

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023

Board Members Present: Ward French, Chairman, Vesna Herman, Manuel Castedo.

Staff: Donna Douglass Minutes from the June 27, 2023 meeting were approved.

1. **620 Post Road East:** Proposed new signage at 620 Post Road East (Parcel ID# E09//046/000) submitted by Lanier Thomas, SNS Installations, for property owned by Equity One Westport Village Center LLC located in GBD/A zone. (Site plan & Sign Design by Signtech, San Diego, CA

Applicant did not appear.

2. **15 Imperial Avenue:** Proposed signage change at 15 Imperial Avenue (Parcel ID# D09//013/000) submitted by John Rountree, Rountree Architects, for property owned by Imperial Ave Associates, located in RPOD zone. (Site Plan by Leonard Surveyors, 4/28/17; Sign Design John Rountree. 10/1/21)

Appeared: Marilyn Jennings

The proposed new sign for Imperial Dental Associates is:

- 5 ft 11 inches high overall
- The signboard is 3 ft x 3 ft
- The sign's logo is a tooth

Ms. Jennings said it is the same size as the old sign. Ward French asked if the old sign board is being reused and was told no, the new sign board is made of Azek. He asked if there is a color rendering. Ms. Jennings said no but the sign board is white and the lettering and sign posts are a dark blue. She said the street number will be above Imperial.

Vesna Herman verified that the street number will be at the top. Ms. Jennings said it really isn't necessary as the number is on the building and wondered if it is requirement. Ms. Herman said yes, it is a necessary identification for the fire and police departments. She said it is a nice clean sign but thought the words Dental Associates were very small. The tooth logo might help identify the office.

Manuel Castedo thought it was a nice sign although he agreed with Vesna about the very small lettering.

Ward French said the street number must be at least 4 inches for easy identification. He said he liked the sign and the size of the lettering is up to the client.

Vesna Herman and Manuel Castedo also approved the design.

THE SIGN DESIGN IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WILL HAVE A 4 INCH STREET NUMBER (Unanimous)

3. **85 Post Road West:** Proposed façade change at 85 Post Road West (Parcel ID# C09//074/000 submitted by David Mann, for property owned by Lighthouse Westport LLC located in ROFD1 zone. (Building design Inglese Architecture & Engineering)

Appeared: Aaron Dweck, Michelle Coletti and Anthony Cognetta, Architect.

Mr. Dweck said at their previous appearance they had discussed changes to the façade with the addition of some reconfigurations including inset balconies and a new color palette. Tonight, they would deal with previous inconsistencies. The rest of the plan remains the same.

Mr. Cognetta said they have refined the color palette and are using more contemporary materials to include brick lap siding, board and batten lap siding and architectural panels. The new balconies are inset and the color palette is shades of gray to white. Also, the windows are larger. There is a newly detailed corner entrance to the lobby. The number of units and parking remains the same.

Manuel Castedo said he liked the rhythm of the Post Road facade; it is sleeker and cleaner. He wished the east end bay matched the west end entrance detail. But it is a much-improved design.

Vesna Herman said the proposal is improved, the massing is much better and the new color scheme is more appropriate for the location. She understood Mr. Castedo's comment about the design difference between the 2 ends of the front elevation, but thought it was ok as presented.

Ward French said the new design is a significant improvement and thanked the applicants for taking the board's previous comments into consideration.

THE APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED.

4. **259 Riverside Avenue (aka 251-253 Riverside Avenue):** Proposed façade change including ramps, stairs, balconies at 259 Riverside Avenue (Parcel ID# C08//056/000 submitted by Philip Cerrone for property owned by CEG Riverside LLC located in a GBD zone. (Site plan by Landtech 4/6/23; Building design Philip Cerrone, Architect dated 2/1/23)

Appeared: Phil Cerrone, Architect; Building owner

Mr. Cerrone said there are 3 buildings on the site. The board had approved #257, an office building, at a previous meeting. 251 and 253 will be converted from commercial use to apartments within the same footprint. The siding will be replaced, new larger replacement windows installed, as well as handicap ramps and balconies on the river side.

