

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MEETING MINUTES JULY 9 2019

Members Present: Ward French, Chairman; Jon Halper and Vesna Herman. Minutes from the June 18, 2019 meeting were approved as presented.

- 1. Text Amendment #772:** Amendment to allow density and bedroom increase, to exempt any dwelling units created from restrictions listed from the Maximum Allowable Multi-Family Dwellings, to eliminate the requirement for a non-residential use on sites and to allow for grading or slope changes within 5 feet of a lot line.

Appeared: Peter Romano, Landtech

Mr. Romano said the text amendment allowed a change to the berm size and slope due to space constraints and 3 extra units for the project in a GBD/RES zone. It also designates the zone as one that has had previous septic tank manufacturing use.

Ward French asked their rationale for greater density. There are site constrictions and there is no green space. Mr. Romano said they are providing 45 ft setbacks and there are no coverage requirements in this zone. We kept a low profile and pushed the project forward from Cottage Lane. It doesn't work financially with fewer units. Mr. French said there is still no green space, people are not going to walk up and down the berm. Nothing about the site has changed since your last appearance.

Jon Halper had no questions.

Vesna Herman clarified why there is a need for 3 extra units. Mr. Romano said that the site could have accommodated a large commercial building. We have refined the wording of the text amendment so these requirements won't work up and down the Post Road. Ms. Herman asked if they are changing the slope shape from town requirements. Mr. Romano said yes. There was discussion about excavation and fill requirements which the applicants felt were restrictive. Mr. Romano said they have refined the text amendment wording so it is specifically for this property.

Jon Halper asked as of right how large could a commercial building be? Mr. Romano said he didn't know but it could be pretty big. Mr. Halper asked where the property stands on coverage. Mr. Romano didn't know off the top of his head.

Vesna Herman asked if there are changes to the entrance. Mr. Romano said no, it still exits only to the right and has mountable curbs.

Mr. French said the board would make comments after seeing the architecture.

- 2. 1480 Post Road East:** Special Permit/Site Plan Application #19-028 for a 32 unit residential development in a GBD.

Appeared: Patrick Rose, Architect

Mr. Rose provided an aerial photo of the neighborhood showing mixed use properties.

He said they have changed the project architecture. It is now a modern farmhouse style. The materials are cement fiber Hardipanel vertical board and batten siding, Hardiplank clapboard, a cultured stone base, asphalt roof shingles and standing seam metal roofing over dormers and gables. The siding is white, the base is buff and the roof is gray. He said they have mixed up the materials on the rear elevations to add interest. Windows and trim are white.

Jon Halper asked if the rear elevation of one of the larger buildings is still facing the gas station and was told yes. He asked if the fence would be there. Mr. Rose said it is an existing fence. Mr. Halper asked about screening. Mr. Rose said they would plant privet, junipers, boxwood and more. Mr. Halper asked if it was possible to add more windows to the rear elevations to make them more interesting. Mr. Rose said some bedrooms could go to split windows, he would look at it. Mr. Halper verified that there are standing seam metal roof accents.

Vesna Herman asked how many units there are in Building 1 as she was trying to figure out the layout. Mr. Rose said 13 units. They clarified that Building 3 has 14 units. Ms. Herman asked if they all share a stairway. Mr. Rose said usually 4 units share a stairway. The entrances are identified architecturally.

Ward French asked how many parking spaces there are. Mr. Rose said 59. Mr. Halper said the projected occupancy is in the 60's? Mr. Rose said yes. Mr. Romano said parking use is diminishing in general these days, people use Uber and other services rather than own a car.

Jon Halper thanked the applicants for reworking the elevations. He thought they were a lot better than the first submission and he's more comfortable with this aesthetic. The site is the problem, he was concerned about the small footprint and said it's important to provide as much screening as possible. The rear facades need to be as attractive as possible. Mr. Romano said they gave the people on Cottage Lane carte blanche to design the landscaping barrier. Mr. Halper said he felt the architecture was adequate for workforce housing. As far as he was concerned 29 units have the same impact as 32. Unless they can be reduced by 5 or 10, 3 units is not a leap for him.

