



**STAFF REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Powell Village Green Council Chambers
April 11, 2007
7:30 p.m.

COMBINED PRELIMINARY AND FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Applicant: Nick Cua
Location: 80 Clairedan Drive
Zoning: PC, Planned Commercial District
Request: Approval of a combined Preliminary and Final Development Plan for a new 9,638 sq. ft. office condominium building.

Last year, the applicant brought in a Sketch Plan for a new office condominium building on Clairedan Drive directly behind his Mainline Computers building. There will be a total of six office units provided for in the building. Access to the site will be from Clairedan Drive as well as a secondary access from an extension of the shared drive between Mainline Computers and the property to the north. The landscape plan shows appropriate tree plantings in numbers and type and perimeter foundation landscaping. The lighting plan also seems appropriate in terms of light style, height and spread.

The proposed building is all brick with small porch like extensions located at each entrance door. The architect has adjusted the building plans according to comments from the Sketch Plan. No building or site signage has been proposed. It is anticipated that building signage will be restricted to vinyl applied letters to the doors. There will also be a site sign presented at a later date. Staff has a little concern over the placement of the dumpster. It should be moved to the northwest corner of the site and placed at a 45 degree angle. That way, a trash truck can have better access to it and be able to turn around more easily. A proper dumpster screening is also required and is described but not drawn.

This is a good proposal and something that was anticipated as a type of building and use with the original Wolf Commerce Park master plan. The applicant has met with all development standards. Staff recommends approval with the condition that the dumpster location be revised as described above and properly enclosed, and that the City Engineer review and approve all necessary engineering requirements including easements.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Applicant: Distinctive Marble and Granite
Location: 210 N. Liberty Street
Zoning: PC, Planned Commercial District
Request: Approval of Green awnings for Distinctive Marble and Granite and Goodwill and approval of ground sign changes.

The applicant, Chris Snitzler, wishes to gain approval of his awning color choice. His proposal was before you last month, but he was not here to present his application for a certificate of appropriateness. At the time, the commission felt that he should switch his awning color from green to blue, mostly to match the monument sign out front. Mr. Snitzler feels that the green awnings should be approved, and he will change the monument sign colors in order to better match this choice. Staff supports this certificate of appropriateness request as long as the applicant matches the monument sign to the green on the awnings.

PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Applicant: DRK
Location: 180 West Olentangy St

Zoning: DB, Downtown Business District
Request: Approval of a Preliminary Development Plan for a new 9,000 sq. ft. retail center

The Traditions Approved Preliminary Development Plan called for the remaining one acre "L" shaped parcel to be developed as a restaurant use. The office building being developed to the west was part of the original plan as well as the condominiums to the north. The owner of the property has not had any success with obtaining a restaurant user for the site. Because it has been offered for some time now, and with the success of retail stores coming into town recently, the property owner is now requesting a new Preliminary Development Plan for this parcel to include the development of about 9,000 sq. ft. of retail shops in two buildings. Access will still come from the common driveway that has been constructed, however the way into the commercial site will be moved a bit closer toward Olentangy Street than previously approved. The access easements that were originally prepared between the current owner and the owner of the office building will need to be amended.

The property is currently zoned DB, Downtown Business District. When the original plan was introduced to the City, we had not yet gone through the revisions to the Downtown area, and the plan was approved through the PC, Planned Commercial District. The property was then rezoned as part of the total area rezoning when the Downtown Districts were created. This property is also within the Historic District Overlay, therefore requiring the Historic District Advisory Committee to provide recommendations on the proposal. We will be scheduling that for the April 26, 2007 meeting. Because of this change to the DB district, there are several areas within the text of the proposal that will need to be amended and also the setback requirements have changed so there are not as many divergences.

The site plan shows a 3,000 sq. ft. building at the front along with a small parking lot. Staff is very concerned over the amount of parking being located at the front of the site. However, the landscape plan does show a stone pillar and small wall with a picket fence that will be installed along the front of the parking lot, thus screening the parking lot very nicely. Staff recalls the Commission's concern with parking going too far out toward the street when the office building to the west was proposed and the Commission removed the last two paces on that parking lot. This parking is proposed much closer. Also, the parking lot is designed in such a way that, if full, someone coming into it realizing that it is full will then have to back out into the main entry drive and this could cause a safety issue on Traditions Drive. Because of this safety issue, Staff is opposed to this parking area as proposed. Rather, removing the drive aisle and landscape island as part of this parking lot removal, three spaces can be added. Therefore, the total loss of parking is three spaces. With the removal of this parking lot, the building can be adjusted slightly to the east to provide a bit more space in between it and the office building to the west. Also, if a restaurant user would have interest in this front building, then the removal of this parking lot will allow for the addition of a patio seating area which will be much more desirable for the overall development and streetscape. The benefits of removing this parking area far outweigh the negatives. From the standpoint of the commercial user, this parking area would be beneficial as it allows for parking at the front door of the businesses and provides three additional spaces. Staff still believes the safety issues associated with this design far exceed the needs of the commercial user.

There has not been any identification of user mix for this development. Staff is concerned that if there is too much restaurant users that parking will be a problem. Maybe some sort of limit to the amount of square feet allowed for restaurant users be imposed.

Overall the landscape plan is fine. There is a divergence to the 70% foundation planting requirement. This divergence can be eliminated when the parking lot is removed. A sidewalk is also shown that goes through the center of the site back to the residential area.

Staff will defer architectural comments to the Architectural Advisor and to the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission. We would recommend that the applicant look at and produce details that conform to the Architectural Guidelines for the Historic District. This proposed design does not appear to be in conformance with the guidelines in many ways. The roof pitch should probably be steeper and there should be more pronounced projections of the gabled elevations. Careful consideration should be given to the mixed use of siding materials in an appropriate manner as well. The rear of the building toward the back also should have outstanding design characteristics as this directly faces the condominium users. The signs should be externally lit with gooseneck type lighting. More consideration should be given to the detailing of the windows and making them more "downtown commercial" than suburban strip mall commercial. Much work still needs to be accomplished on the building designs. Maybe consideration should be given to making the two buildings dissimilar in nature. Maybe the front building should be designed as an American Foursquare design, and the story line is that is the old farm house and the rear building is the old barn and they are converted now for commercial use.

Staff believes that the overall concept is acceptable with the changes that we are recommending. Because there are so many changes, Staff cannot recommend approving the plan at this time. We recommend that no action be taken, and that the applicant revise the plans accordingly, especially with the building designs taking into account the above comments and those from the Architectural Advisor and the HDAC.

SKETCH PLAN

Applicant: Stavroff Interests LTD
Location: 8 North Liberty Street
Zoning: DB, Downtown Business District
Request: Review of Sketch Plan for the demolition of an existing 4,063 sq. ft. retail structure and the construction of a 6,610 sq. ft. retail or retail/office structure located at the northeast corner of Olentangy Street and Liberty Street, and the approval to submit a Combined Preliminary and Final Development Plan.

The City has been working with the property owner with regard to the acquisition of 10 feet of right-of-way along the frontage of North Liberty Street. There is an approved agreement between the property owner and the City Council for this acquisition. The property owner is responsible for bringing a proposal for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new proposed building for the redevelopment of this site. At this time, the applicant has submitted a Sketch Plan to review and provide comments. After this meeting, the applicant intends to submit a Combined Preliminary and Final Development Plan if the Planning and Zoning Commission allows them to submit a Combined Plan. If not, then a Preliminary Development Plan will be submitted.

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURE

The City Council approved a right-of-way acquisition agreement with the property owner. The right-of-way acquisition includes 10 feet along the Liberty Street frontage of the property. This right-of-way will be necessary in the future if the City ever decides to install left turn lanes on Liberty Street at the four corners. It was decided by City Council that now is the time to acquire the right-of-way in order to preserve that option in the future. With the purchase of the property by the applicant and their desire to redevelop the property, it was seen by City Council to acquire the right-of-way at this time rather than in the future when the property is redeveloped/restored and the acquisition would be much more expensive in the future.

The existing building actually sits within, in part, the rights-of-way of both Liberty Street and Olentangy Street by a couple of feet. The acquisition of the needed 10 feet of right-of-way

along North Liberty Street brings the take within the existing structure and not just the front porch.

Section 1143.18 (l) explains the requirements for the approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission for the demolition of a structure within the Historic District::

(l) Demolition Hearing Procedures.

(1) A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for the demolition of structures less than seventy-five (75) square feet in area. All other applicable permits are required.

(2) In cases where an applicant applies for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a structure within the Downtown District, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall approve the demolition and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness following the procedures stated in Section 1143.18(k)(2) when:

A. At a minimum, a Sketch Plan showing possible future redevelopment of the property is reviewed and found generally reasonable by the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission; and it is determined that one or both of the following conditions prevail:

1. That the structure contains no features of architectural and/or historic significance;

2. That there exists no reasonable economic use for the structure as it exists or as it might be restored, and that there exists no feasible and prudent alternative to demolition, or that deterioration has progressed to the point where it is not economically feasible to restore the structure as demonstrated by the applicant through supporting documents such as cost analyses, structural reports, and/or other necessary documents.

(3) Every effort shall be made to reuse existing structures through adaptive reuse and to restore their historic character. Under no condition shall a structure that is able to be rehabbed be demolished for an off-street parking facility or loading space. Where structures must be removed, they shall be replaced with buildings of historic character and qualities of the District.

The applicant has indicated to Staff that they feel there is no reasonable economic use for the structure as it exists or as it might be restored and that conditions of the existing building has deteriorated to the point where it is no longer feasible to restore the structure, especially as it has been requested by the City to purchase the 10 feet of right-of-way. There are two

possibilities for the restoration of the existing building when looking at the property with the right-of-way purchase:

1. The front several feet of the front of the main portion of the building can be removed and then a new front re-built in a position outside of the right-of-way purchase.
2. The entire building can be moved to a location outside of the right-of-way purchase.

Both of these options, as argued by the applicant, are not economically feasible or prudent alternatives to demolition. ***The applicant will need to provide supporting documentation as required by code.*** Once this documentation is submitted, Staff will review it and provide the Commission a recommendation.

This existing building does have some historical significance to Powell. It was the old trading post and hardware store which was the main point in commerce for the community for many years. It has been said that movies were shown on the north side of the building. The Powell-Liberty Historical Society and the Design Committee for Historic Downtown Powell, Inc. have recommended against the demolition of this structure.

From a physical standpoint, the front porch can be considered an "architecturally nonconforming" addition due to the fact that it is a more modern addition, in design and materials, to what can be considered an "architecturally conforming" structure, the main portion of the building. The addition on the rear of the building is also later addition.

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

The proposed redevelopment of the site includes the construction of a new 6,610 sq. ft. structure which includes about 4,221 sq. ft. on the first floor and 2,389 sq. ft. on the second floor. Access to the property includes an existing curb cut on North Liberty Street and the shortening of an existing drive access on East Olentangy Street. This provides access around the east and north sides of the building, however there are no parking spaces shown as there is no room for any. The applicant should show that there is some alternative parking spaces allotted somewhere in close proximity to this property for the users. Section 1143.16.2 (g) (7) requires that parking provisions in Chapter 1149 be met, however the Planning and Zoning Commission is allowed to reduce that number:

(7) The parking provisions set forth in Chapter 1149 shall be met. However, the Planning and Zoning Commission can consider reductions to those requirements provided it is sufficiently demonstrated through data, applicable standards, and/or other materials and information that the minimum requirement is not necessary

The applicant shall demonstrate that they have provided for the reduction of parking and can provide some alternative parking, otherwise a variance will need to be approved. Assuming that the entire first floor is retail and the second story is office, the parking requirements will be 12 spaces. If the first floor is restaurant, the number of parking spaces will be 13 for up to 75 seats plus 1 for every 4 employees, plus 6 spaces for the upstairs offices making a total of 19 spaces plus the number needed for the restaurant employees.

The basic design scheme and "story" to this building proposal includes an Italianate design main structure that is connected by a small connector to a brick commercial storefront type building. The main structure has a corner entrance and another entrance on each frontage. This allows for a maximum of four or five stores, or fewer larger stores. Included with this design are integral sign areas, external lighting, and many windows. Attention to detail is important and Staff recommends that the applicant look at the Architectural Guidelines for recommendations on window designs and trim, door designs and trim, etc. Also, no north or east elevations were submitted. These will need to be submitted as well with their next application.

Staff will defer to the recommendations of the Architectural Advisor as well as the recommendations from the Historic Downtown Advisory Committee for the architecture of the building. Staff does feel that the proposed building is not out of scale as a replacement for that which is being demolished. In fact, this building is taking a cue from the old Odd Fellows building located on the southwest corner in terms of its basic design scheme, with a connector to a one story brick building to the east.

OVERALL REVIEW

It is very important for the Commission to consider the overall needs of the community with this application. There are several considerations when examining this application from the standpoint of allowing the City to preserve the future ability to handle traffic issues at the four-corners. At this time, as the property sits dilapidated and ready for either rehabilitation in place, moving the structure and its rehabilitation, or removal of the existing structure and providing for new construction, there is a property owner willing to redevelop the site. The City is at a point where it can acquire the right-of-way necessary to preserve the ability to install turn lanes in all directions at the four corners based upon the preliminary engineering study that was most recently done and shown on the drawings provided in the packet. This design allows for the installation of turn lanes with the least number of on-street parking spaces removed and the least impact upon existing structures located directly at the four-corners. At this time, the City is able to acquire the right-of-way at the cheapest possible rate. If this building were to be rehabilitated in place, the cost to purchase the right-of-way later will be much higher. It makes sense to decide to preserve the ability for future decisions about the four corners and not take that ability away.

The proposed building fits in terms of its size, scale and overall design as a replacement for that which is removed. Maybe, with this new development, there is an ability to provide for a new center of commerce at the four corners and if the north elevation is done correctly, movies can again be shown on the side of the building!!

There is a lot for the Commission to consider with this application, however we feel that with good discussion about what Staff has provided above, we do recommend that the applicant be allowed to submit a Combined Preliminary and Final Development Plan with all outstanding items needed for a complete submittal be accomplished, including the economic analysis and parking information stated above.

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

Amending Sign Regulations will be heard on May 9, 2007.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: May 9, 2007 @ 7:30 pm.