

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2024

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Community Development, and Gary Haynes, Planner, 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 Chair
Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary
Mr. David Flinchum
Mr. Jeff Kamm
Ms. Amy Luzi
Mr. Michael Stankov

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:06 P.M. He issued an apology to Mr. Stankov, for not realizing that he was present at the last meeting. Chairman Davis gave an official welcome to Mr. Stankov, as the newest member of the committee.

2. 148 OAK STREET – proposal for conversion of residential dwelling into professional office for Delponte Plumbing with an addition, accessibility improvements and creation of a parking lot – Planned Commerce Zone – John MacFarlane & Rick Morse, JWM Architects LLC – Mark Friend, Megson, Heagle & Friend Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors, LLC - Greg Anapol, applicant – FINAL REVIEW

Mark Friend, engineer and soil scientist with Megson, Heagle, & Friend, explained that they have revised the plans since the last ASDRC meeting. One request, which they adhered to, was to reduce the driveway to 16 feet. He noted that there is no intention of having a showroom at this building. The ASDRC had also inquired about working out shared driveway access with another property. Mr. Friend explained that this would be difficult to do because the parking lot comes into the back on the north side of the property and to gain access to adjacent parking areas a significant amount of trees would need to be removed.

Mr. Branse stated that the design guidelines call for a shared driveway. Mr. Haynes noted that it makes sense in some cases, but not in others. In this case, they are not looping the driveway around, which allows them to keep the existing trees and arborvitae for screening the parking area. A shared driveway would mean losing landscaping. Mr. Kamm said that if the Gamer property on the corner came forward for development, then their curb cut on Oak Street would be a subject of conversation for potential shared driveway connection. Mr. Davis wants to steer clear of encumbering the property owner with a narrative or easement on things that are

completely speculative. Mr. Stankov does not think there is a way for the applicant to link the driveways without getting something that is equal or worse to what is presented tonight. Tom Graceffa, the landscape architect, explained that there was a lot of discussion about the north side not having a shade tree. He proposed an American hornbeam located on the north side of the driveway. He also noted that the front door is for show only. The large trees on the southern property line are on somebody else's property but can be trimmed by a professional arborist.

Rick Morse of JWM Architects explained that the committee asked for rendered elevations, which they have provided. The front sign is non-illuminated, and the porch will be rebuilt. The addition consists of warehouse space at the far end of the building. At the rear of the property is the entrance to the warehouse with a connecting piece, allowing preservation of the windows on the second floor.

Mr. Morse then reviewed the updated photometric plan, which consists of six pole lights around the site perimeter. The fixture has been updated from a contemporary detail to one more suitable for style of the building. He stated that all signage complies with the signage standards, but there is an existing pylon sign which was installed prior to JWM's involvement in the project. Total signage allowance is 68 feet. The existing pylon sign is 22 square feet and the proposed wall sign is 20 feet, for a total of 42 square feet. These signs will not be lit. They have also addressed the light timing, to be on from dusk to dawn. Mr. Haynes advised that since there are no tenants other than Delponte Plumbing, the other blank sign panels on the detached sign should be removed.

Mr. Stankov asked about the maximum topsoil stockpile height and how long the topsoil stockpile be at its current location, which is right at the property line. Mr. Friend replied that most of the excavated material from the topsoil will be hauled off-site. He does not envision a big height of a stockpile, if they even have any. Mr. Stankov believes that the new shape of the driveway looks great. Ms. Luzi recalls that a tree would be placed on the island, near the handicapped space. Mr. Friend said that, because the driveway has been narrowed down, the island is bigger, so there is enough space to put a tree there.

Ms. Luzi stated that there used to be a large dogwood in the front yard. Mr. Graceffa clarified there is not a dogwood. Mr. Stankov added that, in the June 2023 plans, there were two proposed dogwoods but nothing in the front. Mr. Morse explained that there was a discussion about dogwood and the exposure it would get, so they went in favor of American hornbeam. Ms. Luzi stated that if another tree is going to be added, she would like for it to be dogwood because it will provide shade for the parking area, minimizing the heat island effect.

Ms. Luzi thinks that the elevations are fine the way they are, but an issue may potentially arise with snow. She suggested changing the roof material to standing seam metal. Mr. Morse stated that the owner wanted to keep the upper story windows. They will look at how that can be managed. Mr. Davis clarified that Ms. Luzi's point was that if a metal roof solves their problem, then that would be acceptable to the ASDRC.

