



**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR  
Thursday, April 10, 2008.**

**Commissioners Present:** Sarah Shotwell, Diane Giannola, Michael Bruner, Robert White, Jim Henrichs and Ellen Ramsburgh (arrived @ 6:09 p.m.) **(6)**

**Commissioners Absent:** Kristina Glusac **(1)**

**Staff Present:** Jill Thacher, HDC Coordinator/Planner II, Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting and Brenda Acquaviva, Administrative Support Specialist V, Planning and Development Services **(3)**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner White called the Special Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Quorum satisfied.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:**

*The Agenda was approved without objection.*

**SS - HEARINGS**

**SS-1     309 South Main Street - MSHD**

Long familiar as Dietzel's Shoe Store, the storefront on this 1916 building was formerly recessed with show windows on either side. After Dietzel's closed, the storefront was removed and boarded up. In January 1992, the Commission granted permission to remodel the storefront by bringing it out flush with the front of the building in a wood framed design that matches that of #311 next door.

The large neon sign on the front façade has changed with the tenants. As Dietzel's, the five vertical blocks read SHOES (see attached 1973 survey photo). Later, as City Grill and other entertainment venues, it said DANCE (1992 photo). The most recent tenant, Improv Inferno comedy club, changed it to LAUGH. Appropriate modifications to the sign may be approved at the staff level.

A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued by the HDC at their February 2008 meeting to rebuild the storefront.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the east side of South Main Street, south of Liberty Street and north of William Street.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant is requesting to extend the previously approved storefront by adding three foot wide decorative wood panels on both sides.

**STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. As noted in the February 2008 staff report, the storefront approved at that time was slightly narrower than the previously existing one, and would expose more of the masonry on either side. When the work was begun several weeks ago, the applicant discovered the reason that the previous storefront extended out farther - - there is

51 existing, non-original gray tile work that is glue-covered, unsightly, and obscuring the  
52 bricks on both sides of the storefront (see photo). If approved, this application would  
53 allow the applicants to cover the tile with wood panels, similar to the way the previous  
54 storefront obscured them. The applicants are not interested in restoring the underlying  
55 brick by removing the tile and glue.

- 56  
57 2. The design of the wood panels is simple and compatible with the approved storefront and  
58 neighboring buildings.

59  
60 **Owner/Address:** Shaw Restaurants, Inc (Leasee), Mark Shaw969 Skyevale Dr, NE Ada, MI  
61 48104

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63 **Applicant:** Rockford Construction, Randy VanderHoff, 5540 Glenwood Hill Pkwy Grand Rapids,  
64 MI 49512

65  
66 **Review Committee:** Commissioner’s Henrichs and Giannola visited the site.

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68 Commissioner Henrichs – The project appears to be straightforward and necessary. This is a  
69 commercial property that has had several versions of the façade in the past. The application  
70 seems appropriate.

71  
72 Commissioner Giannola – Concurs with Commissioner Henrichs. This appears necessary.

73  
74 **Applicant Presentation:** Thomas Goodwin of “The Melting Pot” restaurant was present to  
75 speak on behalf of the appeal. He reiterated what the review committee stated – that the front  
76 of this building has had many changes and this one would be in the best interest of the property.

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78 **Questions of the Applicant by the Commission:** None.

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80 **Audience Participation:** None.

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82 **Discussion by the Commission:**

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84 **MOTION**

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86 Moved by Commissioner Henrichs, Seconded by Commissioner Shotwell, “that the  
87 **Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application at 309 South Main**  
88 **Street in the Main Street Historic District to extend the width of the previously approved**  
89 **storefront by adding wood panels on both sides, as proposed. The work is generally**  
90 **compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest**  
91 **of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior’s***  
92 ***Standards for Rehabilitation* standards 2 and 9.”**

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94 **On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – *UNANIMOUS (Application Approved)***

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97 **SS-2      302 South Main Street - MSHD**

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99 **BACKGROUND:** This three-story brick Italianate commercial block has been remodeled twice:  
100 once after a major fire in 1910 when the original single windows were replaced by the present  
101 bands of multiple windows, and again in 1976 when the roof was raised to accommodate the  
102 Downtown Racquet Club on the third floor. At the same time the storefronts at 300 and 302

103 were both remodeled with darker brick facing and dark aluminum store window frames. Only the  
104 Carrara glass storefront at 304 has remained unchanged.

