



PLANNING BUREAU REPORT
Municipal Historic District
Certificate of Appropriateness

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2053 North Second Street

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

2053 North Second Street –
Sunoco and A-Plus

OWNER:

Sunoco, Inc.

CONTACT PERSON:

Robert Switala

PID:

11001001

ZONING:

Community Commercial Limited
(CCL)

FLOODPLAIN:

100-Year

HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Old Uptown National Register
and Municipal Historic District

INITIAL HARB DATE:

N/A

HARB DATE:

February 7, 2011

DATE APPLICATION

RECEIVED:

December 16, 2010

SITE VISIT DATE(S):

December 9, 2010

January 25, 2011

ESTIMATED DATE OF

COMPLETION:

July 1, 2011

PROPOSAL IS TO:

Demolish the existing structures and construct a new 3,044 SF convenience store, canopy with four gasoline dispensers and site appurtenances.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

The site is comprised two structures, a Sunoco Gas Station with four dispensers and a 1,755 SF “A Plus” Convenience Store, constructed in 1956 and enlarged in 1996. The property is located at the corner of North Second Street, a major north-south corridor through the City and Maclay Street, a gateway connecting Uptown Neighborhoods to Cameron Street and Interstate 81; as such both are considered primary streets. The property extends the full depth of the block east to Penn Street, a tertiary street. The site has six access points: two on North Second Street, two on Maclay Street and two on Penn Street. The convenience store is set approximately on the center of the site and faces North Second Street, with the gasoline dispensers and canopy set in front of the store and extending toward North Second Street.

The convenience store is a one-story, masonry, detached structure possessing no features of any recognizable architectural style, save the vernacular cupola centered on the gabled roof. The structure is defined by its painted brick masonry facade, and gable roof. Fenestration, limited to the west facade, includes aluminum frame storefront windows and aluminum-frame, full-lite, double doors. The canopy

is defined by its aluminum cylindrical column covers and predominate fascia with Sunoco and NASCAR graphics. Set atop the canopy is a hipped roof, though barely noticeable from the public right-of-way.

Neither structure contributes to the character of the streetscape; however, due to the site location; there is an effect upon the district.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Certificate of Appropriateness Application
2. Photographs
3. Elevation Drawings
4. Product Specifications

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

1. The effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the district.
2. The appropriateness of exterior architectural features, which can be seen from a public street or way.
3. The general design, arrangement, texture, material, and color of the building, sign or fence and the relation of such factors to similar features in the district.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION [1995]:

The Secretary of the Interior has established ten enumerated standards to be followed when considering alterations to an historic property. Of the ten standards, the following apply to this application.

None of the ten standards apply to this application.

ANALYSIS:

1. In April 2000, the Applicant proposed to change the building signage and graphics and paint the facility. The project consisted primarily of recoating soffits and signage surfaces. The drawings indicated the Sunoco Symbol would be back-lit. Through staff analysis, the Applicant concurred that in deference to the historic district and the property's prominent location, such lighting would not be used.
2. At the February 14, 2011, Zoning Hearing Board Meeting, the Applicant was granted a variance to construct below the regulatory flood protection elevation and a special exception to substantially improve an existing non-conforming use, with the following conditions: the entrance on Maclay Street adjacent to the intersection shall be limited to ingress only; the design shall be approved by FEMA; the design shall be approved by the HARB; and the Applicant shall provide a traffic study and photometric study as recommended by the Harrisburg Planning Commission.

3. Harrisburg Architectural Review Board's Demolition Criteria states:

In those cases where demolition is being proposed, if the structure or part of a structure does not present a clear and present danger, the Board, in deciding whether to approve the demolition, shall consider all the factors outlined below in their decision.

- A. The architectural integrity and significance of the structure and the structure's contribution to the municipal district.
 1. a. Whether the structure is individually listed on the National Register or is a pivotal building in the district.
 - b. Whether the structure is a contributing structure to the district.
 - c. Whether the structure contributes little or nothing to the historic nature of the district.
 2. Whether the structure is either a design or an historic intrusion.
 - a. A design intrusion is a building or structure that does not contribute to the existing pattern of the surrounding streetscape, in terms of materials and scale of development.
 - b. An historic intrusion is a building or structure which does not contribute to the historic significance of the district.
 3. Whether the structure is a later, incompatible addition to the district or was constructed in the same time period as the district's significance.
- B. The structure's contribution to the streetscape and street design.
 1. Whether the structure is located on a primary street, a secondary street, or an alleyway.
 2. Whether the structure is a primary structure or an accessory structure.
- C. The type and quality of development being proposed to take the place of the demolished structure.
 1. Compatibility of the proposed design and materials with adjacent buildings/streetscape.
 2. What public purpose, if any, the development may serve.
 3. Whether applicant will provide a bond to guarantee that construction will occur as planned (See Analysis Item 2).
- D. What alternatives there are to demolition.
- E. Economic feasibility of reuse of the structure, i.e. the condition of the building.

