

CITY OF FLORENCE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
324 WEST EVANS STREET, FLORENCE, SC
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024 – 2:00 P.M.
MEETING AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes Regular meeting held on December 13, 2023

III. Public Hearing and Matter in Position for Action

DRB-2024-03 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior renovations to the building located at 312 South McQueen Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90074-12-011 in the D-1 Redevelopment Overlay District.

IV. Adjournment Next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2024.

CITY OF FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
DECEMBER 13, 2023 MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jamie Carsten, Brice Elvington, Kyle Gunter, David Lowe, Joey McMillan, Mike Padgett, and Ranny Starnes

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Collins, John Keith, and David Tedder

STAFF PRESENT: Clint Moore, Derek Johnston, and Alane Zlotnicki

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Carsten called the December 13, 2023 meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Carsten introduced the November 8, 2023 minutes and asked if there were any corrections or comments. There being none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. McMillan moved that they be approved; Mr. Padgett seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (7-0).

APPROVAL OF 2024 MEETING CALENDAR:

Chairman Carsten introduced the 2024 calendar of meeting dates. Mr. Padgett moved to accept the calendar, Mr. McMillan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MATTERS IN POSITION FOR ACTION:

DRB-2023-21 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for renovations to be made to the building located at 400 West Cheves Street, specifically identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90074-07-001 in the D-2 Downtown Overlay District.

DRB-2023-22 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the building located at 410 West Cheves Street, specifically identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90074-07-001 in the D-1 Redevelopment Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introductions to DRB-2023-21 and DRB-2023-22 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki gave the staff report as submitted to the Design Review Board. Mr. Padgett clarified that the new window will be storefront windows.

There being no other questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing. There being no one to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion.

Chairman Carsten called for a motion. Mr. McMillan moved that both of the requests be approved as submitted by the applicant. Mr. Gunter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

DRB-2023-23 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for changes to be made to the landscaping of the property located at 310 South Dargan Street, specifically identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90087-06-015 in the D-3 Arts and Cultural Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2023-23 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki gave the staff report as submitted to the Design Review Board.

Mr. Elvington asked if they would meet the requirements of the code once these were removed; Mrs. Zlotnicki said that there would be some foundation plantings missing, but it would meet the parking lot requirements. She said that the owner of Hamilton House Antiques next door did express his disapproval of the removal of the trees.

There being no other questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing.

Janet Brand spoke in opposition to the proposal. She asked if the building was being removed; staff said not that they are aware of. She said that most of Florence has little greenery, so she is against removing established trees unless really necessary.

Barron Ervin spoke on behalf of the owners. He said the building was constructed in 1995, and that's when the landscaping was installed. It's overgrown and covers up the building. The owners had two landscapers look at the parcel. The goal is to make South Dargan Street look more attractive. The requested removals are based on the recommendations of the landscapers they consulted. They want to plant grass and make it look more modern and neatened up. This is an effort to improve the look of South Dargan Street. The submittal was based on the recommendations of two respected landscape architects. The desire is to thin out the overgrowth. Chairman Carsten asked how many trees would be remaining; Mr. Ervin pointed out on the submittal which trees were to remain.

Mr. Elvington asked staff if the numbers of trees required in the Code is supposed to be spread out over neighboring parcels because sometimes there's issues of crime and foot traffic and having lots of landscaping can be less safe due to visibility issues. Mr. Moore said that this property was designed and built prior to the Design Guidelines. The intent is to apply the requirements by lot. Mr. Lowe said that as a landscaper himself, it looks like there is still adequate landscaping remaining. Mr. Padgett pointed out that having the trees against the building can damage it.

There being no one else to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion. Mr. Padgett asked if they'll need to submit another plan; Mr. Moore said yes. He said that they can use existing vegetation to meet the requirements of the Ordinance.

Mr. Ervin asked what was missing; Mrs. Zlotnicki said that the building was missing some shrubs especially around the front of the building, but the parking area did meet the bare minimum of the Ordinance.

Mr. Ervin pointed out that this is an attractive building, but no one can see it because of the overgrown landscaping.

Chairman Carsten called for a motion. Mr. McMillan moved that the request be approved as submitted by the applicant. Mr. Lowe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

DRB-2023-25 Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for wall signage on the building located at 182 West Evans Street, specifically identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90168-02-027 in the H-1 Historic Overlay District.

Chairman Carsten read the introduction to DRB-2023-25 and asked staff for their report. Mrs. Zlotnicki gave the staff report as submitted to the Design Review Board. She said that both Scott Collins and Dr. John Keith expressed their opinion that the sign was inappropriate for the historic district. Their emails regarding the request are as follows:

“Chairman Carsten,

As I indicated to Alane Zlotnicki by email, a conflicting obligation will preclude my attending the DRB meeting on December 13, 2023. While I regret not being able to attend the meeting, I would appreciate the opportunity to have my thoughts expressed regarding a particular case, specifically Case Number DRB-2023-25 at 182 West Evans Street in the H-1 Historic Overlay District.

The case involves the relocation of an existing acrylic internally lit “box sign” from a previous business location. It is my understanding that a sign of this type is not recommended in the published Design Guidelines, but can be used if approved by the DRB.

While I applaud the applicant for relocating their business to the Historic District of Downtown, I respectfully oppose the proposed sign. Over the years, a concerted effort has been made to distinguish Downtown from other areas of Florence and I believe that the character of the architecture, streetscape and signage are among the elements that combine to achieve the current desired result. While the sign in question may be perfectly suitable for a suburban strip mall, I believe that it would not be a positive contributor to the Downtown fabric.

I strongly urge that the applicant work with city staff, including Hannah Davis of the Downtown Development Corporation, to propose an alternate sign that complies with the recommended guidelines. Also, I hope that the applicant might take advantage of all programs and grants that may apply, including the grant involving Commercial Business Signs.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns and I wish the applicant much success in their new Downtown business venture.

Sincerely,
Scott Collins”

“Hi Alane,

In regards to Trendy Twist Boutique:

I believe that their current signage which they intend to use is not in line with the signage that we are currently using in our historic downtown district and lowers the appeal and aesthetics of the downtown area. The signage should reflect what other businesses currently have in the downtown corridor.

Once they change their signage to reflect this, I will be in favor I am sure; but as is, my vote is a No for their current proposal.

Thank you,
Dr. Keith”

Chairman Carsten asked staff if they were aware of any interior lit signs along this part of West Evans Street; Mrs. Zlotnicki said she didn’t think so.

There being no other questions for staff, Chairman Carsten opened the public hearing.

Gloria Anderson, the applicant, explained that she was moving her store into downtown and wanted to reuse the wall sign that she was currently using at her location on South Cashua Drive. She said it didn't have to be lighted. Mr. Elvington asked her if she would then use the existing goose neck lighting; she said yes. He asked if she wanted to save the cost of a new sign; she said that she had no other use for it so she wanted to reuse it if possible.

Chairman Carsten asked if there are any other box signs downtown; Mrs. Zlotnicki said there are some, but not in the historic core.

Mr. Lowe asked about the sign grant program; Mr. Moore said that was for new signs but there are funds available.

There being no one else to speak regarding the request, Chairman Carsten closed the public hearing and called for discussion. There was discussion about the cost of new signs and how Ms. Anderson could reuse the sign inside the store; Mrs. Zlotnicki said that was permitted if it was inside the store itself.

Chairman Carsten called for a motion. Ms. Starnes said that although it's a nice looking sign, it's not appropriate for that part of West Evans Street, and she moved that the request be denied as submitted by the applicant. Mr. Padgett seconded, and the motion to deny the COA for the proposed sign passed unanimously (7-0).

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business, Chairman Collins adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Alane Zlotnicki, AICP
Senior Planner

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT TO THE
CITY OF FLORENCE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

DATE: January 10, 2024
CASE NUMBER: DRB-2024-03
LOCATION: 312 South McQueen Street
TAX MAP NUMBER: 90074-12-011
OWNER OF RECORD: NAFED, Inc.
APPLICANT: Gilbert Construction Co. Ltd.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Renovation of Commercial Building
OVERLAY DISTRICTS: D-1 Redevelopment Overlay Districts

Project Description

The applicant is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to modify the commercial building located at 312 South McQueen Street. The renovations include replacement of the roof and the installation of windows, as well as interior updates including drywall, cabinets, flooring, and the replacement of the HVAC system with a roof top heat pump.

