



## **Architectural Review Board Special Meeting Minutes**

**November 29, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

### **1) Call to Order**

The meeting was Called to Order by Chairperson Toney.

### **2) Roll Call of Members**

Members present: Mr. Hall, Mr. Heyer, Mr. Scott, Ms. Strasser, Chairperson Toney

### **3) Approval of Minutes**

**Motion to approve minutes from the November 9, 2023 meeting by Mr. Scott, second by Mr. Hall, roll call: Strasser–Yes, Scott–Yes, Heyer–Yes, Hall–Yes, Toney–Yes.**

Chairperson Toney reminded everyone that this is a special meeting for the 2200 East Main Street application; Board members have agreed to hold this meeting on their own time and they are asking for respectful discourse and for members of the audience to refrain from repeating comments.

### **4) Public Comments**

There were no Public Comments.

### **5) Old Business**

1) Application Number: BZAP - 23-23

Address: 2200 E Main

Applicant: Ryan Pearson

Owner: Continental Real Estate Cos.

Request: The applicant is seeking a recommendation to the Board of Zoning and Planning for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow demo and redevelopment of the vacant Trinity Lutheran apartment structures at 2160, 2188, & 2186 E Main Street (Parcel No.: 020-000836, 020-000217 & 020-000350), Also a Special Permit and Conditional Use for new 5-story building with housing alternatives and variance for a new 5-story mixed use building to provide additional housing, restaurant, retail and offices.

Ms. Bokor read through her Staff Report and highlighted the deliberate process in reviewing this project, the background of this case, the timeline of this case going before the Boards, considerations, what will be discussed at the ARB, the latest revisions, and the staff recommendation to support a recommendation to the Board of Zoning and Planning with as many conditions as the Board would like.

Brad Pauling with pH7 Architects was sworn in. He shared updates to the building plan and spoke to the Board members' comments. He stated that most of the attention from the architects has been to the west and north facade. Additionally, he mentioned that the cornice line on the sixth floor has been softened and that the applicant will continue to study it, as well as the interaction of the restaurant with the public space. He discussed the windows against the brick facade. The corner of the north elevation was mentioned, along with the applicant's belief that the current iteration is successful. The materials of the bottom layer of the parking layer was discussed, as was the stair step of materials. Mr. Pauling noted the scale and size of the building to the surrounding buildings, shared drawings of the view through the two buildings, displayed a representation of the streetscape, shared the view of the building from Bryden, and more.

Brian Pearson with the EDGE Group was sworn in. He displayed results from the shade study.

Mr. Pauling mentioned a sampling of proposed site furnishings.

Speakers were sworn in.

Linde Kanter, 103 S. Dawson and 505 S. Parkview, gave her opinion that if this building was to become Bexley, it would be very sad. She implored the Board to ask other interested developers what they are thinking about.

John Rousch, 500 S. Parkview, mentioned a comment at the last ARB meeting about the northwest corner to improve the appearance of the building from the Alexander. Images were displayed and the proximity of the buildings were discussed, as were the views from the Alexander with the proposed building included.

Nancy Marzella, 500 S. Parkview, shared her opinion that no regard is being given to those who will be negatively affected by this building. She also shared her experience with a neighbor's addition that caused shade on her home. She stated that the density of the building and trees will affect their view and there will be noise from the alley.

Nicole Bundy—65 S. Columbia and owner of a unit 500 S. Parkview, asked about a stormwater retention plan, shared the goal of the ARB, and said the proposed design conflicts with the Main Street guidelines and is incompatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood. She said the recent changes to the design do not mitigate the density and scale issues gave her belief that the ARB should not issue

a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Kathy Shkolnik, 500 S. Parkview, said she will be extremely affected by the new two-way alley. She said she wonders why it has not been considered to be put on the other side of the building. She mentioned losing value in the units at the Alexander and sunlight, that she doesn't agree with the shade study, and a decreased property value.

Mary Conner, 2470 Bryden, gave her opinion that the scale of the building is too much. She said she is not against the development and doesn't feel it is unattractive, but believes the scale is too much. She asked why the exist isn't against Bexley Square and stated that there is always congestion. She said visitors will be affected, as will trucks. Chairperson Toney clarified a statement she made at a prior meeting that Ms. Conner questioned after reading the meeting's minutes.

Alejandro Diez, 281. S Parkview, stated this project breaks with the architecture of the City and said the redevelopment of this property is a generational opportunity; he proposed a three story building above grade with two stories below grade. He said this design is closer to the "Bexley aesthetic" than previous designs but that he would like to see the bottom be all stone with uniform brick. He questioned if this is an "ad hoc" variance to a specific contractor or a change to the aesthetic of the City.

Mike Mernan, 226 S. Columbia, was sworn in and asked if there was any financial relationship between Mr. Kass and his development team; Chairperson Toney stated there was not.

Angela Yock, 2240 Bryden Road, stated she has been to every meeting since August 24, 2023. She said no one has reached out to the neighbors and they are not being a good neighbor. She gave her opinion that the developer seems to be getting whatever they want. She said the Board members don't think this will affect them, and the project has grown into something twice as large as what was originally planned. She referenced a news segment, said this project is not what Bexley needs, and questioned why this proposal is so important to Mayor Kessler and City Council. She said it would not be responsible to approve this application and asked that this proposal not be pushed through. She said the decision of this Board will affect the city and asked Board members to reconsider. She said this is not what the overall community wants or needs.

Mary Kendrick, 464 S. Parkview, said she feels there needs to be a way to help people see this as something pretty. She referenced other Bexley buildings and asked if there are ways to incorporate more beauty into it, as the building isn't yet where it needs to be.

The Board members in attendance at this and previous meetings were discussed. Ms. Bokor stated she personally confers with Board members who miss meetings as part of ongoing projects to ensure they are caught up.

Mr. Heyer said he agreed with the public comment regarding the site plan overlay concept; the distance of the existing building from the Alexander and Gateway was discussed. Mr. Heyer said he does not feel there is enough green space to grow trees and the applicant stated they will be installing upright trees. Mr. Heyer said he feels it would be better for this project if there were pockets to create a more lively street, on the west elevation in particular. Mr. Heyer indicated he was caught off guard at the last presentation when there were units added; he stated he was hoping the whole fifth floor would be removed from the back side of the building. He suggested making the building a U shape at the north elevation and removing a portion of the units. He explained he would have loved to see different colors as those in the drawings are not Bexley, and he suggested ways to break down the project to make it more scalable. He said the Main Street Guidelines do call for five stories in this corridor but indicated he feels it will be an improvement to the project if the massing is broken down even more.

Mr. Hall asked about the blue panel for the restaurant signage and said he felt the east elevation has come a long way. He said he would like to see the west elevation evolve to be more consistent with this. He noted that the applicant did a good job hiding the parking garage on the east side of the building. Mr. Hall mentioned it seems like the brick is floating and believes it needs to come down and touch the grade. He said he agreed with the comments about the greenery. He discussed the Hardie board that seems to be floating. He shared his opinion regarding stepping back, and indicated it would be nice to remove units and also if the middle section took on the brick character. He said there is a strength in the Main Street and east elevations. He stated the restaurant will be a sensitive area and feels strongly that it should be part of the building, not the brand.

Ms. Strasser said her biggest concern is the west elevation. She echoed that there has been progress on Main Street but agrees in the floating nature of the panels. Furthermore, she explained she feels the scale is still an issue on the west side while understanding the site constraint and desire to maximize and have a successful commercial result. She said she has a big problem with the west side and the relationship with the neighboring buildings.

Mr. Scott said he agrees with what has been said. He discussed the road nearby the Alexander and made a strong recommendation to the applicant to eliminate that connection and instead make the road to the connection alley greenspace. He said if this building was as close to the property line as the Alexander, they would be problematically close together. He would like to see additional investigation into the road and soften it but allow for fire access. Regarding the north side, he would recommend additional screening. He agreed with the suggestion to look at the stepping of the fifth floor. The applicant said they are working through some items and can also look at adding trees. It was indicated that the applicant had evaluated the traffic and western drive but had to open it back up to allow for circulation.

Jason Hockstock of Continental Real Estate was sworn in and discussed the fire department access; he said they've been sensitive to the neighbors with connections to Bryden and cross connection

with the City. He mentioned conversations with the fire department and the fire department's expectation is that the area in question is a driveway. He stated the idea of mimicking a similar streetscape and pulling the trees out a bit and bringing the sidewalks in may help. He said he can't get the fire department to change the access on the west side and there is no option to use reinforced turf. He said they've worked to try to navigate the access perspective and outlining key points that have come from neighbors. He shared that the area cannot be eliminated, but recommendations to further soften it can be looked at.

Mr. Scott mentioned another concern with the transition between the two buildings is the effect of headlights from the parking garage on the residences in the Alexander. He explained he is concerned regarding the second floor of the garage. It was confirmed that this will not be a secure garage and the trash trucks will come down the two-lane road; he stated this is a concern for the residents at the Alexander as it pertains to the noise. It was explained that on each floor, there will be an elevator core with an adjacent trash receptacle and man doors to pull out and pick up; there does not need to be any backing up to retrieve the waste and these will be the smaller cars. The trash system was discussed in more detail. Mr. Scott noted that materials clearly explained in the drawings are missing from the design.

Ms. Rose discussed the limitations of what can be stored on balconies.

The balconies were discussed to answer Chairperson Toney's question about balcony size. She would like to see the balconies kept as clean as possible. Ms. Rose discussed this further. Toney asked if anything that can be done in terms of the design of the balconies to keep them clean.

Mr. Scott said he wanted to make sure the balconies are maintained.

Chairperson Toney explained that regarding the sixth floor, she expected more cut outs and she thinks there needs to be relief and giveback. She said she doesn't believe the applicant can accomplish the proposed treescape and feels trees will go a long way. Therefore, she said she she hopes they can get substantial trees as a buffer between the buildings.

The applicant stated the belief that what they've presented is appropriate and the right response for the property. Regarding the number of units, he indicated they've removed portions of the corners as part of the north elevation carve out. The parking garage has to be considered so it can work efficiently. He explained that what is important to understand is that on the ground floor of the parking garage, there can not be undulation on the facade. As far as materiality, he stated this can be evaluated, as well as how car lights will affect neighbors.

The applicant requested a vote for a recommendation with conditions and Chairperson Toney described the process of recommending this project to the BZAP. She further described what a request back to the ARB would entail. Chairperson Toney said that this project can be sent to the BZAP so it can be sent back. She further gave her opinion that if the BZAP would override the ARB, ARB Board members would be unhappy and members would likely resign.

Ms. Cunningham, legal counsel, explained who has purview of the landscape plans.

Mr. Heyer said even if this Board voted no on the recommendation to the BZAP, the application would still go to the BZAP and they could override the no vote because the project is in their jurisdiction.

Ms. Strasser wanted to acknowledge the effort from the Board members on this project. She stated residents and the city are lucky to have them participate in this project and that the current design is better than what started.

Ms. Strasser stated that she intends to vote against the recommendation because she feels they are too far away from an excellent end design. Chairperson Toney said she feels the Board needs the BZAP to weigh in at some point to hear from members about what they would approve. Chairperson Toney described how this can move forward at the BZAP.

Ms. Bokor said the new variable is the sixth story variance and her suggestion is to recommend the project to BZAP with a long list of conditions because a negative recommendation to BZAP does not give direction. Ms. Bokor stated that working between the Boards is a very fluid process. It was clarified that if the Board voted no on the recommendation, the project would still go back to the BZAP but there would not be any conditions. She explained that if there is a yes vote with a list of conditions, there is some core of what is acceptable. Ms. Strasser indicated a level of discomfort with some of the elevations and she said it feels like there is less control on the big picture issues.

Mr. Heyer stated there are a number of aspects of the design that should come back to the ARB.

Ms. Bokor explained she reads the recommendations to the BZAP and they will also be written.

It was determined that a remand back to the ARB for final design and approval is a wide open condition.

Mr. Hall stated that the BZAP has a clear understanding of what happens at the ARB meeting. He said he feels ARB and BZAP members share the same concerns, and that he does not think the BZAP will not approve this project the first time through.

Cutouts versus the height were discussed; it was stated that there was a net gain of 13 units.

Ms. Rose said that density impacts the number of parking spaces and the applicant stated the number of parking spaces did not increase.

The applicant said they are requesting a variance for parking as a result of the Main Street Street overlay.

There was discussion about the conditions.

The Findings of Fact and Decision of the Board for Application Number BZAP-23-23 for property located at 2200 E. Main Street: The Architecture Review Board recommends demolition of an existing building and replacement of a new, six-story mixed used building which includes housing, commercial, and parking, with the following conditions:

1. The applicant returns to the ARB with material boards and samples.
2. Headlight screening be added to the parking lots where needed.
3. The west drive on the site be redesigned to enhance the green space and allow substantial tree planting.
4. The north and west elevations of the proposed building be reworked to lessen the massing, create better connection to the ground, screen the garage, and use more consistent materials.
5. The height on the west and north elevations toward the rear of the site be reduced.
6. The west elevation have more variation in the plane of the facade and the height.
7. The ARB supports the addition of the 6th story architecturally to allow flexibility in lessening the overall massing of the building.
8. Outdoor dining adjustments be reviewed by the ARB when a tenant is secured.
9. The application be remanded back to ARB for final design review and approval and issuance of a final Certificate of Appropriateness.

The applicant understood the Findings of Fact.

**Motion to approve the Findings of Fact by Ms. Strasser, second by Mr. Heyer; roll call: Hall–Yes, Heyer–Yes, Scott–Yes, Strasser–Yes, Toney–Yes.**

#### **6) Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned.