render a decision within 31 days; thus the reason for this special meeting and reconsideration of this agenda item. Ms. Deese stated this was step one of a three step process. The Board was letting the developer know today yes or no whether or not it was going to permit demolition of the building, however, they must come back before the Board for conceptual approval before the demolition permit can be issued.

Chairman Quina stated when the Board denied the building demolition in 2017, it also suggested that the developer put together efforts to see what the options were and see what the future master plan would be. The Board wanted to get a really good feel for what they proposed before it approved demolition.

Mr. Dunaway appreciated the opening clarification and wanted to make one further clarification. When Ms. Deese stated it was a multi-step process, step one is the request before the Board, a request the Board approve demolition. The Code indicates that the Board had two choices – recommendation to approve or recommendation for a 6-month moratorium at which point it could look at the historical society and other agencies who might be interested in doing something with the building. He advised it was their understanding that the Board went through that process last year and asked for the team to come up with those alternatives, and instead of 6 months, they actually took one year. If the Board was to make a recommendation for approval, the Code is very clear that the applicant would seek approval of the replacement plans prior to receiving the demolition permit. He then read from the Code, Section 12-12-3 (C) which states the replacement plans shall include but shall not be restricted to the project concept, preliminary elevations, site plans and adequate work drawings for at least the foundation plan to enable the applicant to receive its permit. Ms. Deese explained the Code did not identify the plans as conceptual but refers to it as replacement plans, but it would be similar to what the Board operates under as conceptual and not asking for enough details for final approval. Mr. Dunaway was prepared to go through the entire presentation for Ms. Campbell's benefit since she was not present for the previous meeting. Ms. Campbell indicated she was comfortable with going forward with the new presentation.

Mr. Jernigan advised they brought back the entire team to be available for further questions. He maintained that the building architecturally was not a significant structure. It had been referred to as an art-deco structure, but it was more a trade school to put people to work. It did not have a historical or cultural tie and served many years as the offices of the school district. As a result of the many renovations, most of the original architectural character of the building was changed. As was mentioned by staff, the Board would have two more chances to review this project. He explained it was not intended to be Southtowne West but would be constructed from scratch and would be designed to fit in the district, providing much needed housing for downtown Pensacola. Chairman Quina asked what the building could be used for. Mr. Jernigan stated the original CRA study stated it could not be used for workforce affordable type housing because of the deep bays, window size and location. It could lend itself to more high-end condominiums. He also pointed out there was not enough demand for office space in the current market.

Mr. Crawford asked about the study that validated the approach for mixed units. Mr. Rothfeder stated the study indicated the overall housing demand in terms of numbers. He explained people without children 0-18 have a desire to live in an urban setting, and Gen X, millennials and empty nesters generate the demand to live downtown. An amenitized project makes the development interesting for those groups since they want that level of density with people all around them. Ms. Campbell asked about the conceptual view "C" drawing illustrating the Garden Street arches. Mr. Rothfeder stated the arches were on Spring and left over from the old printing building on Garden, and they worked to incorporate those elements into the urban fabric noting how it ties across the street into the new urban plaza and with Spring Street being placed on a road diet. Ms. Campbell had visited the site and agreed that was a possibility.

Ms. Campbell-Hatler pointed out it was the Board's responsibility to reinforce and maintain the special character of the district as new projects were developed. Mr. Crawford explained this plan with this number of units in this footprint has been validated from the business case, and the next level would be the aesthetics being responsive to the character of the district. Ms. Campbell offered sometimes the old structures can devalue a property, and the cost of renovation could be an impressive number. In terms of the use of the building, she asked if Southtowne was at full capacity, and it was determined they were.

Mr. Mead stated with regard to the architectural and historical significance, he felt that could be overcome. The importance of the structure to the integrity of the district had two components – one being historic and one being the GCD, with both overlays working together. He pointed out the purpose of the GCD was to encourage a coordinated architectural character within the district. In the PHBD it states construction compatible new buildings, scale of existing structures, and diversified architectural styles. In looking at those surroundings, he observed large scale buildings in the monumental frame. With this being an anchoring corner, the Code calls for something on that scale, and he asked if they had considered that; in his opinion, they had an opportunity to build something substantial and creative. He explained it came down to Item 5 with "definite plans for reuse of the property and the effect such plans will have on the architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological, social, aesthetics, or environmental character of the surrounding area, as well as the economic impact of the new development." He could not see placing townhomes on this scale of frontage as fitting that. He clarified that if they could not save the existing structure, the new structure should be balanced with the surrounding monumental structures.

Mr. Carson advised they had taken a year to incorporate some of the suggestions into their due diligence. He listed the owners of the project having in excess of 100 years of experience. He also pointed out they had \$250 million collectively invested in the community; a lot of that had been in building reuse. He confirmed the study had determined this structure was not aesthetically supportive of the future development. He read Section 12-2-10 (A) (9) (b) regarding unusual and compelling circumstances and demolition of a contributing structure, specifically Item 5 regarding definite plans for reuse. He referenced a City study which outlined the need for 2000 additional residential units, which this project could not completely fill. However, it would be a catalyst for the redevelopment of downtown toward the west. He also advised the existing structure was off-grade, with polluted soil and suffers from migration of other pollutants which have worked their way underground. By removing an off-grade building, they could provide an engineering control to help contain further migration of those contaminants. Regarding tax revenue, the community was not benefiting from this structure. Working around the structure would generate \$4 million over 20 years with today's numbers. With a \$50 million project, the projection would be almost \$20 million over 20 years. Regarding Item 6, the School Board had abandoned the idea of saving this building, bringing it to a residential use which is what they saw as the only alternative. It would necessitate more renovations for offices and would require relocating the load bearing elements, etc., which would also be devastating to the structure.