Ms. Dalton likes the proposed changes, finding the hornbeam to be an excellent choice for a small shade tree. She recommends pulling the five viburnum out of the drip line, which would still accomplish the screening factor for both the applicant and the neighbor's properties. She believes that this will avoid the issue of sacrificing one root structure for another. As for the second maple closer to the street, she suggested propelling one of the viburnum out beyond it, or instead of using the silhouette, to put slightly wider trees and screen just one trunk.

Mr. Graceffa stated that there are five trees struggling against the big maples there. Taking those out would mean filling up the space with big tough shrubs. Because they have water and enough sunlight, they can trim up the mature trees. Mr. Davis asked how concerned they are about destroying the maple tree. Ms. Dalton is concerned about that because they are creating a hole in the root area. She suggested pushing it out a bit beyond the dip line or putting smaller shrubs in because they grow rapidly. Mr. Graceffa countered that there are not three maple trees with ten-foot spaces between the trunks; they are all together. If that is the case, he would take out some of the viburnum or push them out, but he does not think the proposed location of the viburnum will have a negative impact on the mature maples.

Mr. Davis stated that good landscapers follow best trade practices. While he finds this conversation beneficial, he does not wish to dictate how Mr. Graceffa should do his job. Mr. Graceffa would prefer to put in a shrub that is 12 feet in diameter. He suggested making the sizes smaller and putting in a few of them. Mr. Davis stated that if the sizes are smaller, then he would not support making them fewer. He also believes that a mixture is more organic.

Mr. Flinchum believes that this site is too small for what is going on. He was always concerned about the parking logistics, especially once employees show up with their private vehicles. He was encouraged to hear that there is an option for adjacent parking. If this site is truly for employees only, then he does not understand the need for two signs. He did not realize that the existing sign was that tall. Even though they are blank signs, he cannot reconcile leaving them there. He thinks that the wall sign has a lot of visibility, but nobody will be on-site apart from employees and, potentially, a delivery truck.

Mr. Kamm asked if there is a way to keep the reference to a front door but downplay the landscaping or the sidewalk. Mr. Davis feels exactly the opposite. If there is a sidewalk there that no one uses, he thinks that is great. His reasoning is that there are people who drive by the site hundreds of times a day, and the sidewalk gives the impression of a house. Mr. Morse agreed, stating that their intention was to maintain the sidewalk because of its look and feel.

Mr. Kamm accepts the look and feel but does not support putting the wall sign over the front door. He also questions the applicant's sign square footage. Because it is a freestanding sign on legs, he would count that outer volume and the blank white. He thinks that the sign should be lowered and cut off. He also noted that, in the renderings, there are muntin bars on some windows and none elsewhere. Mr. Morse said that the muntin bars are not shown. Mr. Kamm stated that having the lighting on from dusk to dawn is a violation of Glastonbury's ordinances. Mr. Morse explained that security is the primary concern. Mr. Kamm responded that they do not need to be on full brightness. He also appreciates the driveway getting narrower.

Mr. Branse stated that the signage calculations provided by the application are incorrect. They do not even provide the height. He then inquired about the staircases in the basement plan, wondering why two complete staircases are needed for storage. Mr. Morse explained that this used to be a residential house. Their opinion was that the existing staircase was too narrow, so they insisted that a proper staircase be built. Mr. Branse's concern is that all that storage space would become office space. He is suspicious that the blanks on the signage are to leave open the possibility of more people coming onto the site.

Mr. Morse explained that there has been an evolution. When they acquired the property, there was a tenant on the second floor. As they worked with them, the tenant left, and there are no plans for a tenant. The second bathroom in the basement is beneficial because it allows for facilities for contractors and office staff. He confirmed that they have plenty of office space as is, and the storage space will remain as storage space.

Mr. Branse believes that the two blank panels should be removed from the detached sign. He agrees with Mr. Kamm about the lighting plan, noting that there are 8.9 foot candles on the left side, but the exact same distance to the right has 6.6 foot candles, which is impossible. The photometric diagrams show the shortest possible allowable mounting height at 12 feet, not 10 feet, which does not add up. He would like to see the muntin bars on the windows. He also does not think that they need the wall sign for the front door, which is not actually a front door, and is not open to the public anyway. He asked to lower and diminish the ground sign.

