

BEAUFORT COUNTY
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MINUTES
January 7, 2021, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

Members Present: James Atkins, J. Michael Brock, Sallie Brach and Brad Hill

Members Absent: Peter Brower, H. Pearce Scott and Donald L. Starkey

Staff Present: Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Community Development Department

Guests: Joshua K. Tiller, J. K. Tiller Associates; Anna Petitgout, Ward Edwards Engineering; Conor Blaney, Ward Edwards Engineering and Nicholas Katsibas, LS3P

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.
2. **FOIA:** Chairman Atkins said that “public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act”.
3. **MINUTES:** Chairman Atkins asked if there were comments on the December 3, 2020 minutes. Mr. Brock motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Mrs. Brach seconded to approve. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was no public comment.
5. **NEW BUSINESS:** None
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Robert Smalls International Academy Redevelopment - Beaufort – Final:

Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Nikos Katsibas, the project Architect, Conor Blaney, the project Civil Engineer and Josh Tiller, the project Landscape Architect, made the presentation. Mr. Katsibas thanked the Board for the good comments that were provided at the conceptual Design Review Meeting for which they attempted to address. He stated that the guiding design principle was rooted in the history of Robert Smalls. Mr. Katsibas said that they introduced more color on the back of the building to create a playful atmosphere against the building’s simple form and gable roof and added an open play porch behind the gymnasium wing. He said that they lowered the low sloped roof by 2’ and raised the parapet so that the rooftop equipment is no longer visible above the media center and that the parapet was raised above the art center to conceal the equipment as well. Mr. Katsibas stated that the existing trees and underbrush that was to remain in the buffer behind the cafeteria wing would provide screening for the adjacent property but was looking for clarification from the Board about the screening requirements. He said that the electrical engineer was preparing the lighting plan for the stadium lighting and they would provide the lighting plan with photometrics and light fixture cut-sheets for approval once the Contractor was selected. Mr. Blaney stated that they focused the site work in two phases and he described the scope of work that would be done in each phase. He said that the goal was to create a clean transition for the students to move into the new school once complete, to maximize the site potential and to spread out the access points. Mr. Blaney said that they revised the parking bay layouts to not exceed eight parking spaces and created the front loop

drive to showcase the mature trees. He said that the front drive was revised and now curved around the 38" live oak to preserve it. Mrs. Brach asked if this tree would be protected during construction and Mr. Blaney stated that it would have tree protection fencing around it. Mr. Tiller stated that there would be some clean-up work in the swale on the east side of Alston Drive which may require additional tree removal. He stated that he would provide a tree mitigation schedule and that he anticipated being able to fully mitigate on-site.

Mrs. Brach indicated that she was not happy with the placement of the cooling towers and said that they should be screened but due to their large size, she was not certain how adequate screening could be accomplished. Mr. Katsibas said that the cafeteria roof was tall enough to screen the cooling towers from the front.

Mr. Hill asked what the clearance requirements were for the cooling towers. Mr. Katsibas indicated that clearance was required for maintenance and air circulation and that it would be beneficial to place the cooling towers close to the northwest corner of the building which was near the mechanical room. Mr. Hill asked how much clearance was required. Mr. Katsibas stated that any area outside the fenced-in concrete pad could have vegetation planted. Mr. Hill suggested that they add palmetto trees planted side-by-side to help soften the towers and recommended that the River Birch be changed out to a Dura-Heat River Birch because it does much better than a standard River Birch.

Mr. Brock stated that the architecture looked good and that they addressed all of the DRB's conceptual conditions. He commented on the placement of the cooling towers and stated that there were mainly pines, gums and hickories on the west side of the staff parking area but there were some open spots that could be filled in with live oaks to help screen the cooling towers. Mr. Brock said that the addition of the live oaks would also help reduce light trespass from the security and stadium lighting onto the adjacent property. He said that screening plants should be added near the adjacent inlet. Mr. Brock commented that the muhly grass in the parking lot island may compete with the live oak roots and asked whether the intent was to have the island fully planted with muhly grass. Mr. Tiller stated that there would be a 6' diameter gap without muhly grass around the new live oaks, but that the rest of the island would be fully vegetated.