105  
106 **LOCATION:** The site is located on the west side of South Main Street between Liberty and  
107 William.

108  
109 **APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a 24-foot wide awning and an  
110 integral 13 foot 10 inch wide sign over the storefront.

111  
112 **STAFF FINDINGS:**

- 113  
114 1. The awning appears to have been designed so as not to harm the existing architectural  
115 features and materials.
- 116  
117 2. A sign would be mounted on brackets that go through the awning and hold it away from  
118 the wall in front of the canopy. Staff has reservations about this arrangement, since signs  
119 are traditionally placed in the sign band, or the business name is printed on the canopy  
120 itself. Also, much more framing would be needed to support the sign and the awning than  
121 to support a simple fabric awning alone.
- 122  
123 3. The city's draft Design Guidelines for Historic Districts addresses awnings and signs  
124 separately. This particular storefront may not have a tall enough sign band area above  
125 the front windows to accommodate both a wall sign on top and an awning below it. The  
126 applicant should choose one or the other, but not try to combine them in the same space.
- 127  
128 4. The awning's height and placement along the storefront is compatible with surrounding  
129 buildings. The business to the south (Seyfried Jewelers) has only a sign. The business to  
130 the north (Starbucks) has a flat canopy that extends out from the building, and signage  
131 on top of the canopy. The top and bottom of the awning would align with the Starbucks  
132 canopy. (See photo at end of report.) The top of the awning would be mounted just  
133 below the stone sill of the second floor windows.
- 134  
135 5. The sign is externally up-lit by LED tubes mounted along the base of the sign that are  
136 shielded by a small lip along the front edge of the sign. This type of lighting is  
137 appropriate.

138  
139 **Owner/ Address:** Rob Spears, 514 Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

140  
141 **Applicant:** Sami Valija, 27249 James Street, Warren, MI 48092

142  
143 **Review Committee:** Commissioners Henrichs and Giannola visited the site.

144  
145 Commissioner Henrichs – I would concur with the staff report that the canopy and sign  
146 arrangement actually appear to be incompatible with the adjoining buildings and streetscape.  
147 We would support the staff recommendation.

148  
149 Commissioner Giannola – Concurs with Commissioner Henrichs.

150  
151 **Applicant Presentation:** Mr. John Janviriyia was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. He  
152 gave a background as to why they chose the design presented. Most of their traffic will come  
153 from the north and will be blocked by the Starbucks sign. Bringing the sign out will prevent the  
154 business from being 'hidden.'

155 **Questions of the Applicant by the Commission:**

156

157 Commissioner Bruner – The drawing isn't clear about materials used for the sign. Is the  
158 structure beneath able to support the sign? Can you tell us more about it? (It would actually be  
159 more like 'Syntra' – a sign material – an exterior grade plastic, so that would be more like  
160 dimensional lettering.) The bottom of the sign is to be recessed with LED's? The upper portion  
161 says 'non-lit' – but there will be some light up toward that sign, but not internally lit? (I would  
162 have, but it's not what you would allow.)

163

164 **Audience Participation:** None.

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166 **Discussion by the Commission:**

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168 **MOTION**

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170 Moved by Commissioner Bruner, Seconded by Commissioner Henrichs, **“that the**  
171 **Commission deny the application at 302 South Main Street to install a combined**  
172 **awning and sign over the storefront. The work is not compatible in exterior design,**  
173 **arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the**  
174 **surrounding area and does not meet *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for***  
175 ***Rehabilitation* standards 5, 9, and 10. “**

176

177 Commissioner Bruner – Stated that he was not opposed to this awning and sign combination.  
178 Staff stated reservations previously stated that this would be 'new ground' in the way the sign is  
179 composed. Your point is well taken that you are challenged to present yourself on the street as  
180 well – because it's unique and there is nothing that prohibits the combination of the two, except  
181 that it needs to be of substantial strength to support its construction, which isn't apparent in the  
182 details presented. I'd be more inclined to table this until there is more information.

