CITY OF CONWAY
COMMUNITY APPEARANCE BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 4 P.M.

Present: Jesse Olds, George Ulrich, Brooke David, Robert Harper

Absent: Robert Miller

Staff: Joe Henderson, Zoning Administrator; Barbara Tessier, Secretary

Others: Amber Wall, Wall Engineering, Jerry Johnson, A-1 Signs, Sunita Patel, Main Street Express

A. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman David called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Ulrich made a motion, seconded by Olds, to approve the February 22, 2012 minutes as written. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

C. DESIGN REVIEWS

1. Edward Jones Investments – Amber Wall of Wall Engineering, requests review, and approval of one freestanding monument sign located at 702 Main Street, Units A and B. (Main Street Corridor HDRD) (TMS #137-02-14-010)

Amber Wall was sworn in.

Henderson said staff recommended approval of the request sign for meeting the size criteria for the UDO, provided it met the Historic Design Review Guidelines for this area. He said the total square footage was 16 sq. ft. and was well below the permitted 24 sq. ft. He said a small wall plaque had already been approved.

Harper made a motion, seconded by Ulrich, to approve the signage request. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.
2. Main Street Express – Sunita Patel, applicant, requests approval of elevation modifications, roof replacement, gas canopy improvements, window signage and freestanding sign panel replacements at 1112 Main Street (Main Street Corridor HDRD) (TMS #123-14-16-001)

Jerry Johnson was sworn in.

Henderson said in addition to the gas canopy improvements, the gas pumps would also be replaced, and he said there would also be wall signage.

He showed the color of the red that was now proposed as opposed to the original fire engine red that had been proposed. He said another change, since he mailed out their package, was that the material had been removed from the gable. He said initially the owner wanted to put a smooth metal inside the gable, but staff recommended, based on the standards that not be done because it was too much red. Henderson said for now, the owner was considering replacing or giving a treatment to the shakes.

Henderson said staff recommended approval of all the requests provided they met the design standards of Section 6.3.1 of the UDO, and provided they met the design standards from the Main Street Corridor Design Review District.

Harper asked Henderson if there would be no signage on the canopy. Henderson said the ordinance only allowed for one freestanding sign and one wall sign per tenant. He said the reason why they could not add any freestanding signage is because they have one nonconforming, grandfathered sign on the corner and then a second freestanding pole sign on the other side that belonged to the Credit Central. He said no new signage could be added to the canopy. He said it would be considered a freestanding sign.

Harper asked how they were going to advertise their gas prices. He asked if the manual changeable copy cabinet would remain. Henderson explained that the cabinets would remain, and not be increased in size.

Henderson said the new owner wanted to remove the freestanding sign and put in a monument sign. He said staff was happy to hear that she wanted a monument sign, however, she was not permitted to remove the freestanding sign it because it was a nonconforming sign and all that could be done legally was to replace the existing panels and not increase the square footage of the signs. He said they would be giving a treatment to the pole that would make it look a bit more updated. He said all of it was the same square footage.

Henderson showed the Board the original red color for the roof, but he said it had been toned down. He said originally they were going to remove the shakes and put flat metal in the gable. Olds asked if the shakes were going to remain. Henderson said staff recommended showing two renderings, one with the metal and one without. He said
since it was a gable in the Main Street Corridor, they should keep a semi-residential feel to the structure. He said if the Board was amenable to the design they could approve it. Olds asked if the shakes were still in place, and Henderson said that they were. Henderson said it had been proposed that the shakes be replaced with smooth metal, and the roof would be replaced with corrugated red metal. Henderson asked Johnson if the signage would be channel letters, but Johnson said it would be vinyl.

Henderson said staff recommended that they think about if they did want to remove the shakes that they use something instead of metal like a skim coat or stucco. Ulrich said hardiboard made something that looked like shakes. Johnson said he had already asked the owner about that, and she said it was a possibility. Henderson said staff did mention that vinyl was not permitted.

Ulrich said he would like to see the shake look remain, and David said she liked the toned down red for the roof better than the originally proposed red. Henderson said the owner had originally thought about blue, but the service station next to it was blue.

At this time, the owner, Sunita Patel, joined the meeting, and was sworn in. Henderson said there was also a request to put shutters on either side of the convenience store. Ulrich said they would soften the look.

Henderson told Patel that hardiboard or cement shakes would also be an option for the gable. He said as of now it was just painting it or staining it. Ulrich said a stain would be nice, too. Harper asked Ulrich what color he liked, and Ulrich said he would go with a darker color because of the discoloring that was already on the shakes. Henderson asked Patel if she would like to go with a dark stain. Patel said that was fine. Henderson said all the trim would be painted white. Harper said he would like to see the shakes be white hardiboard or white plank. He said painting the existing shakes would save her money.

Henderson said Patel wanted to do some phased treatments. He said staining or painting the gables now and then in the future she could replace what was there now. He said the Board could allow for a phased approach. He said that way she would not have to come back before the Board.

Olds asked where the signage was going. Henderson said it was going on the main gable. Ulrich asked if it was going to be vinyl. Henderson said originally the vinyl would have been put onto the metal in the gable, but now it would have a red sign board on top of the shakes and the vinyl on that. Harper said the red sign would pop if the shakes were painted white. Harper asked Patel what she thought of the white shakes. Patel said she wanted the structure to look really nice and if that was her only option, she would have to go with white. She said she was not sure. She was trying to picture it. Olds pointed out that it was just paint and could be easily changed.

Henderson said there was a set of pinstripes going around the canopy.
Olds made a motion, seconded by Ulrich, to approve as presented – the
grandfathered freestanding sign with the changes, the roof, the sign on the gable and
that the gables were painted white, and that the owner had the option to go to Planning
if she wanted to make subtle changes inside the gable. The vote in favor was
unanimous. The motion carried.

3. **David Jordan Historic Preservation Tax Incentive – David and Ginger Jordan request a review of completed work at 601 Lakeside Drive for final certification of the Conway Preservation Tax Incentive Program. (TMS #137-02-14-018)**

Henderson prepared a PowerPoint presentation showing photographs of the
“before” and the “after” of this restoration. He said he had done an inspection of the
property the week prior. He said this review was for the final approval for Conway
Preservation Tax Incentive. Henderson said they had been given preliminary approval
on May 12, 2010. He said that the cost of this restoration far exceeded the 25%
threshold that was required to be met.

Henderson said that this was the first true historic preservation of a home in the
city. He said the Jordan’s had already received final certification from the State of South
Carolina’s Archives and History Department. He said they sent a team to do an
evaluation of the house. Henderson said Jordan now wanted the city and county’s
approval.

Henderson said there had been improvements with the siding, the roofing, and
new flashing. Ulrich said all the landscaping had been redone. Henderson said the
retaining wall had also been restored and stormwater drainage improvements made.
He said the house was repainted a historic yellow. He said the chimney had been
repointed. He said they had done a true restoration of all the windows. He said the 100
sq. ft. addition was approved because it was not visible from the right-of-way. He said
the Jordan’s went back to the original landscaping plans for the house. Henderson
said they replaced all the tongue and groove on the front porch. He said they had to
reconstruct the brick foundation along the front because a backhoe accidentally ran into
the house. He said it was all original brick that had been reused. Henderson also
showed slides of the interior as well.

Harper asked what kind of tax incentive they would be getting. Henderson said
the tax assessment had been frozen for the last two years since the preliminary
approval. He said this was a freeze on all city and county taxes. He said there were
also some kind of state tax credits that were offered. Harper asked if the tax incentive
was on property taxes. Henderson said the property tax was at the county level.
Harper said he wanted to know what the benefit was. Henderson said the tax freeze
would now be in effect for the next 13 years (a total of 15 years).

Olds made a motion, seconded by Ulrich, to approve the tax incentive request as
presented. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.
4. **Non-Residential Architectural Design Standards – City of Conway Planning Department**

Staff requests a review of appropriateness for the use of perforated window screening material in commercial zones (VCO and GCO) located outside of Historic Design Review Districts.

Henderson said this was a staff request. He said staff reserved the option to bring any design oriented request or project to the CAB for guidance or clarification on design-related issues.

Henderson said that a local business, A-1 Signs and Graphics, as one of the commodities they offered and to use it as a functional piece of their design, requested perforated screen material for their façade windows. Henderson said this material had been seen once before several years ago. He said at that time, the request was to have the perforated material that included their sign in the middle of it. He said the applicant’s request was not intended for advertising purposes but for the purpose of showing a scene or mural of Conway.

Henderson described the architectural design standards of Section 6.3.1. C, that are used when staff reviewed commercial projects in all non-residential areas of the city. He said they were basically the same standards that the CAB used to review in the previous Commercial Design Review Overlay District. He said they were very broad. He said for example, Section 6.3.1.C.1 of the UDO read, “Architectural design, color, material, proposed structure, or structures shall conform to community standards of good taste and design.” He said that was left to staff interpretation, and if staff was not sure, then they reserved the ability to bring the request to the CAB.

Henderson said staff’s basis of concern with the perforated material was that they were not sure of the process for determining whether a design is of “good taste and design.” He said if staff allowed it for this one business then the door would be opened for this type of printing of any non-advertising design. He said staff was not sure how to approve or deny because not everyone would want a scene of Conway. He said other types of non-advertising types of images might be requested.

Henderson said to summarize, staff felt there were three options:

1) Allow staff to make the decision on whether to approve or deny the images on perforated materials;
2) CAB can deny the use of the material qualifying it as a sign and thus exceeding the permitted sign size;
3) Allow staff to review, and if staff has a question about it, it could come back to the CAB for their review.

Harper said the CAB did not have purview on anything outside the Historic areas. Henderson said the CAB had purview should staff have an appeal from an applicant, or should staff have a question regarding design anywhere in the city. He said if staff
denied this business the ability to use this material, they could fill out a CAB application
and appeal the Zoning Administrator’s decision. Henderson said legally, there had to
be some method of appeal for decisions that staff made from an appointed body of
Conway citizens. He said the CAB heard those appeals with regard to design
standards.

Ulrich asked if the screens were going over a work area. Henderson said they
wanted to put it up, in addition to screening the sun, because they had a lot of
expensive printers and equipment. He said they wanted to screen without having to use
drapes on the inside. Ulrich said that if, for example, Chic Fil A wanted to use this
material and put their logo in it, it would be permitted if the Board approved this type of
material. Henderson corrected Ulrick, stating that a logo is considered signage and not
the same as the issue at hand. Henderson said if we approved this material, then Chic
Fil A would be able to put up a scene of a different kind, Conway bridge for example,
etc.

Harper asked if this material, without a sign, was considered a window
treatment. Henderson said it was. Henderson said it was not advertising material. Olds
said it was not building material either. Henderson said he thought it was a window
treatment. Henderson said that is where staff was stuck with how to approve it and
where to draw the line.

Ulrich asked if the screen material was physically retractable or if it was applied
to the window. Henderson said it was affixed to the window. Henderson the further
away you saw it, it looked more like an image.

Harper said then that it could not be used for advertising or campaigns. Ulrich
brought up whether or not they could change the picture without coming to staff for
approval. Henderson said he thought it would have to because staff would have to be
sure it was not advertising materials.

Harper said option 3 was fine with him.

Olds said if you got away from signs, there was something in the ordinance that
talked about windows. Olds asked what could be done on a window such as how much
had to be clear, uncluttered, etc. He said he thought the perforated material was more
about windows than it was signage. Henderson said the rule was that signage could
not take up more than 25% of the window whether permanent or temporary promotional
material. Olds said if they followed that rule, the perforated material could not be used
because it covered more than 25% of the window. Henderson said it specifically said
permanent signage or promotional material. Henderson said if they considered this
signage, then it was different. Olds said they were still talking about a window.

Olds asked if there was anything that allowed the total covering of a window.
Henderson said a window could be covered with tint, heavily tinted reflective material.
He said windows could be completely covered with curtains or blinds. Olds said he was
looking for a category that perforated materials could fall into or was it a totally new category. He said if it was under the category of heavily tinted material to block light then how would it apply. He said this material had to be applied to something that already existed or make a new category. Henderson asked Olds if he thought this perforated material stood alone different from a window treatment and different from signage. Olds said that was correct. He said it was not heavily tinted material, not a window treatment or a sign. Henderson said it was a mural. Olds said they needed a new category rather than making it something it was not. He said there were no allowances for electronic signs at one time. He said maybe this was also something that everyone needed to understand and make an addendum for. David said tint was one thing, but pictures were something else. Henderson said if it was not signage and not classified as signage, there was nothing that allowed regulation. Olds said if this issue has already come up twice, it was going to come up again.

Henderson said they have the ability with printers to put the scenes on chain link fences and to cover entire walls, too. Harper said it was the evolution of the billboard. Harper agreed that it should have its own category.

David asked if the Board should make a motion on this particular item. Henderson said he thought he was just asking for the Board’s input right now.

Olds made a motion, seconded by Ulrich, for staff look at how to incorporate perforated materials within an existing ordinance or a new ordinance. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

5. Community Appearance Guidelines – City of Conway Planning Department staff will review Section C (Downtown Historic District Sign Guidelines), with samples of various sign types, materials, and lettering styles.

Henderson said since dimensional lettering and wall signage had been brought up at a prior meeting, he would conduct a workshop on Section C of the Design Guidelines. Henderson began by explaining that Planning staff and applicants have the right per UDO Section 14.1.14 to appeal to the CAB for all design designs or clarification from staff.

He said the intent of the Design Guidelines was to offer visual suggestions. He said this was not the hard and fast former guidelines. He said there was flexibility now. He said at the last meeting, it was discussed that the guidelines should state specifically how things should be looked at. He said the benefit of the new guidelines was that things could be worked through on a case-by-case basis and figured out what was best for each site.

Henderson said the UDO had standards that regulated size, types and number of signs. He said if a business wanted a monument sign, there were also standards that applied to monument signs, and if that same business was in the historic district, you
added those specific standards as well. He said the UDO was the base standard with
the monument sign standards and the historic design guidelines as additional layers. He
said these all coupled together was how a recommendation would be made.

As Henderson moved through the guidelines, Olds asked a question about
number of signs that could be on windows. Henderson said staff tried to make a more
flexible approach to window size and they now consider vertical windows to be one
pane. He said the reason for this was that convenience stores or places like Arby’s had
a problem displaying window signs because they had very small window panes, but
they were vertical. He said otherwise he constantly had to cite the owners because
they were in violation. He said as far as number of permanent window signs, there
was no limitation to that. He said if you had 30 windows, you could have 30 window
signs as long as it did not go over the 25% of the area.

Olds said if a gas station, for example, had a window that was 6/6 residential-
style, they could put a sign in each pane as long as it did not go over the 25%. Henderson said they could.

Olds said if A-1 covered the windows with the perforated materials, it was
technically no longer a window and they would have already used their 25% with the
band signs at the top of each window. Henderson said staff had not been putting the
perforated scenes in the category of advertising material or signage because nothing
was being advertised. He said if it was hypothetically Chic Fil A and they put a scene of
Conway up, it was not advertising chicken. Olds said once the window was wiped out,
the size of space they had an allowance for was diminished. Henderson said he liked
the idea of doing more research. Old said he was not opposed to the material, but they
had to decide how it fit into the grand scheme of things. Henderson talked about the
use of vinyl for primary signs. He said this was new language in the guidelines that
stated “Flat vinyl letters applied to an out-of-scale signboard construction..” was
inappropriate, but he thought they were specifically referring to the example in the
guidelines. He said they were talking more about how big the signage was to the
storefront.

Henderson said that Olds had brought up the section that said, “All attached
signs should be or appear to be dimensional. He said it was not expected that signs be
hand-hewn or crafted the way they were 100 years ago from period materials.
Henderson said they didn’t have to use the original materials and was opening the door
to new materials and new ways of doing it. He said it referred to Figure 3.3, which
showed an illustration of what was meant about dimension. He asked the Board to
keep that in mind.

Henderson read off the list of appropriate materials for signs. He read Section
5.2.7 which stated, “Quick signs of vinyl lettering, heat transfers or stick-on letters used
as primary signs have a cheapened and no-durable appearance for the business. This
may be applied as a “secondary” or “subordinate” sign or on awning valances, and
some window appliqué.”
Henderson showed slides of signs in Conway that had been previously approved that were high-grade durable vinyl that he had been told was like the old metallic foil used to be. He showed a sample of a vinyl with implied dimension to show the Board. He said it was not what was shown for the Fudge Buckets signage. Henderson said the big question was how to interpret Section 5.2.7. He said if they could use implied dimension they would look at it on a case-by-case basis. Olds said hopefully they won’t do what they did with Fudge Buckets. Olds said if you go back to how the guidelines were written he viewed some of them as literal. He did not try to add anything to them or interpret them. He said he thought the way this ordinance was well written and told them what they were trying to achieve, how to achieve it and how not to achieve it. He said the three sections on this addressed all those issues. He said it addressed what they were trying to do, a good way to do it, and way not to do it. He said if they just stuck with that they didn’t need a bunch of interpretations. Olds said what was shown for Fudge Buckets was not right. Henderson said then that a flat vinyl letter was not appropriate with no dimension. He said if someone wanted to use vinyl then it should have implied dimension. Olds said that was what he took from just following the ordinance to a “T”. David asked about the logo. She said the Fudge Bucket logo could not be changed. Henderson said the guidelines said it could still be a flat letter but original signs had dimension. He showed a sign that had a flat letter that had dimension to it so that it cast a shadow. Olds said he felt that the implied dimension was what the guidelines were really after.

Henderson said he thought the quick signs meant that a banner couldn’t be used as a primary sign. Olds agreed. Henderson said vinyl put on a sign board would be appropriate. Olds said that some signs around town, according to the new guidelines, were not permitted. Henderson said that was true. He said there were a lot of signs that did not have implied dimension. Henderson said they would be changing from how they approved signs in the past. Henderson said they were not changing the corporate logo. David said if a corporate logo could not be changed by adding a shadow, etc. then all they could do was a raised letter. Ulrich said that was what the ordinance said.

Henderson said he really wanted to hash this out because there were so many signs out there that had used vinyl, especially now that it seemed to be an industry standard. He said he could live with the option that if the implied dimension could not be done, then they would have to do with the true dimension.

Olds pointed out in the minutes where Miller had said that if a business wanted to be in the historic district, they needed to expect step it up a bit. David agreed.

Henderson talked about grandfathered signs. He said they were permitted. He said Tom Anderson might be recreating a historic feature of the Carolina Theater, which would be an appropriate architectural feature. He said he would be putting together a list of local register listings that could be placed on the Conway local register. He said that was brand new with the guidelines. He said this was created to protect historic things that fell outside the historic district. He said Nye’s Pharmacy was one of those.
He said it would apply to cemeteries and churches. He said those places would be put on the CAB's purview, but the catch was it was voluntary by the owners. He said the list would have to go to City Council for approval. He said the first things would be National Register structures like the warehouses. He said they were already protected under the local guidelines, but he felt they needed to be listed on the individual level. He mentioned the clock at City Hall, the Main Street Bridge as well. He asked the Board to think about things they thought might be deemed historic. Henderson said Racepath was a historic site in Conway, but even though most of the structures were demolished, it could still be said that it was a very relevant site for Conway's history.

Olds said the Nye's sign had been painted several times and looked worse than before it was repainted. Henderson said the whole idea was that it would be deemed as a historic site. He said it was a rough sign, but if it was on the local register, the neon could be put back in it.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

E. BOARD INPUT

Harper asked about the handmade sign that was on the Carolina Theater for the rental of the upstairs apartments. He said Anderson had said they were rented and that he would take the signs down, but they were still up. Harper asked to have the minutes amended to show that Anderson had said they were rented and that he would be taking them down in a day or so.

Olds told the Board that it had been a pleasure working with them.

F. STAFF INPUT

Henderson told the Board that the design guidelines had won an award at the state level and that several people from the city would be going to Columbia on March 30 to accept the award from the governor.

G. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Approved and signed this 28th day of March, 2012.

Brooke David, Chairman