

# Historic Preservation Design Review

February 23, 2012

## HP-12-03, 6 N. Main St. – Open Space (City)

### I. THE REQUEST

- Applicant:** Julie Coker representing the City of Sumter
- Status of the Applicant:** Property Owner
- Request:** Design review approval to clean and prepare a site for construction of open space to include landscaping, irrigation, brick and wrought iron fencing with a gate, and decomposed granite pathway connecting Main St. to public parking.
- Location:** 6 N. Main St.
- Present Use/Zoning:** Vacant Lot/CBD
- Tax Map Reference:** 228-12-04-069
- Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:** North – Commercial Building/CBD  
South – Commercial Building/CBD  
East – N. Main St./CBD  
West – Parking lot/CBD

### II. BACKGROUND



*Pictured Left: View of proposed open space area from N. Main St. looking west. The green wall is the approximate location of the proposed open space.*

*Pictured Below: View of proposed open space taken from the public parking lot area looking east.*





26-10 revised 1-24-12; detail the full extent of land disturbance and site grading as well as final construction details. Upon completion it is anticipated that the courtyard area will appear as depicted in the rendering below:



Design review is required prior to undertaking the proposed development.

The *Design Review Guidelines Manual* states:

**#3) LANDSCAPING SHOULD COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN DETRACT FROM BUILDINGS**

**Recommended**

**a. Trees of limited height and dimensions should be considered for the downtown area.** Historic commercial areas such as downtown Sumter often had numerous shade trees to shelter pedestrians. With the coming of the automobile many of these trees were removed to make way for parking. The introduction of new trees into the downtown area is appropriate as long as the trees selected are of limited height and dimension. When mature, trees should not overly mask buildings and make signs and details difficult to observe. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet from each other and have planting beds of at least nine square feet.

**b. Low plants and shrubs at sidewalks are appropriate.** The introduction of low hedges or planters with flowers or other decorative plants is appropriate. These may be desired as part of an overall streetscape program by the city or added on an individual basis by property owners.

**#4) SIDEWALK AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD RESPECT DOWNTOWN CHARACTER**

**Recommended**

**a. Streetscape improvements should be in keeping with the traditional character of downtown.** Appropriate improvements include the introduction of brick sidewalks or textured concrete which imitates the appearance of brick. The use of brick or textured concrete can be of particular assistance in defining pedestrian crosswalks across streets. Simple street furniture such as wood benches would also be appropriate. The addition of elements such as continuous metal or concrete canopies, oversized kiosks or gazebos, and ornate wrought iron street furniture should not occur.

**b. Streetscape improvements should be selected for their simplicity and durability.** Many streetscape

improvements completed across the county in the 1960s and 1970s are now in varying degrees of deterioration. In many of these cases materials or construction methods were selected which were incompatible with exposure to the elements or could not withstand the constant use by vehicles and pedestrians. Before any major expenditure for street furniture, sidewalk materials, or curbing, the longevity and lifespan of the proposed improvements should be carefully studied. Once selected, street furniture should be sited away from vehicular areas and be bolted or anchored in place to discourage vandalism.

***#5) LIGHT FIXTURES WHICH REINFORCE DOWNTOWN CHARACTER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED***

**Recommended**

**a. The introduction of traditional light fixtures is appropriate.** Many communities have reintroduced historic designs for street lighting into their downtown areas. These fixtures are generally of cast iron or similar types of metal and have globes based on historic precedents. The design of lighting should be based on light fixtures originally used in Sumter. If such light designs are no longer available fixtures as close to the original design should be considered. The expense of such fixtures should be carefully weighed against their potential use. Downtown Sumter presently does not have extensive evening shopping or entertainment. However, if substantial pedestrian traffic evolves in the evening the use of period lighting may be a desired amenity.

Although specific guidance for fencing in the Downtown Historic District is not listed within the Guidelines, there are established criteria for fencing within the Residential Historic District in addition; there are commercial guidelines that reinforce placement and material selection related to defining spaces at the street level among established buildings. Specifically Guidelines #33, 38 and 43 speak to the preferred material types and placement of wall/fence like structures within the downtown district.

***#33) NEW CONSTRUCTION SHOULD MAINTAIN SETBACK***

**Normally Required**

- a. New construction should maintain the existing alignment and lack of setback of existing historic buildings.**
- b. Buildings that are constructed on the edges of the district that do not share party walls with the adjacent structures may have minimal setbacks for landscaped areas or pocket parks.**

Buildings in the downtown historic district were constructed flush with the sidewalk to maximize building exposure on the primary façade. This lack of setback is uniform for historic structures and new construction should maintain this alignment. Buildings should not be recessed back from the sidewalk in the commercial area. Buildings that are constructed on the edge of the historic district or that do not share party walls with adjacent buildings may have setbacks for landscaped areas or pocket parks.

***#38) MATERIALS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING MATERIALS***

**Normally Required**

- a. Brick is the preferred building material for downtown Sumter.**
- b. Masonry materials should be compatible in size, profile, and detailing with historic materials.**

***#43) THE ADDITION OF HISTORIC FENCE DESIGN AND MATERIALS IS APPROPRIATE***

**Normally Required**

- a. Other allowable fence materials are open weave brick designs or cast iron.**
  - b. Wooden plank fences, solid wall brick fences, and chain link fences and other metal designs should not be installed at the sidewalk or property line on primary facades.**
  - c. Fence heights not exceeding 3' on the property line on primary facades and 6' on the property lines of secondary and rear facades are encouraged.**
- Wooden split rail fences are not historic designs for urban areas of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are not appropriate.

The overall design proposal to include plant selection, planting location, proposed materials and overall street level appearance of the proposed courtyard area are consistent with established Guidelines. This proposal will create a pedestrian scale versatile open space that maintains the established street level rhythm at an appropriate scale.

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff has reviewed this request in accordance with the design guidelines. Staff recommends approval of this request.

### **IV. DRAFT MOTIONS**

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee approve HP-12-03, in accordance with the materials, photographs, and construction details submitted and referenced in the Staff Report based on compliance with Design Review Guidelines #3, 4, 5, 33, 38 and 43.

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee deny HP-12-03.

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee enter an alternative motion.

### **V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION – FEBRUARY 23, 2012**

The Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee at its meeting on Thursday, February 23, 2012, voted to approve this request in accordance with the materials, photographs, and construction details submitted and referenced in the Staff Report based on compliance with Design Review Guidelines #3, 4, 5, 33, 38 and 43.