

Minutes
Baltimore County Design Review Panel
March 10, 2010

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Minutes
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**
March 10, 2010

Call to order

Acting Chair, Donald Kann, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County **Design Review Panel** to order at 6:00 p.m. The following panel members were:

Present

Mr. Christopher Parts
Mr. John DiMenna
Mr. Scott Rykiel

Not Present

Ms. Betsy Boykin
Mr. Derrick Burnett
Ms. Magda Westerhout
Mr. Thomas Repsher
Mr. William Monk (Chair)

County staff present included:
Lynn Lanham, Jenifer Nugent, Krystle Patchak

Minutes of the January 13, 2010 meeting

Mr. Parts moved the acceptance of the draft minutes as written and the motion was seconded by Mr. Rykiel and passed by acclamation at 6:01 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

ITEM 1

PROJECT NAME: Walgreens, 937 York Road

DRP PROJECT #: 512

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial, Towson

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The property is located on the southeast corner of York Road at Fairmount Avenue. The existing property has been developed since 1946 and has been used for various automotive service businesses. More recently, the building was used for Brooks Huff Tire Center, which vacated the building in April of 2008. Currently, an auto paint shop and a towing company used the building.

937 York Road LLC, is proposing to redevelop the 0.762-acre site and build a Walgreens Drug Store. The proposed store will be 8,580 SF on the first floor and will include a 3,780 SF basement for storage/service. A drive thru window will be located on the eastern edge of the building, which will exit along the alley adjacent to the property. The proposed plan indicates a right-in/right-out entrance to York Road on the southern end of the property. Per the State Highway Administration, a left turn to go south on York Road would be prohibited from this entrance.

The building will be constructed primarily of brick with a cast stone base and accents along with aluminum trim and a standing seam metal roof.

The project was previously reviewed at the January 13, 2010 Design Review Panel meeting and the project was tabled with the following conditions:

1. Widen pedestrian access from northwest corner
2. Pave staging area at bus stop
3. Re-orient dumpster enclosure opening to the south, provide details
4. Provide public trash receptacles at feature street corner entry and also at bus stop
5. Provide textured paving inset from street corner to entry tower through the parking lot
6. Extend textured paving and/or curbed landscape to include triangular transition areas at parking stalls
7. Add knee wall to act as screening
8. Shift curb line along York Road 2.5' to prevent vehicular damage to fencing feature
9. Revise curb height within parking lot along York Road – make 9 inches high to act as wheel stop
10. Show variety of planting at corner entrance
11. Shift parking, add one parking space at northeast property line along alley
12. Delete one parking space at northeast building corner and add planting bed with tree
13. Eliminate all grass areas within property line
14. Post sign at drive thru encouraging customers to turn off headlights at night
15. Confirm zero-cut-off photometrics at east side of rear alley
16. Revise landscape plan
17. Incorporate signage into wall design

18. Continue ripple effect pattern of the brick used on rear façade
19. Provide railing details for rear façade – high quality
20. Delete note on plans regarding parking variance

All final plans were to be submitted to the Office of Planning for final review and approval. Due to the many conditions of approval, the applicant revisited the project along with Planning Office staff and made many revisions to the layout of the site. The project was then brought back before the panel for continued review.

Mike Ertel, of MJ Consulting, along with Richard Polan of Richard Polan Associates, presented the revisions to the panel. The conditions were addressed as follows:

1. The pedestrian walkway from the northwest corner has been widened (6') as requested.
2. A paved area of approximately 22' x 11' has been provided for the bus stop area.
3. The dumpster is now located inside the building.
4. Trash receptacles will be provided at the bus stop and at the corner (see landscape plan).
5. Textured paving will be provided at three points where pedestrians cross the driveways.
6. The triangular areas are no longer shown as the circulation pattern has changed.
7. A knee wall will be built along both street frontages.
8. Parking bumpers are shown to prevent cars from hitting wall.
9. The bumpers will stop cars from hitting knee wall.
10. The revised landscape plan shows a variety of plants at the corner.
11. The parking layout has changed. A tree has been added to define entry from Fairmount Avenue.
12. The parking layout has changed.
13. All areas are landscaped; no grass is proposed.
14. The drive-thru is relocated and no sign is needed.
15. The photogrammetric plan has been uncluded.
16. The landscape plan was revised.
17. Signage is proposed as one monument sign. The wall as now proposed will not accommodate signage.
18. The ripple effect is continued along all sides.
19. A railing is no longer proposed.
20. The parking variance note has been deleted.

