

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2022 MEETING

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM in Meeting Room A, 2nd floor, Town Hall.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Brian Davis, Chairman, Debra DeVries-Dalton Vice Chairman, Mark Branse, Secretary, David Flinchum, Jeff Kamm, Amy Luzi, and Bob Shipman; Rebecca Augur, Director of Planning & Land Use Services, Gregory Foran, Parks Superintendent/Tree Warden and Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP, Planner

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5pm. Chairman Davis gave opening remarks acknowledging the inaugural meeting of the Committee and his expectations going forward.

2. 39 NEW LONDON TURNPIKE – removal of existing monument sign; replaced with monument-directory sign, perpendicular to road – Town Center Zone – SCT Holdings, LLC, owner – Darin Senna, Hartford Sign & Design, LLC, applicant

Geriann Williams of Hartford Sign & Design explained the proposal, which is to replace the existing 87 square foot monument sign displaying the words “Glen Lochen”, with a 32 square foot, double-faced, ground-mounted tenant directory sign. The purpose of the new sign is to give larger tenants signage on New London Turnpike.

Secretary Branse questioned whether this was a tenant directory sign because it did not reflect the amount of tenants in the building. He expressed concern that the placement will not let people know they have arrived at Glen Lochen. Julie Tse, property manager for Glen Lochen, stated that the increased number of tenants has resulted in this request. She added that there is no room for more wall signage so the new tenant sign is needed.

Ms. Luzi asked why the proposed tenant sign is not in the location of current Glen Lochen sign. She added that the orientation could be adjusted perpendicular to the road to increase its visibility. Ms. Luzi said that she would rather see the existing directory sign size increased and the Glen Lochen sign remain. Chairman Davis and Vice Chairman DeVries-Dalton shared Ms. Luzi’s concern about removing the Glen Lochen sign. Mr. Davis asked the applicant if they would consider reusing the current Glen Lochen sign for the new sign. Ms. Tse explained that the building underwent a major renovation in 2013 in which the number of ground signs was reduced and the locations of signs changed. Ms. Tse said that she would prefer to have three signs and to keep the large Glen Lochen sign.

Mr. Flincham questioned whether going back to three signs would create a proposal that TPZ could not approve, or a hardship that should get a variance. Mr. Kamm expressed concern regarding the wall signage on the building. The applicant suggested making the Glen Lochen sign on the top of the proposed sign larger. Mr. Branse opposes the new sign, stating it is too difficult to read from the car. Ms. Luzi said that landscaping should be

installed around the base of new sign and that she would rather see three signs. Mr. Davis advised the applicant to come back in with revised plans.

400 HEBRON AVENUE – in connection with proposed change of use to specialty grocer, construct appurtenant delivery/refuse area and employee parking for grocer on west side of building utilizing 366 Hebron Avenue & 7 Linden Street – Town Center Zone – Jonathan Sczurek, Megson, Heagle & Friend, C.E. & L.S., LLC – Mark Vertucci, Fuss & O’Neill, Inc. – Andrea Gomes, Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP - H374, LLC (Allan Schwartz), applicant

Attorney Andrea Gomes introduced the development team and explained that draft materials were provided in advance. She noted that the material to be provided to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission is the same as what was provided to the ASDRC. The proposal is to construct a small addition designed to continue the same architecture of the existing building. She said that fencing and landscaping would be installed to screen the improvements. Ms. Gomes added that siding, trim, and cornice would be the same as the existing building. She said that false windows would be added on the front of the receiving area to mimic the existing windows. Ms. Gomes stated that a New England-style swing gate with colonial details on rollers would be installed on the new entrance off Hebron Avenue. She said the architectural features on the rear side of the building for dumpsters, loading area and pallet area would also be the same as the existing building. The applicant is requesting to change the color of the existing awnings to red at the request of the grocer. She added that the storefront entrance on the south side would have the same framing and dark aluminum color with sliding doors as the other existing entrances. Ms. Gomes pointed out the outside storage/sales area near main entrance.

Adam Kallstrom of Thomas Graceffa Landscape Architect LLC said that a six-foot vinyl fence and a row of arborvitaes would be installed along the south side of the delivery area to provide screening for the neighbors on Linden Street. He stated that the goal of the landscape plan is to have seasonal interest and provide a mix of evergreens, spring flowering shrubs, and grasses while to screening the building elements. He added that on Hebron Avenue a mix of taller evergreen trees and shrubs with spring and summer flowering plantings is proposed. Mr. Kallstrom mentioned that the southern border has a ten-foot landscape buffer and that the neighbors have provided feedback on planting plans.

Jonathan Sczurek of Megson, Heagle & Friend, C.E. & L.S., LLC discussed the site lighting. They plan on four, 14-foot tall, pole-mounted lights, and one wall-mounted light. Mr. Sczurek added that the LED fixtures on the north wall match the existing fixtures.

