

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

April 9, 2020

Members Present

George Davis
Andrew Hessler
Peyton Keesee
John Ranson
Adam Jones

Members Absent

Courtney Nicholas
R.J. Lackey

Staff

Ken Gillie
Lisa Jones
Clarke Whitfield

Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *Request a Certificate of Appropriateness at 400 Bridge Street to do the following:*

A total of 18 (six per floor) new 4'-0 x 4'-10 1/2" aluminum storefront windows will be placed along the Southeast façade of the building, facing the adjacent parking lot. No windows are currently in this façade. On the North-West façade, facing Wilson Street, the existing corrugated metal wall will be removed, revealing the existing covered alleyway. In the opening, a new concrete stair and deck will be located with a wheelchair lift for accessible pedestrian entry into the building. A new rough-sawn wood-clad wall will divide the new entry from the new concrete loading dock on the Southeast side, and block the loading dock from the view of the street. Also along the North-West Façade, the two existing roll-up doors will be removed and the existing openings will be infilled with aluminum storefront. The mullion pattern will match the existing roll-up doors. DHR/NPS have approved all of these modifications.

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Gillie stated staff did not receive comments on this request. I do have examples of the windows that they are proposing if anyone would like to see those.

Mr. Keesee stated you are referring to those on your desk?

Mr. Gillie stated yes.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Davis stated the only question that I have is being able to cut away on the brick to put the windows in. I thought that was a pretty much a no for any building that was within our district?

Mr. Gillie stated under the not recommended section 3.8 of the guidelines it talks about replacing with different materials that had not been there before or modifying it. The Department of Historic Resources has given the okay for this project and that is why staff is not opposed to it. The decision really comes down to the Commission whether they feel it is appropriate for that structure.

Mr. Davis stated do you feel that it is because that particular wall is not facing the street. Do you have an opinion as to why they would go ahead and agree to it?

Mr. Gillie stated I believe because it is less visible and it does not face the street.

Mr. Keese stated he is referring to cutting the brick.

Mr. Davis stated it's not like if you went to one of the other buildings like Durham Hosiery and had taken the windows out and bricked up the windows and then they pulled that brick out and put the window back in. This is cutting straight into the brick facade of the building in order to put the windows in.

Mr. Ranson stated I understand all of that. I just don't see and I have never heard any sufficient reason against it. As long as the windows are keeping with the style of the building.

Mr. Davis stated it is going to come into play because if you are familiar with our buildings at Davis Storage, on the corner of Deboe and Lynn Street we have an export leaf tobacco building that does not have windows. It is going to happen one day that this same question is going to come before the RDDC as to whether they can cut holes into those bricks to put windows in.

Mr. Ranson stated I would go with what Ken said that the Department of Historic Resources has approved it. The building is changing use and new use requires windows. My difficulty is not adding the windows but that they are so different in style from the windows in the rest of the building. I don't have any problems with it.

Mr. Keese stated neither do I.

Mr. Hessler stated just to clarify this is not one of the buildings that is attached to Dimon, but not the River front property, but actually the other property.

Mr. Keese stated it is the old Richmond Seals building and you probably haven't been here long enough to know what that is.

Mr. Davis stated I agree with you John, the windows are entirely different than anything that is around that area. Please don't get me wrong, it's not that I'm opposed to putting windows in this. I'm just wondering about what precedent we set if we allowed them to do this on this building, and when other buildings come forward. Mr. Gillie I understand

that there are certain guidelines and organizations that they have to go through in order to have that done, but I'm just thinking that it is a what's good for the goose is good for the gander type thing.

Mr. Whitfield stated I think Mr. Chairman what the precedent would be saying is if the Department of Historic Resources actually approved the plan, then that would be the precedent not just any person cutting into the brick. The precedent would be only upon approval of the Department of Historic Resources. It is more limited than just the general public being able to punch windows into brick walls.

Mr. Davis stated that brings me back to my original question. I wonder what their thought was in being able to cut windows into a brick façade for windows that had not been there before.

Mr. Ranson stated when we have one that has been approved by DHR in general, I have no concern. They are able to review projects and they have a lot of power.

Mr. Davis stated that is a good point John.

Mr. Ranson made a motion that it meets guidelines as presented and to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for all aspects of the project. Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

2. *Request a Certificate of Appropriateness at 122 S. Union Street to open previous windows currently bricked in. Install new windows of Aluminum or Fiberglass.*

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Gillie read attached letter from Jeff Bond. (*See Attached*)

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson stated he changed the windows slightly?

Mr. Gillie stated yes.

Mr. Ranson stated do we know why he changed them?

Mr. Gillie stated no sir.

Mr. Ranson made a motion that it meets guidelines as presented and to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

3. *. Request a Certificate of Appropriateness at 427 Patton Street to remove the brick portion of the chimney (Which is no longer in use) to the top of the*

parapet wall and cap the opening. Removal of the abandoned chimney will remove the safety issue of deteriorated brick pieces falling onto the roof and walking/driving surface and prevent water from continuing to enter the building.

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Gillie stated we don't have comments from public works. I did walk up to the roof of the building this morning and there are substantial pieces of brick sitting on the roof. There is no more mortar left at the top and the bricks are shifting to the exterior falling off and landing on to the rubber membrane. A portion of the roof is approximately up in that corner and it is adjacent to the parking lot. Therefore, if things do happen the chimney will fall into the parking lot on the east side of City Hall. That is why we are asking to remove the chimney it no longer serves a function. It is the only red brick portion on the entire building.

Mr. Ranson stated I spent like ten years working on this building and I didn't even know it had a chimney.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion made a motion that it meets guidelines as presented and to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0- vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gillie stated there is a streetscape project being done on South Union Street now from public works. The schedule has been accelerated, so they are going to be adding a parking space bump out and a curb band along the sidewalk as they widen it out to do improvements in front of the Bee project. They had requested to come before you today, but because we can't have members of the public to come, they are not here. They are going to come after the fact. It does comply in my opinion to the guidelines, and I told them that there is no reason for them to delay the project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 13, 2020 minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Approved By: