

STAFF REPORT



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMISSION

Village Green Municipal Building, Council Chambers

Thursday, May 20, 2021

6:30 P.M.

1. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Applicant: Victoria Damiani Davis DBA SoHo Luxury Exchange
Location: 32 E Olentangy St
Zoning: DB – Downtown Business District
Request: Review and approval of exterior building and property improvements.

Aerial Site Image: <https://goo.gl/maps/dd4t3iK3pjnPb3ed6>

Project Background

SoHo Luxury Exchange is a Powell business currently located at 12 West Olentangy Street. Ms. Davis is in the process of purchasing the land at 32 East Olentangy Street, which at this time houses the store “Rue De Lily”. The larger building at 32 East Olentangy Street will allow for more display space for the applicant’s inventory.

Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing to make landscaping improvements around the front and rear entry, as well as some exterior building updates. Specific improvements include decorative iron window guards, double exterior doors, new exterior paint colors, new composite decking material with new black iron railings around the porch and steps, two stone pillars at the walk, and a new sign.

Ordinance Review

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance [1143.18\(a\)](#). It is the purpose of the Downtown District Overlay District (herein after referred to as the “Downtown District”) to promote the public, health, safety, and welfare by providing for the regulation of the downtown area through a single, unified district. This district is created to permit the careful and coordinated physical planning, development, and redevelopment of the land, and to provide flexibility in the location of land uses, housing types, and intensity. This district shall preserve, protect, and promote the historical nature of downtown by pursuing development that encourages a mix of uses in a manner that is safe, pleasant, convenient, and in context with the history of the area. It is also the purpose of the Downtown District to:

- (1) Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving sites and structures within the historic central core of the City that reflect the City’s history and its architectural history.
- (2) Stabilize and improve property values.
- (3) Strengthen the economy of the City by promoting business development through the allowance of buildings that provide flexible commercial opportunities yet in keeping with the village scale and character.
- (4) Protect and enhance the City's attractions to residents and visitors.
- (5) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, and interest of the City’s history.
- (6) Foster civic pride in the beauty, human scale, and human details of the City’s history.
- (7) Promote excellence in small town design, incorporating elements that are consistent with the existing character of the area.
- (8) Promote the use and preservation of historic sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of the City.
- (9) Preserve sound existing housing stock in the historic central area of the City and safeguard the residential scale of the district and the character of sub-areas that are primarily residential in character

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance [1143.18\(i\)\(2\)](#). The Historic Downtown Advisory Commission shall be empowered to hear, review, approve, deny, and recommend modifications to proposals for Certificates of Appropriateness involving environmental changes within the district. Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness shall be judged using the adopted Downtown District Architectural Guidelines.

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(j)(3)(B). Any change in the outward appearance of a property within the Downtown District shall require approval of Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission if any change in the outward appearance of a property within the Downtown District results in one or more of the following:

- B. There will be any changes which affect the outward appearance of a structure, such as installation of different windows, or the construction or reconstruction, including replacement, of such architectural elements as, for example, porches or chimneys.

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(j)(4). External color and/or material changes relative to any structure in the Downtown District shall require approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission

- A. if the proposed colors and/or materials are approved colors and/or materials included in the adopted standards and guidelines, the color and/or materials may be approved directly by the Zoning Administrator if this is the only change proposed.
- B. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the proposed colors and/or materials are not the existing colors and/or materials and do not match those of the approved standards and guidelines, the change must be submitted to the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission for review.

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(j)(5). Landscape changes, signs, lighting fixtures, etc. inconsistent with those indicated in the adopted standards and guidelines must be submitted for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission. Those that are so consistent, including landscaping changes within rights-of-ways, may be approved directly by the Zoning Administrator.

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.18(k)(8). In ruling upon an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission shall consider the following:

- A. The adherence of the environmental change to the district's adopted standards and guidelines, as well as other requirements established in these sections, and
- B. The effect of the Historic Downtown Advisory Commission's decision upon the applicant.

Staff Comments

Staff comments address the applicable sections of the [Powell Architectural Guidelines](#) (PAG). These architectural guidelines are the standard used for the issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness in the Historic District Overlay.

Lighting (pg. 13):

- “Proper lighting fixtures can increase the safety of Powell, and may become more necessary as development continues. Exterior lighting in the Historic District should be incandescent, and low in wattage. Entrance lights and individual free standing path lights are acceptable. Lighting fixtures should be simple Victorian or turn of the century in design, with round or egg-shaped globes on metal posts with minimal design.”
 - Proposed Lighting: String lights.
 - Staff Comments: Images/cut sheets of the proposed string lighting were not provided in the submission materials.

Signage (pg. 16):

- Projecting signs – “These signs may not project more than 2 feet from the face of a building to which they are mounted, or 3 feet from a free-standing support to which they are mounted. Projecting signs may not be more than 15 inches in height or 5 square feet in area. A minimum clearance of 8 feet must be maintained where signs project over a public walkway. Supporting structures for signs should be

appropriate to the detailing of the buildings to which they are attached.

- Proposed Signage: The current SoHo sign at 12 W Olentangy will be relocated. See the Front Concept Landscape Plan for Sign Elevation.
- Staff Comments: The sign design was previously permitted for use within the Historic District. However, staff is concerned that the sign location is too close to the right-of-way and will work with the applicant to determine the appropriate sign location, taking into consideration the required setbacks for signage. The Build Department will also need to review the sign structure.

