

ARCHITECTURAL & DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

MAY 6, 2021 5:45 p.m.

Members present: Charlie Regulbuto, Marshal Montana, Sue Larsen, John Scheib, Dave Goslin

Staff present: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning

The ADRC Online ZOOM Meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. **Appl. 21-21P, Town of South Windsor Pleasant Valley Elementary School** – request for a special exception to Table 3.1.1.A and site plan of development for a new 102,150 sf elementary school, on property located at 591, 623 and 647 Ellington Road, RR zone

Mr. Jim Barrett, Principal with DRA Architects introduced their Project Architect Jim Guarino and Project Manager Judd Christopher, Public Building Commission Chair Matt Montana and Mr. Chuck Warrington, OPM from Colliers.

Mr. Barrett addressed comments received at the January 26th informal presentation with ADRC starting with aerial overviews of the site. The existing Pleasant Valley School was shown with the development of the proposed new building behind it on the upper plateau. The Ellington Road parent drop off loop was indicated where parents will exit onto Ellington Road with a dedicated left hand/right hand turn. The dedicated loop road and parking for the Pop-I-Pop program was shown. Staff, faculty and buses to enter by way of Long Hill Road.

Plans for the retaining wall were eliminated after meeting with IWA/CC. The retaining wall at the back of site will remain.

Site lighting was described and shown for full cut features. Fixture types for walkways and parking lots were shown.

A slide presentation of floor plans were shown and described. Building materials and windows were described. Roofscape architectural shingles will be applied over roof forms serving as screening devices for roof top mechanicals. Some mechanicals will be behind the pop up of the gymnasium and cafeteria/kitchen areas that will have roof screening.

Elevations were shown from Ellington Road of the gymnasium and dedicated entry with sister oreo windows used as a design element to bracket the elevation. A main street element of the campus was described. Play areas and open field play area were shown. Connector points in the building were described with lobby spaces to support after hours and weekend activities by the general public with the ability of sealing away the remainder of academic areas.

Predominant brick building materials were described for the 1st and 2nd floors. Cafeteria windows have overhang strategies for shading of windows on the south side. The library space has a large expansion of north facing glass. Administration and health suite areas were shown.

John Scheib asked where DRA is in the design process and at what stage they are in cost estimating, and if there are any major add alternates that may impact the exterior of the building. Mr. Barrett stated they have just concluded their design development milestone in terms of cost estimation that was reviewed with two cost estimators. There is a reconciled budget within an expected range but they have not yet met with the Public Building Commission. Any add alternates will be known when they meet next week with the PBC, but do not expect any major changes.

Mr. Regulbuto noted the extensive design reminiscent more of a college campus than elementary school and asked if the budget is more than needed. Mr. Barrett stated the building is just over 100,000 sf but a portion of the building is for the stand alone Pop-I-Pop program that works on a separate schedule from the rest of the campus. The focus has been to create smaller learning communities within the larger

building. The building takes the major elements pressed out to the corners of the building with smaller subset spaces within the larger footprint. Mr. Regulbutto asked if the school is supposed to serve more than the Pleasant Valley district. Mr. Barrett stated the POP-IPOP program is town wide. Chuck Warrington described the POP-IPOP program that originated at Orchard Hill School, moved to Timothy Edwards and is now planned for PVS. Square foot costs were described.

Dave Goslin complemented the overall design but commented that the entry at the parent drop off area looks unresolved with the gabled roof of the portico out of scale with a lot of tension between the roof lines. Mr. Barrett indicated because of the distance from Ellington Road, the entrance became a beacon to be easily identified against the rest of the flat roof areas.

Marshall Montana asked about the sight lines when exiting onto Ellington Road. Mr. Barrett stated sight lines have been a significant concern from the start of the project. Significant input from Town agencies and departments was received and found there is not a need for signaling on Ellington Road, but if it becomes necessary in the future the entrance has been located across from the existing road. Traffic studies have shown good sight lines in both directions. Shoulders of the land forms on either side of the entrance will be worked on to reduce them. Mrs. Montana asked about the stream on site that Mr. Barrett described as part of the modified wetlands plan from IWA/CC.

Sue Larsen complemented the design as classic that will stand the test of time. The ability to close off the cafeteria and gymnasium areas is a safety feature helpful for elections and primaries that parents will appreciate.

Mr. Goslin asked if the gymnasium is to the State minimum standards or if the size has been increased. Mr. Barrett stated the gymnasium is sized larger at 6,000 square feet providing the ability to have a full width competition court with areas for retractable bleacher seating, with a full wood court.

Mr. Scheib voiced appreciation that the IWA/CC offered the ability to mitigate the wetlands and to remove the retaining wall and described the challenge of the ten to twelve feet of grade between Ellington Road and the entry and sight lines. Mr. Scheib discussed the northerly retention pond plantings with Mr. Barrett, and asked about the lighting plan that Mr. Barrett described as full cut off at zero at the edges of the site. The parking areas and wall mounts are also full cut off. The emergency vehicle access at the back of the property was at zero but has been changed to allow for some lighting as requested by Staff.

Mr. Scheib described the building as classical in the middle with modern elements of the cafeteria and connector corridors and challenging gable entry, and asked if there is anything to help the building feel more cohesive and to save on costs. He complemented the articulation of the solid brick replaced by the concrete block as you go up in elevation noting it does not happen all the way around the building. Are there elements where the brick can move up to the second floor, and can the curtain wall be broken up by some masonry elements? Mr. Scheib voiced support for simplifying roof forms and eliminating copulas and dormers if possible, to save money. The school has the feel of a college campus in one building and any unifying elements to save money would be great. Mr. Goslin agreed.

Committee members forwarded their comments with a favorable recommendation to the PZC.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele M. Lipe, AICP
Director of Planning