

**DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON**

**TOWN HALL**  
**334 MAIN STREET GREAT BARRINGTON**  
**THUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2017**  
**5:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT: GAETAN LaCHANCE, CHAIRMAN**  
**JONATHAN HANKIN**  
**JIM MERCER**  
**PEDRO PACHANO**  
**STEVE DIETEMANN**  
**STEPHAN GREEN**

**EDWIN MAY STAFF LIASON**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. LaChance called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Mr. Greene had not yet arrived.

**II. PERMIT FOR REVIEW: TOPA ENTERPRISES 546 MAIN STREET**

Tom Doyle was present with architects Jeff Baker and Eric Murphy to discuss his project for 546 Main Street. Mr. Doyle said this is an old/new project in the Mixed Use zone.

Mr. Baker, from Mesick, Cohen, Wilson, Baker Architects, said he does a limited amount of commercial work. He went through a Power Point presentation showing the historic preservation projects he has worked on in many areas of the country. He said he has become very knowledgeable about architecture by working in historic environments.

Mr. Greene arrived at 5:09 P.M.

Mr. Baker said creating a condominium is like creating a little village. He said it is assembling one concept and articulating it in one shape. He said a complex floor plan can be enclosed in a simple design. He said he would take lessons learned and apply them to a new building.

Mr. Baker said the floor plan for the TOPA building has 18 units. There is an issue with traffic. Parking will be under the building. The entrance and egress will be on the west side away from Main Street. The building will be a Greek revival style.

Mr. Baker said the smallest scale of the building will face Main Street. He said he is hoping to save the tree on Mahaiwe Street because it will diminish the size of the

building. He said there will be a low slope roof and a parapet around the edge. There will be a series of balconies. There will be louver blinds in the upper windows.

Mr. Baker said it is a challenge to pull off the local elements and the features seen on other structures. He said the goal is not to create any building but rather a building that feels like it belongs here. He said he looks forward to the comments and reactions of the Committee.

Mr. LaChance asked if there were any other elevations.

Mr. Baker said no only these renderings.

Mr. LaChance asked how many balconies will there be.

Mr. Baker said there are four balconies proposed.

Mr. Baker said it is an interpretation. There are pieces and parts and elements from different periods are put together. The goal is to create something that is its own animal.

Mr. Dietemann asked if something modern had been considered.

Mr. Baker said it would feel like something from outer space in this neighborhood.

Mr. Dietemann said he would have leaned toward something Victorian if the goal was to fit into the historical feel of the neighborhood.

Mr. Baker said he didn't think it would look right.

Mr. Hankin said there was a historical base that was torn down.

Mr. Baker said yes it was boxy. He said we have to think about the maintenance issues. Small broken down facades are always a challenge.

Mr. Dietemann asked if the shutters work. He suggested something with more simplicity.

Mr. Baker said yes the shutters work. He said he created a simpler façade, if it is stripped down too much it becomes institutional looking. He said he is trying to create a balance by making a three story building look like a two story building.

Mr. Baker said it was drawn to scale.

Mr. Hankin asked how much it will be to build.

Mr. Doyle said it is not cheap.

Mr. Baker said it is a challenge to build to the Energy Code and building code.

Mr. Pachano said he has a lot of respect for Mr. Baker's work. He said he can see how it can be rewarding. He said he appreciates the work from the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries but we have previously talked about when Great Barrington move from the past and start looking at the present and the future.

Mr. Baker said he understood. He said it is hard to pull off modern well unless you have a decent budget. The proposed building is easier to do on a lower budget.

Mr. Dietemann architecture tells what you are. He said he sees this as a little fortress.

Mr. Mercer said he really likes the proposal. He said it works with the number of units and the parking.

Mr. Greene said he agreed with the other architects. He said the proposal is simpler in some ways. It gives contrast to the surrounding neighborhood. He said maybe instead of creating something that fits in, create something that competes. It is important to think about what we are today instead of what we were. He said cathedrals in Europe will have a modern element added that doesn't compete with the rest of the structure.

Mr. Baker said we have done everything from complete contextualism to complete modernism. We looked at the site and thought about what it feels like living next door. If it were outside the fabric of the neighborhood it would be different. More contextual projects can be more easily fit into other areas even downtown.

Mr. Dietemann said most are more sympathetic to the historic nature of the area. It is the easier way to go. A modern approach is more difficult. He said a building sensitive to its surroundings can be beautiful without trying to imitate.

Mr. Dietemann left at 5:44 P.M.

Mr. Doyle said he is hoping for a renewed vibrancy.

Mr. Mercer said it is extraordinary to have modern amenities in such an elegant building. He said this is a nice approach.

Mr. Pachano said the massing and the scale work well.

Mr. LaChance said he would like to see an elevation with the other buildings around it.

Mr. Hankin said he thought the building was successful with the scale.

Mr. Pachano said he appreciates there is no parking lot.

Mr. LaChance said he appreciates that there will be no visible parking. He said it is a good use of the space. He said he would like it to be a little less historical.

The applicant thanked the Committee for their time.

**III. MINUTES: FEBRUARY 14, 2017**

**MOTION:** Mr. Hankin to approve the minutes of February 14, 2017

**SECOND:** Mr. Pachano

**VOTE:** All in favor

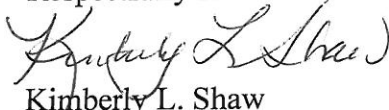
**IV. CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:**

No one spoke.

**V. ADJOURN:**

Mr. LaChance adjourned without objection at 5:49 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly L. Shaw  
Secretary