

## TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Board Members Present: Ward French, Chairman, Vesna Herman, Jon Halper. Staff: Donna Douglass Minutes from the July 26, 2023 meeting were approved.

1. **1620 Post Road East:** Proposed façade renovation (Parcel ID # H09//177/000, H09//176/000, H09//174/000) submitted by Rick Hoag, Frederick W. Hoag Architect for property owned by 1620 PRE-Associates, LLC located in a GBD/A/IHZ zone.

**Appeared:** Rick Hoag

Mr. Hoag said the application is for renovations to the “Redicut” building. Essentially, the building will be split from east to west, Redicut will remain with improvements and the eastern portion of the building will be renovated. The eastern portion will be a golf simulator club on the second level with a restaurant and terrace above. Loading for Redicut will be reorganized so it won’t interfere with driving range activity. Basically, it will be cleaned & fixed up and the east portion of the building re-clad.

- Recladding the siding with fiber cement panels
- New front façade curtain wall system with some sliding glass panels and decorative aluminum architectural fin lighting
- Main entry is on the east side
- Interior elevator access to the upper levels and golf deck
- Outdoor dining and bar on raised roof deck serviced by a ground floor kitchen
- Clean up and paint south elevation and west elevation for Redicut
- Siding will be reparged and painted where necessary
- Main parking area at rear of building

Jon Halper asked about the fins on the front façade. Mr. Hoag said they are Levelux perforated aluminum fins that house LED lighting that glows. Mr. Halper said it’s an operable wall, he was curious how it would be used as it just opens to the front parking lot. Mr. Hoag said it gives people the ability to spill out on the sidewalk at the front.

Vesna Herman verified that the current front façade has 3 entrances at slightly different levels. Mr. Hoag said they would repour the front slab and balance it with site work to make the renovated portion of the building on one level. Landtech balanced the site for them.

Ms. Herman verified that the window lighting fins project 3 feet. She asked if the aluminum canopy was for signage and was told no. She asked if the elevator would be used to carry food and customers upstairs. Mr. Hoag said yes, it is not fine dining. Ms. Herman asked about the canopy on the top level. Mr. Hoag said it’s a steel canopy that looks like wood that covers the

bar area. Ms. Herman asked if there would be canvas on top and was told yes, close to the bar to protect from light rain. She verified that the top floor structure was not visible anywhere.

Ward French said he liked what was being done, it is successful even without bringing up the other half of the building. Mr. Hoag said they are treating it as 2 buildings. A heavy wall separates the 2 facades. The façade will be cleaned up. He thought it would look pretty complimentary. Mr. French was still concerned about the condition; the metal window framing is oxidized. Mr. Hoag said it would be cleaned up.

Mr. French asked if anything else is happening on the property. Mr. Hoag said there had been an 830-g application for a 5-story building at the rear of the property. Rick Redniss was able to do a text change to allow for 10 townhouses instead. Mr. French said the renovation was a bold statement and thought it was a good job.

Jon Halper said it is a modest restrained building and with the skeleton retained, it still relates to Redicut. The new design is successful, and he supports it.

Vesna Herman said it is a statement building, different and visually pleasing. She said, regarding the relationship to the Redicut building, if there is a way to make it more crisp, it will make your building look better. She supported the new design.

**APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED (Unanimous)**

2. **36 Riverside Avenue:** Proposed façade renovations (Parcel ID #C09//103/000) submitted by Julie Verni, for property owned by Scotti Pietro TR & Janine TR, located in a GBD zone.

**Appeared:** Julie Verni, Architect

Ms. Verni said the site, the former Da Pietro Restaurant, is currently a vacant restaurant with an apartment above. There is a proposed change of usage to an all-residential use. The building currently has a single pane glass storefront with an outside staircase to the second level apartment. The proposal includes:

- Changing the main level front façade by replacing the storefront with smaller residential windows
- Applying brick siding to front facade
- Providing doors in the front elevation to access each level
- Enclosing the outside staircase
- Decorative stain glass window in front façade peak
- Changes and additions to window locations using Anderson double pane domestic windows

Ward French thanked Ms. Verni for her thorough presentation.

Ms. Herman asked how they will handle the connection of the front elevation brick veneer to the existing side wall materials. Ms. Verni said the bricks will stand just proud of the building's sides. Ms. Herman asked if they wouldn't have enough shingles to apply to the new front façade. Ms. Verni said the shingles will be used to patch the rest of the building. Ms. Herman asked why they are using brick and was told to match the existing neighboring buildings. Ms. Herman asked if they would be repainting the whole building. Ms. Verni said they would leave the shingles as is for now.

Jon Halper said this is a commercial building with an apartment; is it now a residential building and does it still fall into ARB purview? Board members were told that since there are zoning issues, the ZBA needs ARB approval before reviewing it. Ward French asked what the variances are and was told for coverage and setback. Jon Halper had no more questions.

Ward French said the side staircase looks a little off balance. Ms. Verni said they enclosed the staircase with minimal effect to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and to preserve a river view. Mr. French asked if the staircase had an asphalt shingle roof and was told yes. He said the pitch of the roofline could be a concern, the shingles might not perform. He asked how the side-by-side entrance doors will be treated. Ms. Verni said they are Anderson fiberglass painted to match the windows.

Vesna Herman said it is now a charming shingle building. It still has side shingles, but the front vocabulary is totally different, in style and materials, an applique. It does not make it better. The roof to the second floor might have technical issues. Updating is a good idea but why the new brick vocabulary? I would like to see this go forward but question why you are doing some of the things you propose.

Jon Halper said this is a primary entrance to downtown Westport, it is a charming little 100+ year old colonial structure. It looks New Englandy. What you are proposing does not, on too many levels. From the horizontal transom windows to the entranceway, the composition and the brick façade are not appropriate for this location. I can't support this.

Vesna Herman agreed.

Ward French said we will not be able to pass this application. He suggested they also reconsider the handling of the staircase.

**THE APPLICATION IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. APPLICANTS ARE ASKED TO TAKE THE BOARD'S COMMENTS INTO CONSIDERATION AND RETURN (Unanimous)**