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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
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## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 17, 2018  
Town Room, Town Hall  
6:00 p.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes
  - a. June 18, 2018
2. Announcements
3. Applications
  - a. DRB 2018-25, 26 Spring Street –Construction of a mixed-use building

Kyle Wilson and David Williams of Archipelago Investments, LLC were present to discuss the proposed project.

Mr. Wilson stated the design that was previously approved in 2017 has been revised. The new design includes the construction of a mixed-use building containing 58 dwelling units in combination with ground floor 1,000 square feet retail/commercial space, lobby, trash area, mechanical space, elevator, and site improvements. On-site parking is not proposed. There are no dormers. The roof line has been revised and now includes roof mounted solar. The solar will be black which will blend in with the black colored roof.

There is a pathway from the northern egress to the southern entrance. The building wall is granite, similar to Grace Church with a darker finish. Mr. Wilson showed the Board colored perspective renderings to the south and west of the building.

The street side rendering shows the lobby, entrance to the retail, retaining, and ramp for entrance for use of residents, patrons, and for emergencies.

A pre-finished cedar material will go around each window and around parts of the façade. The cedar will eventually turn gray. The brick to be used is hand formed.

The interior corridor/hallway with all glass windows will be lite 24/7, but it will not be overly bright from the street.

Mr. Wilson showed the Board elevation plans.

Mr. Wilson showed the landscape plan which includes plants on both sides of the proposed building. There will be exposed downspouts, featuring swales and rain gardens.

Mr. Wilson explained the public improvements to be made as part of the project. The applicant would like to make improvements in the public right-of-way on Spring Street, by burying the power lines, removing the 2 existing poles, and put in street trees and bike racks.

Ms. Marquardt inquired if there will be underground parking. Stated the previously approved plan included underground parking.

Mr. Wilson responded, this design does not include underground parking. The previously approved plan had 38 units. The new plan has 58 units that are smaller. The decision to have more, smaller units is based on the One Kendrick Place development.

Ms. Marquardt inquired about the previous talk about having an art gallery on the first floor, in collaboration with Amherst College and whether that is still being planned.

Mr. Wilson responded that is not being proposed at this time. Stated a commercial space would be going into the first floor space.

Ms. Marquardt inquired about who will benefit from the proposed solar.

Mr. Wilson responded the specifics about the solar is still being worked out but the project overall will benefit.

Ms. Schnarr stated she thinks the overall design is elegant. Stated she is concerned with the solar glare on the west and south side of building as it may cause uncomfortable conditions for building residents and adjacent properties. Mr. Wilson responded it will be based on the glazing/coating. There will be some shading. Window drapery may be included.

Ms. Schnarr suggested using a horizontal hozer and/or mechanical shades

Mr. Wilson mentioned the Mass Mutual office at One Kendrick Place recently installed horizontal mechanical shades.

Ms. Schnarr stated she recommends mechanical shades for all windows.

Ms. Schnarr inquired about materials proposed for the patio.

Mr. Wilson responded that they intend to use granite.

Ms. Schnarr inquired about canopies.

Mr. Wilson responded there will be a small canopy over the south entrance.

Ms. Schnarr recommended that the canopy be extended. The proposed canopy is 2 feet wide and suggested that it should be extended to 5 feet, at least as it is an important entrance point.

Ms. Schnarr asked if there is access to the commercial space from the inside of the building.

Mr. Wilson responded there is no access from the inside.

Ms. Schnarr asked about the lighting of the corridor; whether a light shaft has been considered; and whether a solar study of the corridor has been conducted.

Ms. Wilson responded they are working with a lighting expert. They have not considered a lighting shaft. A solar study has not been conducted.

Ms. Schnarr suggested solar tubes lighting could be installed from above.

Ms. Marquardt stated she really liked the original design. She liked the Danish stone and dormers. It matched Amherst's historic architectural composition. Thinks the proposed design is too monolithic, like the One Kendrick Place building design. Stated she is disappointed in this new proposed design.

Ms. Schnarr asked what the window railings will be made of and asked if the railings could be pushed out.

Mr. Williams responded the material to be used is stainless steel and they don't want them to be pushed out as they don't want the area occupied.

Ms. Schnarr said the south facing side of the building is little more traditional and thinks it looks nice.

Ms. Porter stated the building will be close to Grace Church. Stated she is concerned about parking and concerned about the retail going in. Stated she hopes the applicants are mindful of what should go there and be successful.

**Public Comments:**

Dorothy Pam, 229 Amity Street

Stated this project is not for a family to live in and is very concerned by this.

Joyce Berkman, 66 Cottage Street

Inquired whether the applicants conducted a market study for the residential units and retail. Asked is this what people want. Stated there are families that need residential

spaces and maybe office space. The proposed design are dormitories. Stated this is not what this town needs. Stated she would like to see balconies, a more interesting roof line and garden spaces.

Mr. Wilson stated they did not do a market study. Stated Archipelago Investments' property management company received inquiries about needing more residential units in town.

