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

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**MINUTES**

*August-13-03*

**Present**

J. BIANCO, CHAIRMAN  
J. FORTUNA  
P. EVANS  
M. BRADY  
B. PLUMLEY  
N. STAMLER

**Absent**

D. BROWN  
N. GOFF  
B. KRONENBERGER

**Also Present**

M. WACKERS  
R. SCHMIDT  
J. CROUSE  
J. ROSENTHAL  
M. OLIVERAS  
R. JENKINS  
J. TOPSHE  
A. RUBACHA  
P. CACCIOLA  
L. OSBORNE  
A. MINKUS

The meeting commenced at 5:31 PM.

First, R. Jenkins of Able Builders presented the new expansion for Middletown Toyota. The new addition would house a new line of automobiles and provide a covered area for people when their cars are being serviced. J. Bianco stated the addition seemed to improve the entire buildings aesthetic value and improve the general area of Newfield Street. P. Evans motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by M. Brady, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Second, presented the window replacement for Main Street. The replacement will actually look the same as what exists currently. The Board asked if the use of clear anodized aluminum could be considered. The representative replied that could be done. M. Brady motioned to approve the project with a request that the windows be clear anodized aluminum. The motion was seconded by P. Evans, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Third, M. Oliveras of O2 Design presented façade renovations for La Boca at 520 Main Street. M. Oliveras explained that the current signage on the front of La Boca has been insufficient for people unfamiliar with the restaurant to locate it. Therefore, he proposes that the existing sign be taken down and four green awnings with La Boca and logo in yellow or red. It is believed that this proposal will make the restaurant pop out better for pedestrians and motorists. The Board asked as to what the illumination would be. M. Oliveras replied that the lighting would be over the awnings but not the gooseneck style that has become a "plague" on Main Street. These lights will have a small visual profile. The Board asked as to where the current sign would go. The owner replied that they like the current sign and are planning to use it inside the restaurant. M. Brady motioned to approve the text amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by J. Fortuna, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Fourth, M. Oliveras of O2 Design presented a new project for Yvette and Page, a new store at 644 Main Street. The project would have a sign band over the front of the store made on aluminum ribbon with die cut lettering, and gold lettering on the front windows and doors. The board asked if there is any planned illumination. The owner of the store replied that at this time there is no illumination and that it is unlikely that there will be any illumination. M. Brady motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by J. Fortuna, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Fifth, A. Rubacha of Wesleyan University and A. Minkus from Jeter, Cook & Jepson Architects presented the façade changes that Wesleyan is proposing for 45 Broad Street, Wesleyan's new Campus Book Store. A. Rubacha explained that the bookstore will be called the Broad Street Books, Wesleyan Bookstore and Café. A. Minkus presented the proposed changes which are as follows: paint the walls except for the

columns Wesleyan Grey; put three red awnings on the Broad street side of the building; place one red awning over the new doorway in the breezeway; place two new red awnings on the parking lot side of the building; and create a double-wide door on the parking lot side of the building for palettes to move through. P. Evans motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by M. Brady, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

On an additional note, Alan Rubacha asked about future signage and requested some direction from the Board on their preferences. The Board suggested that the building itself is very powerful in comparison to its surroundings; therefore any kind of signage should play off of the strong statement of the building. J. Bianco suggested that the lettering supported by one or two bars stretched across the breezeway maybe a nice direction to go.

Sixth, R. Schmidt of Wesleyan University and Lee Osborne from Smith Osborne Architects presented the revised ADA access plan for Russell House, 350 High Street. R. Schmidt explained that Wesleyan believes that the only appropriate location for ADA access is through the front, but previous proposed versions of this project provided inappropriate solutions. Previous solutions came from the Washington Street side that had a steep incline to contend with, and proposals on the front of the building were out of the question due to the historical importance of the building. This solution will have minimal impact on the building, therefore preserving its façade, as explained in the letter from Susan Chandler of the Connecticut Historical Commission. Furthermore it takes advantage of a beautiful side yard that sees little use today. L. Osborne continued to explain the rationale for the proposal. He explained that in walking the site, he realized that there is natural slope upward from the building to the south, which becomes even with the level of the porch. Therefore, there is not need for a ramp, but merely a sidewalk that maintains its level with the porch. Because the sidewalk is supported by a berm it does not require a railing, but one has been included in order to provide support with the great number of elderly people that take advantage of Wesleyan's campus. As a result in speaking with Susan Candler, it was concluded that having the berm stop before coming into contact with the berm would be in the best interest in preserving the structure, and a small bridge would span the gap. The Board, because of the history of this project, expressed great concern. J. Bianco said that this building is the most significant landmark in the city. The Board felt the sidewalk solution to the building was very creative, but the Board wanted some greater detail about what is happening on the front of the building. L. Osborne and R. Schmidt explained that nothing would happen to the front of the building, since the sidewalk approaches the building from the side and access through the front door would not require any railings. M. Brady expressed concern about the safety of the bridge. R. Schmidt expressed that the bridge has raised sides to prevent wheelchairs from rolling off. P. Evans asked about the material of what looked like a retaining wall at the end of the berm near the Russell House, and how it would match the structure. L. Osborne said that the material will likely be wood or something that breathes, and it will match the charcoal color of the foundation of Russell house. P. Evans motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by M. Brady, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Seventh, J. Crouse of Wesleyan University presented a revised landscaping and street crossings project along college row that included signage on High Street. J. Crouse explained that a brownstone would cover the façade of the wall, topped and grounded by a smoother cut sandstone. The Board's immediate feeling was that the overall look and scale seemed to be a little plain. Also the Board expressed doubt about the representation of the railings in the drawing. The Boards belief is that they are going to be much higher than shown, which could drastically alter the composition of the structure. The Board articulated a need to see actual building documents to see if the scale predicted in the drawings is accurate. J. Crouse said that while Wesleyan would like to move on this project as soon as possible in order to complete construction during the building season, there are still other issues with Public Works that are being ironed out. P. Evans motioned to have the revisions mailed around for approval or have the project be represented at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by J. Fortuna, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

At this point, J. Bianco suggested that the Board consider discussing the Zoning Code Amendment before J. Bianco presented his projects since he would have to excuse himself. See no objection the motion passed.

Eighth, M. Wackers presented the revised Zoning Code Amendment. M. Wackers said that the zoning code had been revised as a result of the Board's suggestions from the July DRPB meeting. The revision included the addition of stencil and channel cut signage, and gives the DRPB a greater degree of discretion in approving and denying signage. The Board remarked favorably on the changes since July and M. Brady motioned to approve the text amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by J. Fortuna, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Ninth, J. Bianco of Bianco, Giolitto, Weston Architects presented a new façade and signage project for Thai Gardens Restaurant. J. Bianco explained that the existing signage will be repainted and gilded to become more colorful and brighter. New gooseneck lights will be posted over the sign, and a new banner sign, featuring the logo as presented on their menus, to go on the corner of the building. M. Brady motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by J. Fortuna, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

Tenth, J. Bianco of Bianco, Giolitto, Weston Architects presented the renovation project for Metro Square. The proposed changes include the following: placing a new tower with sign in the plaza at the corner of Main and College streets, placing three flag poles in the plaza, refacing the steps and floor of the plaza with granite, new signage on the store fronts (metal letters on a bar), refacing with stucco where appropriate, installing a new guard rail along the parking lot side of the building, putting in new antique street lights, and removing the signage facing Main Street and College Street. N. Stamler motioned to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by B. Plumey, and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michiel Wackers, Community Development Specialist