

DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission

Monday, April 17, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.

Staff Comments

New Construction Agenda

R. 1551 Briarcliff Road (DH), Residential Recovery Fund, LLC ("Minerva USA"). Divide the parent property into two parcels and develop one of those parcels, with the development including the construction of two multifamily buildings. 21354

Primary structure built 1965. (18-057-05-019)

This property is not located in a National Register Historic District or in an identified character area.

4-98 1551 Briarcliff Road, WAGA License, Inc. Remove existing TV tower and construct a new tower a short distance to the north. **Approved**

2-03 1551 Briarcliff Road (DH), Neil Mazur. Install 15-foot diameter television dish behind the main building. **Approved**

5-07 1551 Briarcliff Road (WAGA) (DH), Global Data Services Corporation. Install satellite dish behind the building. 13453 **Approved**

4-091551 Briarcliff Road (WAGA) (DH), David Budwash. Enclose metal shed behind main building. 15744 **Approved**

11-10 1551 Briarcliff Road (DH), Rick Underwood. Install fencing at nonhistoric building. 16774. **Approved as modified**

5-15 1551 Briarcliff Road (WAGA) (DH), Neil Mazur for WAGA/Fox Television Stations, Inc. Replace a nonhistoric guard booth. 19884 **Approved**

5-16 1517 (1551) Briarcliff Road (DH), MH Briarcliff LLC. Develop the property with twelve townhomes and twelve flats. 20733 **Approved with modifications**

7-16 1517 Briarcliff Road (DH), MH Briarcliff LLC ("Minerva Homes"). Design details for the previously approved townhouses and flats, and the landscape plan for the development. 20912 **Approved**

7-16 1551 Briarcliff Road (DH), Neil Mazur for WAGA-TV/Fox Television Stations, Inc. Install light poles in the rear parking lot and to the north of the main building. 20905 **Approved**

This is a nonhistoric property. (*Druid Hills Design Manual*, Glossary, page ii: **Nonhistoric** — Nonhistoric properties within the district are those properties built after 1946. Nonhistoric properties are identified on the Historic District Map.)

All the text below was pulled forward from the February staff report and do not reflect changes since then.

A fenced gravel drive runs east off Old Briarcliff Road to the tower. The property is south of this drive. The drive can be seen on aerial photos as a linear break in the tree cover. The proposed entry drive at the north end of the project is set roughly even with the south end of Briar Park Court. Topographically, the property drops in elevation from the south to the north, at the same time dropping from Old Briarcliff Road on the northeast to a small tributary of Peavine Creek to the southeast. The northern part of the property is relatively flat, but the rest is steep. The property is heavily wooded, but the tree survey shows only four specimen trees, two of which will be saved. A 33" red oak and a 36" tulip poplar will be removed. The tree protection sheet in the file lists about 195 trees on the lot and identifies those that will remain and those that will be removed. The tree protection plan shows the locations of the trees to be preserved as well as identifying new plantings. Most, if not all, of the new trees are native to this area.

The applicant has modified the application to cover not only the development, but also to divide the parent property (1551 Briarcliff Road, Fox 5) into two parcels. The Fox 5 property will surround the new property on three sides and Old Briarcliff Road will be the fourth side. The Briar Park Court subdivision is located on the other side of Old Briarcliff Road. Emory University property borders the Fox 5 property on the north east.

The applicant proposes building two multifamily buildings with associated pavement, retaining walls and minor structures. The layout is basically the same as presented at the February meeting, but the building designs and other elements have been modified.

The applicant identifies the two proposed buildings as Building A, to the north, and Building B, to the south. The buildings are very similar in design, with the primary difference being the size of the footprint. Building A will be about 225' long by 70' wide and Building B will be about half that at 110±' long and 62' wide. Both buildings have three stories over a basement parking garage. The garage is above ground in some places. The basement FFE of Building A is 884' and the first floor FFE is 894'. The basement FFE of Building B is 890' and the first floor FFE is 900. The buildings will rise 45' from the first floor FFE to the third floor ceiling.

The exposed basement walls of both buildings will be clad with stone on three sides, but the rear will be concrete. The stone will continue up to the bottom of the first floor windows. Stone will also be used tall vertical elements on both buildings and around the entry on Building A. Elsewhere the buildings will be clad with brick and painted stucco, with small areas of fiber-cement lap siding. The light gray and dark gray in the drawing represent different colors of painted stucco rather than different materials. The hipped roof is on several planes. The roof has a low pitch and wide eaves.