Cathy Shane

Stated tall buildings do not have good circulations and will require a/c. Also, stated the large windows will cause privacy issues for residents.

Laura Fitch, 120 Pulpit Hill Road

Stated she doesn't like big windows that go down to each unit floor. Stated she is concerned that the building will be overheated. Suggested the units should have less sun exposure.

Dianne Amsterdam

Stated she has lost her faith in applicant and Board with the development approval of One Kendrick Place. Stated it was a design bad. Inquired whether this Board could have more regulatory power. Stated she would like to see wider sidewalk and more trees planted as part of this project.

Eric Brody, Amherst resident and member of the Amherst Public Art Commission

Stated Amherst residents want more public art, which is reflected in the town's master plan. Would like the applicant to incorporate public art.

Irwin Friman, 54 High Street

Asked what the frontage distance from the proposed retaining wall/building to Spring Street.

Mr. Wilson responded it is 14 feet from wall to curb.

Ms. Marquardt inquired if on-street parking will be removed as part of this project.

Mr. Wilson responded, there will be no on-site parking. Stated approximately 3 on-street parking spaces will be removed as well as the existing utility poles. Utilities will be buried underground and street trees will be planted and a bike rack will be installed.

Erika Gess

Stated the proposed building is not to scale with Spring Street. Stated it is too big for street. Stated she would like to see a contextual plan for this project.

Hilda Greenbam

Stated that in the past, Town boards were not afraid to required applicants to lower the number of units in the building. A building story should be removed. Stated she doesn't like this project as proposed.

Joan O'Meara, 37 Cosby Avenue

Stated the proposed project is like a green house, without being green

Amherst resident

Stated she would like to see the building set back more and would like to see a wider sidewalk.

Ms. Porter stated that the Design Review Board is an advisory board who can only make recommendations. Stated the Board does not make Rules & Regulations for the town.

Ms. Schnarr stated a contextual map would be good. Stated that in the past, the Board has conducted site visits and has looked at Google maps with applicants for context.

The Board will continue the public meeting for DRB 2018-25, 26 Spring Street until their next meeting.

**b. DRB 2018-26, 33 & 37 & 51 East Pleasant Street – Construction of mixed use buildings**

In attendance were Herbert S. Alexander and Todd Alexander, Trustees to the property owner of 33 & 37 & 51 East Pleasant Street, Central Amherst Realty Trust; Rob Levesque, registered landscape architect; and Dan Lewis, registered architect.

Mr. Lewis introduced the Board by showing a context map of the site in relationship of downtown Amherst. The proposed project includes the construction of 3 buildings: two mixed-use buildings (Buildings A & B) will be constructed along East Pleasant Street with a third, commercial building (Building C) along the eastern edge of the property. Streetscape improvements, plaza improvements, and site landscaping will be provided on all 4 sides of the proposed mixed-use buildings and along the west side of the proposed commercial building.

Residential units are proposed on floors 2-5, with 48 units in Building A and 20 residential units in Building B. There will be 16,107 square feet of first floor commercial space with 8,231 square feet of commercial space in Building A; 4,928 square feet of commercial space in Building B; and 2,948 square feet of commercial space in Building C. Although parking is not required, the applicant has included 49 exterior parking spaces and 14 interior parking spaces. It has not been determined whether the parking spaces will be permitted or will be for free.

Stated the spaces are contemporary. Shows building facades and balconies at building corners. There will be a 32-foot wide court yard with string lighting between Building A & B. Stated the plan is to first build Building A, then Building B, followed by Building C. Building C could be built to suit a specific company. Pedestrians and motorists will be able to see what is behind Building A and B through the courtyard.

Mr. Lewis showed Board members material samples, i.e. russet 598 and fiber cement palette. Stated this design is a work in progress. The windows are double hung with fiber cement around them. The brick that may be used is a light red water struck brick. There would be a connector on the top floor, connecting Building A with Building B. There would be a balcony on the top floor only.

Mr. Levesque explained the siting of the property and lighting. The project site is comprised of 1.5 acres of land so they have some land to be flexible with the design. Buildings A & B are setback from the public right-of-way so they do have some room for streetscape improvements and public art. The applicant would like to create green spaces. Hardscapes are proposed in front of Building A & B with outdoor sitting and café. Stated Tan Brook is piped between Buildings A & B therefore no vehicles could go between the buildings.

Mr. Levesques stated that this is early on in the design phase and the project team would like to ask for input from the Board and public.

Mr. Birtwistle inquired whether the building facade is the same width throughout.

Mr. Lewis responded, the building façade varies in/out by 2-feet, which adds interest with the addition of using different materials, use of balconies and the building setback.

Mr. Birtwistle inquired about the distance from the buildings to Kendrick Place.

Mr. Lewis responded, Building A is approximately 22 feet from Kendrick Place. Stated they aren't planning to develop that area for public space, but will most likely be an area for utilities.

Ms. Marquardt asked if the proposed buildings are the same height as Kendrick Place and One East Pleasant?

