

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1, 2014**
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, October 1, 2014. Vice-Chairman Deyer called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Present: Commission Members Mark Coir, Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas, Darlene Gehringer, Vice-Chairperson Shelli Weisberg, (arrived from work at 7:14 p.m.) Michael Willoughby

Absent: Chairman John Henke; Student Representatives Mitch Boorstein, Cambrea Rush

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

10-40-14

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HDC Minutes of September 17, 2014**

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Ms. Gehringer to approve the HDC Minutes of September 17, 2014 as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Gehringer, Coir, Deyer, Dukas

Nays: None

Absent: Henke, Weisberg

10-41-14

**HISTORIC SIGN REVIEW
160 S. Old Woodward Ave.
SEE
CBD Historic District**

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: The applicant proposes to update the storefront with new signage and white paint.

Signage: The applicant proposes to install a name letter sign and projecting blade sign on a one-story, single-tenant building. The total linear building frontage is 16 ft. 3 in., permitting 16.25 sq. ft. of sign area. The proposed front elevation name letter sign will measure 5.27 sq. ft. and the projecting blade sign will measure 6 sq. ft. for a total of 11.277 sq. ft. of sign area. This is in accordance with Article 1.0, section 1.04 (B) of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance, Combined Sign Area that states for all buildings, including multi-tenant office or retail buildings, the combined area of all types of signs shall not exceed 1 sq. ft. (1.5 sq. ft. for addresses on Woodward Ave.) for each linear foot of principal building frontage.

The mounting height of the sign is not indicated on the plans. In accordance with Article 1.0, Table B of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance - Wall signs that project more than 3 in. from the building facade shall not be attached to the outer wall at a height of less than 8 ft. above a public sidewalk and at a height of less than 15 ft. above a public alley. The proposal meets this requirement.

The proposed **name letter sign** letters will be constructed of black aluminum. Letters reading "SEE" will be 2 in. thick and 16 in. in height. The letters will be stud mounted to the wall with 1 in. standoffs.

The proposed **projecting blade sign** will be constructed of white aluminum with black letters. The sign will be mounted 6 in. from the face of the building and extend 30 in.

Illumination: The applicant proposes to illuminate both signs with white LEDs. The current proposal is to halo light the name letter sign and internally illuminate the projecting blade sign.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Mr. Coir to approve the Historic Sign Review for 160 S. Old Woodward Ave., SEE, as submitted.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Coir, Deyer, Dukas, Gehringer

Nays: None

Absent: Henke, Weisberg

10-42-14

HISTORIC SIGN REVIEW

**150 W. Maple Rd.
Alex & Ani
CBD Historic District**

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: The applicant proposes to install a name letter sign and a projecting blade sign on a one-story, single-tenant non-contributing resource in the CBD Historic District. The space was formerly leased by Pink Pumps.

Signage: The applicant proposes to install a name letter sign and projecting blade sign. The total linear building frontage is 17 ft. 10 in., permitting 17.833 sq. ft. of sign area. The proposed front elevation name letter sign will measure 15 sq. ft. and the projecting blade sign will measure 2.66 sq. ft. for a total of 17.66 sq. ft. of sign area. This meets the requirement of Article 1.0, section 1.04 (B) of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance, Combined Sign Area that states for all buildings, including multi-tenant office or retail buildings, the combined area of all types of signs shall not exceed 1 sq. ft. (1.5 sq. ft. for addresses on Woodward Ave.) for each linear foot of principal building frontage.

The proposed **wall sign** letters will be constructed of black aluminum. Letters reading "Alex and Ani" will be 1 ½ in. thick and 15 3/8 in. in height. The letters will be stud mounted to the wall with 1 ½ in. standoffs. It will be mounted 11 ft. 6 in. from grade to the bottom of the letters.

The proposed **projecting blade sign** will be constructed of white aluminum with ¼ in. acrylic letters painted black. The sign will be mounted 6 in. from the face of the building and extend 30 in. It will be mounted 8 ft. 11 5/8 in. above grade.

The proposed signs meet the requirements of Article 1.0, Table B of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance that states wall signs that project more than 3 in. from the building façade shall not be attached to the outer wall at a height of less than 8 ft. above a public sidewalk and at a height of less than 15 ft. above public Driveways, alleys and thoroughfares.

Illumination: The applicant proposes to use the existing external light fixtures.

Mr. Baka noted both signs meet the Ordinance and are within their allotted sign allowance.

Mr. Paul Deeters, Metro Detroit Signs, said he thinks the existing light fixtures on the front façade will be taken down to make room for the blade sign. He was not certain whether the cornice at the top will be removed.

Motion by Ms. Gehringer

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to administratively approve the wall sign and the blade sign for 150 W. Maple Rd., Alex & Ani, and to request that detailed drawings be submitted for administrative approval to include precise locations of the wall sign and the blade sign and any elements of the building that would be removed.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Gehringer, Willoughby, Coir, Deyer, Dukas, Weisberg

Nays: None

Absent: Henke

10-43-14

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW

220 Merrill

Historic Detroit Edison Company

Pergola review

Mr. Baka recalled the applicant was granted temporary approval for the pergola in the outdoor dining area on June 18, 2014 with the condition that they return to the board at the September 17 HDC meeting for final consideration. The applicant requested postponement of their hearing to October 1, 2014.

Ms. Denise Illich and Mr. Zaid Elia, the business partners, were present. Ms. Illich announced that people have been very positive about the restaurant environment both outside and inside. In the five weeks the restaurant has been open it has serviced over twenty-five thousand consumers. They were pleased to receive positive reviews from the newspapers. Ms. Illich noted she has approached many people and has not heard one negative complaint about the pergola. People think the pergola frames the area and they feel cozy under it. A number of celebrities have visited the restaurant.

Vice-Chairman Deyer said that everyone appreciates what they have done. The discussion tonight concerns whether the HDC wants to extend the temporary pergola to permanent status, should it be taken down, or should it have some other design.

Ms. Illich responded to Mr. Willoughby's inquiry about whether they will be planting the pergola. They hired English Gardens to see if they could cover it but English Gardens stopped in the middle of the project because it didn't look good. During the holidays they want to put a Christmas tree to the left of the front door and frame it with white twinkle lights.

Vice-Chairman Deyer said he personally doesn't think the pergola is an appropriate design because it does not enhance the building.

Ms. Dukas thought the pergola looks starkly different from the building. It seems light in color and in weight against the generally dark building. She thought something could be added to make it work with the building.

Ms. Weisberg indicated she likes the pergola and thinks it looks lovely. It is a nice contrast to the building. Mr. Willoughby also likes the pergola. Its elements are distinct and different from the historic building. Plantings would bring some life to it and soften the color distinction between building and pergola.

Mr. Coir had reservations that this is not the right pergola for the building. He thought the owners could have done a lot better. Ms. Gehringer indicated she agrees with the Planning Division's opinion that the styling is too delicate and it needs to be more substantial. She also thought they could have done much better.

Mr. Elia said they definitely want to add plantings to the design to give it a little more life.

The vice-chairman summarized that he heard everybody asking whether this is the right design in the context of this historic structure.

Motion by Ms. Weisberg

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby that the pergola should stay as currently constructed.

Motion failed, 3-3.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Weisberg, Dukas, Willoughby

Nays: Coir, Deyer, Gehringer

Absent: Henke

Ms. Gehringer commented that additions to this pergola would not solve the dilemma. It does not fit in front of this particular building.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Ms. Weisberg to retain the current structure with the addition of ivy that remains green all year and is planted in the ground; not in pots.

Motion failed, 3-3.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Weisberg, Dukas

Nays: Coir, Deyer, Gehringer
Absent: Henke

Ms. Gehringer motioned that the pergola be removed and that 220 Merrill is allowed to come back with a design and proposal that would better fit the City Ordinance and the historic design and effect of this building. No one seconded the motion.

Vice-Chairman Deyer observed there has been no support for any motion and the objective was to say yes or no to the pergola.

Motion by Ms. Dukas

Seconded by Ms. Weisberg to postpone to December 3rd to allow the applicant to come back with some sort of improvements that address the concerns of the commission in order to get consensus. The issues are color and softening of the pergola to make it match the building more.

Ms. Illich verified that she heard the commissioners would like to see a darker color. Ms. Dukas said softening can be achieved with plantings or lighting or a combination of those. The vice-chairman added they need to do what they can to enhance the historic structure.

Motion carried, 5-1.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Dukas, Weisberg, Coir, Deyer, Willoughby

Nays: Gehringer

Absent: Henke

10-44-14

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals (none)

-- Violation Notices (none)

-- Demolition Applications

- 932 Davis
- 575 Merritt Ln.
- 651 Humphrey

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments

Ms. Gehringer noted there is an Ordinance regarding illumination of a wall sign whether in a Historic District or not. However on blade signs there are no distinction. It was agreed the commission should decide this on a case-by-case basis rather than make a change to the Ordinance.

10-45-14

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner