

Downtown Code Design Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2018

Members Present: Kennedy, Mosley, Dickson, Porter, Casella, Oldham, Hastings

Staff Present: Hammer, Wallace, Buechler

Others Present: Ben Metz - ESa (Earl Swensson Associates)

Location: 800 2nd Avenue South, Metro Planning Dept. – Davidson Room

I. APPROVAL OF THE 9/6/2018 DTC DRC MINUTES

Kennedy moved and Mosley seconded the motion to approve the September 6, 2018 meeting minutes (6-0).

II. CASES FOR REVIEW

1) 1011 Church Street

2018DTC-022-001

120 11th Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37203

Staff Reviewer: Justin Wallace

Request to approve modifications to standards including façade width, build-to zone, and required stepback.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions and disapprove without all conditions.

****NOTE: William Hastings has recused himself for this case due to his role in the project****

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to approve modifications of various standards for property located at 120 11th Avenue North (5.42 acres), south of the Church Street viaduct, and within the Gulch South subdistrict of the DTC.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The project proposes an 11-story mixed-use building composed of two interconnected office towers above a podium of structured parking lined by retail along 11th Avenue North.

MODIFICATION REQUEST DETAILS

1. Active Use along a Greenway
 - Required: Ground floor of all Primary and Secondary Streets, Open Space (which includes existing and planned urban greenways), and Pedestrian Passages.
 - Proposed: No ground floor active use along the greenway.
2. Façade Width along Church Street
 - Required: The building façade must occupy 80% of lot frontage along primary streets.
 - Proposed: The building façade occupies 76% of lot frontage along Church Street.
3. Church Street Build-to Zone
 - Required: 0-10' BTZ with a 15' stepback between 4th and 8th stories.
 - Proposed: Building envelope begins at back of 15' bridge easement.
4. Church Street Stepback
 - Required: 15' stepback between 4th and 8th stories.
 - Proposed: 11' cantilever into the frontage zone of levels 4-6.
5. 11th Avenue North Build-to Zone
 - Required: 0-10' BTZ.
 - Proposed: Build-to-zone varies from 17' to 35' along the front of the building

PLAN DETAILS

The site is bounded by the Church Street viaduct to the north, 11th Avenue North to the west, CSX right-of-way to the east. The site plan proposes to subdivide the lot so that the parcel to the south may be developed separately and at a later time. An unbuilt segment of the City Central Greenway System is also planned to traverse the property. The site receives vehicular access from three points - one in alignment with Grundy Street, a second at the north end of the site, and a third at the third level to the west side of the site. Valet and drop-off area occurs on-site at the third-level entry.

Pedestrian access is provided at several points as well. A primary entrance is provided from Church Street and 11th Avenue North. A proposed connection to the Church Street viaduct allows pedestrians to enter the site and onto a monumental staircase that leads down to 11th Avenue North, where the building is lined with several retail entry points.

ANALYSIS

Active Use along Greenways

The Downtown Code requires an active ground floor use along greenways. The Code defines an active ground floor use as, "a habitable space occupied by retail, office, residential, institutional or recreational uses, specifically excluding parking and mechanical uses. Active ground floor uses are required on all Primary streets, Secondary streets, Open Space and pedestrian passages. In addition to an active ground floor use, when buildings front on open space, the building shall have a minimum of one primary pedestrian entrance on the open space.

This site is unique because the property contains a significantly large amount of frontage along three sides of the lot. The total length of frontage is approximately 1,500' and includes 405' along Church Street to the north, 610' along 11th Avenue North to the west, and 560' along the Greenway to the east. The project successfully creates an interactive environment along Church Street, connecting to the viaduct at two points due to the incline of the bridge. While 11th Avenue North is designated as a Tertiary Street by the DTC, active use is encouraged by the Code, but it is not required. The project proposes activation of 11th Avenue North, and staff supports the activation of 11th Avenue North over the greenway, given existing conditions in the area. 11th Avenue North is building out as an activated frontage, while the City Central Greenway, along this segment, has been constructed primarily along inactive frontages to the rears of buildings.

Church Street Façade Width

The DTC façade width standard requires the building to occupy 80% of the total lot frontage along primary streets. Because the proposed building façade occupies 76% of the lot frontage along Church Street, the deviation is less than 20% of the DTC numerical standard and may be considered a minor modification reviewed by staff.

The site lies between approximately 135' of CSX right-of-way to the east and 75' of public street right-of-way to the west. Because the intent of this standard is to establish a consistent "street wall" effect, and the adjacent properties are right-of-way, the slight deviation seems to have little impact to the perception of a continuous street wall along the Church Street viaduct.

Church Street Build-to-Zone

Buildings with storefront frontage along primary streets are required to have a 0-10' build-to-zone. The submitted site survey indicates the presence of an existing 15' easement beginning at the back of the Church Street viaduct, but the DTC does not contain language pertaining to non-buildable easements. Staff believes that the existing easement creates a unique condition for this building and therefore supports the modification, but because the proposed building placement

does not meet the 0-10' build-to-zone requirement of the DTC, this is considered a major modification.

Church Street Stepback

The DTC requires buildings greater than 4 stories to have a 15' stepback occur at some point between the 4th and 8th stories. The proposed project does not meet this stepback requirement. Rather than stepping the building back, the applicant seeks approval for a portion of the building to cantilever beyond the build-to line between the 4th and 6th stories along Church Street. The remaining 7th – 9th stories are to be built to the build-to line. The extruded portion cantilevers to a maximum of 11' within the bridge easement and does not encroach into the public right-of-way.

11th Avenue North Build-to-Zone

Buildings with storefront frontage along tertiary streets are to be built between 0-10' from the property line. The proposed building location varies 17-35' from the property line along 11th Avenue North.

Planning staff took into consideration the overall form, bulk, and massing of the building to determine any impact the requested modifications have on the public realm and adjacent properties.

- The existing bridge easement along the Church Street viaduct presents a unique condition whereas the allowable buildable footprint is constrained in this area. The proposed building is built to the back of the easement.
- The overall height of the building at 12 stories is well below what this sub-district would otherwise permit (up to 15 stories).
- The building layout responds efficiently to the shape of the lot in the form of a T-shape configuration and maintains a well-defined street edge.
- The massing contains two tower elements separated by a large open space that allows for light and air to penetrate through the building and onto the street.
- Each tower is composed with stacked or cantilevered sections that further break up the massing and give a unique quality to the building. The architectural expression promotes a more interesting interaction between the private and public realm.
- The property is surrounded by right-of-way and/or open space on all sides of the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The project offers unique qualities and architectural expression in its site configuration, building form, and massing. Several points of concern remain with the lack of active use and blank façade proposed along the greenway frontage. A design alternative to the façade along the greenway should promote both a safe and enhanced pedestrian experience.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions and disapproval without all conditions:

1. The relocated stairway should not be an isolated element but rather a much stronger and robust design component that integrates with the building and aligns with the future street crossing at Church Street.
2. The façade along the Greenway should not be left exposed and should be screened appropriately and integrated with the remainder of the building. In lieu of an active use, the façade should incorporate design elements that would enhance the pedestrian experience along the greenway. A mixture of various design elements might include, but is not limited to, the following: integrated stair or ramp to activate the frontage, a mural wall, architectural screening, landscaping, and/or a dedicated bike facility area.

Mosely moved and Casella seconded the motion to approve the modifications request with staff conditions. (6-0)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) 1011 Church Street is approved with conditions. (6-0).

2) Nashville First Baptist Church

2018DTC-026-001

601 Broadway and 600 McGavock, Nashville, TN 37203

Staff Reviewer: Eric Hammer

Request to approve modifications to various standards including the build-to zone, civic frontages, walls, and the applicability of DTC subdistricts.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions and disapprove without all conditions.

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to approve modifications to various standards for property located at 601 Broadway and 600 MacGavock Street, within the Upper Broadway and SoBro subdistricts of the Downtown Code (DTC). The property is located south of the intersection of Broadway and 6th Street.

BACKGROUND

The proposed structure is a new three-story building which will house supporting activities of the Nashville First Baptist Church, directly to the west. There is an existing building being used for ancillary church functions on the site, as well as surface parking. The building would be demolished as part of the project.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The proposed building is three stories in height and would replace the existing building with three stories along the 6th Avenue South frontage and two stories along a portion of the Broadway frontage. The proposed building would be oriented to address the corner of Broadway and 6th Avenue South and is proposed to have a coffee shop on the ground floor facing Broadway. The remainder of the building is proposed to consist of administrative offices, worship space, and educational classrooms.

The proposed building is being reviewed as a civic building. Per the DTC, civic buildings are designed and constructed for community use or benefit by governmental, cultural, educational, public welfare, or religious organizations. Civic buildings require review via modification, per the DTC.

MODIFICATION REQUEST DETAILS

Requested modification to the DTC standards (proposal does not comply with the following standards):

1. Determination of applicable DTC subdistrict.
2. Review of frontages for civic buildings.
3. Allowance of frontages that do not meet build-to zone.
4. Allowance of walls that do not meet DTC standards.

ANALYSIS

Civic Frontage

Civic buildings are designed and constructed for community use or benefit by governmental, cultural, educational, public welfare, or religious organizations. The DTC requires civic buildings to be reviewed by modification and offers general guidance as follows:

A civic building shall be oriented to streets and public spaces and follow the intent of the particular subdistrict in which it is located with regard to pedestrian orientation, massing, and articulation.

Additionally, the Upper Broadway subdistrict offers the following guidance on the intent of the district:

The Upper Broadway area is one of the most important gateways into Downtown. Several civic and cultural buildings front this urban corridor. Maintenance and adaptive reuse of historic buildings is encouraged, and the height and scale of new buildings should be in-keeping with the existing urban pattern. When properties front more than one street, Broadway should be the Principal frontage.

The DTC also calls for civic buildings to be designed with prominence and monumentality. In contrast to the existing building, which is significantly set back from the street and fenced off from the pedestrian realm, the proposed civic building properly addresses Broadway. The site plan indicates that this building will have a prominent entrance on Broadway with stairs addressing the corner of Broadway and 6th Avenue South. The scale and massing of the building are appropriate for the surrounding context, complementing the adjacent church.

DTC Subdistrict Applicability.

The subject property is within two subdistricts: the Upper Broadway subdistrict (to the north) and SoBro subdistrict (to the south). Per the DTC, for property that is within more than one subdistrict, a minor modification must be applied to use the standards of either subdistrict. Broadway is a prominent street within the downtown area and has an established pattern of height and scale. The Nashville First Baptist Church building to the west fronts Broadway as well. Due to the relationship of the site with Broadway, the Upper Broadway subdistrict standards should apply.

Build-to Zone

The Upper Broadway Subdistrict has a build-to zone of 0' to 5' for 80% of the façade width for frontages along primary and secondary streets. The remainder of that lot frontage may be used for pedestrian amenities and shall not be used for parking. Per the DTC, as the lot frontage on 6th Avenue South is greater than 200', the façade width requirement may be reduced to a minimum of 150' in length.

Neither the Broadway frontage, nor the 6th Avenue S. frontage, meets this standard: the Broadway façade meets the standard for 13% of the façade and the 6th Avenue façade meets the standard for 0% of the facade. The building is recessed at the intersection, allowing for the building of a stairway into the main structure that defines the building's connection to the public realm. The façade is well designed and the stairway leads to a coffee shop and outdoor seating area. The 6th Avenue frontage is set back from the street, but uses vertical elements to present an aesthetically interesting view to passersby. The Upper Broadway subdistrict encourages the use of civic frontages, which by nature are meant to be unique contributions to the public realm. In this case, the proposed design does not strictly meet the build-to zone, but addresses Broadway in a manner consistent with the intent of both the subdistrict and the DTC.

Walls and Fencing

The DTC requires walls and fences within the build-to zone to not exceed four feet in height, unless they are being used to screen mechanical, loading, and refuse elements, in which case they must be a minimum of two feet taller than the element being screened. In this case, the elevation shows an 8' brick wall of at least 60' in length with no transparency along 6th Avenue South frontage, which is partially being used to contain mechanical elements, but is also being used for other purposes, including retention facilities. Staff cannot support this request as presented, as the current design of the walls does not properly interact with the public realm.

As the modification is directly related to the stormwater detention, staff has discussed this modification request with the applicant and has ascertained that a Low Impact Development (LID)

Manual waiver is currently being sought from the Water Services department. If granted, the applicant will redesign the site and may not require modifications to the DTC standards. Staff is recommending approval of the other modifications, but is also recommending that the applicant return to the DRC if this request is still relevant after a decision is made regarding that waiver.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed building strives to meet the principles of the DTC and is a positive addition to the Broadway streetscape, in contrast to the existing building, which is inimical towards the public realm. Staff recommends approval of the modifications with conditions:

1. Applicant to return to the Design Review Committee to seek modification for wall height if necessary.

Hastings moved and Casella seconded the motion to approve the modifications request with staff condition. (6-0)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 2) Nashville First Baptist Church is approved with conditions. (6-0).