

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

DRAFT MINUTES

Board Members Present: Vesna Herman, Acting Chair; Jon Halper, Charlie McMillan.
Clerk: Sally Palmer Staff: Donna Douglass.

1. Minutes from the March 22, 2022 meeting were approved.
2. **199 Post Road West:** Proposed canopy (Parcel ID# B08//074/000) submitted by Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead, for property owned by Taylor Made LLC located in a BPD. (Aerial Exhibit CAI Technologies 4/8/22; Site Plan LANGAN 3/2/22; Designed by CPG Architects 4/6/22.

Appeared: Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead

The proposed canopy is for the Schulhof Animal Hospital which is located on a shared drive with an office building to its rear. The outdoor dog run is on the back of the building abutting a tarmac parking area and gets very hot in the summer. The proposal is to extend the existing roof to create a covered run.

Jon Halper asked if a variance was required and was told no.

Charlie McMillan asked if the current footprint isn't maxed out for coverage. Mr. Redniss said P & Z wrote new zoning exempting canopies of a certain size. This canopy was approved, no variance required.

Charlie McMillan said fine. Visually, the canopy is an improvement. Board members agreed.

THE APPLICATION FOR A DOG RUN CANOPY IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED (Unanimous)

3. **1595 Post Road East:** Proposed site improvements including the addition/expansion of landscaped areas, a new 3 story addition, demolition of the front building and driveway/parking improvements (Parcel ID#H09//120/000) submitted by Rick Redniss of Redniss & Mead for property owned by WI Associates located in a GBD/A. (Property survey Redniss & Mead 9/20/2011; Aerial Exhibit CAI Technologies 4/5/22; Beinfield Architecture 4/8/22)

Appeared: Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead; Bruce Beinfield, Architect; Jim Randall, Esq. for W I Associates

Mr. Redniss said this is the site of the former Westport Inn which has been closed for a couple of years.

We have talked to neighbors and town officials and everyone feels that a quality hotel is important to the town. The proposal is for a new iteration of the property, reduced in size, modified and improved, a quality Delmar Hotel operated by the Greenwich Hospitality Group.

Bruce Beinfield said the building in the front will be removed, the building in the rear retained and improved and the indoor pool will remain. There is a circular drop off and parking at the front of the remaining 41 room hotel, which includes a restaurant, bar, lounge and banquet hall. A new wing on the left side of the property will have 10 residential units, 1,600 to 2,400 s.f., each with a rear garage. There will be 70 parking spaces on grade, of which 40 already exist.

Mr. Beinfield said, after exploring several architectural iterations, a New England style inn seemed the most appropriate for a top notch boutique hotel. A gable roof and traditional materials include gray Hardie plank clapboard siding, true divided light windows and a cedar shingle roof. The entrance is 30 ft high with timber framing and vertical barn siding with a glass metal awning over the entrance. The rear of the building has vertical siding and overlooks an outdoor pool, terrace and dining area. Trees will line the pool area and the property behind it will be a conservation zone. James Doyle is the landscape architect.

The new residential building is the same New England style, a 3 story structure with balconies at each unit, and gray vertical siding and cedar shingle roof. The garages are at the rear, accessed by their own driveway from the Post Road. There will be lush plantings in front of the building. The residents will have access to hotel amenities.

Rick Redniss said they have come to the ARB early in the process to get a feeling about the project from the board. We will have to go to P & Z for special permits for the development.

Vesna Herman asked why the need for a special permit. Mr. Redniss said for the partial demolition of a building, and a three story apartment building with long term renters who will have access to the hotel's amenities. There is also an affordability requirement that will have to be satisfied with an offsite property. Ms. Herman said the ARB would stick to the architectural aspects during the discussion.

Charlie McMillan said he was assuming the massing was consistent, he had already noticed 3 different window styles. Mr. Beinfield said what you see is for review. Mr. McMillan asked about the colors. Mr. Beinfield said the hotel is white, the residential building has nickel gray siding, which is also on the back of the hotel.

Jon Halper asked the height of the residential wing and how it fits with regulations for the zone. Mr. Beinfield said regulations allow for 3 stories in that zone under certain circumstances. Mr. Redniss said the hotel is in a residential zone and the residence is in a commercial zone, 3 stories are allowed. Mr. Halper asked if the dimensions are average grade to the peak. Mr. Redniss said it is under 40 feet to the midpoint of the sloped roof. Mr. Halper verified that what's labeled a hotel suite is in the residential building and hotel rooms are in the renovated building.

