

TOWN OF FAIRFAX  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING  
7:30 PM, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2007  
FAIRFAX WOMEN'S CLUB, 46 PARK ROAD

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM

ROLL CALL

Board members present:     Laura Kehrlein  
                                   Robert Cook  
                                   Shane Deal  
                                   Kristen Coffey  
                                   Shelby LaMotte

Staff members present:     Linda Neal, Senior Planner  
                                   Amy Dunnigan, Minutes Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/S, Kehrlein-Cook, motion to remove item number 1 from the consent calendar.  
AYES: All

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/S, Coffey-Kehrlein, motion to approve the minutes from the October 10, 2007 meeting.

AYES: All

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

There were no comments from any of the Board members. .

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

**2084 Sir Francis Drake Blvd; Application # 07-46**  
**Request for design review to re-shingle a portion of the front of a commercial building and erect a new business identification sign; Assessor's Parcel No. 001-183-15; Highway Commercial CH Zone; Bill Johnson, applicant; Aaron Wentzell and Mary Beth Goetting, owners; CEQA categorically exempt, § 15301(a) and 15301(g).**

Aaron Wentzell, the property owner, said that the wood on the building was peeling, shingles were falling off and he just wants to make the building look better.

Board member Kehrlein stated that she liked the concept, but was troubled by the shingle color and recommended a solid colored shingle for the type of roof, one that was more conventional. With a big, vertical surface, the multi-colored choice didn't seem right, but overall concept was good. All Board members felt that there could be better color options and that the applicant should return with samples.

Board member Deal was not bothered by the choice, but Mr. Wentzell agreed to submit a lighter color shingle next month. The letter choices were more limited than shingle options. Mr. Wentzell was comfortable returning with a lighter color sample, but stated the delay was frustrating.

Senior Planner Neal said that the applicants could begin demolition, but had to hold off on construction involving colors.

M/S, Coffey-Kehrlein, motion to approve the project but direct the applicant to return at the next meeting with a lighter color shingle sample to create a higher contrast with the sign lettering.

AYES: All

Senior Planner Neal advised the public that if anyone is dissatisfied with a decision of the Board they must appeal the decision within 10 days and that forms were available at Town Hall.

**4 Bolinas Road; Application # 07-44**  
**Request for a Sign Permit to erect 2 business identification signs and three logo signs for a total sign program square footage of 40sf; Assessor's Parcel No. 002-115-07; Central Commercial CC Zone District; Deborah and Kelly London, applicants; Dick Lash, owner; CEQA categorically exempt, § 15301 and § 15301(g).**

Deborah London, the applicant, informed the Board that she and her husband took over the business, Coffee Roasters, and were attempting to beautify the space. 3 signs were proposed on the front, the side, and on Broadway. Ms. London hoped to proceed with beautifying the outside of the building and asked for approval.

Rose Taber, 94 Hillside Drive, asked for confirmation of the lettering being flat versus projecting. Ms. London confirmed that the signs were flat to maintain the “small town” feel. All board members agreed that they were looking forward to the business opening.

M/S: Deal/Coffey motioned to approve application 07-44 as proposed with the exception that the sign on Broadway run the full length of the stucco area and that it be mounted so that it is not higher than the stucco behind the sign.

AYES: All

Senior Planner Neal advised the applicant that appeals must occur within 10 days and that forms were available at Town Hall.

**183 Frustuck Avenue; Application # 07-28**

**Request for Design Review of a 2,830sf single-family residence with a 575sf garage resulting in a 3,405sf single-family residence; Assessor’s Parcel No. 003-193-13; Residential Single-family RS 6 Zone; Shane Deal, applicant/owner; CEQA categorically exempt, § 15303(a).**

Board members Deal and LaMotte recused themselves from this item.

Max Crome, the project architect and also resident of 236 Forrest Ave., stated that there were two primary things of importance to the owners. One was that a green house be built. Two was that they were asked to conform to every ordinance for a hillside zone. Many neighbors that originally opposed the project were now supportive of it. The project limited excavation and minimized the removal of trees. He felt strongly that the house was appropriately sited, that the design of the house is pleasing and the architecture appropriate for the neighborhood.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Niccolo Caldararo, 165 Frustuck, informed the Board that he does not know of any neighbor who had changed their mind about the project. He stated that most of the people who spoke in favor of the project at the Town Council meeting were members of the applicant’s bicycle group. Mr. Caldararo stated that homes in the area primarily had parking decks and he was opposed to the garage. Mr. Caldararo asked the Board to uphold the existing law as described in his lawyer’s letter and defined in the Town Code. He also asked staff to address the slope issue, the timing of when the lots were merged and when the submission of the applicants’ material was deemed complete. Staff discussed the FAR, but at both times the slope was not discussed. Staff made no finding and ordinance made no motion to slope or lot size. Mr. Caldararo stated that if Fairfax wants to look more like the County or Daly City, more houses like Mr. Deal’s should be approved to be built on the hillside.

