

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MAY 17, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM in the Academy Building Cafeteria and via Zoom.

1. ROLL CALL

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

Excused: Robert Shipman

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5pm.

1199 MANCHESTER ROAD – proposal for a “set-aside development” pursuant to CGS Section 8-30g regarding the construction of an apartment building containing 74 units, w/parking & other site improvements – Planned Business and Development Zone and Rural Residence Zone - Timothy S. Hollister, Esq. and Andrea L. Gomes Esq. Hinckley Allen, Wes Wentworth, P.E. Wentworth Civil Engineers, LLC - Manchester/Hebron Avenue, LLC (Richard Hayes, Jr.), applicant – FORMAL REVIEW

Attorney Andrea Gomes presented an overview of the application. Wes Wentworth, engineer for the project, stated soils on the site were dry sand and gravel and there were no wetlands. Mr. Wentworth then discussed the site plan. Alan Lamson, AIA from FLB Architecture explained that the proposed building would be 5 stories, however only 4 stories would be visible facing on the south elevation. He stated that the upper units have balconies, and the ground floor has patios. Mr. Lamson then stated that all elevations would have the same materials and design features. He added the main entrance to the building would be located on the north side of the building facing Hebron Avenue and would have a portico. John Alexopoulos, landscape architect for the project, presented the landscaping plan.

Committee member Luzi stated that she while she appreciated the fact that the building was built into the slope of the property, she still found it out of scale with the neighborhood. She stated that she did not like did not like the pediments, and she recommended modifying the floorplans to break up the flatness of the northern elevation. Ms. Luzi stated that she found the main entrance to be diminutive and would like it to be more prominent. She also recommended terracing and landscaping to soften the retaining walls.

Secretary Branse stated that he likes the location of the project. He recommended that the applicant install sidewalks and street trees even if the applicant has to plant them in the CT DOT right-of-way.

Committee member Kamm also recommended using landscaping on top of the retaining walls to screen the parking area. He stated that the dumpster needed to be located inside an enclosure.

Mr. Kamm stated that he would like more variety on the building, whether in the form of different railings or other design features to avoid the repetitive nature of the building and to break up the mass of the building.

Vice-Chairman DeVries-Dalton also recommended street trees, stating that they would have a softening effect for both residents and passersby. If the applicant could not plant street trees, then they should bolster front plantings with shrubs mixing evergreen and deciduous. Ms. DeVries-Dalton commented that there were no islands in the parking lot to provide landscaping opportunities.

Committee member Flinchum stated that he felt the scale is not in keeping with the surrounding area. He recommended a maximum height of three or four stories. He commented that the facades were very plain. He recommended using horizontal banding and decorative accents. Mr. Flinchum stated that the retaining walls need a more decorative treatment. He also would like to see impervious surface.

Chairman Davis stated that he felt the scale of the building was fine because of the backdrop of the hill on that prominent corner. He thinks the building will nestle into the site. He felt the pediments were not good for the roofline proportions. Mr. Davis stated that a frieze board with some brackets would help to reduce the scale of the building inexpensively. He also recommended using more than just one color on the building. He then recommended creating tiers for the retaining wall if feasible at the Hebron Avenue entrance. He shared Mr. Kamm's view that enclosures need to be installed around dumpsters. He recommended that the applicant put some plantings on the top of the retaining wall on Hebron Avenue to shield the cars from view. Mr. Davis stated that if possible it would be beneficial for the applicant to eliminate parking spaces in order to include shade trees. He also recommended planting trees on the slope to integrate into the neighborhood.

The applicant requested an example of a frieze board and bracket through staff. The applicant then clarified that one neighbor will see the roofline, but not into the actual units.

The group agreed that the next steps would be to hold a special meeting to develop a formal recommendation.

2610 MAIN STREET – proposal to construct two multi-family townhomes (10 units total) incorporating existing multi-family house – Town Center and Town Center Village District Zones – Jack Kemper, Kemper Associates Architects, Jonathan Sczurek, P.E., Megson, Heagle & Friend, C.E. & L.S., LLC; Thomas Graceffa Landscape Architect, LLC – Attorney Joseph P. Jaconetta for Jays & Tee, LLC, applicant – INFORMAL REVIEW

Jonathan Sczurek, PE gave an overview of the project. Tom Graceffa reviewed the landscape plan. He stated that there would be columnar oaks on the Main Street side of the building. Screening along the back property line includes existing large oaks, a mixture of arborvitae and trellises. Islands in parking area will also have landscaping. Mr. Graceffa then stated that there would be two patios on Main Street.

Jack Kemper, AIA, addressed the architecture. He stated that the retained house is the prominent feature of the front building, with the additions stepped back. All the residents in the Main Street-facing building will have access to Main Street. Chairman Davis asked for a model of the rear building. Mr. Kemper explained that they were keeping the same architectural language for the rear building. He added that he tried to break up the rooflines for the rear building. He said that he added banding to the first floor to give the building a base. Mr. Kemper stated that all the units have balconies with garage doors underneath. He then pointed out the band of recessed panels at the top of both buildings to give the look of a frieze board.

Chairman Davis asked about the slope of the rear building roof. Mr. Kemper explained that the gables are the same slope between the two buildings; however, the slopes were lowered on the back building.

Committee member Flinchum stated that he liked the proposal. He noted that the windows on the north and south elevations seem very small compared to the east and west elevations.

Vice Chairman DeVries-Dalton stated that she liked that existing oak trees are preserved. She questioned Geneva Hemlock's resistance to wooly adelgid. She also questioned replacing two trees around the patios in the front with a single shade tree. She recommended substituting the grass on the driveway side with some type of shrub.

Committee member Kamm asked about the height of the back building. He expressed concern about shadowing the two-story condominiums to the east. Mr. Kamm stated that he liked that the project was preserving the existing building. He recommended toning down elements on the additions to accentuate the main building. He expressed concern about the dumpster location on another property. Mr. Sczurek explained that there will be cross easements to interconnect the properties. Mr. Kamm questioned the difference in foot-candles across the property. Mr. Sczurek stated that the change in foot-candles is a result of the 8-foot light pole height. Chairman Davis stated that he prefers shorter light posts. Mr. Kamm questioned lighting on the balconies, noting that they are not showing in the light calculations.

Secretary Branse commended the applicant stating, "this is what should be done. He stated that he liked that the project preserved the existing house. He also liked the slight difference in depth and change in colors between the additions and the existing house. Mr. Branse stated that he too, would like to see street trees incorporated in the project. He added that he liked that the parking was located in the courtyard between the buildings and he liked the interconnectedness with neighboring properties. Mr. Branse noted that there was only one light in front of the building. He stated that the two lights located between the buildings could be higher to give better coverage of the parking lot.

Committee member Luzi applauded the applicant for this project. She stated that she liked that the old house stands proud, especially with the change in color. Ms. Luzi stated that she also liked the use of porches, and the double columns to anchor the front building. She stated that she liked that the windows were varied, but they were all in the same architectural language. Ms. Luzi stated that she liked the use of functional spaces on the outside. She also liked how the front building steps in and out. Ms. Luzi felt that the front building is in keeping with the historic area

and looks residential. She stated that the rear building falls a little short in comparison to the front building. Ms. Luzi stated that she would like to see a trash enclosure. She stated that she would like to see the two end units stepped down, because they created an odd roofline. Ms. Luzi recommended more screening from Main Street of the double garage on the rear building. She also recommended shade trees along the Main Street sidewalk. She then asked where meter connections will be located and recommended that they be screened.

Chairman Davis stated that he very much liked the proposal, but had some recommendations. He stated that the pediment on the north elevation encroaches on the historic house and intrudes on the roofline. He recommended having ornamentation in at least some of the pediments, either louvres or windows. He stated that the applicant's approach with this project is what the Committee would like to encourage in the Town Center.

52 NATIONAL DRIVE – proposed building addition – Planned Employment and Flood Zones; Dutton Associates, New England Traffic Solutions, applicant – INFORMAL REVIEW

Jim Dutton presented the application. Chairman Davis stated that it was easy to tell the addition from the original building. He recommended treating the corner of the addition to resemble the corner on the front of the existing building. Mr. Davis also recommended that the applicant prepare renderings for the next iteration of plans.