The faux windows currently on the driveway side of the building will be replaced with solid, undivided 2” by 4 ½” white painted thermally broken aluminum storefront windows that are 30” by 60”. The glass is to be 1” grey tinted low-e insulated and tempered. The glass will be installed within the existing stucco arches to replace the faux windows. The roof will be replaced with 3.5” ISO insulation and mechanically fastened 60 mil TPO membrane. A new 3 ton roof top heat pump is proposed.

Background Information

The one story office building was built in 1976 and consists of 3,225 square feet. It is used as a medical office building.

Staff Analysis

In considering the issue of appropriateness of the renovation, the Design Review Board and the Downtown Planning Coordinator shall use the *Design Guidelines for Downtown Florence, South Carolina* prepared by Allison Platt & Associates and Hunter Interests Inc., as adopted by Florence City Council.

1. Every reasonable effort should be made to preserve and enhance the historically significant elements of a building. *The basic form of the building will be preserved. The faux windows will be replaced in their original locations with real glass storefront windows. The stucco arches around the window*

openings will be preserved.

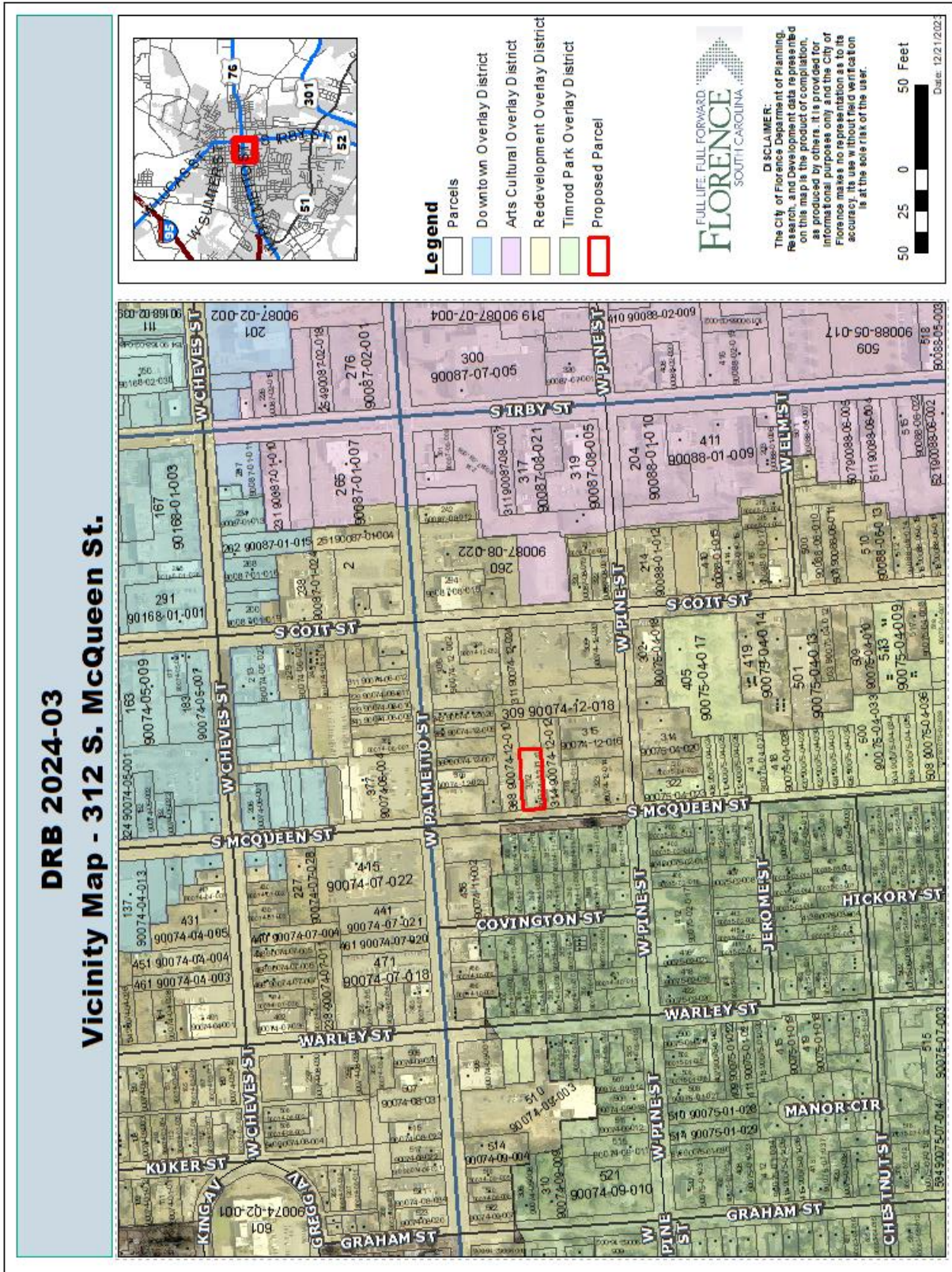
2. Architectural restoration, rather than renovation, is a preferred option when feasible. *Currently there are faux windows along the north side of the building within stucco arches. The owner wants to install real glass windows within the arches.*
3. Qualities critical to overall design should be studied and retained when possible. *The stucco arches are being preserved and the new windows will be appropriate to the building.*
4. Before replacing historic elements of a building, preservation and consolidation should be considered. *The front façade windows will not be changed. The roof will be replaced with the same style, materials, and color. The stucco arches on the side of the building will be filled with real glass windows instead of the existing wooden faux windows.*
5. All additions and renovations to existing structures should complement the original or historic elements in terms of material, size, shape, and color. *The arches will be retained.*
6. New construction should be appropriate to the period and style of character of the district as a whole. *No new construction is proposed; this is simply a renovation of the existing structure.*
7. To avoid deterioration and possible loss, all elements, especially the historically significant elements, should be carefully maintained. Repairs should match in terms of materials, size, shape, and color. *The arches are being retained and the new windows are appropriate to the era and style of the building.*
8. Façade details such as cornice ornaments should not be covered to avoid the need for maintenance painting or refinishing. *Not applicable to this project.*

