

VILLAGE DISTRICT
DESIGN COMMITTEE
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TOWN HALL ANNEX
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Michael Bilby
Kevin Quinlan, AIA
Robert Sanders, AIA
Rose Marie Verrilli
John Weiss

Village District Design Committee Meeting Minutes February 5, 2009

PRESENT: Michael Bilby, Kevin Quinlan, Rob Sanders and John Weiss and Town Planner Robert Nerney

ALSO PRESENT: Kathy Leeds, Pam Hovland and Malcolm Whyte (representing the Wilton Library Association) and Douglas MacMillan (representing Latif Ramadani)

The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Nerney welcomed the committee members and introduced the applicants for the record. He noted that the meeting would be tape recorded and summary minutes would be made available within seven days pursuant to Connecticut state law.

Wilton Library Association, applicant, 137 Old Ridgefield Road, Proposed replacement of library ground sign

The first matter under review involved an application of the Wilton Library Association. Library representatives stated that the project calls for the replacement of a damaged ground sign at the Wilton Library. Association representatives stated that the sign will be positioned in the same the location as the existing sign and has been designed so as to comply with maximum size and lighting requirements outlined in the town's zoning regulations. It was noted that the face of the sign would consist of a smooth Corian surface with etched lettering reading "Wilton Library". Library representatives stated that the proposed sign would consist of a "Glacier White" background color with dark grey lettering etched in a contemporary "thasands" font. It was further noted that the sign is designed to match the architectural vernacular of the library building.

It was stated that the footings of the old sign would be utilized. Mr. Quinlan suggested that the footings be reinforced by way of adding two sub-surface vertical sonar tubes and a sub-surface cross member. Mr. Sanders suggested the width of the sign be increased to 6" so as to provide greater girth and presence.

Mr. Nerney asked if landscaping would be placed around the structure to which the applicant indicated that low shrubs and/or groundcover would be planted. Library

representatives further noted that the structure would be situated on a slightly elevated earthen berm in order to better define the limits of the sign.

Discussion ensued concerning lighting. It was noted that the sign would be externally illuminated by way of a 70 watt metal halide light. Mr. Sanders expressed concern regarding the intensity of the proposed lighting; particularly against a white surface material. It was suggested alternative lighting be considered including fixtures utilizing less wattage.

Mr. Bilby questioned whether the proposed material was subject to discoloration and trouble-free with regard to the cleaning of graffiti, auto exhaust, etc. Library representatives indicated that the surface could be easily cleaned or sanded, if necessary.

The Village District Design Committee voted unanimously to approve of the proposed sign finding the design appropriate with respect to materiality, color and font. However, the Committee recommends both the applicant and the Planning and Zoning Commission carefully consider aforementioned the design issues raised during the meeting.

Lataf Ramadani, applicant, 12 Center Street (Post Office Square), proposed corrective action and miscellaneous improvements to buildings and site

The Village District Design Committee next reviewed the application of Lataf Ramadani, owner of three buildings at 12 Center Street known collectively as Post Office Square. Architect Douglas MacMillan of Ridgefield appeared on behalf of Mr. Ramadani.

Mr. MacMillan stated that the application involves a number of changes to both the buildings and the site. With regard to the building occupied by Portofino's Restaurant, Mr. MacMillan explained that the applicant intends to establish an enclosed three-season sitting area in a location presently being used for outdoor dining. Improvements include the installation of windows and panel walls designed to match the existing building. The project also calls for the installation of a copper-clad seamed roof over the new addition.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Inland Wetlands Commission had approved the project to which Mr. MacMillan responded affirmatively. Mr. Quinlan suggested gutters be incorporated into the design, so as to afford customers protection from the elements. He further suggested the use of underground detention galleries so as to remain compliant with wetland approvals. Mr. Sanders stated the replacement of the vintage 1950's semi-circle window with a matching window was highly desirable in terms of improving the architectural appearance of the building. Mr. Sanders further stated that efforts should be made to replicate bracket detail reflective of architect Charles Moore's original design to which Mr. MacMillan agreed.

Mr. MacMillan stated that the Inland Wetlands Commission objected to a stone wall privacy barrier running parallel to the seasonal sitting area. It was suggested that the wall

feature be replaced with opaque paneling rising 3 to 3½ feet from grade so as to offer privacy to restaurant patrons.

Mr. MacMillan next discussed planned improvements to the center building. Mr. MacMillan indicated that the applicant is seeking to establish an overhead trellis along the front and northerly building elevation. The concept, as explained by Mr. MacMillan, is to create a public gathering place between the center building and the restaurant building; however, not to introduce tables or chairs. Mr. MacMillan stated the area would not be used for dining nor would it be restricted to use by any particular establishment; rather it would be used as an outdoor central gathering place. The committee suggested the introduction of benches, flower planters or some other artistic features so as to provide for a more meaningful gathering place.

Mr. MacMillan noted the creation of a pedestrian opening between the planned trellis and three season restaurant sitting area. Mr. MacMillan explained that such improvement is intended to provide pedestrian access to a river walk trail, adjacent and parallel to the Norwalk River.

Mr. Weiss stated that the trellis tends to connect the two buildings. It was suggested that landscaping be increased in this area to accentuate the river connection. Mr. Bilby suggested the three-season restaurant addition be shifted slightly north so as to increase the width of the river connection. It was suggested the architectural design of the trellis be reworked to match the architectural features of the restaurant building. With regard to the restaurant building, it was suggested that an ogee curve be placed immediately below the requested gutters so as to transition and soften the design.

Mr. MacMillan stated that other improvements call for the introduction of traditional exterior light fixtures, wooden tenant signs painted in a traditional black and white color, restoration of parking lot islands and site landscaping. Mr. MacMillan stated that the parking lot would be resealed and re-stripped, including the repainting of surface pavement directional arrows.

The Village District Design Committee voted unanimously to approve the application subject to incorporation of design changes discussed during the review and outlined in the meeting minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Nerney
Town Planner