

MINUTES
TOWN OF FORT MILL
HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD
April 26th, 2022
112 Confederate Street
4:30 PM

Present: Chairman Louis Roman, David Booth, Megan Brinton, Scott Couchenour, Planning Director Penelope Karagounis, Senior Planner Alex Moore

Absent: Elizabeth Leventis, Jessica Scarlett, Nikki Todaro

Guests: B. Bayles Mack, Cory Ellis, Greg Bauer, Tracey Roman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Louis Roman called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Louis Roman entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Couchenour made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 8th, 2022, meeting as presented. David Booth seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were then approved by a vote of 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Request for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

The first item on the agenda included a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) submitted by B. Bayles Mack, to install a historical marker at 108 Tom Hall Street. Senior Planner Alex Moore noted the location of the property as being within the town's historic district along with the zoning of LC, Local Commercial.

Senior Planner Moore then stated that the proposed sign is an interpretive sign per the historic district guidelines. An interpretive sign provides information to visitors on natural, cultural, and historic resources. An interpretive sign should be designed to be simple in character. The sign face should be designed to be easily read by pedestrians and remain subordinate to its context.

Additionally, Moore noted that interpretive signs should generally comply with the historic district guidelines for the type of sign that is the closest match. In this instance, this proposed interpretive sign is most closely related to a pole mounted or freestanding sign (per the design guidelines). The design guidelines are attached.

Senior Planner Moore indicated that the underlying zoning district is Local Commercial. The maximum height for this type of sign within this zoning district is 8'. The sign must also be located at least 3' back from the street right-of-way.

Moore then provided the staff recommendation as follows: While the design of the proposed historical marker deviates a bit from the historic guidelines suggest for a pole mounted/free standing sign, the sign as proposed does conform to the recommendations for an interpretive sign. Planning Staff deems the sign's conformity to the recommendations for an interpretive sign to be paramount because the standards are necessary for the sign to be appropriately incorporated into the streetscape in a meaningful way. Thus, staff recommends that the HRB grant approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the historical marker with the stipulation that the sign not be more than 8' in height and that it be set back at least 3' from the Tom Hall Street right-of-way.

Senior Planner Moore then presented the signage proposal as submitted by the applicant. This in fact consisted of two iterations with slightly different designs. He noted at Mr. Mack would present the historical background as presented within the copy to be placed on the signage.

Mr. Mack indicated that one of the reasons that he proposed to place this historical marker is that the home itself is eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the NRHP does not allow a home to have multiple names. In this instance the home is known as the Kimbrell, Desportes, Mack House. Mr. Mack stated that in his view, the appropriate naming of the home, in the context of Fort Mill, was more important than working to place the property on the NRHP.

Mr. Mack noted that his grandfather and grandmother, John Barron Mills and Ziza Young Mills were married in this home in 1900. This was a double ring ceremony with Mr. and Mrs. Kimbrell.

Mr. Mack also stated that this home was for many years occupied by the Desportes family. During this period, Dr. Desportes, a physician, had his medical office at this location. At another time, this home was a teacherage.

Mr. Mack then stated that he would have the sign designed and placed to conform all town requirements.

Scott Couchenour then stated that the signage as proposed is like that found on the building currently housing the Local Dish restaurant.

Chairman Roman then noted that it appeared that this sign would be designed to be very durable.

Megan Brinton asked Mr. Mack about the ownership as listed on the application.

Mr. Mack indicated that the home is a life estate property and that he is an owner of the property.

Additionally, Ms. Brinton asked if Mr. Mack did indeed plan to work on placing the property on the NRHP

Mr. Mack stated that he had established that the home was eligible for the NRHP. However, one of the requirements for NRHP was that a home not have more than one name. Thus, it would be his intention not to pursue NRHP listing for this home.

Ms. Brinton then asked if the historicity of the language to be placed on the marker had been verified.

Mr. Mack replied that the history had indeed been researched and verified by LeAnne Burnett Morse, a local writer and historian, who has assisted him with similar projects in Fort Mill.

There being no other questions or comments, Chairman Roman entertained a motion.

David Booth made a motion to approve the second signage iteration as presented with the HRB packet.

Megan Brinton seconded the motion.

By a vote of 4-0, the HRB approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for the second iteration of the historical marker as presented for 108 Tom Hall Street

2. Request for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

The second item on the agenda was a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by Darren R. Vanderhall with Signarama-Pineville. The applicant requested two wall signs to be approved at 240 Main Street in Fort Mill. The owner of the property, Dr. Cory Ellis, DVM, attended the meeting.

Senior Planner Moore stated that the property is located within the historic preservation district, but it is not listed on the NRHP. As you will remember, this project came before us in October 2020. At that time, we were doing virtual meetings due to covid. At the October 2020 meeting, the HRB approved the professional veterinarian symbol on each respective fin (see ppt).

Subsequently, the owner has determined that he would like to change this up a bit. Thus, we have this latest iteration before you. This proposed sign is categorized as a wall sign. Our design guidelines have parameters for the implementation of wall signs. These are within the packet on page 25.

Senior Planner Moore then stated that internal illumination is not allowed. However, signage may incorporate external lighting directed toward the sign from an external shielded lamp. Additionally, the zoning ordinance dictates that a wall sign shall not exceed an area equal to 15% of the area of the wall to which it is affixed.

Moore then indicated that the applicant has indicated that the area of each respective fin is approximately 164.8 square feet in area. See page 24. Based on the 15% calculation, each respective fin can support 24.7 square feet of signage. The applicant has proposed a wall sign consisting of 23.07 square feet on each fin. Their proposal is 61" x 54.5" which equates to $5.08 \times 4.54 = 23.07$. Moore stated that planning staff recommends that the HRB grant approval for a COA for the wall signage as presented.

Megan Brinton asked what the sign material consisted of.

Senior Planner Moore stated that the signage would be constructed of aluminum.

David Booth asked Dr. Ellis if this signage would give his business enough of an advertising presence on Main Street.

Dr. Ellis stated that it would be his intention to also do "up-lighting" which would help at night. He indicated that he would have had larger signage designed, but the necessity of staying within town guidelines led to the proposed design. Nonetheless, he stated that he believed that this signage would accomplish what he wanted.

Megan Brinton asked if there was other signage currently on the building.

Senior Planner Moore showed a slide which illustrated the current signage on the building. This signage was in fact previously approved at HRB in October 2020.

Scott Couchenour asked about the current lighting standards as to whether lighting color could be changed based on seasonal or other considerations.

Senior Planner Moore indicated that signage within the historic district could not be internally illuminated. However, he stated that signage could be illuminated via "up-lighting." He further indicated that changing the color of such up-lighting would not be problematic, although such lighting could not result in intermittent blinking.

Dr. Ellis stated that he had no intention of flashing lights.

There being no other questions or comments, Chairman Roman entertained a motion.

Megan Brinton made a motion to approve.

Scott Couchenour seconded the motion.

By a vote of 4-0, the HRB approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for the wall signage as submitted for 240 Main Street.

3. Request for Preliminary Bailey Bill Certification

The third item on the agenda was a request for preliminary Bailey Bill certification for the property located at 215 Main Street in Fort Mill. The owner of the property, Greg Bauer, was in attendance at the meeting.

Senior Planner Moore presented an overview of this application for preliminary Bailey Bill certification. Our code of ordinances authorizes a special tax assessment for rehabilitated historic properties that meet the criteria for eligibility. This is authorized by the SC Code of Laws and is generally referred to as the Bailey Bill. Upon final certification, the Bailey Bill allows the property's value to be assessed at the pre-rehab value for a period of 20 years. I would note that only the Town of Fort Mill ad valorem tax is abated as York County does not participate in the Bailey Bill program.

The goal for the Bailey Bill program within the town is fourfold: (1) Encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties; (2) Promote community development and redevelopment; (3) Encourage sound community planning; (4) Promote the general health, safety, and welfare of the community.

In order to be eligible for the Bailey Bill special tax assessment, historic properties must receive both preliminary and final certification. The property must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or the property must be located within a historic district listed on the NRHP, and the primary structure to be rehabilitated must be at least 50 years old. In this instance, records indicate that this building is listed on the NRHP as part of the Fort Mill Historic District and was built in 1911.

Additionally, there is a minimum expenditure requirement for such projects. The amount spent on all improvements must be at least 20% of the appraised value. For purposes of the Bailey Bill, there are three methods of determining the fair market value (FMV). These include a property appraisal completed by a real estate appraiser licensed by the State of South Carolina; Sale price as delineated in a bona fide contract of sale within twelve months of the time the application is submitted; or the most recent appraised value published by the York County Tax Assessor.

For this submittal, the applicant has determined FMV via the sale price as delineated in a bona fide contract of sale, which was \$499,000.00 as indicated within the attached contract of purchase and sale. Thus, the minimum expenditure required for this project is \$99,800.00, or 20% of the sales value. The application indicates that the estimated project expenditure will be \$350,000.00.

To be eligible the following work will be reviewed:

- i. Repairs to the exterior of the designated building.
- ii. Alterations to the exterior of the designated building.
- iii. New construction on the property on which the building is located, including site work.
- iv. Alterations to interior primary public spaces, as defined by the reviewing authority.
- v. Any remaining work where the expenditures for such work are being used to satisfy the minimum expenditures for rehabilitation, including but not limited to, alterations made to mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems.