Each application for demolition will be reviewed on its individual merits. Additional evidence and arguments presented by the applicant will be taken into consideration by the Board.

4. The Sec. Of the Interior's Rehabilitation Guidelines [1995] state:

- A. *Setting*. The elements of setting, such as the relationship of buildings to each other, setbacks, fence patterns, views, driveways and walkways, and street trees together create the character of a district or neighborhood. In some instances, many individual building sites may form a neighborhood or setting.

B. *Setting – Alterations/Additions for the New Use.* Introducing new construction into historic districts, a design shall be visually compatible and maintain historic relationships within the setting.

5. The Harrisburg Historic District Design and Preservation Guide states:

A. Chapter 22 - New Construction. The context of the historic district must be taken into account in a new design. This contextualism is achieved through the massing, scale, materials, and site design of the new building. The following are the most important design elements to consider when examining new construction proposed within an historic district:

- i. *Height and Massing.* The general height and massing of the new building should be similar to the surrounding buildings. This is generally prescribed by the City Zoning Code to create a consistent height along streets and retain the scale of the streetscape.
- ii. *Setbacks.* The setback and site placement of new buildings should be consistent with that of the surrounding buildings. This creates a streetscape without any irregularity.
- iii. *Fenestration.* The existing ratio of fenestration (windows, doors, or other openings) to solid wall creates a rhythm of solid to void that should be considered in the design of new architecture, no matter its style.
- iv. *Materials.* Materials for new construction may be modern, traditional, or a combination. This includes the use of typical modern materials such as brick face in lieu of structural masonry, modern window materials, metals, glass, wood, imitation wood products, and modern siding materials. The choice of materials must take into consideration the common historic materials in the surrounding area and the architectural style of the new building.
- v. *Street Level Character.* The street level of a new building and its entrance should engage the sidewalk and surrounding streetscape, this is usually accomplished by active entrances, windows that provide views of the street. Parking should always be secondary and located behind the new construction.

6. The Harrisburg Historic District Design and Preservation Guide [2009] states:

A. Chapter 20 Fences – Design. The design of the fence should be appropriate to the architecture of the property it surrounds and the general historic character of the neighborhood. Finish details such as capping posts are encouraged to create a more refined appearance. All bracing of fence sections must be on the inside of the fence, with the finished sides facing the street or other properties.

B. Chapter 20 Fences – Materials. The materials of a fence are very important to its character. Wooden fences should be stained or painted. Pressure treated wood is not recommended as it tends to warp. More notably, unpainted or unstained wood was simply not used during the era when most historic Harrisburg buildings were built. Cedar is recommended for wooden fences due to its durable nature.

7. The property is located in the Community Commercial Limited (CCL). Fences are addressed under Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 7-327.3 of the Zoning Code.
 - A. 7-327.3(1) Fences shall not exceed a height of six (6) feet.
 - B. 7-327.3(3)(A) In any residential zone or in a Special Planned Development District, fences shall be constructed of brick, stone, ornamental metal, or wood, or a combination thereof.
8. Demolition. The Applicant proposes to demolish the store, canopy, dispensaries and all site appurtenances, excluding the underground storage tanks (UST) and landscaping along North Second Street.

As the structures proposed for demolition possess no contributing features, their demolition is supported under Criterion A(2)(a). Furthermore, as intrusions to the district, the demolition is not subject to the provisions of Section 7-331.15 Demolition as Part of a Development Project in the Planning and Zoning Code.

9. Site Design. The Applicant proposes to reconstruct the site, maintaining the existing orientation toward North Second Street. The proposed site design would relocate the store from the center of the site to the rear, adjacent to Penn Street, and reconfigure the dispensary from two dispensers set linearly, adjacent to a second set of the same configuration and in line with the traffic aisle, to four dispensers set adjacent to one another and configured ninety-degrees from the traffic aisle. The Applicant advised the design was based upon maintaining the existing fuel truck delivery route and underground storage tanks. They clarified fuel trucks dispense to the UST from the passenger side, and that during delivery, this location would not block vehicular circulation.

Currently, the site has six access points: two on North Second Street, two on Maclay Street and two on Penn Street. The Applicant proposes to eliminate the two entrances along Penn Street and maintain the four entrance points along North Second and Maclay Streets.

The Applicant has suggested the site will not generate any more trips than the current site, since the use is not changing and there will be no increase to the number of dispensers.

Staff Analysis. The neighborhood is comprised of private and public properties. The east side of North Second Street retains a residential complexion, typically three-story structures containing single-family or multi-family dwellings, with some conversions to commercial office space. On the west side of North Second Street is the Pennsylvania Governor's Mansion. The 100 and 200 blocks of Maclay Street have evolved to be primarily commercial structures. On the south side of Maclay Street, a laundry-mat occupies the parcel between Penn and Green Streets. The north side of Maclay Street, between Front and Second Streets is a commercial office and bank; between Second and Penn Streets is a restaurant, and between Penn and Green streets are residential structures fronting on the afore mentioned streets.

The proposed plan is a site adaption of a standard convenience store and gasoline dispensary design for the A-Plus/Sunoco Brand. Site adaptations are appropriate for new construction along interstates or other major arterials where site context is limited or not yet established. The 2000 Block of North Second Street has retained its residential character of three-story duplexes and is fully intact except for the subject property. The 200 Block of Maclay Street has experienced more contemporary development with commercial structures out of context with the traditional site development and architectural styles of the neighborhood. As such, it is the position of the Planning Bureau that the new structure should be oriented toward Maclay Street, with the canopy located to the opposite end of the site from the Governor's Residence. Furthermore, there represents an opportunity to position the convenience store in such a location that could act as a continuation of the North Second Street Common Streetwall, re-anchor the southeast corner of North Second and Maclay Streets and/or provide for public space and increased landscaping. The Planning Bureau maintains that by altering the proposed site plan and/or building design, the site can be developed to achieve these criteria necessary to preserve the general character of the neighborhood while maintaining visibility from both major corridors to the store and canopy, visibility from the store to the dispensary, vehicular and pedestrian circulation efficiency and safety and fuel truck delivery. Furthermore, the site is located adjacent to a signalized intersection. North Second Street is a three lane one-way street with traffic traveling north. Maclay Street is a two lane two-way street with traffic traveling east/west. The City Engineer advises against locating curb cuts adjacent to an intersection. As such, the Planning Bureau maintains that by limiting the number of ingress-egress points adjacent to the signalized intersection will improve safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Planning Staff submitted two alternative site designs for the Applicant's consideration. Through subsequent dialogue, including a meeting with the Applicant's Engineer and conversation during the February 9th Harrisburg Planning Commission Meeting and February 14th Zoning Hearing Board Meeting, the Planning Bureau maintains the following:

- A. The existing configuration utilizes approximately half the site, and a new design that maximizes the site inherently improves circulation and safety.
- B. The proposed alternative site designs provide for a new site development that is derived from adjacent context and improves efficiency and safety.
- C. The designs are schematic in their development and may be modified to address other design parameters or site constraints.
- D. The existing fuel tanks may be relocated as part of the new site design.
- E. Planning for a single fuel truck delivery route would improve on-site circulation, by either only permitting fuel delivery trucks to ingress and egress from Maclay Street, thereby eliminating the need for the curb-cut on North Second Street, adjacent to the signalized intersection; or only permitting fuel delivery trucks to ingress from North Second Street and egress on Maclay Street, thereby eliminating the need for the curb cut on Maclay Street adjacent to the signalized intersection.
- F. The ingress/egress at Penn Street may be widened to accommodate two-way traffic.
- G. The site is located on a predominant corner of two major thoroughfares, and either alternative site design maintains visibility of the dispensary and store for vehicular traffic.

- H. Visibility from the store to the dispensary may be accommodated via the use of video cameras provided approval is granted by the Commonwealth.

The site is located in an urban neighborhood, a national and municipal historic register district and adjacent to the Governor's Residence of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Furthermore, it is situated along two major city corridors. The redevelopment of this site represents an opportunity to correct planning and design mistakes of the past, while creating a vibrant corner conducive to the commercial nature of the site that maintains the character of the neighborhood. A site plan shall provide for a site development that is consistent with the context of North Second Street, whereby the convenience store shall be oriented toward Maclay or Penn Streets and away from North Second Street and the dispensary shall be located adjacent to Penn Street and opposite from the Governor's Residence.

10. Store. The Applicant proposes the new structure as a variation of the A-Plus prototype, with the exception of Quik-Brik, structural brick to be installed in lieu of exposed eight inch concrete masonry units. The store will maintain the same orientation as the existing store, with the entrance toward North Second Street. The proposed signage for the building specifies an illuminated "A-Plus" arch facing North Second Street, and illuminated "A-Plus" Graphic along the building band facing Maclay Street, and a snap frame sign on the front of the building facing North Second Street.

Staff Analysis. The building form is atypical of other structures found throughout the district, relating more to the contemporary development along the 100 and 200 blocks of Maclay Street. The only contextual design element is that of brick masonry, which is primarily used on secondary and tertiary facades and then obscured from view by the six foot high privacy fencing to the south and east and the dumpster enclosure to the north. The proposed design does neither continue the historic pattern of development, nor reference architectural elements. Furthermore there is no relationship to the public space.