Mr. Davis stated that signage is marketing, so he agrees with having a sign over the front door. Regarding the timing of the lights, he asked that they be shut off after business hours, apart from security lighting. Mr. Kamm noted that the IES has published data on this, so he requests the applicant revise the lighting plan to meet IES requirements, which would never allow 8 or 6-foot light candles on a parking lot, especially when the business is closed. Mr. Morse will investigate the photometrics.

Mr. Davis asked if Town staff has reviewed the parking. Mr. Haynes responded that the application meets the parking regulations, but there is a unique aspect to the delivery vehicles and this does not necessarily account for the interchange between the employee personal vehicles and the employee work vehicles. Mr. Kamm asked if the regulations address company vehicles. Mr. Haynes replied that they can push the aspect of identifying the parking transitions at the TPZ meeting. Mr. Davis noted that most of the spaces are filled with trucks, so he wonders how that will work with staff coming in. He believes that the TPZ should review that.

Mr. Davis likes the landscaping changes. Regarding the screening and organic arrangement, he wants to ensure that best practices are used to not compromise the existing trees. He does not wish to hold up this application because of the lighting plan. He asked that a revised lighting plan be put before Town staff for review to ensure that inconsistencies are resolved. Mr. Davis also noted that the pylon sign should be modified to eliminate the blank panel spaces and to eliminate the sense of it being up on stilts. Mr. Morse noted that adding evergreen plantings at the base of the detached sign would go a long way.

Motion by: Mr. Branse

Seconded by: Mr. Davis

MOVED that the ASDRC forwards a favorable recommendation to TPZ with regards to architectural and landscape design for a property located at 148 Oak Street, with the following comments and recommendations in the ASDRC Committee Report dated 7/16/24.

- Per ASDRC request revise driveway width to 16ft wide as approved by Department of Engineering and the Fire Marshal Office.
- Revise sign plan for detached sign as follows: Remove two “blank sign panels, Lower sign height to no more than 6ft high, Add landscaping to the base of detached sign, Measure sign area by a single rectangle in which the text fits into.
- Remove or reduce the size of the wall sign. (By Special Permit TPZ has the authority to reduce sign area.)
- In the landscape island adjacent to handicap parking space replace Little BlueStem grass with a shade tree.
- Relocate light pole in the landscape island adjacent to handicap parking space to the north side of the driveway.
- Revise elevations and architectural drawings to include 6 over 1 muntin bars on the windows. (at minimum shall be added to windows on front elevation).
- Add note to lighting plan all exterior lighting will be shut off and turned on 30 minutes prior to opening and closing of business operations, except for necessary security lighting.
- Submit revised lighting plan to be approved administratively by ASDRC as the lighting plan is too bright and has “hot spots” going from 9-foot candles to .3-foote candles. Lighting plan submitted shall meet IES recommended standards.
- Revise landscape plan on southern property boundary to use 5-gallon viburnum to be installed to help protect the root system of mature maples.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {7-0-0}.

3. Staff Report

Mr. Haynes stated that they have been working on a draft design guidelines checklist, which will soon be available in a pdf form.

4. General Discussion *None*

Mr. Branse asked about the building next to St. James Church [2610 Main Street], which was to be preserved but now looks like it was demolished. Mr. Haynes explained that Town staff had the same concerns. On the elevations, it was marked as part of preserving the existing house, but no level of preservation was approved along the way. Mr. Carrier did represent at the last meeting some of the work that they have done, but it was not until they started taking out the building that the shell was not going to be sufficient. However, it was not bulldozed, but taken

apart piece by piece. Mr. Davis' intent is that when it gets put back together; that the building looks the way it used to look.

Ms. Caltagirone has spoken with Mr. Carrier who was able to salvage 100% of the original structure and sheathing, but it is reinforced with a new structure. The building siding was from the 1940s, so they are returning to a siding that is more appropriate for the age of the house. They documented all of the trim works to replicate the details and had a restoration builder and mason on-site who deconstructed the chimney and fireplace. The front door was from the 1920s, so they are returning to a door that will be truer to a 1700s building. Those subtle differences are always harkening back to the original design. She also noted that an architectural historian came in and documented this before the reconstruction started, so she feels comfortable that it has been a conscientious reconstruction, and that all salvaged materials will be incorporated.

Mr. Branse was approached by Steve Bielitz who told him that the house had been demolished, which is why he brought this up. Mr. Haynes stated that the hard part about this process was that there was no communication about the fact that this was not a demolition.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan
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Recording Clerk