A driveway will enter the property near the north end in front of Building A. The drive will run across the face of building A, then divide into a "T" with the eastern arm running south of Building A to provide access to the basement parking area and a dumpster enclosure. A 3-space parking area will be built across the distribute Building A. The western arm of the driveway leads to the basement parking area for Building B and a 4-space surface parking area. A mail kiosk will be set in an angle of the "T" intersection.

The previous site plan shoed "pocket parks", but these are not shown on the new site plan. Staff has asked the applicant is if the parks are still part of the plan. A retention pond was previously shown at the north end of the property, but is not shown in the material presented this month.

Two specimen trees and multiple smaller trees will be removed. The smaller trees are not noted in the tree planting plan and no information has been provided about the size or species of any of the trees being removed.

There is a required 75' stream buffer along the stream at the southeast edge of the development. With the exceptions noted below, there will be no work in the buffer except clearing invasive and overgrown plants, installing a mulched trail and installing new plants. No trees will be removed to make the trail. The county environmental inspector, Greg Hubbard, has reviewed the plan for compliance with the stream buffer requirements set out in the development code. He has determined that the projection of retaining walls and parts of the buildings into the buffer is minimal enough that it would be eligible for a stream buffer variance. The wall and buildings would project into the buffer less than 10' and the decks would project less than 25'.

The applicant proposes building a 10'8" long by 5' tall sign at the entrance. The sign will be brick, stone and wood to match the materials of the buildings, and will have a concrete cap.

Staff sent questions to the applicant in the week before the meeting. The applicant has responded, but staff has not had an opportunity to review the answers.

This property is across Old Briarcliff Road from the historic Briar Park Court subdivision, Briar Park Court has filed an application for DeKalb County historic district designation, but the application has not yet been processed. Staff believes the district meets all the criteria for designation. The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the application and recommended the application be approved. The Druid Hills Civic Association has expressed support for approval. The application and supporting materials are included in the record for this application.

Staff recommends the commission review the application in light of the effect of Briar Park Court as well as the other standards in the Design Manual.

March Recommendation

Staff does not have enough information to make a recommendation. This may change when the when the staff has the opportunity to review the applicant's responses.

If the application is approved, staff recommends it be with the modification that any changes in the plans required during the lot division or permitting process are reported to the preservation commission staff and that if staff determines it is necessary, a new CoA application will be filed to address those changes. This is what should happen in any case, but does not always.

The average grade at Building A is shown as 890' elevation. The average grade at Building B is shown as 895'. Both buildings rise to 45' above average grade.

The site plan identifies two areas as "pocket parks". One of these is adjacent to Old Briarcliff Road south of Building B and the second is a linear element running parallel to the stream at the southeast side of the property. This puts it to the east of Building B and the south of Building A. The linear park is noted as being "native forest" and having a mulched trail. A triangular area along Old Briarcliff Road is shown in the same way as the pocket parks, but is not labeled.

Much of the property is steep and extensive fill and grading will likely be necessary. Staff has requested the applicant provide a grading plan. The tree protection plan shows heavy dark lines that seem to represent retaining walls. Staff has asked the applicant to clarify this. These lines run roughly along both long sides of Building A, along all sides of Building B, along the east side of the entry drive, at the east end of the visitor parking and along the south side of the "T" part of the drive. A row of bald cypress trees will be planted between Building A and the east property line. This appears as if it is meant to screen the retaining wall.

February Recommendation

As of February 12 the applicant has not provided sufficient information to make a review. Staff recommends either deferral to allow the applicant time to provide more documentation, or denial based on DeKalb County code section 13.5-8. Certificates of Appropriateness, which states in part, "All applications for certificates of appropriateness shall be accompanied by drawings, photographs, plans and documentation as required by the preservation commission."

Requests for information made by staff on 2-9-17:

- *Please provide more detailed architectural drawings.*
- *Do the heavy black lines on the site plan represent retaining walls? If so, please provide elevations for the top and bottom of the walls.*
- *What material will be used on the exposed side of the retaining walls?*
- *How long and wide are the buildings?*
- *I assume "trash" south of Buildable A means dumpsters. How will these be screened?*
- *Please provide an illustration of the I.D. Monument at the entrance.*
- *Is a fence required around the retention pond? If so, what kind of fence will be used?*
- *What kind of stone will be used?*
- *Please bring a brick sample to the meeting.*
- *The elevations are not labeled on the drawings of Building B. It appears that they are in the same order as the drawings for Building A on the previous page. Is this correct?*
- *Are the unlabeled gray areas on the basement level of both buildings exposed concrete?*
- *Please provide a planting list.*

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- *Rather than just showing the location of the buildings overlaid on the aerial photo, I need something to show what part of the Fox 5 property is included in the application. The commission and I need to be able to identify the specific area to be reviewed. I only need a digital version for now, but at the meeting I will need a hardcopy for the file.*
- *The area between the linear pocket park and the stream is not labeled. I assume it will be left as it is since it is in the stream buffer, but I want to confirm that—will it be left as is?*
- *Will the windows have metal frames with no grids? If not, please describe the windows.*
- *Please provide a grading plan. Again, I only need a digital version for now, but at the meeting I will need a hardcopy for the file.*

April Recommendation

No recommendation on the overall application. Since the property is not residentially zoned, a sign is appropriate, but this particular design is too large. Staff recommends denial of the sign.

Relevant Guidelines

- 5.0 *Design Review Objective* (p45) - When making a material change to a structure that is in view from a public right-of-way, a higher standard is required to ensure that design changes are compatible with the architectural style of the structure and retain character-defining features. When a proposed material change to a structure is not in view from the public-right-way, the Preservation Commission may review the project with a less strict standard so as to allow the owner more flexibility. Such changes, however, shall not have a substantial adverse effect on the overall architectural character of the structure.
- 7.1 *Defining the Area of Influence* (p64) Guideline - In considering the appropriateness of a design for a new building or addition in a historic district, it is important to determine the area of influence. This area should be that which will be visually influenced by the building, i.e. the area in which visual relationships will occur between historic and new construction.
- 7.2 *Recognizing the Prevailing Character of Existing Development* (p65) Guideline - When looking at a series of historic buildings in the area of influence, patterns of similarities may emerge that help define the predominant physical and developmental characteristics of the area. These patterns must be identified and respected in the design of additions and new construction.
- 7.2.1 *Building Orientation and Setback* (p66) Guideline - The orientation of a new building and its site placement should appear to be consistent with dominant patterns within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.2 *Directional Emphasis* (p67) Guideline - A new building's directional emphasis should be consistent with dominant patterns of directional emphasis within the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Roof Pitch* (p68) Guideline - The roof pitch of a new building should be consistent with those of existing buildings within the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Building Elements* (p68) Guideline - The principal elements and shapes used on the front facade of a new building should be compatible with those of existing buildings in the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.3 *Shape: Porch Form* (p68) Guideline - The shape and size of a new porch should be consistent with those of existing historic buildings within the area of influence, if dominant patterns are present.
- 7.2.4 *Massing* (p69) Guideline - The massing of a new building should be consistent with dominant massing patterns of existing buildings in the area of influence, if such patterns are present.

