

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

DRAFT MINUTES TUESDAY, June 28, 2022

Board Members Present: Ward French, Chairman, Vesna Herman, Jon Halper and Manuel Castedo, a new ARB member. Staff: Donna Douglass

1. Minutes from the May 24, 2022 meeting were approved.
2. **1595 Post Road East:** Proposed transformation of existing vacant hotel from 116 rooms to 85 rooms to create better parking, circulation, landscaping and a new building on the west side of the property (Parcel ID #H09//120/000) submitted by Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead for property owned by W I Associates located in a GBD/A. (Site Plan, Redniss & Mead dated 6/13/22; building design Beinfield Architecture, 6/10/2022)

Appeared: Rick Redniss; Bruce Beinfield, Architect; Cheryl Brown, Landscape architect

Mr. Beinfield addressed design revisions and previous comments:

Hotel:

- Demolish the building in the foreground and add a new building to the west side of the property
- Rearrange the site
- Hotel rooms increased from 41 to 85 by eliminating proposed condos in the hotel building
- Elimination of the condos in the hotel enables the elimination of garages and driveway to garages

Residential Building:

- The architecture has changed; the gable forms are wider and higher and the deck space between them is smaller
- Landscaping has been increased to buffer from Post Road

Mr. Beinfield went through the materials which have not changed since the last presentation; clapboard and traditional windows in the residential building and vertical nickel gap siding with a gray finish for the hotel.

Vesna Herman asked if the windows in the residential building are the same size or smaller. Mr. Beinfield said they are the same size as before but look smaller because the gables are wider. Ms. Herman wondered how long it would take for the landscape to look like the rendering. Ms. Brown said the ginkgo trees will take about 5-8 years to grow to an appreciable height. Ms. Herman said the changes have made the proportions of the buildings more pleasing.

Manuel Castedo said it was a very nice proposal, the buildings have a nice New England spirit. He said he hoped they aren't too tall. The site planning is appropriate. He had an issue with the

landscaping. He suggested keeping existing trees, especially 2 large trees at the east end of the front of the property instead of replacing them with ginkos. It would create a nice balance and he wondered if it would be possible to save the trees. Ms. Brown said she would have to look at the significance of the change in the grading, she didn't know off hand how much there would be. Rick Redniss said one of the trees falls inside of the proposed parking lot. They would try to work around it but sometimes the disturbance kills the trees a few years later. Mr. Manuel said one tree falls in the strip next to the Post Road, it's not in the way of utilities, he thought the larger tree would be more compatible with the natural landscaping. Mr. Redniss said they would look at it more closely. Mr. Castedo said they are nice buildings on a nice site. He supports it.

Jon Halper agreed with Mr. Castedo's comments about the tree and hopes something can be done to keep it. He had no issue with the architectural changes but wondered how high the ridgeline is with the new design. Mr. Beinfield said it is 24 inches taller. Mr. Halper said he supported the application, it is a good project.

Ward French agreed. He also hoped they could look at saving the large trees and perhaps vary the new plantings from just ginkos.

THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE APPLICANTS WILL LOOK AT TRYING TO SAVE LARGER TREES AND VARY NEW TREES BEYOND GINKOS. (Unanimous)

3. **545 Riverside Avenue:** Proposed new canopy (Parcel ID#C06//054/000) submitted by Peter Schuerch, Studio FFA, LLC for Property owned by Mill Pond Farm Inc. c/o Robert Meyer located in CBD/S. (Site overhead photo by Studio FFA LLC dated 6/8/2022; Architectural designs by Studio FFA LLC dated 6/8/2022)

Appeared: Peter Schuerch, architect; Robert Meyer, Owner

Mr. Schuerch showed photos of the buildings at Bridge Square. The barnboard buildings along the east, river side of the complex were deteriorated and the white clapboard Colonial building on the south side of the complex was also tired and in disrepair. Mr. Schuerch said the riverside buildings were updated with insulation and new barnwood siding, with white Hardie Plank clapboard proposed for the Colonial building on the south side. He is changing some decorative details and repeating others:

- Hartford green standing seam metal canopy roofs
- New 3 course brick water table on white Colonial building to match Dunkin Donuts at the west end and new Hartford green standing seam metal canopy
- New canopy at corner entrance where buildings meet

He showed details of the canopy construction and arched corner entrance. Mr. Schuerch said he needs zoning approval for the 300 s.f. of additional canopy.

