

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2024 - MINUTES

Board Members Present: Ward French, Chairman; Vesna Herman, Jon Halper, Jake Watkins and David Halpern; Staff: Donna Douglass; Clerk: Sally Palmer Minutes from the meeting of Tuesday, February 27, 2024 were approved.

1. **561 Post Road East:** Proposed façade modification and use of ancillary building onsite for floral studio and storage at 561 Post Road East submitted by Jennifer Calliagas, Terrain East, LLC for property owned by Infinity Westport Manager, located in a Zone RBD. (Site Plan: Langan CT, Inc dated 3/15/24; Building plan by Terrain Design Services 2/5/24)

Appeared: Jennifer Calliagas, Urban Outfitters

Ms. Calliagas said the building is an ancillary building used for storage on the existing Terrain property, a home and garden center with café and a greenhouse. Last fall after dealing with local zoning compliance issues, the local business district requested that they use the building.

Maintenance required that the roof was recently replaced, the building will be repainted, and the windows replaced. They propose to use it as a floral studio and storage. The sidewalk will be ramped for easier access to the building. The proposal for maintenance includes:

- Remove shutters
- Replace windows with 2 over 2 windows on the upper level and 6 over 6 on the main level
- Repair clapboard siding and paint it dark gray to match Terrain
- New gutters and downspouts
- A new air handling system will be installed on the back wall
- The applicant will return with signage

Vesna Herman asked about the building color. Ms. Calliagas said it is Amherst gray with charcoal trim.

Jon Halper asked if it is being used as retail or strictly ancillary. Ms. Calliagas said it will not be used for retail.

Jake Watkins liked the color scheme.

David Halpern thought it was a well-done repurposing of the existing building.

Ward French said the building will be more attractive and anchors the site.

Board members agreed it was a successful repurposing.

APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED (Unanimous)

2. **35 Beachside Avenue:** Proposed addition to existing athletic facility at 35 Beachside Avenue (Parcel ID# H05/001/000) submitted by Mike Kozlowski, Claris Design Build, for property owned by Greens Farms Academy, located in Zone AAA. (Site plan Tighe&Bond, Shelton, dated 3/1/24; Building design Claris Design-Build, Newtown, dated 4/9/24; Model by Roger Ferris & Partners)

Appeared: Mike Kozlowski, Claris Design Build; Jake Watkins, Roger Ferris & Partners (Mr. Watkins recused himself from the Board)

The proposal is for a new gymnasium, additional squash courts and a fitness center to be built around the existing squash facility with a new entrance. Mr. Kozlowski said the existing maintenance facility adjacent to Maple Lane will be demolished for parking and moved to the basement of the new building. The largest structure, the gymnasium, can be divided up into different training areas. There is a wrestling area and training for wrestling.

They looked to other buildings on campus for materials inspiration:

- Standing seam metal roof
- Resysta siding
- Clear anodized aluminum window and door systems

Mr. Kozlowski said they would be upgrading everything.

Mr. Watkins provided a model of the new structures. He said it is a bookend to the campus. They have continued the gable roof forms and materials for the gymnasium to appeal to the campus as a whole. He said that townspeople use the squash courts on a regular basis.

Jon Halper thanked the applicants for the thorough presentation. He asked if the floor level of the gym is higher than the entry and was told it is 30 inches higher as the groundwater level doesn't allow making it lower. Mr. Watkins said that in finding a new home for the maintenance facility, they used the grade drop to get it in the basement.

David Halpern had no questions.

Vesna Herman questioned the proximity of the laundry and girls' and boys' locker facilities in the basement. Mr. Kozlowski said the laundry is a center of activity all day, used by the maintenance staff. There is a keypad system. The school is comfortable mixing maintenance with the girls' and boys' facilities.

Ms. Herman said you have to go past the locker rooms and facilities to get to the stairs to parking at the rear of the building. She asked if there were any windows for the stairs or is it enclosed. Mr. Kozlowski said that stairwell is a fire exit and for use of the staff. The students will use the stairwell to the main lobby in the opposite corner of the building and it has lots of light. Ms.

Herman said she believed both stairwells would be used by the students and suggested they should bring light into the rear stairs as it's a security issue.

Ward French had no questions. He understood the facility is used by off campus people; it is a great environment for athletes. He appreciated the architectural aesthetics and materials proposed.

Jon Halper agreed. It is well screened from the campus; it is a successful proposal.

David Halpern said it is a thoughtful design that fits the campus well.

Vesna Herman said she supports the proposal. She suggested that they should plant large trees as soon as possible and look into the basement security and light.