Mr. Mead questioned what constituted "definite" plans. The Board had been given plans of some type indicating this was what would be built. He asked what elements of this within an applicable margin were fixed in terms of the proposal to move forward assuming the demolition took place. Mr. Carson advised the structure would be residential and would also have a retail component. He also stated the \$50 million number was likely to go further north due to cost. The number of units were fixed at 280 units leased. He stated there was a component for some townhouse type units to the south.

Mr. Thomas advised their desire was for the project to move forward and understood the important role of the school district not only to educate children but demonstrating how we deal with properties. Over the years, they have repurposed facilities to provide 21st century education. He was Superintendent when they moved out of the Garden Street building since the building systems were beginning to fail. When they were granted the ½ cent sales tax, it was agreed this money would not be spent on administrative or ancillary facilities. In order to remediate the existing structure, it would have taken general fund monies, and it was better to relocate and abandon the building.

They have spent \$700,000 to remediate the environmental concerns not under the building. He explained they moved out of the building 9 years ago and felt the best purpose was to build houses for our kids and place the structures on the tax role.

Mayor Robinson emphasized saving the architectural heritage was very important, and he questioned if this structure was worth saving because of the renovation costs. He questioned what are we going to do going forward with our community? Seeing vibrancy in the downtown area rather than derelict buildings has definitely helped our community. What we see now is the beginning of moving downtown to the west on Garden, and this building stands at a prime location. He explained it would be exciting to him to build something new that could incorporate some of what was there. He restated the developers would return to the Board for approval of the final product. He would judge at that moment to make sure there was a commitment to incorporate some of the architectural features. In making that area continue to languish rather than providing something new that gives vibrant energy to move our downtown to the west, we would be missing the same opportunity as if we said let's keep the old PNJ building. Whatever comes forward, it was his understanding the developers had to return to the Board before obtaining the permit to demolish.

Ms. Campbell-Hatler pointed out in 12-2-10 (A) (9) (2) that "the Board shall be guided in its decision by balancing the historic, architectural, cultural and/or archaeological value of the particular structure against the special merit of the proposed replacement project."

Mr. Studer explained he bought the SunTrust building which is iconic, and they were spending large amounts of money to make it right particularly with the plaza. When one of the five partners backed out of the project, he stepped in. He pointed out Southtowne fits nicely but would not want to look at it on this corner. He advised against building "sameness." He also explained the need for bringing more people into the community for tax dollars. He stated the biggest issue was the financing since you have to show that it works. He advised he wanted the school district to get \$3 million for future uses with \$10 million to come in property taxes for this community. Also, having more people living downtown created a safer environment and customers for downtown businesses. Challenges developers face are finances to get plans developed when the project may not be approved. He also stressed with the Covenant for Community, 70 percent of all jobs go to local labor which is a wonderful influx of money to minorities in the workplace. This covenant was approved by Escambia County for county projects, and he hoped it would soon come to the City of Pensacola.

Mr. Pristera had checked an additional database for further information. He selected the years from 1939 to 1942 and found this building was a trade school for machines and mechanics to accommodate the needs of the military. Yonge and Hart were architects who were likely involved in the design. Pensacola was one of the first trade schools in the south to incorporate women into these fields. He pointed out the building was a product of its time.

Ms. Hatler-Campbell stated if the definite plans that this firm has to take this to the next level are rooted in storytelling, that to her gave to her what she felt the Board's job was - to balance that historic, architectural and cultural heritage. Ms. Campbell asked if the Board was to grant the demolition, how much time would the developer have to come back with the best use of the property? Ms. Deese advised the Code did not reference any timeframe on the approval and thought it would not be feasible to add a timeframe. Mr. Mead confirmed the developer would return with plans before a permit was issued for demolition. He greatly appreciated the expanded package furnished to the Board. He explained he was offended by the way in which certain things happened in regard to the Sunday House in a procedural manner which was completely contrary to the Code. He wanted to make sure when the Board had a demolition of a contributing structure in any district under its purview, they would have a standard set that this is what you show, and this is how we know we are complying with the Code.

Mr. Mead moved that the Board find that the standard for unusual and compelling circumstances is clear and convincing evidence of the factors set forth in the Code, and based upon the amended presentation here we have seen, particularly on the things missing the last time with regard to reasonable measures which was shown by the superintendent's and school board's efforts, which we now have clear evidence of economic impact of the new development, which we did not have before but now have clear evidence of, and the fact we have sufficient definitiveness on the plans at least in regards to the overall massing and structure, etc., that we can have sufficient control over the overall impact or review of those structures, that we have sufficient control of the next stages of the process that we can address those going forward. He moved that the Board approve the demolition on those standards. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. Ms. Campbell-Hatler questioned that he mentioned massing and structure. Mr. Mead stated it was sufficiently definitive for this purpose. The question was he did not think there was any bar to them readdressing those questions in the course of the Board's consideration of the plans. He amended his motion to withdraw the statement regarding we are sufficiently definite in what has been shown and that we can move forward and have adequate controls. The motion was accepted as amended.

The motion carried 6 to 1 with Mr. Salter dissenting.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandi Deese', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brandi Deese
Secretary to the Board