Fences (pg. 18):

- “Small pieces of fence which define corners, edges, entries, or paths are acceptable in front yards, especially if they are integrated parts of landscape features. Front yard fences may not be higher than 3 feet tall. Picket fences or post-and-board fences built out of dressed lumber are appropriate for front yards in the Historic District. These fences should be stained in a natural color or painted cream or white. All fences in Powell’s Historic District should be built out of wood, and be simple in design. Very ornate fences, with intricate patterns, or overly rustic fences, built of hand hewn lumber, are not appropriate. Wire fences are not appropriate in the Historic District.”
 - Proposed Fence: A powder coated black decorative fence, 33” in height, located in the front yard and integrated into parts of the entry landscaping feature.
 - Staff Comments: The location and height of the fence is appropriate. However, the style of the fence is more decorative in nature. Staff suggests a simpler design built out of wood and stained in a natural color or painted cream or white to comply with the PAG.

Landscaping (pg. 20):

- “Yards should be rural in character, and use native plantings. These should be primarily grass with trees and small beds of native cultivated or wild flowers. Ornate, formal, or exotic gardens are discouraged, but may be acceptable if they are not along main roads, are hidden from public views, or can be blended into a more native landscape.”
- “Foundation and wall climbing plants, such as ivy, can damage historic materials. Such plantings should be kept to a minimum and carefully controlled. On existing structures, foundation and wall plantings should not endanger or obscure significant architectural features, or historic fabric.”
 - Proposed Landscaping: Please refer to the Front and Back Landscape Plans and the “Inspirational Photos” page.
 - Staff Comments: The proposed landscaping plan will be an inviting addition to the front yard, and help to activate the site from Olentangy Street. Staff would urge the applicant to reconsider the proposed climbing plant on the west side of the building. If the Commission approves the climbing material, it must be carefully controlled by the applicant as to not damage the building materials per the PAG.

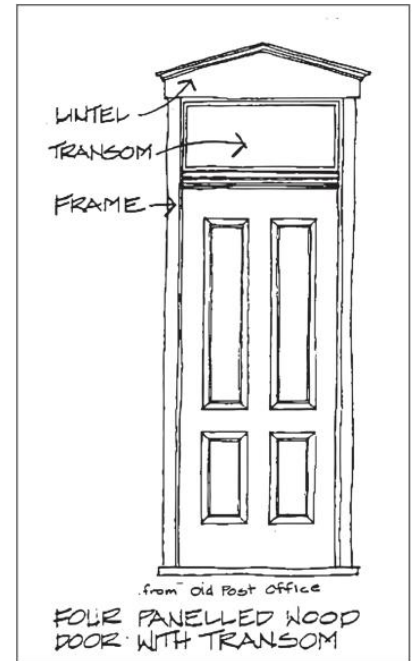
Windows (pg. 50):

- “Parts of a window should be replaced only if they are deteriorated beyond repair or as missing. Replacement parts should match the originals in material and appearance.”
- “Sometimes it is necessary to replace an entire window. Replacement windows should match the originals in material, size, number of panes and type of operation. In addition, rails, stiles, and mullions should match the originals in thickness and depth.”
- “Under no circumstances should a significant window opening be made smaller to accommodate a stock window. Such a treatment will ruin not only the proportions of the window itself, but those of the entire building.”
 - Proposed Windows: New vinyl windows in black or white should the existing windows be replaced.
 - Staff Comments: Staff cannot determine if/when the windows are proposed to be replaced from the submission material, and would like clarification from the applicant. If the windows need

replacing, the applicant should follow the PAG and match the originals in material, size, number of panes, and type of operation.

Doors (pg. 57):

- “Most buildings in Powell have a single front door, with simple trim which matched the window trim on the building. Typically doors are simple in design, with either four wood panels or a single glazed panel above a wood one.
 - Proposed Door: Double exterior doors at front with transom windows above. See image of proposed door.
 - Staff Comments: The proposed style of the front door is similar to the image from the design guidelines to the right, however, staff would recommend a single door instead of the proposed double door to be more consistent with the PAG. The building’s entry door is currently a single door.



Porches (pg. 62):

- “Every effort should be made to repair and retain existing wood porches in the Historic District.”
- “Under no circumstances should a porch in the Historic District be removed and not replaced in kind. If an entire porch has deteriorated beyond repair, it should be replaced with one which matches it in material, scale and detailing.”
- “Railings should reflect the opening or solidness of the original. Balusters should have the same form and spacing as the originals.”
 - Proposed Porch: Replacing the porch with medium brown or gray composite decking including two sets of steps and black metal railings (per drawing).
 - Staff Comment: The composite decking is a material that while not specially addressed in the guidelines is appropriate as a replacement material due to its durability. Not enough material was provided in the submission to determine if the “black metal railing” is consistent with the PAG and similar in style to the existing railing.

Painting & Colors (pg. 70):

- “In general, colors used in the Historic District should be muted, dark, and earth-toned. Livelier colors should be limited to trim, or one accent piece, such as a door. Avoid extremely bright, pure colors, or using two colors of the same intensity.”
 - Proposed Colors: Exterior paint color to be Sherwin Williams #7036 Accessible Beige, paint trim to be Sherwin Williams #7038 Tony Taupe and High Gloss Black
 - Staff Comments: The muted and dark proposed colors are consistent with the PAG.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. The applicant works with Staff to determine an appropriate location for the sign.
2. The applicant provide design details for the string lights for Staff approval.
3. The applicant revise the door design to a single door.
4. That the applicant follow the PAG guidelines should the windows require replacement.