



Bexley Planning Commission

Planning Staff Report – July 25, 2016

Bexley House Apartments Signage

Application #: 16-011

Location: 2877 E. Broad St.

Zoning: Planned Unit Residential (PUR) District

Request: The applicant is seeking:

- Recommendation for City Council approval to allow existing monument signs at the northeast and northwest corners of the property to be replaced with new monument signs and wall features, and removal of the existing front entry canopy, to be replaced by a new architectural canopy.

Applicant: CJ Andrews

Owner: Bexley House Apartments, LLC

A. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

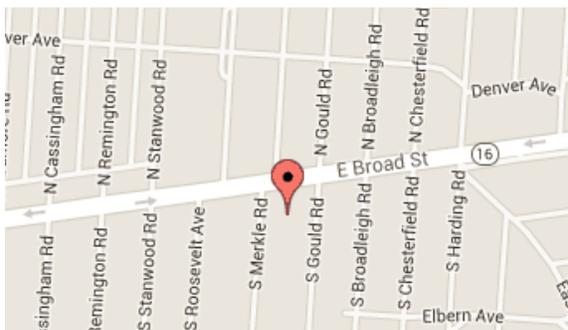
The applicant has proposed replacement signage and replacement of the existing extended awning-style entry canopy with an architectural canopy as well as new paving materials at the entry and painting of specified areas.

Staff is generally in favor of the architectural elements as proposed.

The Tree and Public Garden Commission reviewed the proposed wall and signage. Their primary concerns were the size and materials and location of the proposed wall and signage due to the proximity to existing Bexley gateway features. Staff agrees with these concerns. The applicant has specified the wall and signage location in conformance with right-of-way setbacks and adjusted the materials, but have not adjusted the size of the wall and signage.

Staff recommends further refinement of the design approach to the signage, with several conditions outlined at the end of the report and based on the considerations below.

B. BACKGROUND



The site is located on the south side of E. Broad Street, running the length between S. Merkle Rd. and S. Gould Rd. The proposed signage/wall elements would replace the existing monument signs now located at each of the corners

fronting on Broad Street. Other signage are the words “Bexley House” on three sides of the entry awning and small wall signs at the main doors.

1. Zoning District

The project is located in the Planned Unit Residential (PUR) District. This site was rezoned to PUR in 1968 in order to facilitate the unique scale of this project that would not meet the standards of a typical residential zoning district. As part of a PUR rezoning, a “detailed development plan” is required to guide the specific development approach. In some cases, a development text accompanies this development plan and outlines specific development standards and distinctions from the typical code standards that are unique to this district. Due to the age of this rezoning, staff is unable to locate any accompanying development text, and research into the minutes of previously reviewed cases on this site indicate no earlier use of a development text for review here.

Lacking a development text to guide our review, staff looks to appropriate guidelines in the sign code. The PUR signage standards are very general and as follows (1230.04):

- (1) The proposed signage is appropriate for the site and is warranted by the design and other amenities incorporated in the sign plan.*
- (2) The proposed signage will not be detrimental to other residences of the City and surrounding areas or to the public facilities and services in the City and surrounding areas.*

Other relevant standards for general residential districts could be used as guidance here. Those include limiting the sign to indicate the name and address, and incorporating the signage into landscaping and architectural features.

Due to provisions in 1230.04, signage will have to be approved by Council, so this will be a recommendation that will be passed ahead for their action.

Minor changes to the architecture are proposed - awning, pavement materials and painting – and are subject to Planning Commission approval.

C. CONSIDERATIONS

Signage

Since the previous review, the applicant has made some changes. Primarily, the landscaping has been pulled back to be out of the city right-of-way. The applicant has also explained how the western sign would be located to preserve the existing London Plane tree near the current sign. Also, planter elements that were previously incorporated into the proposed walls and signage have been removed.

The following are overall concerns with the proposed design:

- When reviewed by the Tree and Public Garden Commission, that board echoed the concerns of staff in that these wall elements are too large in comparison to the nearby Bexley gateway wall elements. The feeling is that this oversized signage will visually compete with the gateway elements. The applicant has not reduced the sign or wall size in response to these concerns.
- The Tree and Public Garden Commission also requested that the wall material be switched to brick to make it more in keeping with the Bexley House building than with the gateway features. The applicant has revised the proposal by switching the primary wall material to a brick to match the building.
- Any external lighting for the sign should be detailed to the satisfaction of staff and be fully screened by the proposed landscaping. Lighting should continue to be screened if any design changes to the sign/wall element are made.

Awning

The awning is more modern and integrated into the building than the current extended awning-style. There are no specific standards for awnings in this zoning district, nor particular guidance in the code for this or adjacent districts. As such, the Planning Commission should base a decision on the appropriateness of the proposed awning for the structure and the surrounding area.

Entry Landscape and Walk

The proposed landscaping for the entry area is compatible with the building and provides a needed refresh for an area that has some overgrown plant material. The proposed plan also includes bench seating and the use of natural stone pavers in place of some current concrete pavement areas.

Painting

The proposed location and color choice for proposed painting is appropriate. The applicant has proposed a neutral color for the bay windows and carports that is compatible with the exiting brick exterior.

D. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

No additional comments.

E. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

There are two separate motions needed. For the first, staff recommends the following condition:

1. The awning, entry landscape and walk, and painting will be in substantial conformance with the plans and renderings submitted at the July 25, 2016, Planning Commission meeting.

For the sign, the motion would be a recommendation to Council. Staff suggests that further refinement of the design concepts might be undertaken before Planning Commission acts on the application. If Planning Commission does take action, the following conditions are suggested as recommendations to Council:

1. Reducing the scale of the signage/wall approach in order to complement instead of compete with the existing city gateway elements;
2. Applicant to collaborate with city staff regarding landscaping surrounding the signage;
3. Signage lighting must be screened, to the satisfaction of staff;
4. Benches will be to the satisfaction of staff; and
5. The site plan indicating the location of signage and plantings will be in substantial conformance with the plans and renderings submitted at the July 25, 2016, Planning Commission meeting.

Prepared by:

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