183

184 Commissioner Henrichs – I am not opposed to the 'plane' that the applicant is proposing to  
185 locate the sign in – equal to that of Starbucks; it's the combination of the sign with the awning to  
186 seems to have many unknowns, as Commissioner Bruner eluded to. This would require further  
187 explanation and would break ground as 'new precedent' relative to the other storefronts where a  
188 sign would be embedded into an awning.

189

190 Commissioner Shotwell – If it were denied or tabled pending further information, I would like  
191 more information about how it is being fastened into the building itself – in masonry joints or  
192 exactly what it is doing to the façade of the building. In order to be a strong enough hold and  
193 not be a danger to the public, I would like to see those details.

194

195 Commissioner Ramsburgh – I concur with Commissioner Shotwell. When I drove by this, I  
196 couldn't determine from the plans how it would be fastened, and there is not enough information  
197 or what other possibilities have been considered.

198

199 **MOTION**

200

201 Moved by Commissioner Bruner, Seconded by Commissioner Giannola, **“that the**  
202 **Commission postpone the application at 302 South Main Street until the May 8,**  
203 **2008 Regular Session, pending additional information. “ (Original Motion to Deny**  
204 **will be pending at the May 8, 2008 Session.)**

205

206 **On a Voice Vote – MOTION TO TABLE - PASSED – UNANIMOUS (Application Tabled)**

207 **SS-3** **117 EAST LIBERTY STREET - MSHD**

208  
209 **BACKGROUND:** This two-story yellow brick commercial building was built around 1906. The  
210 first occupant at 117 was shoemaker M Gauss. Originally the upper story of the building had  
211 pairs of double-hung windows with transoms. Those at 117 were eight-over-eight, while those at  
212 199 are the original six-over-six to accommodate the narrower side of the building. Both  
213 storefronts have been altered completely.

214  
215 **LOCATION:** The site is located between Main Street and Fourth Avenue.

216  
217 **APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to install a twenty-foot wide and three-foot  
218 tall awning over the storefront.

219  
220 A replacement sign shown on the drawings has been administratively approved.

221  
222 **STAFF FINDINGS:**

- 223  
224 1. There is a decorative, non-original shelf that is painted black and extends out from the  
225 bottom of the sign band (probably less than a foot). It may have been used to hide up-  
226 lighting or simply as a decorative feature. The applicant would like to be able to remove  
227 this shelf if necessary for the installation of the awning. There is no lighting proposed for  
228 the new awning.
- 229  
230 2. The canvas awning would be 20 feet wide and three feet tall, and would be mounted  
231 immediately below the sign band. The awning's height and placement along the  
232 storefront is compatible with surrounding buildings. The building to the west has a flat  
233 fixed canopy that projects straight out from the wall. The top of the proposed awning  
234 would be level with the top of the canopy next door. The business to the east has no  
235 canopy.
- 236  
237 3. The proposed awning is simple, appropriate in design, and compatible with the district.

238  
239 **Owner/ Address:** Z Liberty Corp., 117 E Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

240  
241 **Applicant:** Tom Holleman, 136 N Old Woodward Ave., Birmingham, MI 48009

242  
243 **Review Committee:** Commissioners Henrichs and Giannola visited the site.

244  
245 Commissioner Henrichs – The proposed project is compatible with the adjoining buildings and  
246 streetscape.

247  
248 Commissioner Giannola – I concur with Commissioner Henrichs that this is appropriate.

249  
250 **Applicant Presentation:** Mr. Tom Holloman and his partner Mr. Kerry Johnson stated that they  
251 are the owners of the Cupcake Station in Birmingham, MI and are looking forward to opening a  
252 shop in Ann Arbor. One of the requirements we would like to have is to create an 'old  
253 fashioned' historic feeling within and without the store. The awning and storefront fit that image.  
254 (Mr. Holloman presented a sketch of what they would like to use, along with a sample of the  
255 fabric for the awning. He presented the Commission with a historical photo of the building which  
256 had the same type of awning, as well as a photo of their store in Birmingham.)

259 **Questions of the Applicant by the Commission:**

260

261 Commissioner Bruner – I noticed two ‘gooseneck’ lights in the sketch as well as the picture of  
262 your other store. These are not mentioned in your application, but I assume your intent is to  
263 install those lights? (Yes.) The edge of the awning would be scalloped as well? (Yes.)