Mr. Lewis responded, yes. The height for Building A and B is 55-feet. Building C is a single story building.

Ms. Marquardt stated that Kendrick Place, One East Pleasant, and the proposed Building A and B, will have the same height. Inquired about the energy efficiency of the buildings. Inquired about roof mounted solar.

Mr. Lewis responded, the buildings will be relatively energy efficient. The units will be well insulated. They are looking into solar.

Ms. Marquardt stated she appreciates the mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units. Asked what the proposed building setback is from the existing sidewalk.

Mr. Levesque responded, approximately 12 feet from the public right-of-way.

Ms. Schnarr stated Amherst has a lot of different building types and forms. Stated the proposed building architecture is too monolithic. Suggested the applicants to look at the architectural mass much further. Building A is too massive. Buildings A & B could be split into 3 buildings. The proposed residential units look awkward. Suggested the corner of the building could be split. Recommends that there should be three distinct buildings, instead of the proposed design which all looks the same.

Mr. Lewis responded it is costly to propose an additional building as it will require another elevator and stairway to the project.

Ms. Porter stated Amherst deserves better than what is be presented. Stated she only sees one big brick building. The proposed design does not capture the spirit of Amherst and lacks the feeling of the Amherst neighborhood. The proposed design looks like it belongs in an office park, not in Amherst. Stated she is glad the applicant is including on-site parking. Stated she is concerned with the proposal of retail space, as it may be difficult to find retail that would be successful in that location. Stated her concerns if an accountant or attorney office goes in the first space. Stated she doesn't like the fiber cement for the building. Stated 5 stories is questionable and a challenge. Ms. Porter stated she does not like the proposed flat roof.

Ms. Levesque stated she would like the applicants to break up the buildings and wants the applicants to go further with architectural massing. Stated she would prefer seeing the architecture mimicking row house. Stated 5 stories is a bit much.

Mr. Birtwistle stated the design is too monolithic. Stated he would like the building footprint reduced. Suggested a building section could be 3 stories or 4 stories with more balconies be included. The massing is the major issue here

Michael Hanke, 91 Gray Street

Stated parking is a town wide problem. Suggested the applicants to think about the context and look at other communities for design inspirations, such as in Grapevine, Texas and Williamstown, MA. Stated the aesthetics need to be better. Asked why office spaces are not proposed on the second floor.

Maureen Evans, member of the Local Historic Commission

Stated she likes that the rendering has been improved from what was originally submitted and published in a recent Gazette article. Stated she gets a sense of claustrophobia though. Stated the sidewalks are narrow given the scale of the project and worries about the buildings blocking the sun. Stated she would prefer 4 stories, instead of 5. Stated the design would be more interested if different kinds of cornices and corners were incorporated in the design. Stated the plan lacks context. Suggests Amherst based architects and contractors should be used for the project.

Hilda Greenbaum, 289 Montague Road

Stated the design feels claustrophobic. Stated she is concerned with the removal of snow from the proposed flat roof. Suggested a creative playground be incorporated in design.

Mr. Lewis stated the cornice and brackets provide details. Stated the flat roof does not require shoveling for removal of snow.

Amherst resident

Stated the plan needs more articulation, context, and materials. Stated the setbacks can break it up, and a pocket park could be designed at the north space where utilities will go.

Stephen Schreiber, 100 High Street

Stated he hopes the applicants consider incorporating owner occupied residential units for professional demographics, not just rental units for undergraduate students. Suggested a performance space could go into the old Bertucci's space. Stated many residents have expressed a need for a performance space in town and it is mentioned in the master plan. Stated collaborative efforts are needed for this project.

Mr. Birtwistle stated a performance space is interesting idea.

The Board will continue the public meeting for DRB 2018-26, 33 & 37 & 51 East Pleasant Street project until revisions are submitted

**4. New Business**

**a. Appearance by Sarah la Cour, Executive Director of the Amherst Business Improvement District (BID), regarding design competition for band shell on the Common**

Sarah la Cour, Executive Director for the Amherst Business Improvement District (BID) was present. Stated the BID is hosting a design competition for a new band shell at the Town Common. Landscape Architect Frederick Olmstead originally designed the Common which included a gazebo type structure. John Kuhn, BID member and la Cour have expressed the desire to create a design competition for the band shell design. The BID would like to invite 1 DRB member to join the jury for reviewing and select the winning design. The competition selection process is to start early fall and the BID hopes to start construction in spring 2019. The band shell would be approximately 18-feet by 24-feet. Additional staging could be added, if needed for specific events.

Ms. Schnarr stated she would love to be the representative. The Board expressed their support for Ms. Schnarr's desire to be on the jury.

**b. Items Not anticipated 48 Hours Prior to Meeting**

**3. Old Business**

**b. Items Not anticipated 48 Hrs. Prior to Meeting**

**5. Future Meetings**

**6. Adjournment**

The Board adjourned at 8:35pm

**Members:**     **NOTE MEETING LOCATION. RSVP as soon as possible if unable to attend.**