Ms. Herman verified that there are 41 hotel rooms and 10 dwelling units. She asked about the affordability component. Mr. Redniss said it doesn't make financial sense to have affordable units on site. They will work with the commission to provide them elsewhere. Ms. Herman asked how extensive the hotel renovation would be. Jim Randall said they are leaving basically what is there, 41 rooms. There will be a cosmetic upgrade so the hotel remains essentially the same but with a substantial upgrade. Mr. Beinfield said the sides and back of the building are not visible, they will be cleaned up and simplified. The front of the building is getting the architectural attention. Ms. Herman asked if we are talking about quality. Mr. Randall said the Delmar is considered one of the top 25 hotels in the US, so 5 star quality.

Charlie McMillan said the service area for the hotel looks small and circuitous. Mr. Beinfield said there is 700 s.f. behind fencing for the dumpster and generator. It is larger than the existing which has worked for a larger operation.

Mr. McMillan said the project is a vast improvement. He liked the different façade colors, the lighter residential building, the darker hotel that recedes. He liked the flow and appreciated the New England forms and materials. It is a nice job and an addition to the town.

Jon Halper agreed, it is beautifully executed, refined and restrained. He hoped it stays that way and is executed to Mr. Beinfield's vision. He had questions about the height of the new wing, he'd like to be convinced that the scale is appropriate to the Post Road. It is beautifully done but he'd like to see it in context to other buildings on the Post Road. He said it would probably be the only pushback the project gets. Jim Randall provided a screen shot of 1177 Post Road East, a 4 story 830-g, much closer to the Post Road. Mr. Beinfield said it is 40 ft from the neighboring building and 60 ft from the Post Road. We could densify the landscaping between the building and the Post Road. Mr. Redniss said the building would not be obvious from the Post Road.

Mr. Halper said he understood. He was playing devil's advocate, it is very strong the way it is designed. He supports the project.

Vesna Herman agreed that the residential building's height and proximity to the street make it look prominent. She wondered what would happen if the darker siding was on the residential building and the lighter on the hotel, it might make the larger building recede. Mr. Beinfield said they had gone through a number of schemes and this seemed to work. Mr. Redniss said the building is sited is farther to the left, you don't get the feel of a 60 ft setback. It isn't obvious in the renderings which are to show the buildings to you.

Ms. Herman said she liked all 3 aspects of the project, the architecture, landscaping and size. She proposes that the project should go forward.

APPLICANTS ARE ASKED TO TAKE THE BOARD'S COMMENTS INTO CONSIDERATION AND RETURN WITH THE FINAL PROJECT (Unanimous)

4. **1680 Post Road East:** Proposed signage and canopy (Parcel ID# H09//173/000) submitted by Matthias Sportini, FLB Law for property owned by 1480 Post Road East LLC, c/o Little Branch Inc located in a GBD. (Site Plan, Waldo & Associates LLC dated 4/8/22; Designer TAD Architecture & Design 4/11/22)

Appeared: Nick Cifaretto of Tacombi

Mr. Cifaretto reminded board members that the building will be resided and will have an outdoor seating area. He said that the board had concerns about the slope of the canopy over the dining area. He provided an updated rendering that showed a softer hipped roof and a consistent fascia around all sides of the red roofed canopy.

Other changes include tweaked window size and screening for mechanicals on the roof. Signage remains the same as originally proposed, mimicking the colors of the building, white, turquoise and red. The transition from the outdoor eating area to the parking lot has been softened with boxwood hedges and white box planters planted with boxwood all around it.

Vesna Herman verified that the sign had been reviewed at a previous meeting.

Jon Halper said thanks for making the changes, it looks good and he supports the application.

Charlie McMillan agreed and said the change of the angle on the dining area roof and its color looks good next to the sign.

Vesna Herman agreed that it is an improvement.

THE APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED
(Unanimous)

5. **1076 Post Road East:** Proposed signage for Amazon Fresh, Parcel ID# F09//050/000 submitted by Gary Potts, Professional Permits, for property owned by Post Plaza LLC located in an HSD. (Site Plan by Atlas, 3/18/22; Sign Design by Atlas, 3/18/22)

Appeared: Garry Potts, Professional Permits

Mr. Potts said that at his prior appearance the board had asked for a linear sign design which, at that time, he had never seen. He said the new Amazon Fresh design is linear:

- 27 ft 9 inches long x 6 ft high
- Internally illuminated channel letters, translucent vinyl
- White Amazon logo
- Fresh is green

Mr. Potts said the sign is compliant and he is seeking approval for the design.

Vesna Herman asked if any members of the public wished to comment and received no response.

Charlie Mc Millan had no questions and thanked the applicants for doing what was asked,

Jon Halper agreed and thanked Mr. Potts for going back to the powers that be for a workable solution.

Vesna Herman liked the sign and said its shape would be friendlier for the neighbors as well.

THE SIGN DESIGN RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED (Unanimous)

Sally Palmer

Recording Secretary