

DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET
LARGE MEETING ROOM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015
5:00 P.M.

PRESENT: JONATHAN HANKIN, VICE-CHAIRMAN
STEPHAN GREEN
JAMES MERCER
STEVE DIETEMANN

EDWIN MAY, STAFF LIAISON

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

II. PERMIT FOR REVIEW: 79 BRIDGE STREET

Present for the applicant, attorney Ed McCormick, engineer Jim Scalise, architect Michael McKeown, architect Carl Black, Jane Iredale, Robert Montgomery and applicant Vijay Mahida.

The presentation began with a description of the property, the former Searles School, located at 79 Bridge Street. The building is located on 3.1 acres of land. The building is approximately 25,000 square feet. The proposed build out would be 90,000 gross square feet. The building is located in the B-3 zone. The proposed use of a 95 room boutique hotel is allowed by special permit.

Jim Scalise from SK Design Group said the building sits along the River Walk. Improvements would be made to River Walk as part of the project. The goal is for the project to be pedestrian friendly and to connect to Main Street.

Mr. Scalise said the building can-not be rehabilitated because of life safety issues. The interior of the building has 8 levels. The stairs are not wide enough. There are accessibility issues with the layout of the building. In addition the building does not comply with building codes. There are significant inefficiencies including mechanical, plumbing and electrical.

Mr. Scalise said the project requires a historic designation from the Historic District Commission and a special permit from the Selectboard. He said a waiver would need to be granted for the number of rooms. He said the property is in the flood plain and the Water Quality Protection District.

Mr. Scalise said there is an application into the Conservation Commission to see if the property is part of a habitat. He said there is no plan to bring in fill so there should not be an issue with working in the flood plain.

Michael McKeown addressed the main points of the building. He said the footprint of the building will remain as it exists. The scale and mass will be similar to what exists. The hotel will have 95 rooms, it will have a conference component and an activity wing. The existing gymnasium building will be closer to the street than what exists.

Mr. McKeown said the height of the new building will be within 5-10 feet of the existing building. There will be another floor in the proposed building. The roof is designed to keep the height similar to what exists. There will be hip roofs on either side of the center. There will be an attempt to reuse some materials.

Mr. Scalise said the landscaping plan will take ideas from the Iredale property. Trees will be planted and rain gardens installed to work with the storm water management plan. There will be pedestrian walkways along the entire site.

Mr. Dietemann asked if the landscaping would go to the end of the property along the River Walk.

Mr. Scalise said we will try to maintain landscaping to the north along River Walk on our side. Rachel Fletcher wrote a mitigation plan along the property line to the north.

Mr. Green asked why keep the existing footprint.

Mr. Scalise said the layout works and compliments the abutting property.

Mr. Hankin asked how people will be directed to the hotel entrance.

Mr. Scalise said there will be directional signs to direct guests to the check in.

Mr. Green said there is ambiguity between the front and back. Architecture should be used to find the entrance. There is an opportunity to reestablish the pedestrian way. There needs to be a separation between the pedestrians and motorists. The building could be brought forward to encourage pedestrians.

Mr. McKeown said they didn't want to clutter the front of the building.

Mr. Hankin suggested a walkway to the front of the building.

Mr. Montgomery said a porch on the front of the building with a view of the baseball field provides an opportunity to magnify the view-scape.

Mr. Hankin asked if there will be solar panels on the roof of the gymnasium.

Mr. Scalise said there is a green component that is not well defined yet. He said it is a mandate of the project.

Mr. Hankin asked if the panels would be rack mounted.

Mr. Scalise said yes.

Mr. Hankin asked if there will be a parapet to hide the panels from view.

Mr. McKeown said the rack would be very shallow only 2-3 high.

Mr. Hankin asked what type of siding would be used on the side of the building.

Mr. McKeown said clapboard made out of a fiber product.

Mr. Green asked if the 95 room request is important.

Mr. McKeown said the budget projections show this to be the required number.

Mr. Dietemann asked what the accessory uses will be.

Mr. Scalise said there will be a restaurant, meeting room, fitness center and swimming pool.

Mr. Montgomery said when this is constructed this will be the only hotel with a conference center in this part of the county. The other one closest would be Cranwell.

Mr. Dietemann said he would like to see some of the contemporary playfulness of the Iredale building brought into this project.

Ms. Iredale said multiple architectural colors will be used to bring character to the building.

Mr. McCormiack said there is historical context for the design.

Mr. Dietemann said if you wanted to work with the design it could have been done better. The building will be razed it could be rebuilt with some historical character.

Mr. Hankin said a lot can be done with color to articulate the different masses.

Carl Black the building was built in the Queen Anne style with bi-lateral symmetry. He said the porch was never part of the formula, it is very American.

Mr. Black said the colors will be authentic Georgian colors. The gymnasium building will have more stone. It will have a mansard roof. The Annex wing will be white wash. He said he is not sure of the color of the trim.

Mr. Hankin asked what color the front will be.

Mr. Black said he is still working on the colors. It hasn't been decided. He said the front will be one color and the recessed area a different color.

Mr. Montgomery said Mr. Black worked on the Bryant building. He will choose beautiful colors.

Mr. Green said he is familiar with Mr. Black's work. He said he would like more detail. He said the placement of the building takes away from the pedestrian appeal. He said he would like the back of the building treated like the front.

Mr. Scalise said they will discourage exiting onto Church Street. He said it is necessary for the traffic to enter the east driveway and exit onto Bridge Street from the west driveway. The site-sight line is not adequate to exit from the east driveway.

Mr. McCormick said the ~~road~~-driveway in front of the building is necessary for fire access.

Mr. Green said the Red Lion Inn and the Curtis Inn are right on the street. It would reinforce the street to have the building closer.

Mr. Mercer asked if windows will be put in the top where there were originally two Palladian windows.

Mr. Black said it could be done but the hip roofs make it challenging. The plan needed the difference in roof types to break up the repetition.

There was a question from the audience. How can the historical designation allow for rooms in excess of the 45 room limit when the historical structure is to be razed?

Mr. Hankin said that is a question for the Selectboard.

There was a question about signage.

Mr. McKeown said there will be signs developed with the landscaping to ensure the circulation.

There was a question about exterior lighting.

Mr. Scalise said a detailed lighting plan will be part of the special permit application. All lighting will be shielded and downward directed.

Mr. McCormiack said lighting would be complimentary to the Iredale building.

A member of the audience said the town is giving up a large historic brick building with large windows for a building with cookie cutter siding and windows. It will look like an airport hotel. The Town is not getting what they deserve.

Mr. Hankin asked if there will be a 6-7 foot retaining wall on the west side.

Mr. Scalise said yes on the north end. There will be plantings along the wall. There will be adequate separation between the wall and the walkway.

Mr. May said it meets the regulations of the code.

Mr. Dietemann asked if something could be done to mitigate the huge parking lot in the back.

Mr. Scalise said there will be plantings and aisles.

Mr. Dietemann said it is good to break up all the asphalt.

Mr. Black said there will be faux material used but 18th century people loved faux. George Washington built Mt. Vernon in wood but had sand glued to the face to look like stone.

There was no additional information provided.

Mr. Hankin said the Committee is not going to make a finding.

III. CITIZENS SPEAK TIME:

There were no citizens comments.

IV. ADJOURN:

Mr. Hankin adjourned without objection at 6:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw
Secretary