

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2022

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee with Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP, Planner and Greg Foran, Tree Warden, in attendance held a Regular Meeting at 5:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street with an option for Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

1. ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present

Mr. Brian Davis, Chairman
Ms. Debra DeVries-Dalton, Vice Chairman
Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary
Mr. David Flinchum {participated via Zoom video conferencing}
Ms. Amy Luzi {participated via Zoom video conferencing}
Mr. Jeff Kamm
Mr. Robert Shipman

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:04 P.M.

2. 2533-2577 MAIN STREET & ASSESSOR'S LOT W-38A MAIN STREET - Proposed building addition, parking lot expansion and reconfigured parking at St. Paul Church – Town Center Zone & Town Center Village District Overlay Zone – Megson, Heagle & Friend, C.E. & L.S., LLC – Davison Environmental, consultants – Alter & Pearson, LLC

Mr. Mullen explained that this is the third time that this application has come before the ASDRC. The applicant would like to receive as much informal input as possible. If the Committee is satisfied today, then the formal recommendation will happen at the next meeting. Attorney Meghan Hope presented the few changes that have been made to the site layout. The driveway connecting the parking lots has been narrowed to allow for more room to wrap around the addition. They have decided to leave the 24-inch Norway Maple located there, even though it is an invasive tree. The buffering around the tree has been increased, which will also provide additional snow storage. Additionally, the driveway is now steeper in the beginning portion to allow for lowering the retaining wall by 1.5 feet. This will improve aesthetics.

Tom Graceffa, Landscape Architect, explained that church maintenance personnel has provided feedback on what they would like and not like. The ground material varies from island to island. At the request of the parish, they have eliminated a sidewalk. A new island has been shifted down to bookend the new entry, and a divided walkway will exist with permeable paving in the center and a tight row of trees. The benches would be backless. Behind the retaining wall is a generator which needs to be screened. Two signs are proposed to replace the existing sign. They are using linden trees in the four islands. There is a steep transition from the sidewalk down to the curb. Only one person is doing the maintenance for this campus, so the church does not want

annual plantings. Mr. Graceffa has set up a perennial garden with species that will be easier to maintain.

Ms. Dalton pointed out that the eastern red cedar serves as the alternative host to apple cedar rust. Mr. Graceffa resists using arborvitae because they are overused but he could consider narrow arborvitae; Ms. Dalton supports that suggestion. Mr. Kamm agreed that space is tight, so he suggested that there be fewer plants. Ms. Dalton likes the idea of using ground cover, and the large shade trees in the parking lot will help with the heat island effect. Mr. Shipman noted that the lower branches of white pines start to break off by the time they get tall. He suggested using fernspray cypress instead, which is an evergreen. He is concerned about all the grasses in the parking lot and would like to see more with the trees used in the landscaped islands. Mr. Kamm asked how the trash will be serviced. Ms. Hope explained that church staff will roll the residential cans down to the dumpster on the north side of the parking lot. Mr. Kamm asked where the Fat Albert spruce is located. Mr. Graceffa replied at the top of the stairway, sloping down along the building to the north.

Mr. Flinchum noted that the applicant is changing the entire parking lot, which is a good opportunity to look for pedestrian and traffic patterns. He encouraged the design team to address the future island locations and use that to enhance and reinforce the new entry. The tree islands need to be spaced and reinforced, with breaks for people to safely cut across the spaces. He recommends widening the sidewalk along the east side of the parking lot. For future parking, he asked to consider using gravel as an interim basis and then switching to a more impervious pavement type. Mr. Branse stated that there should be a grass strip along the east parking lot so that car bumpers do not cut off the sidewalk. Ms. Hope remarked that Mark Friend, their civil engineer, has investigated that. He tried to maximize the parking by angling it on the islands, but it was not possible due to the geometry of the site. The plans are not changed because a solution cannot be reached without further eroding parking, for which they already seek a waiver.

Mr. Davis pointed out that the parking lot has been redesigned several times, so they know that it is stretched. Because the lot does not have many islands, it allows for free flow of pedestrian traffic through the parking lot. People do not like to walk through the islands, so they should not be used as a pedestrian funnel. In his anecdotal research, not many cars pull over the sidewalks. He asked if the five different grasses on the islands is an arbitrary number. Mr. Graceffa stated that using several grasses will pique interest. Mr. Flinchum disagreed with Mr. Davis' comment that this lot is similar to a mall. The site has peak flows during busy times of the day. It is used by parishioners in a manner more like a school, where everyone tries to enter and exit at once.

Ernest Nepomuceno of Tecton Architects explained the architectural changes to the site. The rotunda has been raised to accommodate the possibility of taller rooftop HVAC units. The biggest change to the elevation drawings is the southern facade facing Welles Street. They have created taller, narrow window bays to give more verticality and to keep it symmetrical. The plane of the back wall has been dropped and a couple of windows have been added along that facade. A roof screen has also been introduced. Once mechanical engineers are involved in the feasibility study, they can discuss the possibility of raising the ridgeline higher, should the rooftop units be much taller.

Mr. Kamm likes the idea of the bronze inside the entryway. He asked if the top of the rotunda is a metal panel. Mr. Nepomuceno replied yes, they wanted to create some verticality. Mr. Flinchum likes the architecture. While he still thinks that most people will park in the lower parking lot and enter through the Main Street side, he finds this to be a nice change from the front facade. It is a very modern entrance to the church. Mr. Branse likes the boxed window look, so he is glad that the applicant has kept it. He finds that since the whole south side of the existing building has long rectangular windows with mullions, then the south side of the addition should incorporate it. It is not as critical on the west side, but on the south side, it would give some unity because they have already used the same shape. Ms. Hope noted that they will fine tune the signing, lighting, and fence details before returning to the committee.

3. 240 OAKWOOD DRIVE - Proposed construction yard with a material processing stockpile area – Planned Commerce Zone – Jim Dutton, Dutton Associates – Alter & Pearson, LLC – Thor Norgaard, Mjolnir Construction, applicant

Attorney Hope stated that this is a follow-up meeting regarding a proposed three-acre construction yard with materials processing. The applicant seeks to locate this component of his business on Oakwood Drive. There are two curb cuts and a chain link fence for safety, as well as quite a bit of grading.

Jim Dutton of Dutton Associates presented plans showing cross-sections of the proposed site layout. There will be a very steep slope on the three sides and plantings along Oakwood Drive. There is a detention basin, a scale house, and some pavement area for traffic movement. There are two above-ground fuel tanks and another basin on the back side of the fuel tanks. This is a primary sediment collection area. When it rains, water and sediment will end up in the wet basin. He then explained that the soil stockpiles at the west of the site can be between 25 to 28 feet tall. The detention pond has been made a little smaller to allow more room for plantings. They have also moved the fence back further, behind the plantings. Town Engineer Dan Pennington has indicated that it is permissible if some of the vegetation encroaches on the town buffer. The scale house will be a pre-manufactured building measuring 10 feet by 12 feet. Its use is to house electrical equipment. There are two lights for security and a well house for dust control.

Ms. Hope explained that the colors for the scale house and well house will be barn red with a white trim. The signage will be on a large granite cube. Mr. Dutton showed where the sign will be located, near the entrance. Ms. Hope noted that, at the last meeting, Ms. Luzi had asked about the retaining walls. There are two: one on the north side and the other on the south side. Mr. Dutton added that their maximum height is about six feet. Ms. Hope stated that the material bins are movable concrete blocks, typically no higher than six feet.

Mr. Graceffa reviewed the landscaping changes. A row of Taylor red cedars and grasses runs along the front property line and there is giant arborvitae along the western edge of the primary sediment basin. Mr. Dutton added that the intention is to make these plantings maintenance-free. The slope continues up another 60 feet. A chain link fence will surround this facility. Mr. Graceffa stated that three large oaks and three red maples will surround the basin.

Mr. Davis asked about the scale house. The applicant, Thor Norgaard, explained that they will pre-engineer the panels, tilt them, and put them up. The plan is to use white paint so that it looks like a New England barn. Mr. Davis asked to define maturity. Mr. Graceffa explained that the deciduous tree will reach 60 feet of height in about 30 years. Mr. Davis stated that they are scarring the landscape, so their only opportunity is to provide good screening. Deciduous trees only screen for a certain number of months out of the year. Ms. Dalton thinks that the evergreen gives a good contrast to the deciduous tree. Mr. Davis recommended a dark color for the chain link fence. Mr. Dutton stated that they can buy it black.

