



DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

MINUTES (FINAL)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022

6:00 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: Tamie Ehinger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

PRESENT: Tamie Ehinger, Chair; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair; Leslie DiCarlo; Chris Bennett; Ellen Sheehan; Jeff Gritsavage; Tad Roemer

STAFF: Amanda Tucker, Senior Planner, City of Saratoga Springs

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, made a motion to approve the March 23, 2022 DRC Meeting Minutes with minor corrections.

Leslie DiCarlo seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair; abstained; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor;

MOTION PASSES: 6-0-1

B. POSSIBLE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

NOTE: The intent of a consent agenda is to identify any application that appears to be “approvable” without need for further evaluation or discussion. If anyone wishes to further discuss any proposed consent agenda item, then that item would be pulled from the “consent agenda” and dealt with individually.

1. #20220210 176 WEST AVENUE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MODIFICATIONS, 176 West Avenue,
Architectural Review of modifications to an existing telecommunications facility within the Urban Residential-2 District.

2. #20220219 315 CHURCH STREET EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS, 315 Church Street,
Architectural Review
of a new entrance roof for an existing commercial building within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.

3. #20220009 102 LINCOLN PORCH DECKING REPLACEMENT, 102 Lincoln Avenue,
Architectural Review of
decking replacement for the front porch within the Neighborhood Complementary Use-2 District.

4. #20220265 116 CAROLINE STREET MODIFICATIONS, 116 Caroline Street, Modification to Historic Review approvals for an exterior modification to an existing single-family within the Urban Residential-3 District.

5. #20220238 40 FIFTH AVENUE LANDSCAPE MODIFICATIONS, 40 Fifth Avenue, Historic Review of exterior modifications within the Urban Residential-1 District.

6. #20220241 231 BROADWAY, THE INN AT SARATOGA EV CHARGING STATIONS, 231 Broadway, Historic Review of electric vehicle charging stations within the Transect-6 Urban Core District

7. #20220243 75 CHURCH STREET EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS, 75 Church Street, Architectural Review of rooftop solar panels within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.

8. #20220274 FIVE FIFTY WALL SIGNAGE, 550 Union Avenue, Architectural Review of a new wall sign within the Water Related Business District.

9. #20220264 241 UNION AVENUE KING 'S TAVERN EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS , 241 Union Avenue Architectural Review of a new exterior exhaust system within the Urban Residential-3 District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission regarding these applications.
None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on these consent agenda items. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, made a motion in the matter of 176 West Avenue Telecommunications Modifications, 176 West Avenue, 315 Church Street Exterior Modifications, 315 Church Street, 102 Lincoln Porch Decking Replacement, 102 Lincoln Avenue, 116 Caroline Street Modification, 116 Caroline Street, 40 Fifth Avenue Landscape Modifications, 40 Fifth Avenue, 231 Broadway The Inn at Saratoga EV Charging Stations, 231 Broadway, 75 Church Street Exterior Modification, 75 Church Street, Five Fifty Wall Signage, 550 Union Avenue, 241 Union Avenue King's Tavern Exterior Modifications, 241 Union Avenue, that these applications be approved as submitted. Leslie DiCarlo seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor

MOTION PASSES : 7-0

C. DRC APPLICATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

1. #20220228 148 SOUTH BROADWAY BODY GLOW NY SIGNAGE, 148 South Broadway, Architectural
Review of a new wall sign within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.

Agent: Adam Wakulenko, Adirondack Sign Company

Mr. Wakulenko stated this is a push through internally lit sign with illuminated letters. Same type of construction as was previously there but a different configuration.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated her concern regarding the signage was its size. It overwhelms the existing space. The sign you are replacing was much smaller and a better fit proportionally for the space. The previous sign was also internally lit.

Discussion ensued among the Commission regarding the size of the signage, too much black, smaller dimensions,
symmetry and balance between the two signs on this façade.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated the consensus she is getting from the Commission is that the sign does not work as presented.

If the Commission agrees that the proportions of the sign should be made smaller or a different configuration for the crown, the Chair would be happy to approve that Administratively.

Mr. Wakulenko stated he would like to pull the sides in. He feels adding the same size spacing on all sides and reducing the size would work.

Leslie DiCarlo made a motion in the matter of the 148 S. Broadway Body Glow NY Signage, 148 S. Broadway the DRC issues the following decision on April 13, 2022 - Approve with the following condition - the applicant will return with rendering showing new dimensions for possible Administrative Review. Rob DuBoff seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor;
Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor

MOTION PASSES : 7-0

2. #20220252 131 EXCELSIOR AVENUE NORTH SPRING RUN NEW MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, 131

Excelsior Avenue, Consideration of deferral of Lead Agency Status for coordinated SEQRA Review for a new multi-family residential development within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated the applicant is before the Commission this evening for deferral of Lead Agency Status for SEQRA Review for this multi-family development. The applicant will provide the Commission with a brief overview of the project, and we can provide initial feedback. The application will return before the DRC for full review.

Applicant: Conifer Development

Agent: Mark Taber, LA Group

Mr. Taber stated the project site is the former Saratoga Brewery site. A visual of the project site was provided, noting the site is primarily covered with the building and parking provided on three sides, with frontage on Excelsior Avenue. Mr. Taber provided streetscape photographs for the Commissions review. The applicant is proposing to demolish all the existing structures and the asphalt on the site. The proposal is a 4 story multi-family building. It is classified as a single building, there is a small connector between the two buildings on the upper levels allowing a pedestrian walkthrough on the street level. 102 units are proposed providing a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Site is to be accessed on the western side of the property, renovating that access point around the building to the provided parking areas. Mr. Taber provided streetscape elevation views. The architect is taking cues from the surrounding area. The materials proposed are brick and composite siding around the front and three sides of the building. Vinyl siding is proposed for the elevation facing Route 50 with colors to match the front side of the building.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated typically with a project of this size we defer Lead Agency Status for SEQRA to the Planning Board. When we review new construction, we look at mass and scale, the proportions, contextual appropriateness and how the structure relates to the neighboring structures, directional expression, fenestrations, entrances, street orientation, grade, and topography. We take into consideration all those things. In looking at this project it is heading in the right direction. This is a large structure. The use of the connector may not be an appropriate choice it draws the eye to that area instead of the building. The grade is interesting, and we do like to see everything above grade.

Mr. Taber spoke regarding the grade of the site, and he noted the building will be set up a bit.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, also stated the Commission has not approved vinyl on a commercial residential structure such as this for years.

Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, stated this is a great project. He echoes the comments of the Chair regarding the vinyl siding. He cannot support the project at all, along with vinyl windows and trim. Wood, masonry, or cement board siding. The foundation must be treated in some fashion; it cannot be left as is. The mass appears too broken up. It is a little too confusing especially the way it jogs in and out. The connector is a good idea, but it is not entirely successful the way it is. Otherwise, it is a great project.

Tad Roemer stated there are lot of doors, the applicant should consider giving the front door to the lobby more distinction.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated that is also one of the Commissions tasks, is placing emphasis on main entrances, and making them more prominent.

Chris Bennett agrees with what has been stated so far especially with the proposed products. The treatment of the porches is important and what the pedestrians will look at when they look up.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, made a motion in the matter of the 131 Excelsior Avenue North Spring Run New Multi-Family Development, the DRC defers Lead Agency Status for SEQRA to the Planning Board should they seek it.

Jeff Gritsavage seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor;

Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor

MOTION PASSES : 7-0

3. #20220208 10 MADISON AVENUE EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS, Historic Review of exterior modifications, of an existing single-family residence within the Urban Residential-1 District.

DISCLOSURE:

Chris Bennett disclosed that he lives within 500 ft. of the property but not less than 100 ft.
Leslie DiCarlo disclosed that she lives within 500 ft. of the property but not less than 100 ft.

Applicant: Barbara Glaser

Agent: Rich Thorkleson, project director

Ms. Glaser stated due to a variety of health issues she cannot maneuver the stairs and they recently purchased the 10 Madison Avenue property. They are making this property more accessible for her. We are proposing to expand the side entrance. The steps will remain on the front of the property but around back is a discrete elevator lift for a wheelchair or walker will be installed. Interior renovations are also proposed. A back deck is also proposed, accessible by stairs and small ramp from both sides of the house. We are changing the doors, front, side, and porch. The dining room window which faces the driveway we are adding a very subtle stained-glass feature which will camouflage the cars.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated this home although in the historic district is a very contemporary home. It was built in the 1990's. The changes we are looking at should be reviewed if they are appropriate for the house not necessarily the district it is in.

Mr. Thorkleson, project director provided views of the new door proposed. The deck will be constructed of cedar, Handrails to match existing and color to match the existing home. Visual images of the elevations were provided.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated she does not feel these doors are inappropriate, they are quality doors. In terms of the elevation and replacement of the deck and ramps are being made to make them ADA compliant. They are not just a personal choice but a need for the owner.

Chris Bennett stated these changes are making the property more attractive.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, made a motion in the matter of the 10 Madison Avenue Exterior Modifications, 10 Madison Avenue,
The DRC issues the following decision on April 13, 2022 - Approve as submitted or shown on the attached plans.
Leslie DiCarlo seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor;
Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor

MOTION PASSES : 7-0

4. #20220230 37 PHILA STREET, BAILEY 'S EXTERIOR KITCHEN DEMOLITION AND REPLACEMENT, 37

Phila Street, determination of significance and review of demolition for an existing exterior kitchen. Possible

Architectural Review of a new exterior kitchen within the Transect-6 District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated this application has three components. First the DRC must determine if there is any historical or architectural significance to the existing structure. Once that is determined, we can then discuss demolition. Should the Board approve demolition a SEQRA Review is required, a motion will be made on both of those items. Following that we can discuss the new structure the applicant is proposing, and new motion will be made on that application.

Applicant: Samuel Bottini, owner

Mr. Bottini stated the idea for the project was from Farmer's Hardware which used a shipping container kitchen attached to the rear of their building. The size of the current kitchen is not appropriate for the number of seats we have. We currently need a larger more efficient kitchen. Following research, we were able to find a company that can provide a shipping container type kitchen which will meet our needs.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, questioned when the original kitchen was installed.

Mr. Bottini stated it was prior to his ownership of the property which has been 6 years and it was there a long time prior to that.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated we did view the property on caravan, and this is your entire kitchen. In terms of historical and architectural significance, the Chair feels confident that there is no historical or architectural significance in this small shed.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if the Commission had any concerns regarding demolition of this structure.

Jeff Gritsavage questioned if the applicant during demolition were proposing to take down the CMU wall behind the structure.

Mr. Bottini stated yes, everything there is going to be removed. The only need for the new structure will be a concrete slab.

Amanda Tucker, Senior Planner, provided a visual of the proposed new kitchen, noting on the plans a portion of the CMU wall was to remain in effect.

Mr. Bottini stated we had an architect draw up a plan for a new kitchen prior to deciding on the shipping container type kitchen which does show a portion of the CMU wall being retained. Everything will be demolished prior to the delivery of the new kitchen.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, completed a review of the SEQRA Short Environmental Assessment Form.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair made a motion in the matter of 37 Phila Street, Bailey's Kitchen, Demolition Only, 37 Phila Street acknowledging that the DRC consisted with Section 7.5.11 "Demolition" of the City's Zoning Ordinance, the Design Review Commission determines that this property does not have Architectural and/or Historical significance contributing to the historic fabric and resources of the City of Saratoga Springs. And, in accordance with the objectives, standards and guidelines contained in the City Zoning Ordinance Article 240-7.5 Architectural Review; the DRC issues the following decision regarding SEQRA. Based on the information provided in the SEQRA Short Environmental Assessment Form and an analysis of the information provided and presented in Part II of the SEQRA Short Environmental Assessment Form the Chair made a motion for SEQRA Negative Declaration since this project will not result in any large and important impact and therefore is one that will not have a significant impact on the environment. Ellen Sheehan seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, in favor; Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Jeff Gritsavage, in favor; Tad Roemer, in favor

MOTION PASSES : 7-0

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated we can now discuss the proposal for the New Exterior Kitchen.

Mr. Bottini stated he does not have a visual rendering for the new kitchen. The container will be painted a dark grey in color. It is set far back from the property.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated she would like to see a rendering of the exterior of the new kitchen. The elevations provided are helpful, but a rendering would be key and provide a visual of what is being proposed.

Discussion ensued among the Commission regarding a mural of or design on the container.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated since this is in the Architectural district, and something as was suggested is considered a mural which falls into the art category, and we do not have purview over art. We do not allow umbrellas to have advertising on them and we do have purview over that. We are not 100% sure how this is managed at this time.

Amanda Tucker, Senior Planner, stated murals in an Architectural Review District are not part of our purview. In a Historic District they are. If the mural is larger than the allowed permitted sign it is 200 sq. ft. or up to 50% of the façade whichever is less then it triggers a whole slew of things, including DRC review. She is unsure how the Zoning Officer would interpret this. Her instinct would be just the kitchen space, but she will research this and provide the information to the Commission and the applicant.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated when the applicant returns with a rendering if you have any ideas regarding wrapping this or disguising or painting it please bring that when you return. Explore your options. The Chair questioned the exhaust

currently and will that remain with the new container. Any way to hide or mask the exhaust would be helpful as well.

Mr. Bottini stated that is the only way feasible.

Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, stated materials such as vinyl's would not be acceptable.

Chris Bennett stated painting the structure or the exhaust with something that blends.

5. #20220129 30 CAROLINE STREET, 6 STORY MULTI-USE BUILDING, 30 Caroline Street, Architectural

Review of a proposed mixed-use project within the Transect-6 Urban Core District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated this project is here for Architectural Review even though it is part of Broadway's Historic District.

Agent: George Olsen, Olsen Architecture; Dave Carr, LA Group

Mr. Olsen provided a visual overview of the project and the site. A two-story building previously existed on the site and was destroyed by fire. The building was removed a foundation exists. We are proposing to stay away from the side walls and construct a small basement for mechanicals. We will be filling the entire site with the building. A panoramic view of the neighborhood was provided for the Commission. What we are proposing for the first floor is a small restaurant or bar tenant. The building is required to have two exits and an elevator which consumes the square footage. There is a total of 15 units in the building 5 one bedroom and 10 studio apartments. Views of all elevations were provided. The trend is recognizing that people want to be downtown, they do not want square footage, they will pay extra to live downtown. We have been following the new UDO with the new zoning which will allow taller buildings. The applicant is proposing a six-story building. **The façade** concept will be a modern version of the cast iron facades which are seen down in SOHO. Mr. Olsen stated the applicant is proposing the use of black brick, steel, and glass with storefront framing. The building is a lot line building and therefore does not have windows on this side of the building. Reviews of all elevations were provided for the Commission as well as a 3D illustration of the building.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated what the DRC looks at with projects such as this is to ensure they comport with the City's Design Standards and Guidelines. We look at mass and scale, proportions, contextual appropriateness, how the structure relates to neighboring structures, directional expressions, entrances, fenestrations, and quality of materials. The Chair feels that the six-story structure is completely inappropriate. She personally cannot move this project forward as it is presented. She is excited to see infill development, but the height and the proportion seems off. The fenestration is new construction and should not mimic historic structures but should be compatible with neighboring buildings. The Chair does not see that here. **The other concern is the east façade** which is highly visible and there is no articulation whatsoever. **That huge blank façade is unacceptable.**

Tad Roemer stated he disagrees with the Chair regarding the six stories. It does not feel height is an issue.

The verticality works and has nice texture and is setback. This is a nice design. He does have concerns regarding the use of storefront windows on the building. A brick blend would work better than the black. Photographs of the applicants' other buildings with the use of black brick would be helpful for the Commission to see.

Ellen Sheehan agrees with Tad it is a well-designed building. The issue she has with it is the context, streetscape, the differential. The differential here is too great to be consistent with the cityscape.

Jeff Gritsavage stated he does not have a problem with the height. It seems massive because the floors all mimic each other. On the east and west sides of the building you can add textures with the brick. Pilasters added can be effective. The void to solid ratio is not an issue for him. Breaking up the top and second floor might help reduce the massing.

Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair, stated it is too tall next to the surrounding buildings. You mentioned the UDO and the design is not in keeping with the UDO standards. The Vice Chair provided information to the applicant's agent regarding current UDO standards which this project does not meet. The east and west and south elevations are very visible elevations, and he would not support these blank highly visible elevations. The cornice should be prominent as well as the entrance should be prominent and that has not been honored. Lastly, the fenestration of the building reads like a wall of glass, and he does not feel he could support that. The railings look tacky. He does like the brick choice and the use of steel.

He is not sure the design is where he could support it.

Chris Bennett echoes what Rob stated. The height in this context, especially the surrounding neighborhood. It is overwhelming.

Leslie DiCarlo agrees with everything everyone else has stated. The entrances are not prominent enough and she does not have a problem with the height per se, but all the floors are the same, stacked upon one another and they are all glass, brick, and masonry all around. It does not read residential, it reads commercial. The cornice is weak as well. It does not have a nice ending. If the floors were not all the same, that might help.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application.

Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation stated this is in the Broadway Historic District listed in the National Register. Your guidelines listed in the Architectural Review District are the same as those listed in the Historic District. She is struggling with the comments regarding the window and door fenestrations which in no way relate to the surroundings buildings or context. The height could be presented in a different way. A stronger cornice and the blank walls are certainly highly visible from all four sides. That needs to be addressed as well. A prominent cornice for this building is encouraged.

Tad Roemer stated the entrance seems fine to him no one is going to get lost.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, stated the applicant agent has heard feedback and concerns. Five out of seven Commission members are concerned regarding the height of the building. Six out of seven have expressed concerns about the width of the windows and the fenestrations. Concerns were voiced regarding the weak cornice, as well as more emphasis on the entrance. Everyone had concerns about the east, south and west wall being prominent and blank.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Design Review Commission Caravan, Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 5:00 P.M.

Design Review Commission Meeting, Wednesday, May 4, 2022, at 6:00 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business to discuss Tamie Ehinger, Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Buzanowski
Recording Secretary

Meeting minutes approved May 25, 2022