Attorney Gomes stated that the outdoor sales area would be small, with decorative placards. She then said that two existing parking spaces in the lot at 400 Hebron would be converted to cart returns. She added that there will also be a cart corral on the southern side of the building, to the left of the main entrance. This cart corral will be covered by a black metal overhang similar to the overhang on the Gottfried & Somberg building at 340 Hebron Avenue.

Attorney Gomes stated that the proposed project was extending a land use pattern established at the Gottfried & Somberg building at 340 Hebron Avenue. She said that the project would have no adverse impact on the Village District. The landscaping will improve year-round appearance of the building at 400 Hebron Avenue, and the improvements are harmonious with existing development in the area, making an attractive appearance on both Linden and Hebron frontages. Ms. Gomes expressed her applicant's desire, due to a tight timeline with the grocer, to get feedback from the Committee in time for the May 3rd TPZ meeting.

Secretary Branse expressed concern about demolishing the building at 366 Hebron Avenue for employee parking when the site meets the minimum parking requirements. Ms. Gomes responded that the addition continues the design that was previously approved for the existing building at 400 Hebron Avenue. Further, the building at 366 Hebron Avenue is in disrepair and has been vacant for 18 months, is not generally usable, and needs to be removed to accommodate delivery truck-turning movement.

Mr. Kamm expressed concern about the number and size of the curb cuts on Linden Street. Mr. Sczurek explained the truck-turning movements. Ms. DeVries-Dalton recommended that the applicant eliminate parking along the southern property line and install more landscaping. She also recommended using Vanderwolf Pine for screening. She then asked if the maple tree on southern property line was going to be cut down or damaged as part of the project. Ms. Gomes replied that it was going to be cut down. Mr. Davis stated that the addition should not look like the rest of the building. He does not like the architecture of the existing building and the applicant should not try to incorporate that architecture into the addition. Mr. Flinchum stated that the building is located at the entry to the town center on a highly visible corner site, and he expressed concern about overhead garage bay doors facing neighboring properties.

Mr. Kamm shared Mr. Davis's concern about incorporating the architecture of the existing building into the addition, nor was he in favor of the faux windows facing Hebron Avenue. Mr. Kamm stated that he did not like the idea of creating a false front and recommended stepping the addition back from the front of the existing building. He said that he would like to see the corner of Linden and Hebron in renderings to show how the corner would look with loading dock and curb cuts.

Ms. Luzi stated that the massing of the addition was not to scale on that corner. She recommended breaking up the façade rather than creating in one long façade. She also recommended adding depth to the building by stepping the addition back. Ms. Luzi then recommended changing the materials, and possibly adding a roof. She said that the design of 340 Linden Street and the Stop & Shop on Oak Street/New London Turnpike are good examples to follow. She shared Mr. Kamm's view that the applicant needed to supply a view of the entire gate and corner of Linden and Hebron to get a better idea of what the proposal will look like.

Mr. Davis stated that the homogeneity of the building design is not good in a village setting. He recommended that the applicant use a variety of design in the addition, break up the façade, and explore making the addition look like a different building.

Dr. Allan Schwartz of H3734, LLC stated to the group that he and his design team are doing the best they can with the tight space at the site. He thought the town would not want the addition to be the focus so they purposely created a design to hide it.

Ms. Luzi suggested eliminating the Hebron Avenue curb cut and using additional space to do something different with the addition. She added that she was okay with the change in color of the awnings and with the proposed outdoor storage. She requested to see design of cart corrals and expressed concern about the location of utilities. Mr. Mullen said that town staff was working with Eversource to influence the location of meters. Ms. Devries-Dalton suggested that the outdoor storage be on Hebron Avenue to create more vibrancy and suggested more shade trees along Hebron Avenue. Mr. Shipman expressed concern about the curb cut on Hebron Avenue. He recommended putting more trees along Hebron Avenue and suggested placing them in stands rather than using uniform spacing. He also recommended changing the plantings in islands on Linden Street.

Mr. Branse expressed concern about demolition of building. He felt that project required a Section 12 Special Permit with Design Review rather than a Minor Change. He wanted to see more landscaping on the site overall. He also recommended that a brick water table be brought around the corner of the addition and raised concern about a cart corral blocking a walkway. Mr. Branse recommended more screening for neighbors on Linden Street. He had no issue with the outdoor storage area but recommended redesigning cart corrals to be more attractive. He expressed concern about the gate on Hebron Avenue and questioned whether awnings qualify as signs because of uniform color.

Ms. Gomes said that she would will put together materials for the next meeting.

The group agreed to have a special meeting on April 27, 2022 at 4:30 pm. Ms. Gomes stated that materials would be submitted for distribution by April 25, 2022.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.


Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP
Planner