Vesna Herman said that, in terms of density, she would not have a problem if there was not so much asphalt. It is not generous with greenspace for residents. She would like to see some of the asphalt treated with permeable pavers, it would be more thoughtful for the residents. Peter Romano said that is doable. They could make some of the parking spaces permeable and leave the travel areas pavement. Ms. Herman said the architecture is more appropriate. There is not much space to play with volumes, the elevations look flat. She suggested using different shades of the proposed colors to create some differentiation. She said she really hoped Westport workers can live here.

Jon Halper asked how that would be enforced. Mr. whatshisname, the property owner, said they have Westport people in the 7711 project.

Ward French asked if this would help the quota of affordable housing. Mr.x said 7 units would count toward the next quota.

Mr. French agreed that the design is better. Density is still a problem and the street context is not exactly beautiful. He wished the project could be decreased in size to make it more attractive for residents.

Board members agreed that they could support this project if the applicants take there recommendations into consideration.

THE DESIGN IS RECOMENDED FOR APPROVAL WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE APPLICANTS WILL TAKE THE BOARD'S SUGGESTIONS REGARDING MORE ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING ON REAR ELEVATIONS, PAINT SHADE VARIATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILING ON FACADES, ADDITION OF PERMEABLE PARKING SPACES AND PLENTY OF SCREENING PLANTING. (Unanimous)

- 3. 355 Riverside Avenue:** Proposed wall signs for property owned by 285 & 355 Riverside Avenue LLC and Baywater Properties located in a GBD/Residential zone.

Appeared: Larry Bork, ABC Signs

Mr. Bork said this is a multi tenant office and it requires 3 new signs on the front façade, 2 for Coldwell Banker Global Luxury, the other for Verrill Dana LLP Attorneys at Law.

Proposed signage is 18 s.f. 36 s.f. is allowed per tenant so it is well under signage regulations. Letters are black, non- illuminated marine grade PVC mounted on the building's front wall facing Riverside Avenue.

Jon Halper asked if the letters are pin mounted and was told yes. He asked about the backing and was told the building wall is behind the letters.

Ward French verified that the signs are under size requirements.

Vesna Herman verified that there is no lighting on the signs.

The owner would prefer to light the signs but there is residential property next door.

THE SIGN DESIGNS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED

(Unanimous)

4. 323 Main Street: Proposed exterior modifications for property owned by Westport North Associates located in a GBD/Residential district.

Appeared: Doug Quinn

Mr. Quinn intends to open a new restaurant on the property which has had restaurant use for many years. He will clean up the building and make minor changes:

- There is a preexisting deck approval from the P&Z on the south façade. It will be a floating deck on piers and have a canvas awning.
- The roofline on the north west rear corner will be slightly raised to accommodate interior reconfigurations
- The west entrance door will be widened to a double door and made more majestic. Stone cladding will be added to the stairs
- Walls of window will replace bay windows on north and east elevations
- A stone through fireplace will be constructed on the south elevation to accommodate the new deck.
- A new egress will be added to the south elevation.
- The building will be cleaned up and repainted. Colors are Hague blue with gray white trim. The trim color will pick out the roof lines

Ward French said this is a non conforming building. Will you be able to accommodate parking? Mr. Quinn said yes, there is plenty of parking access across the street.

Vesna Herman asked if the siding is cedar shingles. Mr. Quinn said yes, it will be power washed and repaired before repainting.

Mr. Quinn brought up signage ideas. He said he designed a neon sign for his NYC restaurant. The application shows a potential monument sign on Main Street. There was discussion but signage is not part of the current application.

Ward French asked about the new fireplace. Mr. Quinn said it is two faced through fireplace but will only operate on the deck.

Jon Halper asked if the awning is permanent. Mr. Quinn said no, but it won't be coming down seasonally. He intends to get add a plexiglass interior to the awning to accommodate diners in winter, like at the Spotted Horse.

Jon Halper said he thought it was a nice improvement to a tough site.

Ward French said it was a very nice job.

Vesna Herman agreed. She liked the interior changes and the refreshed exterior will be an improvement for the neighborhood.

ARB 7/9/19

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THE RESTAURANT REDESIGN APPLICATION IS RECOMMEND FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED. (Unanimous)