The applicants also addressed the issues raised by the Planning Office in the Staff Report dated March 8, 2010 and submitted additional materials to the staff. The Staff Report is filed as Appendix C.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Ms. Leigh Farrell, of 976 Radcliffe Road, has rental properties directly behind the site and she expressed her support for the many changes and improvements made to the site. The only concern that she still had was with the headlights from cars waiting in the drive-thru lane. The applicants stated that the drive-thru window was now located on the rear of the building, so cars sitting at the window would not be facing her property. Ms. Farrell was also concerned with the dumpsters. The applicant stated that the dumpsters have now been moved inside.

Mr. Mike Farrell, of 976 Radcliffe Road, was concerned with the grade of the site in comparison to the grade of the alley and their property. The applicants stated that the lights would not be an issue and that the building is set between 6" to 12" of existing grade. Mr. Farrell was also concerned with the use of the alley as 2-way. He stated that cars park along the alley and doesn't understand how cars leaving the site will be able to maneuver. The applicants assured him that the county stated that the alley is only 1-way at their property line going south and is 2-way onto Fairmount Avenue. The applicants also assured Mr. Farrell that the loading dock, which is internal, was moved to the side of the building to prevent the truck from having to back down the alley.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Rykiel commented on the revisions to the plans and the great improvements that were made. He was concerned that the textured paving located from the area near the egress out to Fairmount Avenue crossing the parking lot and into the traffic lane of the drive-thru lane could be a safety hazard. He suggested possibly losing a parking space to angle the walkway more. The applicant stated that they can try and work with the angle, but they are currently at their count for parking and prefer not to lose any spaces. Mr. Rykiel also commented on the variety of landscaping on the site. He was concerned with the location of the Towson Park sign, and suggested either moving it closer to the actual Towson Park or just creating a "Towson" gateway sign. Mr. Polan stated that they worked with the community and they like the idea of a Towson Park sign, specifically on the bottom of the monument sign. He also stated that they would be willing to revisit the signs.

Mr. DiMenna had no additional comments.

Mr. Parts also complimented the applicants on their improvements to the project. He suggested eliminating the Towson Park sign and using the Towson scripted "T" logo on the bottom of the monument sign, to act as a gateway feature. He also stated that he agreed with Mr. Rykiel with regards to the textured paving from the area near the egress out to Fairmount Avenue crossing the parking lot and into the traffic lane of the drive-thru lane. Mr. Parts questioned the applicants on the use of light poles on the top of the masonry piers. Mr. Rykiel was also concerned with this idea and they suggested using a more traditional light fixture.

Mr. Kann thanked the applicants for working on all of the improvements and working along with the Office of Planning staff. He suggested revisiting the location of the drive-thru window, and moving it as far towards Fairmount Avenue as possible. He also suggested detailing the drive-thru window on the rear elevation to give it more presence.

DISPOSITION:

A motion was made by Mr. Parts to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. Provide traditional light fixture on top of masonry piers.
2. Eliminate arched Towson Park sign – possibly add Towson “T” to monument sign.
3. Provide Towson Park sign along Fairmount Avenue
4. Study textured paving at back corner of site
5. Revise location and articulation of drive-thru window
6. Revise all plans to address staff comments in staff report

All revisions are to be submitted to the Office of Planning for final review and approval.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rykiel and approved by acclamation.

The meeting was adjourned at 6: 45 p.m.

Code Statement: Section 32 – 4 – 203 (i) (2) of the Baltimore County Code states, *The Panel’s recommendation is binding on the Hearing Officer, and on the agencies under subsection (l), (Directors of the Office of Planning, the Department of Permits and Development Management and the Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management), unless the Hearing Officer or agencies find that the Panel’s actions constitute an abuse of its discretion or are unsupported by the documentation and evidence presented.*

Approved as of June 9, 2010