Ms. Dalton is concerned that there are too many of one plant species. While she understands that the space is narrow, moving back the fence provides more leeway. She asked to fit in a vanderwolf white pine or fastigiata to mix it up. This will also help avoid new infestations which can wipe out entire species. She also suggested the same concept on the other side with the green giant arborvitae. Mr. Dutton noted that an existing wooded residence is located back there. Mr. Kamm asked what is planted under the red maples. Mr. Dutton stated that he has not specified the seed mix, but it would be grass. Mr. Kamm asked if the light poles will be 14 feet or 16 feet. Mr. Dutton clarified that they will be 16 feet and used mainly for security bases. They will be motion-activated.

Mr. Branse cautioned that flood lights are not allowed, so if the applicant changes their mind, then they should add poles. He requested that a maximum height for the stockpile mounds be specified on the plan and asked to consider moving the chain link fence to the easterly side of the detention pond. He then shared examples of scale houses which could be considered. Mr. Davis asked the applicant to do what they can to move the fence. Mr. Flinchum likes the idea of moving the fence behind the retention area, which helps complement the site and blends in. He agrees that evergreen would be preferred, and a vinyl chain link fence is always his preference. Ms. Luzi would like the fence to continue straight across the back side of the retention wall instead of seeing the gate at the road. She also agrees with a black fence.

4. 2951 MAIN STREET - Proposed exterior architectural changes for Shops on Main Building 3 - Planned Business and Development Zone - Alter & Pearson, LLC - Shops on Main LLC, applicant

Attorney Hope noted that the materials they submitted a few weeks ago involved facade changes to Building 3. The Plans Review Subcommittee has reviewed the parking calculations. The Subcommittee found the layout for the tenants to be a bit flat, so the architect has proposed changes.

Tom Scott from Scott/Griffin Architects explained the differences between the proposed plans and what was just handed out to the committee. The proposed plan has simplified the elevation which faces the parking entrance to the development. Because of the change in the number of tenants, they propose eliminating some of the architectural features on that side of the building. Originally, some modifications were made to accommodate the areas for signage and basic frontage for as many as four tenants. Now, there will be two anchor tenants and a small tenant in

the middle. They have added back all the fabric awnings to the building. In general, the building is very similar to all the other buildings in the development.

While Mr. Davis understands that this complements the mix of buildings there, he does not see anything that tells him that this building is in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Ms. Hope noted that the architectural design of the Shops on Main project was influenced by the McDonald's redevelopment that had recently been approved. Mr. Davis pointed out that that context and baseline would not be appropriate today. Mr. Scott explained that the evolution goes back seven years. This project had a very different look initially which was rejected by the Town. Mr. Branse agreed with Mr. Davis. Ms. Dalton likes this evolution. The awnings bring it down to a more pedestrian scale. Mr. Scott agreed, stating that they have worked to bring back some of the elements to return the building to a pedestrian scale.

Mr. Flinchum remarked that the ASDRC's responsibility is to look for an identity that one has arrived at Glastonbury. This project is in the tail end of development. He does not find it appropriate to bring new exhibits into the meeting, especially for those following along on Zoom. The project should automatically be subject to a 30-day postponement. Ms. Luzi seconded, adding that there is no greenery in this project. She asked to introduce planters or something along the walk which the tenants must maintain. Mr. Shipman agreed with Ms. Luzi. His first impression is to take out some parking spaces and turn them into green spaces. Ms. Hope stated that they hope to provide a full landscaping plan at the next meeting.

Mr. Davis would like to see this again, along with a site plan, a planting plan, and a signage plan. Mr. Kamm does not see how the elevations match the plan, in particular, on the south elevation. There is also a signage problem which he would like to see addressed. Mr. Scott pointed out that Shops at Main is doing well. This building is being constructed because people want to be there. Ms. Hope added that they hope to get two retail tenants into the space. Mr. Branse does not like what was provided to the committee, but he likes what was handed out. The void to solid ratio is off. Additional landscaping is necessary to soften the space which is essentially four little cubes, and any amendment to a special permit application automatically triggers a full site review.

5. Other Business *None*

With no further comments or questions, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk