



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government
COURTHOUSE AREA DESIGN OVERLAY ZONE REVIEW BOARD

Jim Gray
Mayor

Derek J. Paulsen, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Design Review Officer Report -

Applicant:

Case No. 8-2012 – 21c Lexington, LLC – Re-approval of the Authorization Permit

Addresses:

167 West Main Street, 145-151 West Main Street and 100 North Upper Street

Purpose of Work:

A comprehensive rehabilitation of the First National Building, including the Upper Street Annex, the Main Street Annex and the Fayette Building into a full service luxury hotel including a ballroom, meeting and conference spaces, a restaurant and lounge, gallery spaces and a fitness center.

Scope of Work:

To review an application for an Authorization Permit to renovate the facades, replace windows, infill windows, remove a stair penthouse, add a stair penthouse, remove service doors, remove planters, refurbish a sidewalk, add an overhead door, remove and add rooftop mechanical equipment, refurbish a skylight, add skylights, add windows, replace storefront entries, replace storefronts, add retractable awnings, replace an entry canopy, add a suite penthouse, add an outdoor terrace with a guardrail, replace stone paneling, restore an areaway and add a metal guardrail.

Background:

The proposed 21c Lexington project consists of the comprehensive rehabilitation of the First National Bank Tower, including its two annexes, and the adjacent Fayette Building. The project will convert the structures into a full service luxury hotel with ballroom, meeting and conference spaces, restaurant, lounge, gallery spaces and a fitness center. Originally constructed in 1912, the existing First National Bank Tower is a 15 story structure designed by McKim, Mead and White. In 1933, the first of two existing adjacent buildings, known as the Main Street or Tower Annex, was annexed to the tower as a single bay, three story building adjacent to the Tower on Main Street. The second adjacent building, known as the Upper Street Annex, is located to the north of the tower on Upper Street and was annexed sometime after 1933. While only a three story building, the Upper Street Annex facade is four stories in height. The

final structure included in the proposed project is the three story Fayette building, dating from 1872. While originally a five-bay building, only two bays remain. (Information provided in the application)

Findings:

The application meets the following Themes of the Courthouse Area:

Theme 1: Enabling the creation, growth and retention of jobs that promote a strong, progressive economy.

- A key objective is to encourage the creation of jobs within the project area. Special opportunities exist...for professional offices and related services as well as residential use. These design guidelines will help promote designs that support this theme while encouraging investment in the area.

Theme 2: Promoting the downtown as a regional commercial, office, government, residential and cultural center focal point within the Bluegrass Region.

- These design guidelines establish a vision for renovation and new construction that facilitates the mix of uses desired to make the Courthouse Area the focal point for the region.

The application meets the following Goals of the Courthouse Area:

Goal IV: Ensure the vitality of the downtown

- Objective A: Promote and expand the role of the Downtown area as the logical community location of major regional business, commerce, governmental administration, cultural and recreational activities and entertainment.
- Objective D: Formulate a realistic plan for the future of the Downtown, and foster public-private efforts to maintain, rehabilitate and redevelop Downtown.
- Objective E: Recognize and preserve significant architectural features and encourage new construction to be compatible with these significant features.

Goal X: Protect and preserve Fayette County's significant historic and cultural heritage

- Objective A: Encourage protection of historic resources through compatible use and reuse of historic sites and structures.
- Objective C: Encourage protection of significant historic resources through documentation and designation of

- Objective G: Encourage compatible design in public and private developments and structures which serve to reinforce the fabric of the community.

The application meets the following Basic Principles of Design in the Courthouse Area:

Principle 2: Enhance the street level as an inviting place for pedestrians.

- Providing features that are visually interesting and that are in human scale is essential. These may include storefront windows, display cases, art and landscaping.

Principle 3: Relate to traditional buildings in the area

- Traditional buildings combine to establish a sense of continuity in the area, while also accommodating variety in design and detail. As properties are improved, they should enhance the overall image of the Area as a place to do business. Each building can help contribute to this visual continuity while also meeting an individual owner's needs.

Principle 4: If the building is an historic structure, then respect its earlier character.

- Preservation of Lexington's heritage is important to its sense of community and its economic development. Many of the structures in the Courthouse Area have historic value, even some that have experienced alterations. It is important to consider the significance of their character-defining features, including basic forms, materials and details when planning improvements.

General Design Guideline:

It is important to note that, while emphasis is placed on respecting historic resources, change is anticipated in the area; it is not to be "frozen in time." However, alterations and new construction should occur in a manner that respects the traditional design context.

The application meets the following Design Guidelines:

2.2 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

- A building should have a clearly-defined primary entrance. For most commercial buildings, this should be a recessed entryway.
- A secondary public entrance to commercial spaces is also encouraged on a larger building.

2.9 Materials should appear similar to those used historically.

- Wood and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds and should be continued in new construction.

2.10 A simple material finish is encouraged for a large expanse of wall plane.

2.13 Building entrances should appear similar to those used historically.

- Clearly define the primary entrance with a canopy or other architectural or landscape feature.
- A contemporary interpretation of a traditional building entry, which is similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, is encouraged.

2.14 Locate the primary building entrance to face the street.

- The building entrance should be recessed.

2.15 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

- Include traditional elements such as display windows, kickplates and transoms on commercial storefronts.

2.16 A fabric awning is encouraged.

- Operable awnings are encouraged on historic buildings.
- Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the façade. Solid colors or simple muted-stripe patterns are appropriate.
- The awning should fit the opening of the building.
- Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

2.17 A fixed metal canopy may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.18 On an historic building, mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character defining features of window openings.

- It should be mounted to highlight moldings that may be found above the storefront and should match the shape of the opening.

2.19 Use lighting for the following:

- To accent architectural details.
- To accent building entrances.
- To accent signs.
- To illuminate sidewalks.

2.20 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.

- All exterior light sources should have a low level of luminescence.
- Lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.

2.21 Prevent glare by using shielded and focused light sources.

- Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light downward.

2.22 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment on the public way.

2.23 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

2.25 Minimize the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas.

3.1 Preserve character-defining features that are intact.

3.2 Repair those features that are damaged.

- Use methods that will not harm historic materials. For example, repair work is preferred over replacement.

3.4 For a commercial storefront building, a rehabilitation project should preserve these character defining elements:

- Display windows
- Transom
- Kickplate
- Recessed entry

3.6 Design an alteration to be compatible with the historic character of the property.

- Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the original building.

3.7 Avoid alterations that damage historic features.

3.9 If a storefront is altered, consider restoring it to the original design.

- If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts.

3.10 An alternative design that is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront is appropriate.

3.11 Maintain a historically significant storefront opening.

- The size and shape of the storefront are important characteristics that contribute to the integrity of an historic commercial building.

3.14 Maintain recessed entries where they are found.

3.17 If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

3.18 Preserve the character of the cornice line of an historic building.

3.21 Historic building materials and craftsmanship add textural qualities, as well as visual continuity and character to the streetscape, and should be preserved.

3.22 Protect historic material surfaces.

3.23 Protect masonry from water deterioration.

3.24 Do not cover or obscure original façade materials.

3.25 If material replacement is necessary, use materials similar to those used historically.

- Brick and stone were the primary wall materials for most buildings. Wood and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds.

3.26 An addition should be compatible in scale, materials and character with the main building.

3.27 An addition should not damage or obscure historically or architecturally important features.

3.28 Design an addition such that the historic character of the original building can still be interpreted.

3.29 An addition should be subtly distinguishable from the historic building.

3.31 An addition may be made to the roof of a building if it does the following:

- An addition should be set back from the primary, character-defining façade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.
- An addition should be modest in character, so it will not attract attention from the historic façade.
- The addition should be distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.

6.1 Consider the building front as part of an overall sign program.

- A sign should be in proportion to the building, such that it does not dominate the appearance.

6.2 A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- A sign should appear to be in scale with the façade.

6.3 A flush mounted wall sign may be considered.

6.7 Sign materials should be compatible with that of the building façade.

6.10 A simple sign design is preferred.

6.11 Select letter styles and sizes that will be compatible with the building front.

6.14 If internal illumination is used for a sign, it should be design to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- If internal illumination is used, a system that backlights sign text only is preferred.

Recommendation:

Re-approval of the Authorization Permit to renovate the facades, replace windows, infill windows, remove a stair penthouse, add a stair penthouse, remove service doors, remove planters, refurbish a sidewalk, add an overhead door, remove and add rooftop mechanical equipment, refurbish a skylight, add skylights, add windows, replace storefront entries, replace storefronts, add retractable awnings, replace an entry canopy, add a suite penthouse, add an outdoor terrace with a guardrail, replace stone paneling, restore an areaway and add a metal guardrail. All signage is subject to approval by the Division of Building Inspection.