

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

MEETING MINUTES JULY 28, 2015

The meeting was brought to order at 7:30 PM by George Masumian, Chairman.

Members present: Ward French and Vesna Herman. Minutes from the meeting of July 14, 2015 were approved as presented.

1. **645 Post Road East**, ZBA #7409, façade renovations (applicant returning) (Plan revisions dated 7/21/13, Frederick William Hoag, Architect)

Appeared: Rich Hoag, Architect; Jack Rosen owner's representative

Mr. Hoag said at his previous appearance, the Board had requested more information about the proposed window systems. He said the primary tenant, Free People, want a steel window system. It is a slim line system with insulated glass and has a dark gray clear coat.

The rest of the building will have dark bronze anodized aluminum frame, 1 ¾ inch center mounted storefront systems. Mr. Hoag said he was trying to match the steel system as much as possible.

Because the building requires some additional brick work and the original brick can't be matched, it will be whitewashed "Marshmellow" white and steel brushed.

Ward French asked if there are any additions to the canopies. Mr. Hoag said no, it is an aluminum frame with plexiglass inserts. Mr. French asked if the cap on the parapet had been changed. Mr. Hoag said no, it is the aluminum flashing around the top. Mr. French asked if there is a reason the steel window systems aren't being used on the whole building. Mr. Hoag said yes, Free People was willing to pay for it. Mr. French asked if the signage over the canopy was new. Mr. Hoag said they were not asking for signage now as the sizes have to be worked out. He will return with signage.

Vesna Herman verified that the canopies are the same as previously and the only change is the steel window system. She also verified that an effort had been made to approximate the colors for the different systems.

Ward French said the tenants' doors are different heights. Mr. Hoag said the Free People space has a full steel door; they proposed the grillage at the bottom.

George Masumian said the door proportions are also different, one is 10 ft high. Mr. Hoag said it's what the client wanted. Mr. Masumian asked if a window has been added. Mr. Hoag said yes, the wood panel to the left of the Free People entrance has been replaced with another window. Mr. Masumian asked if the mechanicals would be visible. Mr. Hoag said they aren't visible now and they are not being changed. If there are changes he will try to put any new equipment as far back out of view as possible and screen it if necessary.

Board members agreed the new design is an improvement over the existing and the materials go well with the design.

THE BUILDING DESIGN IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED; THE APPLICANT WILL RETURN FOR SIGN APPROVAL (Unanimous)

2. **605 Post Road East, ZBA #7410, façade renovations (applicant returning)**

Appeared: Rick Hoag, Architect; Jack Rosen, owner's representative

Mr. Hoag said he had been asked to return with more details about the new storefront design, the roof windows and proportions. In particular, the Board had been concerned about the feasibility of forming the sculptural roof windows/dormers with standing seam metal roofing.

Mr. Hoag said he had met with the representative from Firestone, the roof manufacturer, who thought the metal could be folded to make the dormers. Also, the roof will be skinned beneath the metal with an impervious material to prevent leaks.

Mr. Hoag said the metal roof is metallic gray, the portico columns are a darker gray and the storefront systems have a design similar to #645 but are red anodized aluminum with an underlayment. The roof plan and dormers call for separating the standing seam roofing enough to make all the angles for the dormers. Regarding Ms. Herman's questions at the previous meeting about the dormer's proportions, Mr. Hoag said he wanted to stand by the design because he liked the way it works.

Vesna Herman asked what was being done to the Fresh Market. Mr. Hoag said it will have the metal roof, the cupola redesigned to match the new cupolas on the rest of the roof, and the brick would be painted gray.

Ward French asked how the dormers would be formed. Mr. Hoag said they will have an edge and metal folded into the required shapes. Mr. French asked about the material in their front wall. Mr. Hoag said it is white waffle plastic set back into the shape.

George Masumian asked if the dormers would be attached to any vertical members. Mr. Hoag said yes, there are baffles every 24 inches. Mr. Masumian asked if any other dormer designs had been considered. Mr. Hoag said yes, he looked at a number of different ideas but likes the way these work.

Vesna Herman said she liked the new storefront design very much, it opens up the building and provides a nice space for signage. She also liked the new cupolas. She still holds that the dormers are disproportionately large for the roof. They are different from anything else, have a strong form and make a strong statement. But they are being implanted in a design that is traditional. They create a "wow" effect but it is not smooth or harmonious. Mr. Hoag said he was trying to do something interesting with the long roof and wanted to stand by the design. Ms. Herman said she would not oppose it.

Ward French said he didn't see the logic behind the dormers. The new storefront works well but he didn't like the dormers and didn't think they would wear well.

George Masumian said he agreed. The dormers' sculptural form and provocative shapes don't work well with the rest of the more traditional building. Otherwise, everything else works and looks nice.

THE DORMER DESIGN IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL (Agree: Masumian & French; Disagree: Herman)

3. **1 Glendinning Place/25 Ford Road, ZBA #7407**, site and building improvements and additions. (Applicant returning)

Appeared: James Cutler, Architect; Wesley Stout, Landscape architect

Mr. Cutler said the scheme had not changed but he had more developed plans and elevations. He said he would remind Board members of project by going through the property description and proposed goals:

- Restore the riverfront and make the property more environmentally valuable
- Emphasize the connection for workers to their surroundings
- Keep the large pine grove and reforest other areas
- Put parking from the large lot underground adjacent to the buildings and turn the parking lot into a large green with a turnaround area for the fire department
- The parking garage will have 2 full floors of parking
- Align the exterior walkways and parking building walkways so that they can be paved with glass blocks to bring natural light into the parking garage
- Will eliminate the Building C mechanical building
- Building B will have a partial 3 story addition and the elevations will be improved
- Building A will be renovated and the elevations improved
- Pull parking at 25 Ford Road back from the river and build a 2 story parking structure
- Remove the retaining wall along the river to restore the riverfront
- Build a “highline”, a steel grate walkway through the tree canopy to connect Ford Road to the main campus
- Build a new 4800 to 6000 s.f. “commons” building with a roof deck to provide a cafeteria, auditorium and social spaces adjacent to the parking garage. It overlooks and is terraced down to the new green
- Build a new entrance structure from the parking area to Building B with views through Building B and into Building A and the outdoors

Mr. Cutler described the additional architectural changes and what he hopes they achieve:

- Building B will be partially dismantled and rebuilt with a partial 3 story addition
- Remove stone piers from both buildings and rebuild stone walls on the ends
- Build out to the T’s to enlarge interior space except for the south elevations, allowing overhangs to provide sun shading
- Provide ventilation with operable windows on the east elevations via casement and vented glass windows
- The roofs will be shedded down
- Move connecting bridge between the two main buildings
- Elevations on the Ford Road building will not change
- Build a glass box at the rear of the Ford Road building to provide access to the building and to the “highline”
- Create a “green” wall where parking garage abuts Ford Road

Mr. Cutler said he was looking for schematic approval. He wants to get Building A as close to a net zero building as possible and as it progresses and he gets more expertise, there might be minor changes. He’s also hoping to grow things on the building. He said he would return with any changes.

Mr. Cutler provided materials samples:

- Weathered zinc standing seam metal roof
- “Solarban” starfire non reflective glass
- Structurally glazed, narrow joint curtain wall with operable vents
- Brown bluestone paving stones
- Granite veneer

George Masumian asked about the pattern of the stone work. Mr. Cutler said the current stone work isn't very good. He prefers “farmer's walls”, unpretentious and graded toward the top.

Vesna Herman said among the new buildings is the fish shaped entrance to Building B. She asked Mr. Cutler to describe it. He said outside, the entrance will be very heavily treed and only the door will be visible. When you step inside the whole area opens up with views into and through the office buildings and to the outside. Ms. Herman asked about the commons building. Mr. Cutler described its design and function. Ms. Herman asked about the design guiding principal behind the 3 new buildings. Mr. Cutler said it is to create an emotional connection with the landscape.

Ward French asked, since they are looking for schematic approval, if they anticipate changes. Mr. Cutler said they want to move into the next steps for Conservation and ZBA approvals. They will come back to the ARB if there are any real changes. They talked about the efforts toward less energy use. Mr. Cutler said he can't guarantee he can achieve it. He wants to do shading coefficients from trees but is not sure if it is possible yet.

George Masumian said he would ask about the practical considerations, like where are the service areas. Mr. Cutler said it is all located at the rear, north elevation of Building B. Mr. Masumian asked where the service area for the café would be in the common building. Mr. Cutler said in the garage underneath where there are also storage areas. Mr. Masumian asked how the floor lines behind the curtain walls would be addressed. Mr. Cutler said there might be space or back painted glass; he wasn't sure yet.

Vesna Herman thanked Mr. Cutler for his efforts. She said she finds the connections he is trying to achieve much more thoughtful and peaceful than just “wow” architecture. She said she hopes it is going to be built.

Ward French agreed. He said he had a very positive view of the project and its synergy. He wants to see it built.

George Masumian also agreed. He said he wished the missing board members had been there to see the emotional connections Mr. Cutler had created between the buildings and land. It makes you want to experience it. He said the Board appreciated the time and care that is involved and thanked Mr. Cutler for his very comprehensive presentation. Mr. Cutler offered to show the project to the absent board members.

WITH A VERY POSITIVE VIEW OF THE PROJECT, THE BOARD RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE DESIGN WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE APPLICANT WILL RETURN WITH ANY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES (Unanimous)

Sally Palmer

Recording Secretary