11. Canopy. The Applicant proposes to construct a new canopy using the Sunoco prototype, a series of columns supporting a flat roof, concealed with a fascia. The fascia is designed as an advertisement for the Sunoco Brand. The Applicant proposes the new canopy will maintain the same number of signs as the existing canopy, although will reduce the overall area by five square feet. The existing canopy has three "Official Fuel of NASCAR" Signs and one "Sunoco" Sign. The proposed canopy will have three "Sunoco" Signs and one "Official Fuel of NASCAR" Sign.

Staff Analysis. The canopy is atypical of other structures found throughout the district. By changing the dispensary configuration and turning the orientation ninety degrees from that of the existing canopy, the proposed canopy is approximately three times longer than the existing canopy as viewed along North Second Street. The location is incongruent to the residential character of North Second Street.

12. Fencing. The Applicant proposes to enclose the refuse area, to be located north of the store, using six foot high concrete masonry (CMU) walls, with six foot high wood gates. The refuse

area will also be screened by rhododendron bushes to the north and a six foot high wooden fence to the east. The six foot high wooden fence is also proposed to screen the east side and south sides of the building. The fence design is comprised of pressure-treated posts and stringers with untreated cedar plank siding. The planks are vertically-oriented, with dog-ear tops. The fence siding will face the public right-of-way and extend above the posts.

Staff Analysis. The style, configuration and materials are deemed to be compliant with the Historic District Design and Preservation Guide, as well as the Planning and Zoning Code.

13. Signage. The Applicant proposes to improve the freestanding price sign by removing the existing price panels and replacing them with LED panels.

Staff Analysis. Per Section 7-311.7(d)(9) of the Planning and Zoning Code, in no case shall any flashing or pulsating light(s) be permitted in, on or about any sign which is visible from any public way, whether or not said light(s) are used for purposes of illumination or for purposes incidental to the communication or advertising content of the sign; all illumination sources shall so be constructed and located that no portion of an adjacent property shall be illuminated and so that no glare shall be visible to pedestrian or vehicular traffic upon any public right-of-way. It is the opinion of the Planning Bureau that the illumination type shall be white.

14. Landscaping. The Applicant has provided a landscaping plan. The plan includes Emerald Arborvitaes along the southern property line as a screen and rhododendron bushes along the refuse area to the north. Additional landscaping is proposed at the southwest corner of the building. The Applicant proposes to maintain the planter along North Second Street, including the three shade trees. The Applicant has estimated the new site design will increase previous coverage (landscaping) by eight to nine percent.

Staff Analysis. Existing landscaping includes the following: On North Second Street, set between the two curb-cuts and between the sidewalk and canopy, is a planter containing three shade trees and shrubs. At the corner of North Second and Maclay Streets and beneath the free-standing sign is a planter containing ground cover. On Maclay Street set between two curb-cuts and adjacent to the sidewalk is a planter containing ground cover. On Penn Street, there is a single shade tree. Along the eastern half of the southern property line, is a series of shade trees, though indiscernible as to whether they are on the property line or on the adjacent property.

The proposed landscaping is primarily scheduled for the southern and eastern edges of the property. Moreover, shrubs are located along the southern property edge from North Second Street to the fence and north of the refuse enclosure. The design proposes two St. Gregory Hedge Maples, one on the south side of the store and one on the north side of the refuse enclosure; the trees are estimated to reach a mature height of forty feet and mature spread of twelve to fifteen feet. There is no new landscaping proposed along North Second Street or Maclay Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial

The Planning Bureau staff recommends the request be denied for the following reason(s):

1. The site is located in an urban neighborhood, a national and municipal historic register district and adjacent to the Governor's Residence of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Applicant has not provided a contextual site design and architectural design to improve the residential nature of North Second Street. By locating pedestrian services, primarily that of the convenience store, to the rear of the site; locating vehicular services between the store and North Second Street; significantly increasing the canopy, signage and illumination along North Second Street; and providing no new landscaping along North Second Street, the proposed new site design will have an adverse effect upon the general historic and architectural nature of the district. A site plan shall provide for a site development that is consistent with the context of North Second Street, whereby the convenience store shall be oriented toward Maclay or Penn Streets and away from North Second Street and the dispensary shall be located adjacent to Penn Street and opposite from the Governor's Residence.

REVIEW PROCESS:

1. HARB makes recommendation to City Council.
2. City Council Building and Housing Committee Chair reviews and issues a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) or holds an additional meeting and issues Resolution to approve or deny the application.
3. Bureau of Codes will issue a Building Permit if CA has been issued and a Building Permit application has been submitted for processing.
4. Follow-up review of completed work by Planning Bureau staff to ensure compliance. Applicant to contact staff when work begins and again upon completion.