Chair Cook advised it would be Town Council that would develop an ordinance in regards to slope or lot size.

Diane Dalhann, 177 Frustuck, indicated she was very pleased with the design of the home because it does not obstruct her view and the three living levels step down the hillside. She pointed out that it was impossible to build on that lot and make a home look invisible. She stated that when somebody follows rules and designs plans based on the rules their project should be approved.

Mr. Crome addressed two issues that Mr. Caldararo brought up which were garage issues. To make it clear, the applicant felt the garage was an important aspect of the project and that a carport would become a storage eye sore while bikes and tools and other things can be stored out of sight in a garage. He finished by stating that Mr. Deal needed a secure spot as a contractor for his tools at night.

Jean Deal stated that she loved Max Crome's design and really looked forward to it being built. Her personal opinion was that she was not a huge fan of carports and wished she had a picture of their current garage containing bicycles, camping supplies, etc and that the garage was a very, very important to them. Living on a hillside makes a garage even more necessary because it is very challenging to carry bikes, tools, etc up and down a hillside. Jean Deal disagreed with Mr. Caldararo's belief that hillside residences throughout Fairfax do not have garages. Those homes with garages have more of an aesthetic appeal and hoped that the Board continued to agree that the garage was an important part of the design.

Bruce Binell lived across the street (one home above it) and he held pictures up that Mr. Crome produced. He would have liked to have seen the home set down further on the site which the garage located on the lower portion of Frustuck. However, he is now o.k. with the design but it was paramount that they had greenbelt brought back to the neighborhood since this house will result in much of it being lost. He verified with Mr. Crome that trees would be planted between 177 and 183 Frustuck. Their reason for living there was to be in Fairfax, off the beaten path, in the forest and the designer was doing his best to maintain that feeling.

John Owens, 177 Frustuck (new house to left) said he lived next door and was very much in support of the project. They proposed a garage when they built, but it was denied by the Town Council. It was difficult to keep a deck clear of garbage cans and other stored items, but said they tried. It was difficult on a hillside without a garage. Mr. Owens stated that when Mr. Binell purchased his home it was directly above two empty lots. It was inevitable that homes would be built on these lots and Mr. Binell should have expected this. Mr. Owens felt the Deal home was overall a house that would be a benefit to the community.

Mr. Crome explained the landscape plan was to plant large trees to be tall and ultimately hide the roof of the garage from Mr. Binell's yard. The canopy of the trees would eventually reach 40'-60' in height. They would not be able to obscure parking garage/deck. It would have been disingenuous to show pictures of the greenery before it had been planted and matured. He stated that any disturbed native soil would need to be restored. Fescue would be planted to restore that area.

Chair Cook endorsed softening the appearance of the home.

Mr. Crome confirmed that there was an existing wooden fence; nothing additional.

Paul Fitzgerald down the street on Coree Lane agreed that Mr. Binell's idea to try to create a green belt along the frontage of the site where there was no garage is a good one. He indicated there were two carports a couple of houses away that are bigger than the proposed garage. He felt the home fit within all the rules and that it should be approved.

Chair Cook closed the public hearing.

Board member Kehrlein asked the neighbor Diane Dalhann if she'd had an opportunity to look at the landscape plan. She had not seen the most recent one but the previous plan retained the trees that were not located within the footprint of the house. Therefore, she is not concerned about the landscaping. There were no houses that have any formal landscaping other than the natural plant material. Board member Kehrlein wanted to make sure that the landscaping would not negatively affect them. Board member Kehrlein didn't think carports were desired for houses any more and that the garage was much more appealing.

Mr. Crome explained that the garage door was a simple roll-up, painted, wood door that was painted in the accent color (rust).

Board member Kehrlein commented it would be nice to have something more subtle than the rust-colored paint.

Mr. Crome said that they'd entertain natural wood versus the accent color. The door was one of few opportunities to do something a little bit "designerly" and of interest by using an interesting use of color.

Board member Coffey stated Crome had coined a phrase "do something interesting". and she agrees with the proposal to make a statement through the use of the garage door color though it would not be something she'd do with her own home.

Senior Planner Neal explained that this is a legally created lot and the Hill Area Residential Development Ordinance does not prohibit development on legal lots just because they are sloped.

Chair Cook explained to the audience that there were approximately 16 points of criteria for review and these criteria have been met and therefore there was no basis to deny the project. Chair Cook stated that the architect did an excellent job and if you took a look at the property next door that has no garage, you can see what a visual mess it can become without a garage. The only issue he could find was the strength of the color on the garage door. He could not see anything else to be done to make it blend in except to recommend a less powerful color on the garage door.

Mr. Crome proposed an on-the-fly design modification to change out the color of the cedar to a natural wood color cedar door. Jean Deal did love the color of the door, but was willing to consider something else. A neighbor around the corner had a punch of color on the exterior of her house and she really liked the uniqueness. She hoped to keep the nice, rust color and felt the door was fantastic.

Chair Cook felt brighter colors made things look bigger, so everything must be done to reduce visual impact.

Jean Deal hadn't heard complaints.

Chair Cook felt a less powerful color would reduce visual impact.

Ms. Deal was disappointed but willing to work with an alternative color.

Board member Coffey stated her view was that the door was an integral part of the design although her personal approach to design would be more traditional. The fencing and other design elements were small in impact and something was missing if the door color was taken away.

Board member Kehrlein asked that the applicant bring back an actual paint sample of the alternative finish color/stain.

M/S: Kehrlein-Coffey, motioned to approve application # 07-28 based on the findings and subject to the conditions contained in the staff report with the following additional condition:

The applicant shall return before the Board at a future hearing with an alternative proposal for a garage door color.

AYES: All

Senior Planner Neal advised the applicant and the audience that appeals must occur within 10 days and that forms were available at Town Hall.

**89 Broadway; Application No. 07-45**

**Request for a Sign Permit to erect 2 business identification signs and an awning sign on the Bank of America building for a total sign square footage of 463.65sf; Assessor's Parcel No. 002-113-08; Central Commercial CC Zone; Sign Productions, Inc., applicant; Bank of America National Trust and Savings, owner; CEQA categorically exempt, § 15301 and § 15301(g).**

Steve Allson, representative for the sign company and the applicant, informed the board that he had come from Cedar Rapids, IA to be there that evening. He explained that Bank of America was re-imaging itself and proposing a new sign program. He acknowledged

that often these big organizations are not sensitive to the characteristics of a small town in which their establishment was located. He stated that sometimes Bank of America forgets that local character must be taken into consideration. The bank was willing to work with changes and plans that would be acceptable to the Town and the other parties involved. He asked that the Board try to reach some kind of compromise so that his firm does not have to send him out to California a second time to the tune of a \$1,200 plane ticket. He explained that the awning over the side door would look dark at night and the lettering would be a blue, translucent color and about a quarter inch of a white outline that the canister lights would back-light.

Senior Planner Neal stated that there would be no interior illumination in the signs unless an exception was made by the Board. Mr. Allson stated that the dual function of the lights was to illuminate the lettering as well as help light the pathway. He felt under soffit lighting with canister lights would work well.

Senior Planner Neal stated the code did not prohibit exterior lighting.

Chair Cook stated that the lighting (external) would require a building permit but it would not have to come back to the Board. Two white signs only and the sign on the awning was what Board was approving.

Mr. Allson suggested halo lettering where the lighting was cast from the side of the building against the back of the sign lettering.

Board member Deal said that any sign with a light in it was against the Town ordinance. Signs must not be illuminated. If the Board approved one illuminated sign, the Board must approve future signs. He needed to be consistent in his approvals. He indicated that he is o.k. with illuminating the awning from behind with canister lights which are required to light the sidewalk beneath the awning. Regarding the sign square footage, he felt it should stick within the parameters the ordinance allows and be consistent.

Mr. Allson commented that the bank really needs some kind of signage over the entry door and people looked to the business logo to identify the entrance.

Board member Coffey liked the idea of halo lighting and while she understands the Ordinance prohibition against chain signs, thought there should be the potential for exceptions to accomplish the signage in other ways like the halo as it was a classic look.

Board member Kehrlein stated the longer front of the building should be used to calculate the sign square footage.

Senior Planner Neal said the building was unusual as it was surrounded by three streets. Because the building had streets on three sides, it has an exceptional need to provide additional signs to notify customers/passersby of its use.

Mr. Allson said he saw the lighting as something mounted underneath a soffet and would have to look at the spread angle of the fixtures, but it would be something underneath.

M/S, Kehrlein-Coffey, motioned to approve application # 07-45, based on the finding that the proposed sign program, as amended, is the minimum necessary to advise people of the building use and subject to the conditions contained in the staff report. The internal illumination shall be removed and the awning shall be backlit under the soffit with canister lighting .

AYES: all.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Senior Planner Neal stated that the Planning Director wanted to know if the Board would like to try to start working on a Green Building Ordinance. There was a group (Alec Hoffman and more) that met once per month and a staff member should be present. Asked if the Board would be willing to put time in (possibly as an advisory group) for whatever it may be. Hoffman was trying to draft something or work off of something that the County may have already had.

AYES: All.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Cook adjourned the meeting at 10:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dunnigan  
Minutes Clerk