Senior Planner Moore noted that the historic rehabilitation must be conducted according to the following standards:

- i. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations or of features and spaces that characterize each property shall be avoided.
- ii. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development shall not be undertaken.
- iii. Most properties change over time. Those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- iv. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be preserved.
- v. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
- vi. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
- vii. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the historic property and its environment.
- viii. New additions and adjacent new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Senior Planner Moore then stated that if this application receives preliminary approval from the HRB, rehabilitation work may begin subsequent to plan review, approval, and issuance of permits by the Town of Fort Mill Building Department.

Additionally, all contractors performing work on this project must obtain a Town of Fort Mill Business License. The project must be completed within two years of the date of the preliminary certification. If the project is not complete after two years, but the minimum expenditures for rehabilitation have been incurred, the property continues to receive the special assessment until the project is completed or until the end of the special assessment period, whichever shall occur first.

Upon completion of the project, the property must receive *final* Bailey Bill certification by the HRB to be eligible for the special assessment. The HRB shall review at a regularly scheduled meeting, and inspect, if they so desire, the completed project to determine if the work is consistent with rehabilitation plan being reviewed during the current, preliminary certification process.

The applicant's submittal information for Bailey Bill Preliminary review, including pictures, and architectural plans are included subsequent to this staff report. Planning Staff recommends that HRB grant **APPROVAL** for preliminary certification for the proposed Bailey Bill project at 215 Main Street.

Mr. Bauer, property owner, then spoke to the historic review board about the project. He noted that this would be his eleventh restaurant, with others located in Charleston, SC, Conway, SC, Savannah, GA, and in Charlotte. He stated that his passion is rehabilitating and utilizing historic buildings and that the Bailey Bill program would allow him to offset some of this cost at 215 Main Street.

Mr. Bauer noted that a key component of the current rehab at 215 Main Street in Fort Mill was saving and maintaining the existing tin ceiling. He stated that they were very hopeful that this important architectural attribute of the building would be able to be saved and be a visible part of the rehab. Additionally, Mr. Bauer stated that his team was working through a few permitting issues with the town, but that he anticipated successful completion of the plan review.

As a matter of interest, Chairman Roman then shared that he believed it was very appropriate that this building use the Bailey Bill because that as a member of the Fort Mill Economic Council, he spent a lot of time meeting in this building during which he urged the town to adopt the Bailey Bill program. Ultimately, the decision was made in the Spratt Building to move forward with the Bailey Bill program.

Scott Couchenour asked when a sign would be installed for this business at 215 Main Street.

Senior Planner Moore responded that this would likely come before the historic review board in May.

Mr. Couchnour then asked if the town of Fort Mill still set aside money for exterior rehab.

Planning Director Penelope Karagounis responded that the town did budget money for such façade grants within the historic district.

Mr. Bauer then asked if the façade grant would apply to signage.

Senior Planner Moore responded that technically it does, but that typically the town wanted to see façade grant applications that encompass more than just signage. He did indicate that staff could take a look at the possibility of a façade grant for just signage.

Chairman Roman then responded that the façade grant could cover both the front and rear of buildings.

Senior Planner Moore concurred with this.

Chairman Roman noted that it was the board's position to promote the availability of these façade improvement grants for exterior improvements to buildings in the historic district.

Megan Brinton asked about a note within the plan-set which indicated part of the ceiling would be removed.

Senior Planner Moore indicated that the portion of the ceiling to be removed would include the first floor drop ceiling and that both the tin ceiling and tin cornice would remain.

Scott Couchenhour then asked if the exterior trim work were painted, would the application then have to come back before the HRB for review?

Senior Planner Moore responded that if the same color was maintained then it would not have to come back before HRB for review.

Moore then noted that the parameters indicated that work considered as part of normal repair and maintenance are not eligible for the façade grant program.

Megan Brinton then asked Mr. Bauer when he hoped to open.

Mr. Bauer stated that he would like to be open by December 31st, 2022.

There being no other questions or comments, Chairman Roman entertained a motion.

Scott Couchenour made a motion to approve the application for preliminary Bailey Bill certification for 215 Main Street.

Megan Brinton seconded the motion.

By a vote of 4-0, the HRB approved the preliminary Bailey Bill certification for 215 Main Street.

There was then some discussion about possibly holding an HRB meeting on May 10th.

Planning Director Penelope Karagounis then reminded HRB members that there would be a virtual continuing education class held on Wednesday May 18th from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. She asked all members to please attend if possible.

Megan Brinton noted that she obtained three hours of continuing education from the South Carolina statewide historic preservation conference.

There being no other business, Chairman Roman adjourned the meeting at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex J. Moore, AICP

Senior Planner

May 27th, 2022