



**City of Birmingham Design Review Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 26, 2022**

**Meeting Time: 7:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Location: City Council Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall**

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Applicants please note: The decisions of the Design Review Committee (the Committee) are binding. It is each applicant's responsibility to see that the decisions of the Committee are carried out as stipulated. Any changes or deviations from the Committee's decision, including but not limited to: colors, forms, configurations, materials, assemblies or any other aspects of the approved work shall not be undertaken by the applicant or the applicant's agent unless said changes are approved by the Committee beforehand. Under the terms of City ordinance, any change or deviation from work approved by the Committee constitutes a violation of the ordinance and renders the applicant subject to citation with penalties as prescribed by a city magistrate. In addition, please note that prior to obtaining any permit(s), all applicants must meet with Zoning staff to determine compliance with the Zoning regulations. Design Review approval does NOT mean that Zoning has approved the request.

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Members Present: Scott Burnett, Richard Mauk, Shelia Montgomery-Mills, Brian Wolfe

Members Absent: Abra Barnes, Ivan Holloway, Creig Hoskins, Willie Oliver, Chris Swain, Ben Wieseman

Staff Present: Charles Bradley, Lauren Havard, John Sims

Others Present: Sissy Austin, David Brandt, Rebecca Dobrinski, Tamera Erskine, Herb Holcombe Jr., Justin Jones, Kristin Martin, Christian Rogers

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Chairman Mauk. He stated that the minutes from the 10/12/22 meeting were ready. Montgomery-Mills made a motion to approve the minutes. Wolfe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- I. Name:** Mr. Christian Rogers (Architect) and Mr. Justin Jones (Ascend Real Estate Partners)  
**Site Address:** 1608, 1610-12, and 1614 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
**District:** Anderson Place Local Historic District  
**Requesting approval for:** Demolition of two residential structures and conceptual review of six townhomes for new construction

**Statements:** Chairman Mauk asked if there was a report from the LHAC. Havard stated that the proposal for demolition was approved, and that the concept plan for the new townhouses was also approved.

The Five Points South Neighborhood provided the following written recommendations



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and comments:

“The Five Points South Neighborhood considered and acted on October 18, 2022, to approve the proposal to demolish 2 existing structures (a single-family historic home and a duplex) on 16th Ave. South to build 6 new townhouses. Please consider this note as the official action of the Neighborhood.

The project was approved on a motion to approve, with 14 ayes and 0 noes. The motion is to demolish the 2 existing structures, clear the site, run geotechnical and engineering studies, and build back the site. When more information is known about the site's landslide and stability, then another scheme besides the current one should be studied and brought back before building permits issued. An alternate analysis should see if tuck-under car parking below each townhouse would work in individual garages, accessed via a driveway likely on east side of the joined parcels, and driveway at the lower elevation to the garage of each townhouse. A superior 16th Ave. South urban design would result with opportunity for lush landscaping.

The applicant expressed a desire not to have a homeowners/s association with CC&R's to accommodate the tuck under garage parking concept, but this is commonly done elsewhere. The neighborhood is concerned with the poor appearance of the adjoining townhouses recently built with hardly any landscaping and basically masses of concrete driveways.”

Mr. Jones presented his plan to demolish existing structures on the site and build new townhomes. He stated that the existing buildings were in poor repair and the foundations were sliding down the hill. He stated that the properties needed to be demolished and rebuilt. He stated that he planned to build six townhomes on this site. Mr. Rogers stated that deep foundations were needed for the new townhomes. Burnett stated that demolition was justified based on the geotechnical report.

Wolfe stated that he doesn't prefer parking in the front, but based on the topography, there may be no other option. Mr. Rogers stated that parking in the front was required by zoning, because they require off-street parking. Ms. Martin stated that she intended to incorporate a good deal more landscaping than the adjacent townhomes. Wolfe asked what materials would be used. Mr. Rogers stated that the front and sides of the homes would be brick and would have limestone/capstone sills. He stated that the brick would not be painted. Mr. Rogers stated that the shingles will be asphalt, dimensional shingles. Mr. Rogers stated that the windows would have actual muntins.



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**Motion:** Montgomery-Mills made a motion to approve the demolition of these homes based on the geotechnical report provided, in agreement with the Neighborhood Association. She also stated that she would approve the conceptual plan as presented, with the final plan with more details to return for approval, in agreement with the Neighborhood Association.

**Motion seconded by:** Wolfe

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.

