

ARCHITECTURAL & DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2023 5:45 p.m.

Members present: Sue Larsen, Marshall Montana, Charles Regulbuto, and John Scheib
Staff present: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Appl 23-32P, Evergreen Walk Unit 5** – request for a site plan approval for three retail/restaurant buildings totaling 10,725 sf., on property located southerly of Cedar Ave. and westerly of Buckland Rd. Gateway Development (GD) Zone.

Architects Douglas Grunert and Michael Barago, both of BKA Architects, out of Brockton, MA, presented the design proposals along with Rock Emond, SLR Consulting and Sarah Stine, O'Connell Development Group.

Grunert reviewed the architectural elements of the Starbucks and Chipotle discussed at the previous meeting. He then displayed the new design for the Chipotle, revised per the Committee's suggestion to make the design unique to South Windsor. More decorative elements were added to the masonry, and the material of the top of the building was changed to cementitious Hardie board, with horizontal and vertical lines to add texture. The base material was also changed from Dryvit to bricks of a dark charcoal color. The pickup window tower would have textured vertical panels of varying widths.

For the Starbucks, the aesthetic of the shou suji ban was translated into a horizontal clapboard look with engineered cementitious wood panels. The base now contains a brick roll lock that slants up slightly, with a running bond pattern capped with soldier course. The third restaurant space, with a tenant to be determined, would use the same paneling material but with a lighter wood; the base would contain a similar brick pattern but with no soldier course. The applicant team showed samples of the materials.

Rooftop units would be obscured by the parapets on the Starbucks and Chipotle buildings. In response to a question from Sue Larsen, Grunert said the rooftops would be visible from up the hill across Buckland Road but not from the road itself. The Hardie board on the Chipotle would have concealed fastener, with rain drains behind it. John Scheib said he would be open to a darker shade for the Hardie to resemble the Peoples Bank building.

The Committee forwarded a favorable recommendation on the proposal. The applicant will come back to the Committee when plans for the third restaurant are developed.

2. **Appl 23-42P, The Metro Realty Management Corporation** – request for a special exception to Sec. 7.22 and site plan of development for a 55-unit apartment complex property located at 240 Deming Street and a portion of 440 Buckland Road (northerly side of Deming St. and easterly of Buckland Rd.), MAH Zone

John Hammer, Principal Landscape Architect, SLR Consulting, introduced the project. He stated the proposed complex would have landscape buffering along the frontage and east, west, and north sides. There would be a courtyard in the middle of the facility with landscaping, including trees in front of each building. He listed the tree species to be used. There is a wetland at the top of the property, so a buffer with landscaping would be added. Sue Larsen asked about existing vegetation on the property. Hammer said the site is mostly clear, with most vegetation along the perimeter.

Ben Tripp, EVP, Metro Realty, said the existing buffer along the rear property line would remain. He has spoken with the Town Engineer about preserving and maintaining some of the mature trees near the sanitary sewer easement at the front. Hammer showed the landscaping along the grade on the site, to consist of smaller and younger plants. Tripp said most of the trees on the buffer were planted at the time of the approval of the Residences at South Windsor Farms, and if any need to be removed, he hopes the replacements would provide a similar buffer.

Michele Lipe read into the record an email from Justin Iriondo with suggestions regarding the appearance of the project. In response to the first suggestion, regarding signage, Tripp said an entry island is planned with signage, most likely with a stone base. A post and rail fence is planned along the frontage as well, though it may need to be shifted back as a result of the sanitary sewer easement. Larsen stressed that the fence should not obscure sight lines given the curve in the road. Tripp spoke about the anticipated impact of the development on traffic on Deming Street and the vehicle services MARC, Inc. would provide for the residents with intellectual disabilities. He also explained the definition of "assisted housing."

The site grade would be brought up around 10' in one location and down about 10' in another to level the site; the parking lot would grade down about 7' from the entrance. Larsen asked what the center island would contain. Tripp said there would be a grilling area in the rear; a gazebo is currently planned in the center and might become a recreation area for children. The rest would be covered in plantings and grass. No garages are planned in the development. An 8-acre area would be conserved as a meadow and technically not be part of the site.

Larsen asked about the location of the fence and whether it could be extended along the frontage to discourage children from running into the road and enhance the aesthetic. In response to a question from Scheib, Tripp said the island with the sign would be as close to the road as possible without obscuring sight lines. Plantings between the fence and the road are not currently planned, but the Committee discussed whether to plant day lilies in this area, as is the case at 175 Oakland. It was the consensus not to plant the lilies.

Tripp displayed the elevations and said the development would consist of three building types, each with two stories, direct entrances for each unit, a gabled roof, and clapboard siding, preferably gray. The 8-unit building would be in the eastern portion of the site. Each entrance would be framed by the private outdoor space of the upstairs units, about 7' deep. He pointed out the sconces, header, and decorative medallions. There are currently no plans for basements. Every unit would have private outdoor space, with fenced-in rear patios for the downstairs units and balconies for the upstairs ones. He showed the floor plans and said all units are one story; all units would be 1- or 2-bedroom, with slightly more 2-bedroom units. One of the downstairs units in the rear building would be a common space with a kitchenette, offices for the leasing and MARC staff, and a community room. All first-floor units would be handicapped adaptable, with some accessible to meet requirements; Tripp said accessible units cost slightly more but are a major marketing point for developments. All adaptable units are required to meet requirements regarding a turning radius for wheelchairs.

The 8-unit building would have black aluminum balcony railings, with white vinyl dividers about 5 ½' high. The colors of the doors are to be determined. The riser room on the side of each building would contain equipment for the fire suppression system. The window on the third floor is decorative, and only the windows on the end walls would have shutters. Tripp thinks the rear of the development would be mostly obscured from view due to the grade and the buffer.

Scheib asked about the possibility of separating the façades by 1-1 ½' and/or using a Hardie plank material for the siding. Tripp said doing so would be costlier, but he will discuss the possibility with the construction manager. Charles Regulbuto suggested varying the colors of the shingles for each unit. The Committee discussed the use of clapboard siding, as well as a suggestion from the email from Justin Iriondo to add headers and grills to the windows.

The Committee forwarded a favorable recommendation on the proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 7 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele M. Lipe, AICP
Director of Planning