

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. on Thursday, July 25, 2013, in the Council Chamber, Second Floor, City Hall. A roster of the members of the commission and the technical posts they fill are on file and available upon request. Also present were commission members S. Dozier, V. Hrabal, S. Silas, and M. Wertman. P. Nigh was in attendance on behalf of the Mayor and Council. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 11, 2013.

The minutes were not ready for approval.

DESIGN REVIEW

**60 West Washington Street – University System of Maryland-Hagerstown – Awnings,
Case No. HDC 2013-35.**

Erin Harding, University System of Maryland-Hagerstown, and Jonathan Kerns, City of Hagerstown, were present.

Staff Report: This building is a B resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to add “Sunbrella” awnings to the three entrances that open on to University Plaza. Eight feet of clearance will be maintained between the bottom of the awnings and the stoops. Color scheme will be similar to the awnings that were installed over the Convention & Visitors Bureau on North Potomac Street—red, black, and yellow. Staff noted that this side of the building was never intended to be a main façade so all of the entrances on this side of the building are nonhistoric. Modern fixed awnings would not be inappropriate in this setting. The awnings will not be backlit.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ms. Harding noted that the photograph submitted with the application does not show the University’s circular seal logo (no text) that will be printed on the end caps. Ms. Hrabal was concerned that the awnings will be barrel-shaped and not the traditional shed-style awnings. Ms. Harding stated that the traditional shed-style awnings do not lend themselves to adding a logo on the ends. It was noted that barrel-style awnings are not unheard of in Hagerstown’s Downtown Local Historic District. Ms. Hrabal stated that many awnings in the Downtown area do have graphics on the valances. She was concerned about the shape of the proposed awnings. The property is within the district and the commission’s Design Guidelines state that the HDC is charged with maintaining the integrity and character of the historic district. If the commission continues to approve nontraditional items it will encroach

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upon the look of the historic district. It was noted that there is a contemporary stage on the east side of the building. Mr. Bockmiller indicated that Kathleen Maher wrote this staff report since he was on vacation last week. One of the things she would have taken into account is that the space is not historic in any context. There is a contemporary addition to the USM building, University Plaza was developed within the last ten years, and the commission recently approved a modern stage on this same facade. Ms. Dozier noted that the stage is very industrial looking. Jonathan Kerns mentioned and there is also a sail-like canopy structure in the park closer to the USM building. Ms. Harding and Mr. Kerns stated that originally the awnings were going to be flat metal awnings.

Mr. Gehr asked if there are other canopies in the district that have rounded fronts. Commission members could not picture any examples in the City (or in the historic district????). Ms. Hrabal was concerned that each time the commission approves a nonhistoric element it whittles away the character of the district. Mr. Gehr noted that the shape of an awning must be able to shed snow and rain.

Ms. Harding indicated that she would be willing to go back to Stitches Awning Company to explore whether it would be feasible to use a more traditional awning style. The HDC agreed that the applicant could work with staff on finding a suitable awning style, as long as the applicant amends her application to indicate a shed-style awning with a valance that can accommodate three lines of text. Ms. Harding agreed to amend her application to go with the more traditional shed-style awning.

MOTION: (Hrabal/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and property in question and if constructed in accordance with these plans, the project is compatible with character of the district for the reasons that the materials and the shape being amended to be shed-style with valance wide enough for three lines of text would be appropriate for and in harmony with the Architectural Guidelines for the Downtown Historic District and the character of the adjoining properties. Therefore, I move that the HDC grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for Case No. HDC 2013-35.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP:

None.

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NEW BUSINESS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURN: It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (4:40 p.m.).

8/8/2013

Date



Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary