

LIBERTY HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMISSION
Meeting Summary
August 20, 2024
5:30 pm
City Council Chambers

Roll Call: Paemon Aramjoo, Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Present: Paemon Aramjoo, Linda Armstrong, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Absent: John Carr

Applicant: Star Development; Paul Jenness, Matthew Iway. Klover Architects; Henry Klover

Staff Present: Katherine Sharp, Director Planning & Development, Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager

Chairman Grundy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
15 Members of the public were in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING

HDRC Case 24-013LS Consideration of a certificate of appropriateness for new construction at Kansas & N Water Street, Liberty Square Historic District:

- Ms. Thill read the staff report and recommended approval of the application.
- Commissioner Rinker asked about guidelines for signage and lighting. Ms. Thill said that the applicant was not ready to request approval for the lighting and signage. They will bring that back to the HDRC for consideration.
- Mr. Klover showed sample materials of the cornice, brick, stone and awning fabric samples.
- Chairman Grundy asked the applicant if they have additional information for the Commission.
- Mr. Klover commented that he likes the idea having place/patio for people to gather, it provides 1600 square feet of gathering space. They hope to get a restaurant as a tenant for the corner space. The existing building to the left will have a window well. On the south elevation there is a large drop in the grade along Kansas Street, they will get rid of the stairs and rail that is existing. The wainscot was incorporated into the storefront design, per staff's recommendation. They tried to create a rhythm and pattern for the façade.
- Chairman Grundy asked if there are any questions for the applicant.
- Armstrong commented that the exhibits are very helpful.
- Commissioner Gray asked about the white brick for downtown.
- Mr. Klover said that it is used sparingly and visually it ties in with the white that is on the City Hall building.
- Mr. Klover said they thought they tried to keep the same rhythm and pattern as what is found on neighboring buildings.

- Commissioner Chelton asked if arched windows could be incorporated into the façade to tie in with the adjacent buildings.
- Mr. Klover said they could study that.
- Commissioner Gray asked how far the balcony sticks out.
- Mr. Klover said that they are 4 ft.
- Commissioner Gray added that from the first rendition it looks much better but the horizontal band of brick above the patio is too long of an expanse. The banding across the two south storefronts is very long and horizontal and should be broken with brick. Brick insets or “tricks with bricks” could be used to create a visual division. The balconies are out of place with the square and are likely to become eyesores when furnished.
- Mr. Klover said that the metal for the balconies will likely be by Architectural King Metals but they would be custom.
- Commissioner Drottz agreed that the banding on the façade doesn’t look appropriate. He added that the living portions look too much like one building. He asked if there is a footing and if there will be a concrete slab between the garage and first floor.
- Mr. Klover said that there would be and it will be sprinkled.
- Commissioner Drottz said we would want to consider the visibility of the peoples’ belongings on the balconies.
- Ms. Sharp said that people are allowed to have appropriate outdoor furnishings.
- Commissioner Drottz suggested more solid screening.
- Commissioner Gray said the balconies might look better if they were pushed back into the building.
- Ms. Sharp commented that staff felt that that design of having the balconies recessed is very modern, it was in the initial design and that was one of things discussed. Historically, that isn’t likely what you might see. The existing design of the balconies was done with effort for them to protrude out, rather than inset. She said the railings were similar to those found around the square.
- Commissioner Rinker commented that the exterior sconces don’t blend historically. The lights are small and light on the building is intentional. The back lit signs would be something that would need to be discussed.
- Ms. Thill said that the lighting and signage is not part of this application.
- Commissioner Drottz asked about the cornice on the south elevation, asking if it ends flat or wrap around the building.
- Mr. Klover said the cornice would wrap around the building.
- Commissioner Gray commented that with the removal of the existing stairs along Kansas Street, a hand rail should be considered on the side of the building. She said it would be a walking route to the neighboring building, and that grade can be challenging for people to climb.
- Mr. Klover said it can be added in the future if needed.
- Commissioner Chelton asked what is above the parking area inside the building.
- Mr. Klover said it is the back of house for the commercial/restaurant space.

Chairman Grundy opened the Public Hearing.

Two members of the public wish to address the Commission.

- Ms. Carly Riley, 402 W Franklin- She is an architect loves the City, she feels that the building doesn’t fit in to the historic square, yet. The existing facades are vertical and

the proposed is horizontal. She feels it looks modern for a few reasons. She is fine with balconies on the Kansas side however the balconies on the Water street elevation are out of place, there aren't any elsewhere on the square. The way the glass windows wrap around the building is modern. Glass that spans two floors is modern. It is looking a lot better than the first design, but this looks like buildings in other cities in the metro area and she doesn't think that it fits on our historic square.

- Danelle O'Donnell, HDLI Director- Asked where the signage for the storefront businesses would go on the Water Street facades.
- Mr. Klover said signs would be on the awnings.

Chairman Grundy closed the public hearing at 6:10 pm.

- Commissioner Drottz said that Ms. Riley's comments are spot on.
- Commissioner Armstrong commented that if the white portion of the building was the red brick that might look better and if the windows were in trios or clusters that would help adding that a pattern of three's seem to drive the symmetry around the square. She appreciates that this is new construction. Some have arches or a pediment to create some distinctive vertical features.
- Chairman Grundy commented that the windows are not always in threes, there are some facades with four windows and others with five, on the North side of the square.
- Ms. Sharp said as staff worked through this with the applicant we referenced the code. There is nothing in the code that says the windows need to be in an odd number or pattern. We looked if there are quality materials and to reduce the height. That isn't to discard things which might help make it more traditional. We want to make sure our analysis is rooted in the city code. We are not here to redesign this to our individual preferences. Our comments should be based on the code.
- Commissioner Rinker said some of the things in the code aren't measurable. There are very modern features that would be added to the square for the first time. The sconces look like a movie theatre, the white part is modern.
- Ms. Thill reminded the Commission that the lighting is not part of this proposal.
- Commissioner Armstrong said there is room for interpretation that catches us off guard. For fenestration, this may have not captured the rhythm and patterns. It's new construction we can't expect a building that looks like it is from the 1880s.
- Mr. Klover said that they need to be careful of design by committee, as those often look terrible They do take this historic location seriously and they want it to be compatible. He said they are happy to work on appropriate materials.
- Commissioner Aramjoo said he is very grateful for the applicant listening to the Commission's suggestions given at the study session and the amount of insight that was provided to him. He said it seems that they are trying to meet the goals for the downtown area in light of all the suggestions. He can relate to how difficult it must be to balance all the interests that are affected on the square as he had to rebuild a house in the historic district after a fire which had to meet the needs of his family and the historic district but not the entire downtown.
- Commissioner Armstrong said the storefronts feel very comfortable to her.
- Chairman Grundy commented that the space has to be useful for the tenants. We could nitpick it to death. He agrees with Commissioner Aramjoo's comment that they took our suggestions and implemented several of them. He doesn't see anything that causes tremendous distress like the last design did, adding that this is something he can live with.

- Commissioner Chelton said it is hard to find the balance of respecting the neighboring architecture, at some point we need to move forward.
- Commissioner Rinker said the monolithic run of the stone could be broken up. The long runs are concerning.

Action: Commissioner Aramjoo moved to approve the case as presented in the staff report because it supports the UDO and the Design Guidelines, Commissioner Armstrong seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 5-3-0

Yes: Aramjoo, Armstrong, Chelton, Grundy, Schmidt

No: Drottz, Gray, Rinker

Abstain: None

Chairman Grundy said the case would be heard in front of the City Council on Monday, September 23, 2024.

Approval of the August 6, 2024 Meeting Summary: A motion to approve the meeting summary as corrected was made by Commissioner Aramjoo. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chelton. The motion passed 8-0-0

Other Business

Administrative Approvals since the August 6, 2024 meeting:

- 120 S Terrace- Removal of Stucco.

Miscellaneous matters from the Commission:

- Commissioner Gray commented that the porch roof is on at 337 N Water, it is looking good.

Miscellaneous matters from Staff:

- 120 S Terrace has requested a design sub committee meeting, please let Ms. Thill know your availability for next week.
- Ms. Sharp said that the Downtown Plan will be on the September 3 HDRC agenda for comment, she clarified that the design is not a component at this time. Its more about identifying areas for infill and growth opportunities the downtown area.
- The 1-11 N. Water application will have to go to the Planning Commission because it is over 10,000 square feet. City Council is the final approval. The demolition of the GM Peters building would occur with the project. The timeline isn't clear.

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.