

## **THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023**

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Planning and Land Use Services, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 5:00 P.M. in Meeting Room A 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. Robert Shipman  
Mr. David Flinchum  
Mr. Jeff Kamm  
Ms. Amy Luzi

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:01 P.M.

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### **2. 51 KRIEGER LANE - Site plan approval pursuant to CGS Section 8-30g concerning the construction of an apartment building containing 48 units, with parking and other site improvements -- Planned Commerce & Groundwater Protection Zone 1 – Alter & Pearson, LLC - VESSEL RE HOLDINGS, LLC, applicant**

Josh Levy of Vessel apologized for the delay in getting the materials to the committee. Attorney Peter Alter noted that on March 21, the applicant is scheduled to go before the Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ), who have indicated that they will not approve this application as a set-aside development. Therefore, the applicant has filed a separate application under a different provision of CGS 8-30g, which considers the proposal an assisted housing project; an assisted project is not subject to the industrial exemption. That application will include the same design as this one.

Additionally, Mr. Alter commented that the TPZ has the authority to approve the application, even if it is in an industrial zone. He added that, if the TPZ decides that a building like this cannot go in the industrial zone, then it would need to go in a residential zone, which may not be as conducive for affordable housing developments. Mr. Alter asked the ASDRC to consider that this building fits in the Kreiger Lane architectural landscape, as it will create opportunities for affordable housing in areas where people will have access to amenities and public transportation.

Mr. Branse countered that industrial zones are not the only place where affordable housing can go. There are residential zones in Glastonbury which have public sewer and water and are close to amenities; Mr. Davis agreed. Mr. Davis added that this application does not prevent an affordable housing development from being proposed in a residential zone. He reminded the

applicant that this committee is charged with looking at the architectural character, so their focus is on the design. Mr. Kamm does not like the current plan. He would have preferred more space. Mr. Shipman echoed, adding that there is more parking on site than the minimum required. A few spaces could be eliminated to make some green space.

Attorney Hope explained the revisions to the site plan. They have extended the row of trees on the back. The HVAC units will not be on the first floor of the mechanical room, but at grade on the northeast corner of the building. The concrete pad will be enclosed with a six-foot screen. She also noted the comments that were received at prior meetings about the monolithic easterly facade. The electric line ran from the transformer to the mechanical room. They have flipped the electrical line and extended some of the tree plantings on the east side of the building.

Tom Graceffa, landscape architect, reviewed the changes to the landscaping plan, which has opened up several areas across the front of the building. Shade trees on the perimeter will break up the spaces visually. The line of beech trees will be extended to the east side of the building as well as the front. The remainder of the site has three kinds of plant material: ornamental grasses, a meadow mix, and lawn. The entrance also has sea oats.

Mr. Shipman has several concerns. The location is quite barren and needs some form of evergreens. Sea oats seed all over the place and require more maintenance. The beeches are a little close together - unless the intention is to create a wall. Mr. Graceffa noted that they are roughly 7 feet apart. Mr. Shipman believes that 10 feet apart would be better. He also suggested changing a few of the beeches to Little Giant arborvitae. He then asked about the snow plan. Ms. Hope explained that the site can accommodate a two-foot storm. Anything beyond that will be removed from the site. Mr. Kamm asked if the Town has commented on the snow shelf along the road. Mr. Graceffa explained that the shelf is one foot off the road, and the Town has accepted it.

Mr. Kamm mourns the loss of the dogwoods, which gave some light, color, and variety. While he likes the modernist approach, he thinks that the design can go somewhere between modern and traditional. Ms. Dalton stated that the seed mix does not work well. She suggested a low juniper instead, such as blue rug juniper, realizing that shrubs are more expensive. Ms. Luzi wonders why there isn't some grassy lawn, as there will be a lot of people living in this building who may want useable outdoor space. Ms. Dalton also suggested taking out the miscanthus, which is quite invasive. Mr. Davis asked about the parking. Mr. Alter explained that there are 55 spaces for 48 units, which is 7 spaces above the minimum requirement. Mr. Davis suggested replacing the three parallel spaces on the north with a lawn and picnic area for the residents. The applicant did not object to this condition of approval.

*Ms. Caltagirone exited the meeting at 5:54 P.M.*

Ms. Hope explained the architectural changes. The first floor is now a perforated metal screen. The second change is the column of windows across the front facade. Mr. Kamm does not like the wood panel approach, believing that it resembles a 1970s office building, whereas the original white design was elegant. He also does not like the glass render textures, which look black in the daytime. Instead of ribbons of wood, he suggested doing the inside cut of wood; this

would be a bolder approach. He then asked about the lights in the parking lot. Ms. Hope noted that there are no changes to the lighting plan.

Ms. Luzi agreed with Mr. Kamm about the striping. She also preferred the white design; the current design gives her the impression of a prison. It needs to be more than a box with windows in it and should look like it belongs in Glastonbury. She also noted that when the row of trees on the front grow in, residents on the bottom floor will be looking out at a solid block. She was going to suggest putting shade trees along the road, but the easement prevents that. She applauds the use of shade trees in the parking lot, but more grass would be nice, as well as possibly windows on the ends of the building.

Mr. Kamm asked about solar shading on the south side. Mr. Alter explained that the form of the building is driven by the function of the building, which is designed to be net-zero. The rooftop solar panels will provide all the energy needed. Mr. Levy added that the building exterior is a rainscreen system. They have created a building design that is a particular product, so there are limitations to what they can alter. Mr. Kamm countered that most net-zero buildings address issues such as solar shading. Mr. Davis pointed out that the light shelves would only be installed on one side of the building, which is not very expensive, and it would go a long way in improving the architectural elevations.

Mr. Davis finds it unfortunate that the created product does not reflect anything in town. The architecture of the building is unique and distinctive, but out of context for Glastonbury. However, it might be the best-looking building on Kreiger Lane. He also noted that the site will not get any through traffic because it ends on a cul-de-sac. Mr. Shipman added that most of Kreiger Lane is well maintained. Mr. Branse stated that, last time, the applicant had provided a lot of photos to show how this material is used without applying it in stripes. This is not what he had in mind. He does not like the white cube, though the light shelves would give it some dimension.

Mr. Branse acknowledged that the development is an exciting concept for affordable housing, and he would like to see it succeed. However, bringing this cube into town, or other towns in Connecticut, will receive a strong negative reaction. He also pointed out that CGS 8-30g applications are unique in the sense that they almost require this committee to design the architecture. Mr. Levy noted that a second material could be attractive when there is a delineated space. The reason they started with white is because it is elegant and simple, as opposed to stripes. He thinks that the singular color could be nicer. Ms. Luzi likes the contrast on the revised rendering. Mr. Davis agreed, stating that the light shelves and dark color should become almost tone-on-tone. He suggested a condition that discussed the introduction of light shelves and further exploration of the color scheme.

***Motion by:*** Mr. Davis

***Seconded by:*** Ms. Luzi

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee forwards a favorable recommendation to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for the said plans, with the following conditions:

1. Substitution of the corner beeches with little giant arborvitae.
2. Converting the three parallel parking spaces on the north into a landscaped area.
3. Substitution of the wildflower mix with an evergreen ground cover, such as a blue rug juniper or grass lawn.
4. The developer shall introduce light shelves to the south elevation of the building.
5. The developer shall utilize a gray tonal panel, in place of the dark panels presented.
6. In the professional opinion of the architects and landscape architects of the Committee, the recommended modifications to this application will not have a substantial adverse impact on the viability of the affordable housing development or the degree of affordability of the affordable dwelling units in this set-aside affordable housing development.
7. The applicant shall return to the ASDRC after the TPZ meeting for confirmation of the meeting of the conditions.

Note: The ASDRC strongly recognizes that the design is appropriate for this location only and is not reflective of the architectural character that would normally be positively recommended on other sites in Glastonbury.

**Result:** Motion passed {6-1-0}, with one abstention from Mr. Branse.

With no further comments or questions, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 6:47 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Lilly Torosyan***

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk