

Town of Davidson, NC
Design Review Board: Staff Analysis
Project Manager: S. Chad Hall
July 18, 2018

Project: Moxie Mercantile – Signage on front façade
Location: 202 South Main Street
Applicant: Clifton Castelloe (Jen Jentz is owner)
Planning Area: Village Center, Local Historic District: Contributing Resource

A project is proposed at 202 South Main Street for two signs on the front façade. The applicant is proposing two signs: wall and projecting. In addition, there is a request to change the existing awning.

Wall Sign (with lighting option)

As proposed, one request is to paint the business name “Moxie Mercantile” centered above the existing window and awning. The sign size meet the five percent rule but is greater than 24 square feet, requiring approval from the HPC, in addition to the sign being painted on a building in the local historic district. Paint color appears to be black.

While not shown, the applicant has inquired about adding gooseneck lighting similar to the lights above the Ben and Jerry’s sign. An exact design or color has not been provided.

Projecting Sign

A projecting sign is proposed to hang from an existing bracket on the building. The sign size is 30’ (round). Per the application, the bottom of the sign would be 5’-10” from ground level. Staff has alerted the applicant that the bottom of the sign must be 7’ from the ground. The intent is to relocate the existing bracket higher on the wall so that the bottom of the sign meets minimum clearance. As such, the area of the wall below the relocated bracket will need to be painted to match the existing façade color.

Awning

The applicant proposes to replace the existing awning with one that is black and white striped. It is assumed that the awning size will remain the same.

Door and Window signs are not proposed. Staff has included language for the benefit of the applicant and for the board in case these items need to be discussed.

The building is located within the Village Center Planning Area. This building is considered to be a storefront building. The building is a contributing structure in the Local Historic District. As such, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) may use its Design Guidelines to ensure that facades and their features meet the spirit and intent of the Davidson Planning Ordinance, even if all aspects do not necessarily meet the requirements for façades.

Language from National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report:

202 South Main Street, ca. 1925, Withers Electric Company Building Contributing Building

- One story, brick commercial building consisting of entrance recessed into the center bay; replacement multiple-paned sash in the two large shopfront windows flanking the entry; originally built as an auto sales and service establishment, it is locally known as the Withers Electric Co. Building, which it became after World War II.

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Storefronts

1. *Retain and preserve storefronts that contribute to the overall historic character and form of commercial buildings including display windows, transoms, mid-cornices, recessed entries, bulkhead panels, and other functional or decorative features.*
2. *Retain and preserve storefront materials that contribute to the overall historic character of a building.*
3. *Maintain, protect, and repair the features, material surfaces, and details of storefronts using repair techniques appropriate to the specific storefront material.*

Paint and Exterior Color

3. *When repainting, select colors appropriate to the historic building and district. Enhance the features of a building through appropriate selection and placement of paint color consistent with its architectural style. In particular, the foundation color is usually darker than the body of the building in order to visually anchor it to the ground.*

Exterior Lighting

5. *If needed, introduce exterior lighting fixtures sensitively so that the overall character of the historic building, site, or district is not diminished. Select and install new fixtures so that the location, orientation, height, brightness, design, and material are compatible with the human scale and character of the historic district.*
8. *It is not appropriate to create a false historical appearance by introducing period lighting fixtures from an era that predates the building or district.*

Signs

5. *Introduce new signs, if needed, in traditional locations where they do not diminish or compromise the overall historic character of the building, site, or district. Design new signs to be compatible in location, configuration, orientation, height, material, scale, and detail with the historic character of the building, site, and district.*
7. *Construct new signs in traditional materials, such as wood, stone, or metal, or apply lettering and graphics on display windows or awning fabric. It is not appropriate to introduce signage in contemporary materials such as plastics or to introduce internally lighted signage that is incompatible with the overall historic character of the district.*

DAVIDSON PLANNING ORDINANCE:

SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Section 4.2.1 – Historic District Regulations

All changes or improvements made to structures within the Local Historic District must comply with the Historic District Regulations as described in Section 22.

Section 4.4.1.E.4a-b – General Building Design Standards - Materials

Building materials and colors shall be complimentary to materials already being used in the general area. If dissimilar materials are being proposed, other characteristics such as scale, proportion, form, architectural detailing, color, and texture shall be used to ensure that the building relates to the rest of the neighborhood.

SIGNS

Section 11.2.2.B Required Permits

All signs proposed to be affixed to a structure in the Local Historic Overlay District must be approved by the Design & Historic Review Board to determine that the signage meets the provisions of this section and any additional historic district requirements.

Section 11.3.1.2 Multi-Tenant Buildings

Each tenant on the street or ground level may display one of the following signs on each façade: wall, projecting, hanging, freestanding, and two additional signs from the following: sidewalk, awning, canopy, window or door.

Section 11.4.1.2 Wall Sign

A sign directly attached and parallel to a building façade or dependent upon a building for its support. Wall signs may consist of sign board, metal, or channel letters mounted directly on wall or via raceway, neon, or paint directly on brick.

1. Permitted Location

- *Building facades that face the right of way, pedestrian passageways, and/or parking associated with the establishment.*

2. Area & Dimensions

- *Maximum sign area per facade is five percent of the ground floor facade area on which the sign is located OR 24 square feet, whichever is greater. The Design Review Board must approve all signs greater than 24 square feet.*
- *For multi-bay, multi-tenant buildings, the facade area shall include only that portion of the facade designed for a specific tenant.*

3. Height

- *The top of a wall sign shall not exceed 18 feet above grade.*

4. Additional Requirements

- *Internally illuminated signs, including LED signs, are not permitted.*
- *Signs must either be a minimum of 1.5 inches thick or include a 1.5 to 2 inch border.*

Section 11.4.1.7 Projecting Sign

A sign directly attached and not parallel to a building facade or dependent upon a building for its support.

1. Permitted Location

- *Building facades that front a right-of-way, pedestrian passageway, and/or parking associated with the establishment.*

2. Area & Dimensions

- *12 square feet maximum, per side*
- *Three feet maximum width*
- *Four feet maximum projection from building*

3. Height

- *18 feet maximum*
- *A minimum of seven feet of clearance must be maintained between the bottom of the sign and the grade.*

4. Additional Requirements

- *Must be perpendicular to the building facade. Internally illuminated signs are not permitted. Any external illumination may not be attached to the sign.*

Section 11.4.1.3 Window Sign

A sign affixed to the surface of a window or displayed within one foot of the window and visible from a street or park.

1. Permitted Location

- *Windows on ground-level facades and upper level arcades only.*

2. Area & Dimensions

- *Maximum size is 25 percent of the window area.*
- *Neon signs mounted on the interior of storefront windows shall not exceed 10 square feet in area, and shall be counted as part of the total window sign area.*

3. Height

- *No maximum, but signs are limited to windows on ground-level facades and upper level arcades only.*

4. Additional Requirements

- *Internally illuminated signs, including LED and neon, are not permitted, except for interior mounted neon signs not exceeding 10 square feet in area.*
- *To ensure that visibility both in and out of the window is not obscured, such signs may be silk-screened, vinyl, etched, or hand-painted.*

Section 11.4.1.4 Door Sign

A sign applied, mounted or painted on the solid portion of a door; or a sign that is attached, applied, painted, silk screened, or etched onto the glass pane of a door.

1. Permitted Location

- *Storefront doors only.*

2. Area & Dimensions

- *Two square feet maximum per door.*

3. *Height:*

- *None*

4. *Additional Requirements*

- *Internally illuminated signs, including LED signs, are not permitted.*

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