Mr. Atkins agreed with Mr. Hill about the cooling tower screening and asked that they consider moving the staff parking area in order to install more buffer plantings to look less utility-like. He stated that there needed to be a more substantial buffer to make this area look natural to mitigate the hard surfaces. Mr. Atkins said that the colored areas on the building facade looked fine but was curious about the rationale for selecting the white metal panels on the connector sections. Mr. Katsibas stated that they introduced the white metal panels on the front linking elements and that green accent panels were applied on the gymnasium gable and referred to the roof plan to show the other locations the white panels were to be installed. Mr. Atkins stated that he was not opposed to the metal panels, but said that the white horizontal metal panels gave the building the appearance of a car dealership and would prefer that a traditional material, such as tabby, be applied and that tabby would be a good contrast with the brick. Mr. Atkins said that he liked the wood tones in the metal panels and that the colors tied in well with the green and orange accent colors. Mr. Katsibas said that the wood-look panels gave the building a natural appearance and the white color was inspired by the Robert Smalls white "Planter" boat images which were supplied to the DRB at the conceptual review. He said that he

preferred the brightness of the white metal panels. Mr. Atkins said that the panels were very white and reflective. He said that they looked fine on the inside courtyard because it was creative, fun, a modern take and that the kids would like it, but that the white panels looked distracting on the front secondary background connectors and asked whether they considered using the green panels instead. Mr. Katsibas said that it was a challenge to keep a cohesive design and that they modified the gym entry with green accent panel detailing and added an orange play porch behind the gym to introduce the school colors, but tried to be consistent at the connector sections to keep a cohesive design all the way around the building. Mr. Atkins asked that they consider changing the color on the two connector pieces in the front. He said to also make sure that the stadium light fixtures have good cut-off edges.

Mrs. Brach made a motion to approve this final project with the following conditions:

Architecture:

1. Landscape Plan:

- a. Provide a tree mitigation chart and identify all on-site, non-specimen trees within the limits of disturbance, to remain for the life of the project. All tree inches removed that cannot be mitigated must be paid into the Tree Fund.
 - b. Add palmetto trees planted side-by-side next to the concrete pad/service yard fencing to help soften/screen the cooling towers.
 - c. Substitute the River Birch tree selection to a Dura-Heat River Birch on the plant schedule.
 - d. Add Live Oak trees in the open areas of the back buffer (next to the drain inlet) behind the cooling towers for better equipment screening.
2. Stadium Lighting Plan: submit the lighting plan with photometrics and light fixture cut-sheets for DRB approval once the plan is prepared. The stadium light fixtures must have good cut-off edges to avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties.
3. Cooling towers and equipment boxes must be screened with a combination of landscaping plantings and/or architectural louvers or panels.
- a. Consider moving the staff parking area in order to install more buffer plantings to look more natural and less utility-like and to mitigate the hard surfaces.

Mr. Brock seconded the motion

The Board had a discussion about the motion. Mrs. Brach amended her motion to include changing out the white metal panels on the two front connector pieces with a different color and/or material.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Atkins asked that the applicant submit the revised drawings to staff to distribute to the Board for review.

Mr. Atkins read the standard final condition for the Robert Smalls International Academy Redevelopment project and stated, “the structures, landscaping, lighting and other design elements must be built/installed according to the plans reviewed and approved by the DRB. The material and color board reviewed and approved by the DRB must be adhered to during construction. Any changes to the approved plans or submittals must be requested for and submitted to the DRB for formal approval before changes are made”.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Atkins stated that the next scheduled meeting – 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Brock made a motion to close the meeting and Mrs. Brach seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.