
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
DESIGN REVIEW & PRESERVATION BOARD**

MINUTES

13-June-01

Present

J. BIANCO, CHAIRMAN
D. BROWN
P. EVANS
J. FORTUNA
N. GOFF
B. PLUMLEY
N. STAMLER

Absent

B. KRONENBERGER

Also Present

M. JOHNSON
S. HILL
E. MEYST
P. MCKEEVER
L. OSBORNE
R. RIZZO
M. TETER
C. WIDMERE

The meeting commenced at 5PM.

Minutes from the 9 May 2001 meeting were reviewed. Members requested revisions and M. Johnson agreed to bring the revised minutes back to the July meeting.

Next, C. Widmere presented plans for a facade renovation at 646 Main Street for Alderhouse Residential Communities. J. Bianco inquired if the cornice detail was existing. C. Widmere replied it was. J. Bianco asked if driveit might not be a better alternative to the stucco proposed for the spandrels. C. Widmere replied, either way, you would still lose two inches. One idea had been to use copper louvers and retain the brick. J. Bianco then inquired into the proposed banners/signs. C. Widmere's drawing showed one on either end of the building, but he said there would only be the one on the north side. J. Bianco encouraged him to keep both, but to return to the Board with the design for the banner. J. Bianco inquired into the materials to be used for the bottom paneling. C. Widmere replied it would be wood. The Board instructed C. Widmere to use brick --not stucco -- for the spandrels, re-pointing the brick as necessary, or return to the Board with a different proposal. C. Widmere agreed. P. Evans moved to approve, N. Stamler seconded. The Board approved the proposal, as stipulated, with D. Brown abstaining.

Next, the Board reviewed a sign proposal from P. McKeever of Family Dentistry, 749 Saybrook Road. P. McKeever stated that, although his proposed sign was an internally-illuminated box light, it was appropriate to the context since all other signs in the plaza were of a similar nature. J. Bianco conceded the point, but asked if an additional sign wouldn't "oversign" the plaza. The Board was sympathetic to the impetus of the proposal, i.e., that the subject office was around a corner and not easily found. The Board briefly explored with P. McKeever sign alternatives but conceded that the proposed sign fit in with the plaza. D. Brown asked if there might not be a '1/2' step, in between denial and approval. Appearing to be none, P. Evans moved to approve the proposal as presented and J. Fortuna seconded. The Board approved unanimously.

Next, the Board reviewed a sign proposal from DOTS, of Metro Square, as presented by R. Rizzo. Very similar to the Hit or Miss sign that it was replacing, the DOTS sign was made with a solid brown aluminum face with the letters cut out to show the underlying white acrylic. D. Brown verified with R. Rizzo that the sign was essentially the same color and size as what it was replacing. R. Rizzo confirmed same. N. Stamler moved to approve the sign. P. Evans seconded. The Board approved unanimously.

Next, S. Hill and M. Teter introduced themselves to the Board as prospective buyers of the Danforth Pewter Shop who are working with Architect Alain Munkittrick, and presented a basic outline of their intentions for the property. They solicited input, feedback, and suggestions from the Board, which holds a

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grant of Preservation Restriction and Covenant on the property from the City of Middletown. S. Hill and M. Teter's presentation reflected their interest in restoring the house in keeping with its historic character, but the Board predicted they would have difficulty getting Planning and Zoning approval for their plan to construct a carriage house on their property or on neighboring property. The Board also asked that they perform renovations to (or exceeding) the standards of earlier work done on the house. N. Stamler recommended that, as they pursue development of the property, they consult with the Suvall family who has also been interested and involved with the property. J. Bianco noted that, if land were to be obtained for a carriage house, obtaining it from South Green (to the east, i.e., behind, the property) would be preferable to obtaining it to the north, i.e., adjacent, to the property. S. Hill and M. Teter said they would continue to seek ways of making the project work or looking for another agreeable downtown property and thanked the Board for their advice.

Next, L. Osborne of Osborne Smith Architects, presented a proposal for facade renovations to the Poliner Building, 515 Main Street. L. Osborne talked through the submitted drawing, noting that the plan restores granite plinths, faces the columns with tile, attaches six (6) black, cast aluminum carriage lanterns on the columns, relates the band to the ornament at the main entrance, frames the storefront windows with clear anodized aluminum, and a low brick wall with a shelf at the base. J. Bianco and D. Brown remarked that they thought the aluminum would look out of place with the 1920s character of the building. L. Osborne responded that the original configuration of the building (he first floor was set back considerably) made it challenging to come up with a build-to-line design that looked historically consistent. L. Osborne also said that, for tenants, his client still hoped to get a restaurant but was also entertaining the idea that small start-up retail serving the north end was also possible. Additionally, while the plan calls for six (6) doors (including the main entrance) opening onto the street, it was possible that, upon lease-up, some tenants might occupy more than one bay. J. Bianco then inquired into signage, noting that the signage band was covered with ornament. L. Osborne replied that he envisioned signs being fitted into the transom area of the window bays. J. Bianco inquired if projecting signs might be a better alternative. L. Osborne replied that the sign question would mainly be dealt with once tenants were obtained, but that projecting signs would certainly be appropriate, if allowed under zoning. M. Johnson said that they were. P. Evans asked if doors were level with the columns. If so, couldn't they be set back, even four (4) inches, for shadow. D. Brown and J. Bianco agreed. L. Osborne said this would be possible, and he would take that recommendation back to his client. P. Evans moved that the Board approve the plan with that proviso. Members of the Board also asked that instead of a clear, anodized finish, the aluminum be painted, either white, red, or green. J. Fortuna seconded the motion. The Board approved unanimously.

Next, M. Johnson reported that the website with photos of preservation award winners Wadsworth Mansion and Police Headquarters now linked to external sites. The Police HQ picture, links to others on the Jeter, Cook & Jepson website (JC&J were the architects for the Police building). M. Johnson also reported that Crown Atlantic (representing Verizon Communications) was applying to Portland for a permit to construct a wireless telecommunications tower close to the river. The Board instructed M. Johnson to write a letter expressing the Board's concern that it would take away from the views. Finally, M. Johnson informed the Board of a new, state initiative to offer forgivable, rehabilitation loans of up to \$25,000 in downtown census tracts. The Downtown Village District zone is included in the eligible area.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Munro W. Johnson
Community Development Specialist