


Talks continue for Claudius Place in downtown Crozet  
written by Newspark Team | June 12, 2011

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Charlottesville Tomorrow  
Monday, June 13, 2011

With the new Crozet Library stalled for lack of funding, it appears a new commercial building will be the cornerstone of a major expansion of downtown Crozet.

As the design for Claudius Place works its way through Albemarle County's Architectural Review Board, the developers are learning that being first in line carries a hefty design responsibility.

 *Claudius Place Architect, Bob Anderson*

Bob Anderson, lead architect for the project, views Claudius Place as a "transitional building" between old Crozet and a revitalized downtown. Located across from the library site, the two-story, 6,607-square-foot building would be the commercial anchor of the Barnes Lumber redevelopment project.

Anderson told the ARB last week that his office-and-restaurant design brought together Crozet's industrial past with the traditional architecture of its historic storefronts.

"Through materials we want to tie into those [two sides], but at the same time we want it to have a contemporary feel to it so that it's more representative of who we are today, as opposed to who we were 20 years ago or 50 years ago," Anderson said.

However, some members of the board felt that certain elements of the design — in particular, the roof and two "languages" of the façade — were not appropriate within the existing fabric of Crozet.

"It concerns me a little bit if this is a main street building that doesn't use the language of main street architecture," said board member Bruce Wardell. "It's sort of taken the warehouse language that's along the railroad tracks and brought it over to main street."

"We could mimic that [traditional architecture] but that was not our decision," Anderson responded. "We decided, no, let's think in terms of the warehouses that are up there, the things that are going to be torn down [at the lumber yard], and pull a little toward that direction."

Wardell said the "argument didn't really hold together" and he felt the design looked more like a "1950s school building" and needed to incorporate more of the existing, traditional main street context.

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