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- 7.2.5 *Proportion* (p70) Guideline - The proportions of a new building should be consistent with dominant patterns of proportion of existing buildings in the area of influence, if such patterns are present.
- 7.2.7 *Scale/Height* (p72) Guideline - New construction in historic areas should be consistent with dominant patterns of scale within the area of influence, if such patterns are present. Additions to historic buildings should not appear to overwhelm the existing building.
- 7.2.7 *Scale/Height* (p72) Guideline - A proposed new building should appear to conform to the floor-to-floor heights of existing structures if there is a dominant pattern within the established area of influence. Dominant patterns of cornice lines, string courses, and water tables can be referenced to help create a consistent appearance.
- 7.2.8 *Individual Architectural Elements* (p73) Guideline - New construction and additions should be compatible and not conflict with the predominant site and architectural elements—and their design relationships—of existing properties in the area of influence.
- 7.3.2 *New Construction and Subdivision Development* (p75) Guideline - To be compatible with its environment, new construction should follow established design patterns of its historic neighbors, including building orientation, setback, height, scale, and massing.
- 7.3.2 *New Construction and Subdivision Development* (p75) Guideline - New construction should respect the historic character that makes the area distinctive, but it should not be a mere imitation of historic design.
- 8.1 *Open Space and Parkland Preservation and Conservation* (p77) Guideline - The original layout of Druid Hills should be preserved through the conservation of major open spaces and the linear system of parks and green spaces that buffer the stream corridors. Retaining these spaces, both public and private, by limiting their uses to passive activities will perpetuate the park-like character in the district today. An exclusive palette of native vegetation is recommended for these spaces to protect and enhance the ecology.
- 8.2 *Trees* (p78) Recommendation - The mature hardwood forest within the Druid Hills Local Historic District should be perpetuated through a district-wide replanting program. Trees should be replaced when mature trees are lost to age or damage or are removed for safety reasons. Replacement trees should be of identical or similar varieties to the original trees. A diversity of tree types is recommended to perpetuate the existing character of most tree groupings. Replacement trees of adequate size (1.5" caliper minimum) are recommended. Existing ordinances that provide for the protection and replacement of the district's tree resources should be applied to development activities within Druid Hills.
- 8.3 *Protection of the Historic Watershed Design and Design Concept* (p79) - Guideline - All construction within the Druid Hills Local Historic District should follow a 75' setback requirement from the top of bank of creek corridors and drainage ways, as delineated on the official "Historic District Map."
- 9.3 *Vegetation* (p83) Recommendation – The plant list is intended to assist in the selection of appropriate plant materials. Olmsted's list and the list from the Georgia Landscapes Project provide guidance in selecting materials appropriate for historic landscape projects. There are other sources that can be consulted to identify additional plants used by Olmsted in Druid Hills, such as historic planting plans and particularly the archival record at the Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts. The Olmsted list presented in this document should be considered a beginning. Residents of Druid Hills are encouraged to add to this list with historic plants that can be documented as having been used by Olmsted. The native list should be used for natural areas within the district, such as creek corridors and drainage ways. Places within the district where the retention of healthy ecological environments is critical are best landscaped with native varieties. Since native plants have been available since the colony of Georgia was established in 1733, native plants are also appropriate for historic landscapes.

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- 9.4 *Enclosures and Walls* (p90) Guideline - Fences and walls should not be built in front yard spaces and are strongly discouraged from corner lot side yard spaces. Retaining walls should only be used in situations where topography requires their use.
- 9.4 *Enclosures and Walls* (p90) Recommendation - Fences are appropriate in rear yard spaces. Rear yard fences should be coordinated with existing county codes. Suggested materials include wood and chain link. Vinyl- covered chain link fencing, typically in bronze, brown, or black, assist in making fences less obtrusive. Vines are suggested to "soften" the appearance of metal chain link fencing. If wood fencing is used, the paint color and design should be compatible with the architecture of the adjacent residence. Fence heights can range from 4' to 6' depending on the reason for the enclosure.
- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Guideline - Parking should be addressed in a manner that does not distract from the overall character of the district. Parking to serve private residential lots should be accommodated on-site, when at all possible, using the pathway of original drives and parking. Front yard parking should not be allowed unless it is a public safety issue. When front yard parking is necessary, it should be added in a manner that does not destroy the unbroken landscaped character of the front yard spaces in Druid Hills. Rear yard spaces should be considered for expansion of parking areas.
- 9.5 *Parking* (p90) Guideline - Curb cuts should not be added or expanded in order to protect the character of the district's streets.
- 9.6 *Accessory Buildings* (p91) Guideline - New accessory buildings, such as garages and storage houses, are to be located in rear yard spaces and visually buffered from adjacent property owners and the public right-of-way. Accessory buildings that complement the architecture of the adjacent residence do not require the same level of buffering and may remain more visible within the local district. If the new building will be visible from the street, it should respect the established setbacks and orientations of the historic buildings in the area.
- 9.7 *Residential Landscape Design* (p91) Recommendation - For residential yards, created without the assistance of landscape designers, historic landscape plans for other residential lots within the district should be used for guidance. These plans can be interpreted to create a new landscape plan that is based on historic traditions. Care should be taken to select designs for yards of similar size containing houses of similar style and scale.
- 9.8 *Signage Within Residential Areas of the Local Historic District* (p92) Guideline - Signage is incompatible with the residential character found in most areas of the local historic district. Permanent signs are prohibited in residentially-zoned areas. Public signage within public right-of-ways in the district should be designed to be compatible with the character of the district.
- 11.0 *Nonhistoric Properties* (p93) Guideline - In reviewing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a material change to a nonhistoric building, the Preservation Commission should evaluate the change for its potential impacts to any historic development (architecture and natural and cultural landscapes) in the area of influence of the nonhistoric property. Guidelines presented in *Section 7.0: Additions and new Construction* are relevant to such evaluations.

