Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Design Review Board
March 15, 2016

The State College Borough Design Review Board (DRB) met on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 in the State College Borough Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street in Room 241. Chairman Rick Bryant called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Members present

Rick Bryant, Chairman; Justin Wheeler, Vice-Chairman; Richard Devon, Bond Reinhardt, and Alexandra Staub

Others Present:

Anne Messner, Planner/Zoning; Sarah Smith, Staff Assistant; Al Drobka, Architect; Mark Torretti, PennTerra Engineering; Chad Stafford, PennTerra Engineering; and Robert Khayat, owner of 705 South Atherton Street.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Devon made a motion to approve the March 1, 2016 minutes as submitted and Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Chair Report

The Chair had nothing to report.

Public Hour

No one in the audience wished to discuss items not on the agenda.

Land Development Plan

<u>233 Easterly Parkway, Easterly Parkway Townhomes Preliminary Plan, R-3 Zoning District, PennTerra, Engineer, Albert A. Drobka, Architect</u>

Mark Toretti and Albert Drobka's highlights included:

- This proposal is to add 2 groups of 6 residential units to the site which will create a mixed use to the site.
- They will be taking out some parking spaces, but there will still be 27 extra spaces as they are moving the impervious paving to add parking areas.
- The plan will not increase the impervious coverage much, but there will be an installation of a rain garden at the site.
- The embankment will be kept open and there will be screening on both sides of the property.
- The existing vegetation in the back will remain and will be filled in with evergreen trees.

- A previous plan had an elevator lift for handicapped access, but the updated plans have a ramp in a different location rather than an elevator.
- The developers were trying to get some of the landscaping to “pop”. They reviewed the landscaping plans and revised them with moisture tolerant plants including some that will attract butterflies. They are hoping that will add some color.
- The entrance to the property will have sidewalk access to Easterly Parkway.
- The developer removed 1 more parking space to open up the tight turn on the left side of the site.

Boards’ comments included:

- Some members expressed concern about the handicapped access on the left side of the building and making it all the way to the right hand side of the units. They inquired if access had been explored to put access on the right hand side as well which would create a circular circulation pattern. In addition, they felt that the elevation change on the right was not that great so perhaps there could be an adjustment there to accommodate the handicapped access.
    - Mr. Drobka noted that the configuration met the Code requirements and the distance really was not that far to travel. They could investigate the possibility of changing the grade to make it level. They would review the plans and see what would be feasible.
- The Cardinal Flower was a great plant for the rain garden, but it really was an annual that reseeds itself so it would likely spread from where it was planted. The Rocket Ligularia is not a native plant and it was suggested to use Rudbeckia instead. There was also a suggestion to put Coneflower on the outer edge and to plant Swamp Milkweed.
- The Board expressed appreciation of the trees at the edge of the parking lot as they would make a screening for the condos.
- The Board inquired if the condo parking spaces would be reserved or mixed into the commercial parking. (It would be mixed throughout, but they would be identified as reserved for the condos.)
- Inquired about variations in the colors for the units. (Mr. Drobka stated that they had thought about a variation in colors and they were open to suggestions.)
- Inquired who the target market would be. (Mr. Drobka explained that the planned units had a large floor plan, would sell for around $300,000, and had the Master Bedroom on the ground floor. They were hoping to get fewer students in the units. He noted that there were no garages which could be a negative, but they had wanted to make the floor plan as large as possible.)
- Inquired about the alley in the back of the property. (It was a vacated alley.)

Mr. Reinhardt made a motion to forward the Plan with the Boards comments regarding adding accessibility for both ends of the units and regarding the different planting options that were discussed. Mr. Devon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

705 South Atherton Street, Penn Mobil Reconstruction and addition, Preliminary Plan, CP-3 Zoning District, Penn Terra, Site Engineer, Lichty Engineering, Building Engineer

Mr. Stafford's and Mr. Khayat's highlights included:

- The facility burned down and would like to rebuild the same footprint, but add a second story.
- The site is very tight. It has 8 designated parking spaces with adding an ADA parking space, ADA striping, and ADA accessibility to the public right of way.
- The plans meets all Code requirements for function of the building.
- The second story would only be for storage.

Boards' comments included:

- Inquired if there was any change in the functionality of the site. (Mr. Stafford responded that there would not be. It would still be a service station.)
- Discussed the difficulty with access to the site. (Mr. Khayat noted that they had investigated the possibility of closing the access to Atherton Street, but in looking at the accident history, there were no accidents on Atherton and there were many accidents on Hamilton Avenue.)
- Inquired if there was to be an elevator installed or how the items in storage would be accessed. (Mr. Khayat stated that the items stored on the second story were not heavy so they would be accessed via a set of stairs.)
- Inquired if there would be a fire exit on the second floor and about the way the door swung in at the bottom of the stairs. The Board felt the door at the bottom of the stairs needed to swing out in case of emergencies.
- There was some discussion about the balcony on the second floor. The balcony was just an imitation and for design purposes. The Board felt that the design of the building would be better without the balcony, without the dormer above the balcony and with using the same windows across the building.
- There was some discussion of the colors for the building. There would be a brick base to the building, and gray or brick siding on the second floor. The Board suggested that the colors look less residential so that the building's purpose would be clear and to choose at least one color that would be a little bright to be an identifying feature. There was a suggestion that blues and grays would make the building look cleaner since the building's function as a garage has a lot of grease.
- There was some discussion about the arguments for and against metal roofs.
- Inquired about landscaping at the site. (Mr. Stafford noted that the site is not large enough to accommodate landscaping. Mr. Khayat stated that he had been thinking about painting the private sidewalk.)

Ms. Messner stated she would summarize the Board's comments to be a part of the plan review letter to the applicant.

Work Program

2016 Holtzman Award

Next, Chairman Bryant turned the meeting to a discussion of the 2016 Holtzman Award. Ms. Messner gave an overview of possible candidates.

After the previous Design Review Board meeting the suggested candidates were:

- Liberty Craft House – façade change
- Kitchen Kaboodle window display
- Local Whiskey
- State Theatre

Mr. Devon suggested the private residence at 914 Robin Road as he felt it was very elegant. Ms. Messner noted that with any of the candidates, the Board would also have to decide whether to give the award to the owners, the architects, landscape designer, etc. Mr. Bryant noted that the property had always been a favorite of his. Ms. Staub stated that she had spoken with the owners previously and that the owners had fired their contractors twice. She stated that the owners were heavily involved in the design of the house and landscaping.

Mr. Reinhardt suggested that it might be helpful to have more photographs of each of the candidates and Ms. Staub agreed.

Ms. Staub inquired if there was a monetary award that went with the Holtzman and inquired if it should be given to individuals or if it would be better to give it to somebody who would re-invest it into the Borough.

There was some discussion of the purpose of the Holtzman including that it was intended to recognize a more lasting design and to recognize any improvements that enhanced the Borough.

Ms. Messner noted that the Board would be recommending to the Borough Manager who would have the final decision.

Mr. Devon made motion to recommend awarding the Holtzman to 914 Robin Road and Mr. Reinhardt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council (BC): Ms. Messner reported that the Borough voted on each individual Work Program. There was a good deal of discussion but each of the items were approved to move forward. In addition, Borough Council considered 3 amendments to the Zoning Ordinance including inclusionary housing, the fence ordinance and the student home rule. Council had not yet moved forward with any changes to the inclusionary housing section of the ordinance and the Planning Commission had recommended not changing the ordinance. Council was moving forward with the changes to the fence ordinance. The hearing and enactment of the ordinance was

scheduled for May. Finally, Borough Council was reviewing the changes to the student home rule to remove Ph.D. students from the restriction. Borough Council felt that there needed to be more exploration on the subject and wished to have a joint meeting between Borough Council and Planning Commission within the next 60 days.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 10:54 a.m. by a motion from Ms. Staub.

Respectfully submitted by,
Sarah E. Smith, Staff Assistant