THE APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL AS PRESENTED
(Unanimous)

3. **280 Compo Road South:** Proposed renovations to the inn, restaurant and event space at 260 Compo Road South (Parcel ID# C04/001/000) submitted by Peter Romano, LANDTECH, for property owned by the Town of Westport which is located in Zone AAA-AA) (Site plan: LANDTECH dated 3/5/24; Building design Ken Nadler Architects, dated 4/9/24)

Appeared: Peter Romano, LANDTECH; Ken Nadler and Philip Cerrone, Architects

Mr. Romano gave a brief overview of the history of Longshore. He said Michael Ryan, a hospitality professional, had secured a 30-year lease on the property and was proposing updates to the inn. No changes are proposed for the restaurant and dining terrace. He's hoping to start work in 2025.

Mr. Nadler described the proposed updates:

- Replace windows, roof and siding
- A new enlarged entrance port cochere to create a sense of arrival
- Move the handicap entrance ramp to the left of the entrance
- Move the building's entrance door under the port cochere slightly to the right to create straight access and site lines through to the rear of the building and the water
- Move office space to the second floor
- Increase and update bedrooms, including a new bridal suite that opens to the pergola
- Build a large, modern kitchen to serve all the inn's needs
- Install new elevators
- The ballroom will be one big space on one level and open to a new, partially covered large patio with a bar overlooking the water

- An exterior wall and change of elevation separate it from the public restaurant bar and patio
- New windows will be uniform, the building will be insulated, and the siding is shakes

Ward French asked if there would be any changes on the east elevation and the entrance to the current restaurant. Mr. Nadler said there are no changes planned for the restaurant, outdoor bar and patio or that elevation.

Jon Halper wondered if there had been any study given to the building's history for making design decisions. Mr. Nadler said he had tried but hadn't been able to find historical photos. Mr. Halper asked what color the new roof tiles will be. Mr. Nadler said they are currently red but the proposal calls for gray asphalt. Mr. Halper said there are a couple of different railing styles on the flat roofs and port cochere. Mr. Nadler said they are more decorative over the port cochere and are all white.

Jake Watkins said the new entry reorganization with views to the Sound is very nice. He asked where the scale of the entry portico comes from. Mr. Adler said it is wide enough to cover a car. Mr. Cerrone said it covers 2 cars side by side. Mr. Watkins asked why the restaurant area isn't being renovated. Money, said Mr. Adler. Mr. Watkins said the planning is really strong but he was confused by some of the rear additions and the large flat roof. Mr. Cerrone said they had cleaned up the 2nd floor roof. Mr. Watkins asked if that would be the site for the new a/c condensers. Mr. Cerrone said yes.

David Halpern said the entrance design approach is successful, it brings together the disparate styles of the building. He was concerned about the scale of the port cochere and suggested cutting it back to accommodate one large car lane. It might enable them to save the large tree in front of the building. He was also concerned with the new gable and Juliette balcony, it looks like a foreign expression, the gable might be better without it. Overall, the rest is well done. Mr. Cerrone suggested the existing drive might work, it is 24 feet wide, enough for 2 cars. We want it to be 2 cars wide. Mr. Halperin said there is another parallel drive outside the port cochere.

Vesna Herman agreed with Mr. Halpern about the scale of the port cochere, it is too big and needs to be scaled down. She agreed that the floor plans have been done really well, especially the entrance with the site line to the water. She said the architectural elements at the rear of the building look dry and institutional, the columns are too uniform.

Ward French said the lack of presence of the rear elevation concerned him, the appendages added to the rear take away from the elevation and make the entire structure disappear. All that flat roof is massive and obfuscates the building behind it. I understand you are making the building more functional but the proportions of the port cochere and the rear need to be reduced.

Jake Watkins asked if they could consider an awning over the rear patio.

Jon Halper asked if there had been any design attempts for the restaurant. Mr. Nadler said yes. Ward French reminded Mr. Halper that the board can only review what it is presented.

Jon Halper said he was struggling with what the goal of the project is, what are we turning it into? It's a quirky old building that is having some nice expensive pieces added to it. What is the architectural goal of the project? The disconcertingly large port cochere doesn't align with the front gables and the Juliette balcony is...eh. The rear program is done skillfully, but it's a layer cake of flat roofs and an undistinguished 2nd floor. It's blah from the water.

Ward French said the rear terrace pavilion is massive relative to the existing building.

Mr. Nadler said part of the program is seating for 200 people on the patio for cocktail hour. Mr. Cerrone said the rear of the building is more functionally delivered.

Vesna Herman said we are all looking for a point of reference on the rear elevation. The massing is so uniform, it needs...Mr. Nadler said it needs a focal point. Board members agreed.

THE APPLICANTS WERE ASKED TO TAKE BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS INTO CONSIDERATION AND RETURN WITH A REVISED DESIGN. (Unanimous)