Committee member Luzi recommended relocating the existing large window on the back of the building to the southwest corner of the addition.

Secretary Branse stated that the proposal looks like two buildings glued together. He felt the addition could be better integrated with the main building.

Committee member Kamm recommended that the applicant prepare elevation drawings of all sides of the building. He also recommended providing accurate color renderings. Mr. Kamm also suggested adding more landscaping to the east side of the building to match the west side.

Vice Chairman Devries-Dalton recommended adding more shade trees.

Committee member Flinchum recommended reducing the amount of impervious surface by removing parking spaces. He also recommended better integration of the addition into the main building.

121 KREIGER LANE – proposal for construction services yard – Planned Commerce/GW-1 Zone – Mark W. Friend, P.E., Soil Scientist, LEED AP – General Landscaping, LLC, applicant – INFORMAL REVIEW

Mark Friend, PE made a presentation for the proposal.

Members of the Committee observed trees stumps from recent cutting in the rear of the property, and wondered if that cutting had cleared the area shown as wooded on the site plan (which

shows a tree line). If so, then those cleared areas must be re-landscaped to provide a buffer to the adjoining properties. The Committee also asked for more information about adjoining uses and topography to determine what kind/height of buffering will be needed.

The height of material bunkers was not known at this time. The design engineer thought perhaps 8-10 feet in height, in which case buffering would have to account for that height of structure. The bunkers will be constructed of so-called “mafia blocks,” which are typical for bunkers of this kind, but are not attractive and need to be screened.

The consensus was that the front landscaping could use some additional thought. This is an opportunity for a reputable landscape company to “show off” what they can do. Members suggested alternative plant materials.

There was concern about the use of chain link fence and chain link gates. While this is an industrial zone, something more attractive would be preferred. Vinyl slats in chain link fencing provide visual screening, but a more attractive option should be explored. The design engineer noted that the site plan submitted was wrong: It shows the chain link fence in front of the landscaping when, in fact, it is proposed to be behind it (like the property across the street owned by the same company). The designers will explore enclosure alternatives.

2533-2577 MAIN STREET and Lot W-38A MAIN STREET – proposal for building addition, parking lot expansion and reconfigured parking at St. Paul’s Church – Town Center, Town Center Village District and Flood Zones – Alter & Pearson, LLC, Community of Saints Isidore and Maria, applicant – INFORMAL REVIEW

Attorney Meghan Hope made a presentation for the proposal.

The Committee was unanimous and emphatic that demolition of the existing parish house, and the substitution of a parking area/driveway, is not acceptable. Expansion of the handicapped parking area and the provision of a loading area for the kitchen (as proposed) are possible while retaining the existing building.

There was no particular use that the Committee proposed for the existing parish house. It could be a Church-related use or rented as an income-producing office or retail store, but this was left to the needs and desires of the Church. What was important was that the solid-to-void ratio and rhythm of the street be preserved.

There was concern about the extension of the “drop off” driveway parallel to Main Street, partly because it requires demolition of the existing parish house, and partly because of the increase in pavement along Main Street. It was also noted that shifting the southerly two-way driveway closer to the Main Street/Welles Street intersection would increase the probability that the driveway will be unusable as traffic on Main Street backs up at the light and blocks that driveway. The curb cut should be retained in its current location.

The Committee suggested that more handicapped spaces could be shifted and/or located to the rear of the building because the new addition will have an elevator that will bring visitors from the parking lot level to the sanctuary level.

The use of hip roof element versus a peaked roof element was discussed at length. Both rooflines are now used on the existing building, and there appear to be pros and cons to using one or the other for the addition.

The rooftop air handling above the proposed/expanded kitchen area should be screened in a manner that utilizes whatever roofline is used, rather than what amounts to a rooftop fence.

There was discussion of the adequacy of the parking lot landscaping, especially with regard to the islands that double as stormwater management systems.

There was discussion of the bay window elements on the new addition. The project architect felt that they needed additional thought, and some suggestions were made.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP
Planner