

BEAUFORT COUNTY
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MINUTES
April 6, 2023, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

Members Present: James Atkins, Peter Brower, Brad Hill, Roger Jadown and Donald L. Starkey

Members Absent: J. Michael Brock

Staff Present: Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Community Development Department

Guests:

Patel's Bluffton Bottle Shop – Ronak Patel, A & A Maruti & John B. Crouch, Oceana Design LLC

Modern Classic Motors Service Center - Tim Probst, Parker Design Group

No members from the public were in attendance.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order at 2:30 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 February 2, 2023, minutes. Mr. Starkey motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Mr. Jadown seconded to approve. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was no public comment.
5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Patel's Bluffton Bottle Shop, 74 Bluffton Road – Bluffton – Conceptual:

Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comments, but no comments were made. Mr. John Crouch, the project Architect, and Mr. Ronak Patel, the project developer made the presentation for the project. Mr. Crouch distributed printed copies of the color board and a third revision of the building elevations for the Board's consideration. Mr. Crouch stated that the original architectural design had dynamic sloping roofs with inserts but amended the building elevations based upon the staff comments. Mr. Crouch stated that he was seeking input from the Board for the 3rd version of the building elevations. Mr. Atkins stated that the Board would offer critiques of the building design but could not design the building for them.

Mr. Jadown questioned whether there would be rooftop HVAC units and if so where they would be located. Mr. Crouch stated that the HVAC units and the exhaust fan would be located behind rooftop screens. Mr. Jadown asked if they would consider a wall mounted exhaust fan versus a roof mounted fan. Mr. Crouch stated that they would prefer a roof-mounted exhaust fan because a wall-mounted fan creates a mess on the exterior walls. Mr. Patel said that the kitchen would need the exhaust fan and would be geared for a Grab & Go type food service sales similar to Parker's and would not be a dine-in restaurant. Mr. Jadown stated that the 2nd updated rear view

had three gable heights and three different roof lines and questioned how it would work at the corner. Mr. Crouch stated that there would be two intersecting gables. Mr. Jadown asked what was proposed on the southwest wall under the clear story windows. Mr. Crouch said that this area would have a wall-mounted intake louver. Mr. Jadown said that the east elevation had too much going on. Mr. Crouch said that 3 gables were better than two gables and wanted to reduce the interior building volume that needed to be conditioned. He stated that the building was a tall “T” warehouse with intersecting gables. Mr. Jadown stated that the dumpster enclosure area seemed very small and wondered if it would be large enough. Mr. Patel stated that the refuse would be disposed of three times a week and that it would be large enough.

Mr. Brower stated that he liked the revised elevations over the previous design. He said that the previous design had few accommodations to Lowcountry architecture and that the current design had nothing to break up the facade and suggested that canopies and roof overhangs were needed to soften the structure. Mr. Brower said that the streetside gables appeared to be nonsensical and that the rhythm did not work.

Mr. Hill said that he agreed with the previous comments made by the Board members and questioned whether the trees within the bioswale area that were scheduled to remain would be feasible and wanted the applicant to re-study this.

Mr. Starkey stated that the previous to impervious ratio seemed extremely high and that there was little room left for tree planting. He said that the east elevation was unacceptable, and it may help if the left gable height were reduced in height. Mr. Crouch said that the left gable was the roof for the warehouse and that it could not be reduced in height. Mr. Starkey said that a light green colored aluminum roof would be more energy efficient and would resist stains better than the clear anodized metal roofing. He said he was glad the original building design had changed.

Mr. Atkins stated that he appreciated the original building design but that the architecture was not appropriate for the location so close to Bluffton Road and Old Town Bluffton. He said that the height of the eaves on the updated elevations were 27’ with a ridge height of 30’ and that the building would have an enormous impact on Bluffton Road. Mr. Atkins stated that although it was a warehouse, the architect would be tasked with the challenge of being creative and bring the building down to scale with the adjacent buildings. He said that the east elevation had dominate massing on the left side and that the entry feature was a minor element. Mr. Atkins said that the fascia and eaves were on the same line and that roof does not extend past the fascia to create shade and shadow. He asked the architect to restudy the massing of the roof and bring the facade scale down to a one story level and to add Lowcountry elements such as shutters and bracketed awnings. Mr. Atkins said that due to the scale of the building, the landscaping will be paramount, and it will be important to augment the plantings in the buffers and have larger sized plantings in the foundation buffer. He said that it would be helpful if a conceptual landscape plan were submitted with the revised architecture to show how the building will be softened and buffered.

Mr. Atkins read Mr. Brock's comment for the record: "A majority of the trees are proposed for removal. Landscape plan should reflect required buffers along the Hwy 46 frontage and buffer."

Mr. Brower made a motion to table this project.

Mr. Hill seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Modern Classic Motors Service Center, 155 Forging Island Road – Bluffton – Final:

Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Mr. Probst, the project Architect, stated that he had no comments to add to the staff report and would take questions from the Board.

Mr. Starkey asked whether the roof mounted air handlers would be completely screened from view. Mr. Probst stated that the units were 4' on the lower portions of the building with the mansard roofs and would be fully screened and that the units were 6' on the taller service area roof with parapets. He said that the parapets were 2'-3' in height and that the units were positioned in a manner that would conceal the units from view. Mr. Starkey said that he would like to see an exhibit to demonstrate that the roof-top units would be completely screened from the streets. Mr. Starkey said that the foundation shrubs being proposed were too few and not large enough to soften the front facade.

Mr. Hill agreed with Mr. Starkey's landscaping comments. He stated the landscape plan needed to be beefed up and that most of the trees in the buffer were deciduous and would offer no buffering in the winter months.

Mr. Jadown said that the dark horizontal siding color did not match the colors of the existing buildings and suggested using a lighter color.

Mr. Atkins said that it was a good-looking building. He said that the dark boral siding may lose the horizontal pattern in the shadows and suggested using a color one shade lighter and to add black striations or to add black metal on the mansard roofs or other black accents to match the Mercedes brand color.

Mr. Atkins read Mr. Brock's comments for the record: "Staff should consider not allowing the front area between parking lot and buffer for car storage or display of sales. The bio detention pond should be planted per standards for bio-retention ponds. Palm trees in buffer are not adequate for buffer planting. There are no evergreen overstory trees within the buffers. Specify treatment for open areas between buffers and parking. Parking spaces require shrubs at the head of parking".

Mr. Atkins asked what the intent was on the green space between the front buffer and the parking area and didn't want it to become a vehicle display or parking area. Mr. Atkins said that the landscape plan should be revised to loosen the back edge of the "L"-shaped street buffer lines and create a wooded buffer. He said that there was not a lot of room to screen the HVAC units and that sections or diagrams would have to be prepared to confirm that the units would be screened.

Mr. Starkey made a motion to approve this project with the following conditions:

- Revise the landscape plan increase the size and number of plantings in the foundation buffer, loosen the edge of the street buffers & add evergreen overstory trees inside and outside of the artificial buffer line to create a wooded buffer, plant the bioretention area to meet the SoLoCo standards and add shrubs at the head of the parking spaces
- Provide an exhibit to demonstrate that the rooftop units are completely screened from view from Highway 278 & Graves Road.
- Lighten the dark gray color on the boral siding and introduce black accents.
- Submit the revised drawings to staff which will be forwarded to the DRB for approval.

Mr. Hill seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Atkins read the standard final condition and stated, “the building, landscaping, lighting, and dumpster enclosure 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 would be held at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909.
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Brower made a motion to close the meeting and Mr. Starkey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.