



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

MINUTES FINAL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2023

6:00 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: Tamie Ehinger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

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

Tad Roemer, Jeff Gritsavage

ABSENT: Karen Cavotta (Alternate)

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

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

There were no minutes to approve.

VOTE:

MOTION PASSES:

B. POSSIBLE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

NOTE: The intent of a consent agenda is to identify any application that is “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. **#20230809 STARBUCKS SIGNAGE**, 351 Broadway, Historic Review of new wall mounted signage within the (T-6) Urban Core District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, asked if anyone on the Board had any questions, comments or concerns on the consent agenda item. None heard.

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

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, made a motion in the matter of Starbucks, 351 Broadway Signage That this application be approved as submitted. **Jeff Gritsavage** seconded the motion.

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

Notice of Decision

In the matter of the application

#20230809

Starbucks Signage
351 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

involving Historic Review of new wall mounted signage within the Urban Core / T-6 District, tax parcel #165.67-1-70, within the City of Saratoga Springs.

In accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Design Review Commission classifies this request as a SEQR:

Type II action – exempt from further SEQR review

And, in accordance with the objectives, standards and guidelines contained in the City Zoning Ordinance Article 240-7.5 Historic Review, the Design Review Commission issues the following decision on October 4, 2023:

Approve as submitted or shown on the attached plans

Note: this approval shall expire 18 months from the issuance date unless any necessary building permit has been issued and actual work begun.

Record of vote: motion to approve made by T. Ehinger, seconded by J. Gritsavage: passed 7-0 In favor: T. Ehinger, R. DuBoff, C. Bennett, L. DiCarlo, J. Gritsavage, T. Roemer, E. Sheehan

As a result of this decision, the applicant:

may proceed with the proposed project as approved.

Please contact the Building Department to verify permit requirements.

C. DRC APPLICATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

1. **#20230750**, 324 Lake Exterior Modifications, Architectural Review of exterior modifications including roof, siding, and select replacement and modification of roof gable for an existing single-family structure within the Urban Residential-1 District. **Tabled by Tamie Ehinger, Chair**
2. **#20230806**, 27 Division, Bank of America Signage, Architectural Review of new wall mounted, monument, and directional signage within the Urban Core / T-6 District.

Applicant: Tom Wheeler , AJ Sign Co . is representing the Applicant

Tom Wheeler stated that The Bank of America is changing their branding throughout the Country. **Tamie Ehinger, Chair** , stated that 99% of the signs being presented are replacing existing signs. There are a few with changes and one new sign. **The Chair** suggested that the Board look at the straight up replacements first. She also thanked Mr. Wheeler for showing renderings of the before and after signs. "It makes sense. Very well done!"

Slide 6 - this sign will replace the old sign with the new branding. The letters will all be capital letters. **Rob DuBoff, Vice Chair** asked if they could get rid of the conduit that runs up to the sign. **Tom Wheeler** said he would check into that.

Slides 7, 9 & 11 are straight up replacements.

Slide 14 is the same and they are dropping one of the signs.

Slide 16 the color of the poles (red) and the background color are changing. **Tamie Ehinger, Chair** feels the white posts are far more appropriate. She said while the signs can reflect branding, the construction around the sign should not necessarily be tied into the brand. Although, she doesn't feel it's a deal breaker. White is more appropriate for a downtown block. The sign is isolated to the back of the property.

Slide 17, the sign will be shorter. It's a solid red color - Fire Engine Red.

Slides 18, 19, 20, 21 are all parking plaques that are being replaced same for same.

Monument sign - Tom Wheeler described the sign as an aluminum structure with the same branding and colors as previously discussed. There is red on the sides of the sign. The letters are cut into the face and pushed through an acrylic so that at night only the letters will be illuminated. None of the background or post is lit. The overall height of the sign is 6'. The lighting is soft.

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, said 6' is an appropriate height but she doesn't feel it should be internally lit. Suggested a Gooseneck or uplighting.

Chris Bennett said he liked it and thought it would look nice because it's soft lit and low key. Tom Wheeler said only the letters light up so you can read it at night.

Rob DuBoff said he really likes the design but would like to see what the sign looks like lit up. He agrees with Tamie that the sign should be externally illuminated.

Leslie DiCarlo agreed with Rob but feels the sign is more attractive without a red border and that it's not necessary. She would like to see the sign externally lit.

Jeff Gritsavage said the sign is "a little too highway". A gooseneck would be more appropriate in that area of downtown.

Tad Roemer agrees with Rob.

Ellen Sheehan said she was okay with an internally lit sign as long as the letters are subtle.

Tad Roemer asked that Mr. Wheeler put the light temperature at 27 hundred degrees.

THERE WERE NO FURTHER COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD OR PUBLIC

Tamie Ehinger, Chair, thanked Mr. Wheeler. It was decided that the Board would vote on the majority of the signs, and asked Mr. Wheeler to return with different options for the monument sign including gooseneck, uplighting and halo lighting.

Notice of Decision

In the matter of the application

#20230806

Bank of America Signage

27 Division Street

Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

involving Architectural Review of new wall mounted, monument, and directional signage within the Urban Core / T-6 District., tax parcel #165.59-1-19, within the City of Saratoga Springs.

In accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Design Review Commission classifies this request as a SEQR:

Type II action – exempt from further SEQR review

And, in accordance with the objectives, standards and guidelines contained in the City Zoning Ordinance Article 240-7.5 Architectural Review, the Design Review Commission issues the following decision on October 4, 2023:

Approve with the following conditions:

All signage approved as presented with the exception of the new monument sign.

Applicant to return with nighttime renderings of the monument sign showing illumination.

Note: this approval shall expire 18 months from the issuance date unless any necessary building permit has been issued and actual work begun.

Record of vote: motion to approve made by E. Sheehan, seconded by J. Gritsavage: passed 7-0 In favor: T. Ehinger, R. DuBoff, C. Bennett, L. DiCarlo, J. Gritsavage, T. Roemer, E. Sheehan
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As a result of this decision, the applicant:

may proceed with the proposed project as approved

Please contact the Building Department to verify permit requirements

3. #20230750, 53 PUTNAM NEW 5-STORY MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT - 52 Putnam St.,
Historic Review of a new 5-story mixed-use development within the Urban core / T-6 District.

Jason Letts Applicant working to give back to the city. After presenting the sketch plan review in April with DRB they have worked hard to identify a new plan to move forward. The new plan is 100% affordable for the residential units with the first floor to include community spaces, coffee shop, bookstore and art market space. They are looking to clean up the environment, provide affordable housing and create some good jobs.

Adam Feldman, clarified affordable housing income range to be between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Potential buyers would be mainly workforce and possibly Senior's who no longer own a car and want to live in the downtown.

James Tripp, Architect with MRB Group said he appreciates the Board's time, comments, and feedback from a few months ago. James presented the updated design for the building. The building is directly across from the Library and the Frontier building is on the left. The site was a brownfield and has been cleaned up. James displayed a collage of existing buildings along Putnam St. for context. The footprint of the new building is close to what was there previously. The site is approximately 1/3 of an acre, with an alleyway to the north that connects with some of the adjacent parcels for service, and a right-of-way/easement to maintain the alleyway. The dumpsters in the northwest corner belong to a separate parcel, but it is an access drive all the way through. They are proposing a colonnade at the street level, with store fronts to create more pedestrian friendly spaces at the building. They are also working with the Planning Board and DPW to provide street trees on that side of Putnam St. where none currently exist. Their electrical transformer, a provision for a generator (exterior or interior) and loading area for residents for move-in day along with short term parking. A trash access point will be located off the north side, with an overhead door with pedestrian access into the building.

Adam Feldman said they are now proposing a 5-story building:

First-floor plan: on the left are the trash/utility areas previously mentioned. On the east side is a covered colonnade creating pedestrian table areas for the commercial space, which is to be retained by Putnam Resources and used as community space such as coffee shops, etc. The residential lobby entrance is toward the south, facing on Putnam St. along with some utility spaces and tenant storage units.

Upper Floor Plan : They are proposing 8 apartment units per floor. They are 1- and 2-bedroom, 1-bath units. The majority are 2 bedrooms. Some of the units have an extra den that is internal to the footprint. The approximate square footage is 835 sq. ft. for the 2-bedroom units and 683 sq. ft. for the 1 bedroom. The footprint is the same all the way up for the 5 floors.