**II. Name:** Mr. B.A. Grant, Sr. (A Home Sweet Home Design)

**Site Address:** 1501 14<sup>th</sup> Street South

**District:** Phelan Park Local Historic District

**Requesting approval for:** Connecting existing garage to existing home and constructing an addition

**Statements:** The applicant was not present; therefore, the case was not heard.

**III. Name:** Ms. Tamera Erskine (Webster Henry Attorneys at Law) for Mr. Byron Studdard (owner)

**Site Address:** 1421 33rd Street North

**District:** Norwood Local Historic District

**Requesting approval for:** Modified proposal with new information from the original proposal last reviewed at the 8/24/2022 DRC meeting -- Painting of brick, soffit, and trim; Removing vinyl from soffit and trim and replacing it with Plybead plywood; and Installing wood window trim

**Statements:** Chairman Mauk asked if there was a report from the LHAC. Havard stated that the proposal was approved with conditions.

On October 19, 2022, the Local Historic Advisory Committee (LHAC) for the Norwood Local Historic District heard the DRC case for the property located at 1421 33rd St. N, and the Committee took the following action: Approve with Conditions.

The recommendation of the Local Historic Advisory Committee was to Approve with Conditions the design review request for the following reasons:

Page 15-Item K-Materials "Alternative materials shall not be used unless such materials visually replicate the original exterior in appearance, dimensions, texture, etc. to every degree possible." See conditions below

Page 16-Item L-Paint "Colors shall be compatible with the age and style of the house.



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Previously painted brick shall not be painted except in cases where repair has been so extensive as to be visually distracting. Previously painted brick and stone may be repainted.” See conditions below

The recommendation of the Local Historic Advisory Committee was based on the following sections of the local historic district’s design guidelines:

Page 15-Item K-Materials

Page 16-Item L-Paint

The Local Historic Advisory Committee also voted to request that the following conditions be placed upon this request:

1. The proposed plyboard sheets are approved as an alternative material for the soffits, porch ceiling and interior face of the porch frieze. All joints between panels should be caulked or filled to maintain a more uniform look similar to historic beadboard. All other trim elements that may need to be replaced must match the original.
2. Committee agrees that the unfortunate brick repairs on the rear of the house are done in a way in which they are visually distracting to the facade. Because this repair was done prior to the current owner’s purchase an exception can be made to allow for the applicant to finish painting the brick. Paint must be suitable for masonry application.

The LHAC also made the following findings:

1. The proposed change, erection, or demolition: Conforms to the design standards established.
2. The proposed change, erection, or demolition: Is compatible with the character of the historic property and the historic district and does not detract from their historic value.
3. The proposed erection, alteration, restoration, relocation, or demolition, in whole or in part: Will not detrimentally change, destroy, or adversely affect any significant architectural feature of the resource.
4. The proposed erection, alteration, restoration, relocation, or demolition, in whole or in part: Will be compatible with the exterior features of other improvements within the District.

Ms. Erskine presented her case to allow for the painting of the brick on the home. She stated that the brick repairs were very distracting, and the home needed to be fully painted. Ms. Erskine stated that several different types of brick were being used and the mortar didn’t match. She stated that the owner wanted to make the house more uniform and make it fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.



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Wolfe asked Havard what the LHAC said differently for this submission. Havard stated that previously the LHAC had denied the brick so as to not go on record as approving painting of brick. She went on to say that the applicant showed the LHAC why the painting was necessary (mismatched brick, mismatched mortar), so the LHAC made an exception for this case because of the distracting repair work that had been done. Burnett stated that the distracting brick was on the back of the house, which isn't visible anyway.

Wolfe verified that the house was painted by the current owner of the home. Wolfe also verified that the brick repairs were made by the previous owner. Burnett stated that the brick colors are pretty close to matching, but that the mortar color is way off. He stated that the mortar could be tinted to match more closely. Burnett stated that he wasn't inclined to approve this just because the owner got ahead of themselves. Wolfe asked if the owner had explored removing the gray paint. Ms. Erskine stated that he hadn't yet. Wolfe suggested that he attempt to remove the paint to see how it looked.

**Motion:** Montgomery-Mills made a motion to table this proposal.

**Motion seconded by:** Wolfe

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.

**IV.**

**Name:** Ms. Sissy Austin (Architect) and Mr. Leo Payne

**Site Address:** 3125 Argyle Road

**District:** Red Mountain Suburbs Local Historic District

**Requesting approval for:** New windows and doors; new landscaping, terraces, and pool; and exterior painting

**Statements:** Chairman Mauk asked if there was a report from the LHAC. Havard stated that the proposal was approved with conditions.

On 10/20/22, the Local Historic Advisory Committee (LHAC) for the Redmont Local Historic District heard the DRC case for the property located at 3125 Argyle Road, and the Committee took the following action: Approve with Conditions.