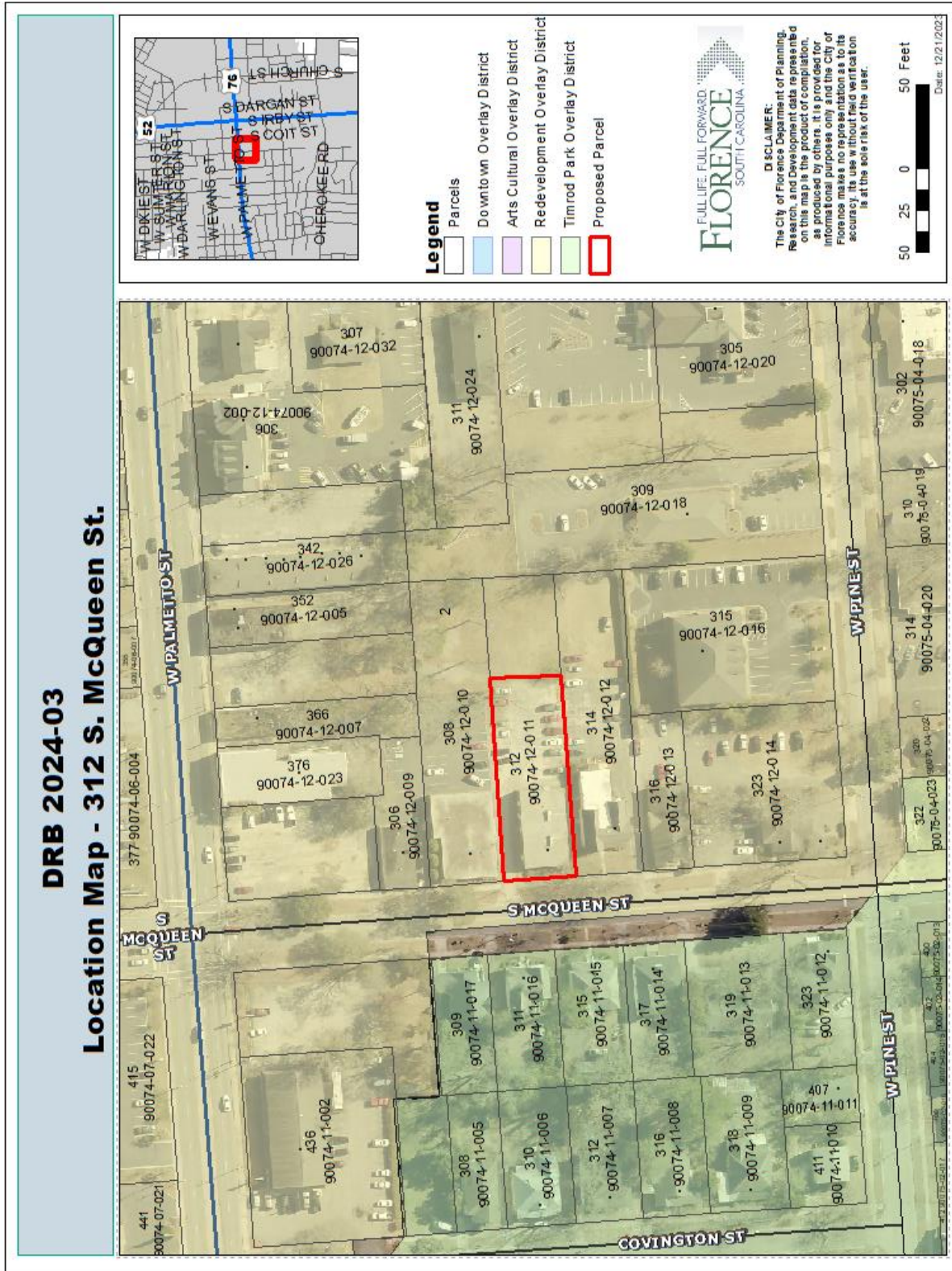
Board Action

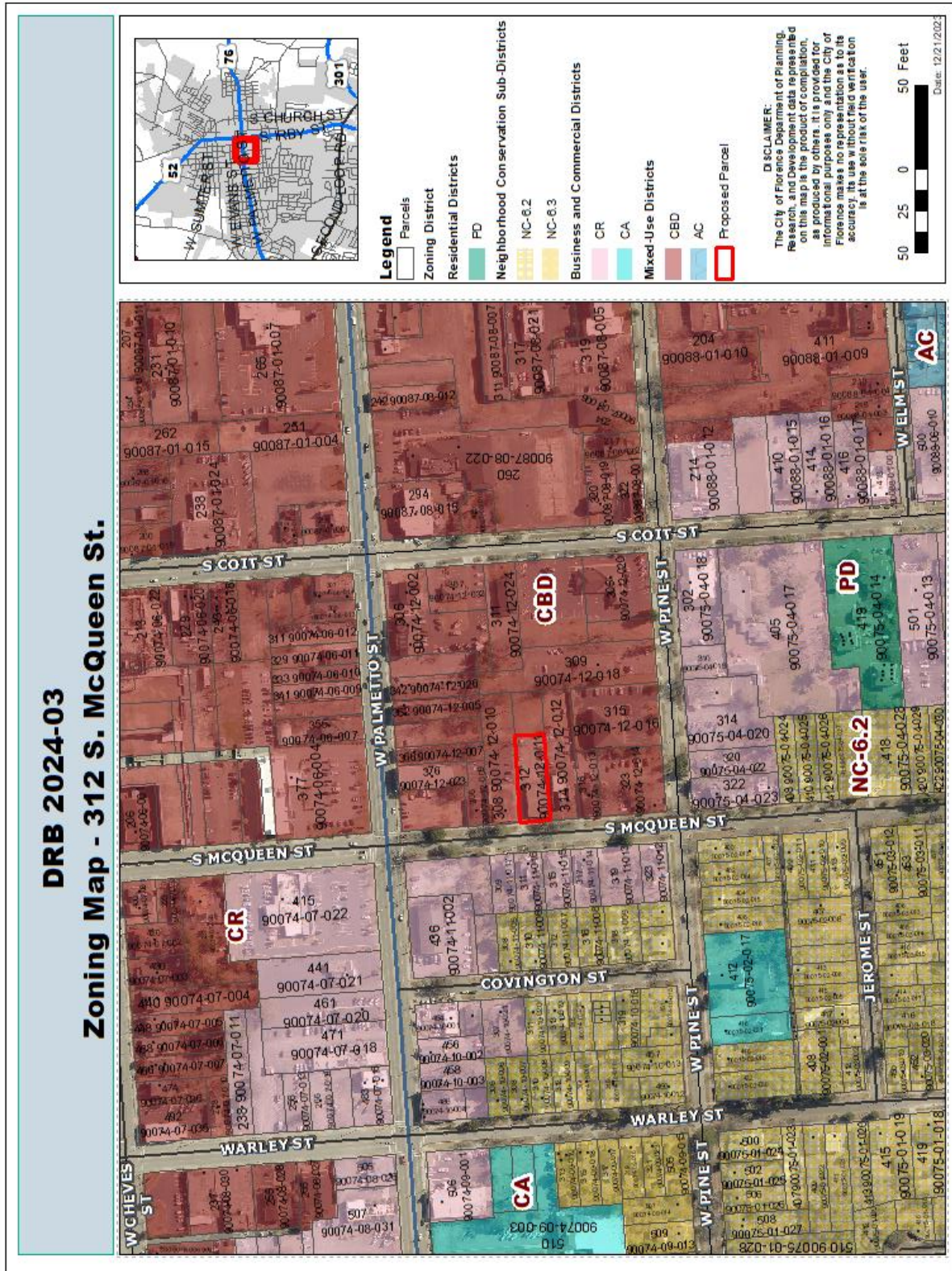
1. Consider only the evidence presented before the board during the public hearing.
2. Make findings of fact to apply the guidelines to the application presently before the board.
3. Based on the findings of fact, make a decision regarding the request on the application.

Attachments

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Location Map
- C. Zoning Map
- D. Site Photos
- E. Options for Board Action Based on Findings of Fact







Attachment D: Site Photos







Attachment E: Options for Board Action Based on Findings of Fact

a. Deferral

I move to defer Case Number _____ [or items _____ of Case Number _____], to the next meeting of the Design Review Board, with the specific finding that additional information is required from the applicant in order to determine whether the action requested is consistent with the relevant Design Guidelines and is in compliance with the relevant sections of the *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report.

b. Approval

I move to approve Case Number _____ with the specific finding that the proposed work as submitted will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property, and it complies with the relevant Design Guidelines and sections of the *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report.

c. Approval with Conditions

I move to approve Case Number _____ with the specific finding that the proposed work as submitted, with the agreed-upon conditions, will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property, and the items comply with the relevant Design Guidelines and sections of the *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report. [list conditions in a numbered format]

d. Approval with Unique Circumstances

I move to approve Case Number _____ with the specific finding that the proposed work as submitted will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; that the following unique circumstances exist; that the items do not strictly comply with the relevant Design Guidelines or are not addressed by them, but are nonetheless consistent with the spirit and intent of the Guidelines and the *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report. [list unique circumstances in a numbered format]

e. Approval with Conditions and Unique Circumstances

I move to approve Case Number _____ with the specific finding that the proposed work as submitted, with the agreed-upon conditions, will not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; that the following unique circumstances exist; that the items do not strictly comply with the relevant Design Guidelines or are not addressed by them, but are nonetheless consistent with the spirit and intent of the Guidelines and the *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report. [list conditions and circumstances in a numbered format]

f. Denial

I move to deny Case Number _____ with the specific finding that the proposed work as submitted will have an adverse effect on the historic character of the district or property; it is not consistent with the provisions of the Design Guidelines, and it is not in compliance with the relevant sections of the City of Florence *Unified Development Ordinance* as referenced in the Staff Report. [list the reasons in a numbered format]