Architectural design: Adam described some of the window styles. As recommended by the Board previously, they have created a hierarchy at the entrance with the idea of a bay or boxout window to define a base, a middle and a top for the building. The **façade at Putnam St.** elevation would have double-hung windows, some Juliet balconies, and the colonnade at street level. They showed hierarchy for the residential entrance with a canopy, incorporated some articulation with the brick work with soldier courses over the windows on the first two floors, some band coursing corbels, the bands over the top of the colonnade recess creating shadow lines and a place for signage for the commercial space. Up above are the double hung windows. The fifth floor would be a different color of proposed fiber cement siding. The first two stories on Putnam St. are brick and will transition to one story of brick around the building. Adam showed some proposed pilaster lighting on the columns, canopies with signage, etc. There will be dark aluminum windows and the store front systems will be black. The Juliet balconies on the Putnam Street side will be prefabricated black mesh unit. The Putnam St. and north and south elevations will have the brick wrapping around for two stories and transitioning to a single story in the rear. They've included box out windows and different materials and colors to create shadow lines **to give some movement to the façade.** Lapp siding where the red would be and panel siding where the gray is located. Something new to the plan is that there will be elevator over-run and they likely will be taking a stair to the roof which would be 9' above the roof deck elevation. The north elevation is along the alleyway previously mentioned with punch openings providing access into the commercial space for various venues taking place there. There is a grade change that goes from Putnam St. up to the back of the site toward Broadway to deal with in elevations. The west elevation has brick on the first floor, fiber cement siding, and panel siding up above. The windows are into a bedroom unit. The property line is limiting the amount of fenestration allowed on the west side of the building.

Materials and color palette: the siding is smooth sided fiber cement (not wood grain). Showed the aluminum sample for the windows and the storefront is black windows where the metal would be. Adam showed samples of the siding colors red and gray. They are proposing Lapp and panel siding and are including copings and facias and metals on top on the cornice. The proposed brick is full width. The first floor will have a backup - it will be a cavity wall construction. Adam showed a sample of the wood and said the coloring looks yellowish inside but out in the sun it's not so yellow. It's a wood look made of a synthetic material for maintenance.

Adam Feldman showed pictures of different street views of the building.

Tamie Ehinger emphasized the scope of what the DRB is here to determine. They are not deciding whether or not affordable housing is appropriate in Saratoga Springs. The DRB is looking at the design of the structure that is being presented to ensure that it meets historic design standards. If it doesn't then the DRB will determine whether there is valid rationale behind why it should be allowed. The DRB will be looking at overall design elements such as: height and proportion of the structure, how the building relates to other neighboring structures as well as the district in general, tree orientation, main entrances, step-backs, setbacks, vertical and horizontal expression, fenestration and materials.

Tamie Ehinger feels that the design is moving in the right direction. She said she was quite impressed with the difference between what was originally proposed and what the applicant has shown today. Tamie likes the 6 story down to 5, much more appropriate for the neighborhood. The fifth story as presented does work. There has clearly been an intent to break up the mass of the structure. She likes the change in materials - that it's full brick and that the first 2 floors at the pedestrian level are brick and that it continues toward the back of the building. Tamie feels they've done a good job emphasizing the main entrance. Fiber cement for new construction is an appropriate material. She emphasized that the installation of the fiber cement panels is very important. The stair tower and elevator tower complicate the height issue. Tamie would like to see renderings showing those.

Ellen Sheehan said the **primary façade**, the fenestrations, 2 sliding doors and 3 other sized windows, doesn't feel successful. The rhythm is lost. She feels that sliding doors are **inappropriate on a primary façade**. Ellen asked what kind of trim would be around the windows. Adam said there would be 5/4" x 4 trim casing around the windows.