The recommendation of the Local Historic Advisory Committee was to Approve with Conditions the design review request for the following reason: "Approved the plans for Phase 1 as submitted with the exception of moving the equipment pad for the generator and condensing units so they will be located closer to the existing condensing unit and near the more westerly wall. They will still be behind the privacy fence as shown on the plans. Note that Phase II, consisting of a roofed terrace, was not considered nor



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approved as part of this.”

The LHAC also made the following findings:

1. The proposed change, erection, or demolition: Conforms to the design standards established.
2. The proposed change, erection, or demolition: Is compatible with the character of the historic property and the historic district and does not detract from their historic value.
3. The proposed erection, alteration, restoration, relocation, or demolition, in whole or in part: Will not detrimentally change, destroy, or adversely affect any significant architectural feature of the resource.
4. The proposed erection, alteration, restoration, relocation, or demolition, in whole or in part: Will be compatible with the exterior features of other improvements within the District.

Ms. Austin stated that the new windows would be aluminum clad wood windows that have simulated divided lights. She stated that the windows were very similar to the existing windows. Ms. Austin stated that the windows would be painted bronze. Ms. Austin stated that all the windows would be replaced. Burnett asked if the windows would be replacing the existing exactly. Ms. Austin stated that the terrace and pool would be added at this time. Wolfe asked what the new paint color for the exterior of the home would be. Ms. Austin stated that the new color would be “Pigeon.” Wolfe asked what color the trim would be. Ms. Austin stated that it would all be “Pigeon.”

Ms. Austin presented her landscaping plan. Mauk asked where the generator was located. Ms. Austin stated that the generator would be at the rear of the home, would have a landscape buffer and a cover.

**Motion:** Burnett made a motion to approve this proposal as presented, in agreement with the conditions set forth by the LHAC, on the condition that the applicant submit her paint colors to City Staff.

**Motion seconded by:** Wolfe

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.

- V. **Name:** Mr. Jay Mitchell (Food Giant/Mitchell Retail Properties, LLC)  
**Site Address:** 2200 Bessemer Road  
**District:** 5 Points West  
**Requesting approval for:** Signage



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**Statements:** Mr. Holcombe presented his plan to change the Winn-Dixie to a Food Giant. Burnett asked if there was a master signage plan for this building. Sims said that there wasn't one yet. Sims said that the owner wasn't sure what would happen with the rest of the building, so there wasn't a master signage plan yet, but that there needed to be one. Montgomery-Mills asked if any painting was being proposed. Mr. Holcombe stated that the stucco portion of the façade would be repainted, but that the brick would not be repainted. Mr. Holcombe stated that the letters would be individually mounted, and that there would be no raceway. Mauk verified that the area that was painted would be painted the same color that is existing.

**Motion:** Wolfe made a motion to approve this proposal as presented, with the owner presenting a master signage plan within 90 days. He stated that he wanted to allow for the signage to go up because this area is in a food desert and the DRC wants to support the grocery business.

**Motion seconded by:** Montgomery-Mills

**Discussion:** Burnett asked that there be a time frame for the signage master plan to return.

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.

- VI. Name:** Mr. David Brandt  
**Site Address:** 1301 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North (EBSCO building)  
**District:** Downtown West  
**Requesting approval for:** Signage

**Statements:** Mr. Brandt presented his plan to add signage for the EBSCO building. He stated that there would only be one tenant in the building. He stated that he was installing raceway mounted channel letters. He stated that the letters would be low profile. Montgomery-Mills stated that the logo for EBSCO looked odd since it flared out beyond the edges of the column. Burnett verified that the EBSCO medallion would not be lit. Burnett stated that he wasn't sure if there was a good spot on the façade for the logo because of its size.

Burnett suggested a blade sign on the column, to fit the building better. Mr. Brandt stated that he didn't want to wait for a ROW use agreement and wanted a sign larger than 8 square feet.

Mr. Brandt presented his directional signage and window vinyl. Mr. Brandt stated that the directional signage would be non-illuminated aluminum signs with vinyl.

Montgomery-Mills suggested a working session for this project since the signage was



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starting to cover up the architectural features of the building.

**Motion:** Wolfe made a motion to approve the directional and parking signs and the vinyl graphics, with the building sign to return.

**Motion seconded by:** Montgomery-Mills

**Discussion:** Wolfe suggested that all the signage go on the blade sign. Wolfe was also concerned that the building signage might not be visible for people driving past the building. Montgomery-Mills stated that the existing proposal for the signage didn't fit within the architecture of the building.

**Vote:** The motion carried. Burnett recused himself.

There being no further business, Wolfe made a motion to adjourn. Burnett seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.