Ward French asked why they had come to the ARB half way through the project. Mr. Schuerch said they realized they needed zoning approvals. Mr. French said he was surprised they hadn't come at the start of the project and have already set a precedent with the green metal roof and new yellow color on one of the barnboard buildings. Mr. Meyer said it was their understanding that if the work was within 4 inches of the sides of the buildings and existing awnings were replaced, they needn't appear before the ARB. Mr. French said it would have been nice to have some say in the materials and colors. This is a very important site in town.

Jon Halper verified that the bricks are a water table. Mr. Schuerch said the sidewalks are brick as well as the steps to the corner entrance.

Manuel Castedo asked where the signs will be located. Mr. Meyer said they may have to put them on the canopy roof if there is not enough room below the first floor windows. Mr. Castedo questioned if this was the best location for signs. He felt there was a lack of clarity and consistency in the signage plans.

Jon Halper asked if signage is part of this application. Ward French said it should be, we have to understand how it works with the architecture. Above the canopy and below the windows it may not be visible. If it can't be made to work, the architecture of the canopy may not be applicable. Mr. Schuerch said there will also be lighting for signage.

Vesna Herman said the structure of the canopy is appropriate and nice but to have any kind of signage above it may be questionable. She asked about the corner entrance canopy which looks very classical. Mr. Schuerch said the corner entrance is very quirky and showed pictures of it with an adjacent pipe stack. He thought the corner canopy design was more vernacular than classical. Ms. Herman said the style is extreme for this one area, it creates a very strong juxtaposition. Mr. Schuerch said there are similar details in the canopies along the buildings, they are tied together in a way the sketch doesn't show. Ms. Herman wondered if he could treat the classical canopy design a little differently.

Jon Halper said the corner entrance is the weak link in an overall fine project. He would like to see the corner entrance and canopy ends simplified.

Ward French said he was not in favor of the green and yellow color palette. Overall, the design is successful but signage is a real issue. Jon Halper agreed and suggested they should be asked to return with a rethought color palette and signage.

Mr. Castedo asked if the stack next to the corner entrance would stay and was told yes. He agreed with other board members about the color palette, the previous buildings looked more like the dock buildings they are. He agreed with board members that the color scheme, signage and corner entrance need to be looked at.

Ward French said he applauded the effort to improve the buildings, it is an important location and he would like to see it finished appropriately.

APPLICANT WAS ASKED TO RETURN AFTER GIVING CONSIDERATION TO A RETHOUGHT CORNER ENTRANCE DESIGN, COLOR SCHEME AND HOW SIGNAGE WILL WORK WITH THE CANOPY (Unanimous)

4. **164 Kings Highway North:** Proposed construction of new double faced sign (Parcel ID# C10//099/000) submitted by Marty Signs for property owned by NB 1 Realty LLC located in an RBD zone. (Site sign: Land Surveying Services, LLC, Fairfield, CT dated 12/14/2020)

Appeared: Marty Rogers, Marty's Signs; Ari Benmoschi, owner

Mr. Rogers said the current ground sign encroaches on the setback and is rotting. They propose to replace it with a ground sign that is more functional and longer lasting:

- Gray Chelmsford granite masonry pillars to match the base of the building, topped with a piece of bluestone
- Double sided sign board 16 s.f. each side
- A black metal sign panel with white text listing tenants fits into a track system on posts
- Street number is located on one of the posts
- The sign is located within the setback

Mr. Rogers said it matches the building, is readable from the street and complies with zoning regulations.

Vesna Herman confirmed that it is double sided and perpendicular to the road.

Board members had no questions.

Ward French said it is a huge improvement.

Vesna Herman said it is strong and simple.

Other board members agreed.

THE SIGN DESIGN IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED

5. **1076 Post Road East:** Proposed signage (Parcel ID# F09//050/000) submitted by Gary Potts. Professional Permits for property owned by Alix Field located in the HSD Zone. (Site Map Atlas BTW, W. Palm Beach FL, 11/18/2020; Site Plan, Atlas BTW, dated 6/10/22; Sign Design Atlas BTW, 6/10/22)

Appeared: Gary Potts, Atlas BTW

Mr. Potts said the board had approved an Amazon Fresh sign on the entrance canopy. The client said it would not work. Mr. Potts said the design is now on the wall above the canopy. At 5 ft high and 24 feet long, for a total 129 s.f., it is smaller than the canopy sign. It is comprised of internally illuminated, individual channel letters. The foot candles are the same as previous lighting.

Board members had no questions and agreed it was as good as it could possibly be.

THE SIGN DESIGN IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL (Unanimous)