He said the renderings show new longer windows to create a vertical element, more doors, and balconies on the water side. Siding will be brick, the new roof is asphalt tiles, and landscaping

will be renewed with eventual river access. The buildings will have eight, 1,250 s.f., 2-bedroom apartments. The site will be totally cleaned up.

Vesna Herman asked about the text amendment that requires approval. Mr. Cerrone said it is to allow the number of bedrooms proposed. She asked about parking and was told there is more than they need. Ms. Herman verified that, in terms of the architectural footprint, it is the same, just the enlarged windows and balconies are added.

Mr. Castedo asked if the materials are the same as the octagonal building and was told no, it is totally different as they have different uses. Mr. Castedo asked if, in the balcony renderings, there are fins along the windows. Mr. Cerrone said there are no projections, the façade is flat. Mr. Castedo thought the building was good looking.

Ward French agreed and proposed the application should be approved using the thin brick façade.

The building owner said that thin brick would be very difficult to use on this style of building. He said they are using EIFS brick. Thin brick is not economically viable.

Mr. French said he was not in favor of using EIFS, it is no longer used much today. It doesn't hold up and is not appropriate for use on the water.

Vesna Herman said we can't approve it if it is not the material proposed. I agree it needs something longer lasting.

Mr. Cerrone said it is presented as EIFS brick on the drawings. The owner said the new EIFS is a much more durable product than before and looks like brick.

The owner said he wants the brick look for the buildings. The issue is the materials or aesthetics. From the looks standpoint it looks the same as brick. There is a building at 230 East Avenue you can see for an example of the material.

Vesna Herman said that in order to approve the material, they will have to go look at the sample.

Ward French said he would be in favor of approval of the project subject to the approval of the EIFS thin brick by board members. At in person meetings, we would have had a chance to see the material. He suggested board members go to 230 East Avenue in the next few days and let him know if they think it is suitable.

Meanwhile, he said, let us not lose sight of how much better the project is than what is there now.

THE APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT BOARD MEMBERS WILL GO SEE A SAMPLE OF THE PROPOSED EIFS THIN BRICK MATERIAL TO APPROVE ITS USE (Unanimous)

Board members comments after visiting 230 East Avenue to view the EIFS brick recommended by the applicant:

Vesna Herman 7/29/23: EIFS brick texture is similar to brick veneer texture. EIFS brick sizes and color shades are much more uniform than brick veneers. EIFS grout lines are very shallow and almost nonexistent. If the architect can find EIFS brick cladding (as I understand is possible), with more diversified color shades and a deeper grout line (creating a shadow), I believe that it would be an appropriate material for the 259 Riverside Avenue building.

Ward French: Thank you Vesna. I count you as a yes vote. My observation has me going in a different direction. Real thin brick veneer is indistinguishable from a traditional brick installation. The grout lines are tooled to the proper depth and the color mottling is what real brick would replicate. The synthetic grout product at 230 East Avenue is a flat monotone except for where they rolled paint on the surface to create an odd shade. The grout line looks like tape. I do not support the material.

Vesna Herman: Ward, please notice the condition under which I would consider EIFS as an option.

Ward French: I fully understand your condition but it gives the architect a lot of squiggle room in my opinion. We should comment on what is put in front of us not what we think would work if they can find it. To say what was said the other night in regard to how authentic the brick on the building (230 East Ave) looked leaves some doubt in my mind about leaving any latitude. Presenting an actual product that we can accept will make for a better project outcome.

Vesna Herman 7/31/23: Ward, I fully agree with you. EIFS brick used for 230 East Ave. is not appropriate for the Riverside project. Can we give them options?

- 1) EIFS brick with deeper grout lines and more diversified brick color shades (not painted).
- 2) Natural brick veneer.

Ward French: Hi Vesna, Thank you. Pending Manuel's comments and concurrence, I suggest we put these criteria to the architect.

Manuel Castedo: Hi Ward, I have been away and did not have a chance to see the actual building, however the photos appear to show a flat, cardboard-looking, unconvincing appearance. I agree that they should propose a more substantial alternative.

Ward French: Thank you both. **We are all not in favor of the material selection for the project.**