Tad Roemer said the building doesn't have a base, middle and top. It all seems kind of random. He believes that the two-story base doesn't work because they only have 5 stories to work with. The first two floors are by themselves. He encouraged the applicant to simplify the plan. There's too much asymmetry. Tad noted that the two-story base to him is the most successful part of the picture. He would object to sliding glass doors anywhere on the building. Tad said he really wants to support the project but is not supportive of the design solutions. He thinks 6 stories would be even better. The density for Saratoga would benefit from more affordable apartments here. Tad feels there are too many window types included in the plan. He doesn't like the small double hung windows. The three-part windows in the living room (picture window with double hung on each side) don't work well. The building has a suburban feel with the picture windows. He feels there's not enough difference in the size of the windows. Double hung windows throughout the building would have an historic feel. Tad said he would almost like to see the pattern of double hung windows continued, a simpler and easier repetition of windows. Tad feels the **east façade is broken up too much** and doesn't understand how the materials will all go together. He likes the overhang at the top of the building. Tad said he's questioning the design and needs to better understand the materials, shadow lines, set back, etc. **Adam** said they are still working with the design but felt it was important to get to mass and scale after the last meeting. There's a lot to figure out at this point.

Jeff Gritsavage said he doesn't really understand the box bay rhythm. It doesn't really appear to accomplish anything like shadowing or bringing in more light. Jeff said the picture window with the double hung windows on each side would make more sense if it were a bay window to create some context, but not on a flat plane. Jeff said the sloped stair tower could be boxed, which is a good thing because it makes it smaller. The double hung windows on the Putnam St. **façade** is a little bit of picture frame design and needs more definition between the jams the sill and the lintels. Even if it's the same depth, the proportions going around can't be the same width. Jeff said the pilasters and the brick really work well. He said this will be the first building that redefines the streetscape which badly needs redefinition. Jeff said it's a fantastic project to get this street in the right direction. He believes this is the next railroad place and it will have a defined street scape. Jeff has no problem with 6 stories but 5 is fine.

Leslie DiCarlo agreed with a lot that had already been mentioned. She has no problem with the size of the building and feels that 5 stories are appropriate. Leslie agrees that the area is important as the first fill-in building in the area, especially for pedestrian traffic and it will set the standard for buildings to come. Leslie said she would like to see the entire **façade** brick and that she doesn't see any reason to break it up with asymmetrical differences in windows, Juliet balconies and sliding doors. She said the **façade** doesn't have the presence of a long-term

contribution to the street. Leslie said she's not as worried about the sides of the building because it will eventually be filled in. Leslie likes that the building has a strong cornice. She would like to see more of a base, middle and top defined by proportions not necessarily materials.

Rob DuBoff agrees with others that this is a very important building they want to see built. Rob said he questions the material choices and has a list of items to mention:

- With the size of the building he would prefer to see the 5th floor step back.
 - Need to see elevator overruns, roof equipment, any wall penetrations for HVAC, laundry facilities
 - Won't support sliders on front facade, inappropriate.
 - First floor space fronting Putnam should be retail not community space. That will affect how the exterior building presents to the street and it's very important. So that will be his vote there.
 - The fiber cement on the front of the building is not compatible with the neighboring buildings. The UDO says it must be compatible. Not a single building in the area has fiber cement on the front **façade**. **Agrees with Leslie that at least the front façade should be all brick. Would support clapboard siding on sides and rear. Fiber cement panels don't hold up. Fiber cement has no longevity.**
 - Suggested gray brick for the box bays instead of the fiber cement panels. He likes that they're using full brick. Rob asked what the cornice material would be composed of. **Adam** said fiber cement with metal. The windows are aluminum versus clad. What is the yellow fake wood made of? **Adam** said Fundermax , resin .
- Rob asked why they are calling them apartments not condos. **Adam** said that was his own term. They are 100% for sale condos. Rob said, in his opinion, the building lacks architectural interest, and doesn't contribute anything artistic to the historic district. The Guideline says to find if it is appropriate or inappropriate. He doesn't find it inappropriate it just doesn't lend anything to the historic district.

Chris Bennett agreed that the building is not inappropriate. He said it would be nice if the **entire façade** was brick. Fiber cement board doesn't last. Chris asked if they considered high quality stucco. It has better longevity. Chris has seen cement board panels that are popping, warping, and twisting on the movie theater building. It appears that the darker the color the worse it holds up. Chris asked what the framing would be. Adam replied 4 over 1 wood frame building. Chris is concerned about repairing the cement board siding that is sagging, warping, twisting. Chris said he has seen it defective on lots of buildings. Chris said he would like to see them clean up the window fenestration. He said they have done a pretty good job overall, but he would like to see them do away with the Juliet balconies and sliders. The mass and scale are fine but he would like to see a material change that has longevity.

Tad Roemer mentioned that these people will be condo owners who could be set up for a maintenance nightmare with a huge assessment if the fiber cement board doesn't hold up. He suggested that stucco would be a great solution for the sides. Tad suggested that they put their money in making the front of the building look great. There was discussion about the windows along the front of the building. They are a mixture of double hung and casement windows.

Tamie Ehinger , Chair opened the discussion up to the audience for public comment. **Samantha Bos shart with the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation** said she echoes the conversation of the DRB. The Foundation wants to see this site redeveloped. It is part of the core of the downtown and they want to see the project succeed. Samantha said affordable housing is important to the community and there are workforce housing challenges in Saratoga. She said the **primary façade doesn't** have a rhythm that's consistent with the historic buildings in the downtown. She agrees that brick **would be great for the entire façade**.

Samantha noted that there is no cement board on the **primary façade** of any other buildings downtown. She's glad that the 6th floor was removed. Samantha compared 26 Caroline St. and a previous discussion with the DRB about the height being very important and consistent with the surrounding 4 story buildings. The Foundation recommends that the 5th floor be set back to be consistent with other reviews the Foundation has advocated for.

Chris Bennett said the main issue with the fiber cement board is thermal expansion and contraction. He said he did a survey around Town and the direction the cement board faces make a difference. Sun, rain, snow, dark, light, etc. It seems the darker the color the worse it becomes. The lighter the better. Chris added that the installation is really important, and he wanted to clarify that. He also stated that not all fiber cement board is rated equal. A good product installed properly in certain locations where there is no moisture would be ok. If there's splash back on the product you will see deterioration along the edges. In primary facades without any roof lines or dormers or splashing back there are no issues.

Adam Feldman made some additional comments. He said they will need 5 stories to make the project work for affordable housing. They will need to look at the cost for stucco. They need to look at the energy code. It's going to be a high efficiency building so there's a lot of systems there to be looked at. BBL is the CM and is very reputable. Adam said they looked at step backs and felt it ruined the proportions of the building. They looked at a 10' setback. They like the full 5 stories. They wanted more movement in the front of the building. Adam said they appreciate all the comments and feedback. For the box outs and fiber cement the proposal is a foot. He said they will look at taking out some of the joints to lessen expansion and contraction.

Tamie Ehinger , Chair said the comments made by DRB show we are excited by this infill. Quick summary:

Consensus **is to focus on the primary façade**. The use of all brick on the structure but specifically on the front. The overriding theme seems to be a need for a simpler design and that there are too many window types. Sliders are inappropriate. The DRB feels Juliet balconies are a suburban feature.

Tad Roemer asked if double hung windows were more thermally efficient than casement. It was discussed and decided that casement windows are more efficient. Casement windows would comply and are not a deal killer.

There was a discussion regarding the building being kinked on the north as you get closer to the east. **Adam Feldman** said there is an easement there and they are trying to keep it away from the alleyway. They had to kink it because the alley is not perpendicular to the street.

Tamie Ehinger , Chair noted that there are 7 different perspectives on the Board. Some want a simpler design. For others breaking the mass is important. Tamie stressed that all aspects of the building need to have the same integrity as the front. The building will be incredibly visible right now and we will be looking at the sides of the building for a long time. The applicant should take all feedback into consideration and come back with options.

Jeff Gritsavage asked if the DRB was going to attempt to advance the approval on the mass and scale of the building. He stated that everyone seems to be in agreement. Tamie said they would need a SEQR review before they can do that.

Tamie Ehinger , Chair in summary:

The height of the building is not inappropriate. Applicant should bring back a height study elevation, elevator tower and stair tower overruns, window details and how they relate to the

façade of the building. Adam said 5 stories is their sweet spot for the building. They don't want to build 6 stories.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Design Review Board Caravan, Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 4:00 P.M.

Design Review Board Meeting, Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 6:00 P.M.

Reminder: Design Review Board Caravan on October 25, 2023, will be followed by Board training with Miller Mannix and Mark Schachner.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

The motion to Adjourn was made by Rob DuBoff and seconded by Leslie DiCarlo.

ALL IN FAVOR

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Gizzi
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved 11/1/23