264

265 Commissioner Henrichs – The staff recommendations refers to a ‘shelf’ that needs to be  
266 removed? What is that referring to? (The petitioner pointed out a metal trough.)

267

268 Commissioner Ramsburgh – Stated that the store next door has a similar ‘trough.’ These  
269 appear to have been used in the past to ‘store’ the rolled awning when retracted back.

270

271 **Audience Participation:** None.

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273 **Discussion by the Commission:**

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275 **MOTION**

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277 Moved by Commissioner Giannola, Seconded by Commission Shotwell, “**that the**  
278 **Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 117 East**  
279 **Liberty Street to install an awning over the non-original storefront, and if**  
280 **necessary, remove a shelf installed at the base of the sign band. The work is**  
281 **generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and**  
282 **relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The***  
283 ***Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* standards 5, 9, and 10.”**

284

285 **On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – *UNANIMOUS (Application Approved)***

286

287 *Commissioner Bruner stated that he hoped that the applicant would provide better drawings for*  
288 *fabrication and installation prior to erecting the awning.*

289

290 **SS-4 713 WEST LIBERTY STREET - OWSHD**

291

292 **BACKGROUND:** This two-and-a-half-story, gable-front house appears to have been  
293 constructed about 1885 for John Goetz Jr, a grocer, John Goetz & Sons, on South Main Street.  
294 John’s widow, Dorothea Goetz, lived in the house until 1940. From about 1920 until 1940 a  
295 Lydia Henne, a Christian Scientist also lived in the house. Marwood H. Goetz, a student at  
296 Cleary College lived in the house in 1941, but by 1943 several members of the Bensinger family  
297 who worked at Liberty Food Lockers lived in the house. By 1945 a Ford employee, Herman G.  
298 Wieterhoft and his wife Rosa lived in the house. The 1916 and 1925 Sanborn maps show the  
299 house in its current configuration with two, one-story outbuildings on the property. One  
300 outbuilding had an ice house attached to it.

301

302 The current owner received a staff approval to remove the artificial siding and two non-original  
303 concrete porch stoops to repair the foundation behind.

304

305 **LOCATION:** The site is on the south side of West Liberty Street, between Fifth and Seventh.

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307 **APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to remove a non-original rear door  
308 enclosure and a chimney on the rear section of the house.

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311 **STAFF FINDINGS:**

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1. The rear door enclosure is a three-sided, gable-roofed enclosure that is one story high and extends from a rear basement door. There is a small window on one side. It appears to have originally had clapboard siding and was covered with wide artificial siding with the rest of the house, probably in the 1940s. The enclosure does not appear to be original to the house, and is not a character defining feature.
2. The chimney extends from the center of the rear portion of the house. According to the owner the exterior part of the chimney was constructed in the 1970s, and the original chimney brick is still inside the house. The reconstructed chimney has a liner that protrudes from the top, and the reconstructed chimney does not resemble a historic chimney, and is not original to the house and is not a character defining feature.

**Owner/ Applicant/Address:** Michael Bielby, 605 N. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48013

**Review Committee:** Commissioners Henrichs and Giannola visited the site.

Commissioner Henrichs – I concur with the staff report. The chimney does appear to be from the 1970’s due to the style and type of brick. This doesn’t appear to be original to the house, nor does the shed in back appear to be a contributing structure to the home. The applicants appear to be taking a strong interest in the home and are taking the correct approach and attitude and sensitivity of restoration on the home. It’s the type of project that we want to be supportive on if we can, and I favor approval of the application.

Commissioner Giannola – I concur with Commissioner Henrichs and the staff report.

**Applicant Presentation:** Michael Bielby, petitioner and owner was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. He agreed with the Commissioners and staff report.

**Questions of the Applicant by the Commission:**

Commissioner Bruner – (Asked questions regarding the ‘doghouse’ structure. The petitioner and the Commissioner discussed this as well as when it was possibly built.)

**Audience Participation:** None.

**Discussion by the Commission:**

**MOTION**

Moved by Commissioner Bruner, Seconded by Commissioner Henrichs, “**that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application at 713 West Liberty Street in the Old West Side Historic District to remove a non-original rear entry door enclosure and the chimney on the rear of the house, as proposed. The work is generally compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* in particular standard number 2.”**

**On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUS (Application Approved)**

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Without objection, the Special Session was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.*