

FINAL MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the
Historic District Commission of the Town of Greenwich
Wednesday, July 10, 2019, 7:00pm
Mazza Room, Town Hall

ATTENDEES PRESENT

COMMISSIONERS: STEPHEN BISHOP – CHAIRMAN, DARIUS TORABY, FI FI
SHERIDAN

ALTERNATES: CYNTHIA SMITH, ANNIE MCGINNIS, MARIE WILLIAMS (arr 7:08)

ABSENT: SERENA BECHTEL, KATHRIN BROWN, ARIS CRIST, MARTIN KAGAN

Mr. Bishop called meeting to order at 7:04pm

1. ADVISORY TO PLANNING & ZONING
301-309 Greenwich Avenue (NRHP)
Greenwich, CT 06830
Represented by Granoff Architects

Continuation from June 12 meeting - Review plans to construct an addition with an elevator and enclosed stair to make structure compliant with HC accessibility requirements.

Andreas Stresemann (Granoff Architects) recapped the past meeting (discussing that the last design had to overcome a few challenges; address the challenge that the limited parking in the back is where the addition will go for the elevator and enclosed stair and that the addition be secondary to the new building and reference the present architectural elements of the building).

Mr. Stresemann continued, explaining that the present design showed how the applicant is relating to the windows and instead of the double-hungs a more simplified version will be used and that the design also shows the top mimicking the top crown with band that goes (relates) to the existing building.

Two different versions were presented. One option with a more reddish (supposed to be antique brick – similar to the Armory) and the other to be more associated with the original building.

Ms. McGinnis stated that she felt that with the crown molding being so different, the set back, the red brick makes it more interesting.

[Mr. Stresemann showed two colored bricks]

Ms. Williams preferred the one that is more sympathetic with the existing color.

Mr. Toraby said the design (presented in June) was nice. He continued saying that here, the proportion of the base bulkhead with respect to the intermediate “band-course”? is a little odd. You need to have the band-course more subservient to the base (limestone). The limestone seems too small. It would then also relate a little more to the band course of the main building.

Mr. Toraby continued, since the fenestration and the form of the new addition are very similar to the rest of the building, Mr. Toraby believed the homogenous color is more desirable.

Mr. Bishop agreed Mr. Toraby with homogeneous color. Mr. Bishop inquired about the windows.

Mr. Stresemann replied that the windows are not double-hung and are fixed windows. We didn't want to be too 'matchy matchy' but wanted to have a simplified look with a more modern language.

Mr. Toraby was concerned that due to code, it would be necessary to have glass windows behind the elevator (shaft way) and as such, would be different.

Mr. Stresemann acknowledged Mr. Toraby's comment and replied a painted piece of sheet rock could be used and would be different than an actual window but it would not be noticeable to the average on-looker.

Mr. Toraby said that it makes it look more like an afterthought and would prefer the applicant stay truthful.

Ms. Sheridan spoke to Mr. Stresemann's comment regarding making the addition a bit more modern. She believed that bringing a modern element into a historic district is not appropriate. She felt that the significance of the site warrants a design that honors the architectural heritage.

Mr. Stresemann inquired as to what Ms. Sheridan was envisioning.

Ms. Sheridan felt that the present design is an improvement over the last and supported Mr. Toraby's comments.

Mr. Toraby commented, if you are matching the brick color and keeping the horizontal, it behoofs that you are more respectful to the rest of the elements of the main building.

Mr. Stresemann asked for a definition of “respectful”.

Mr. Toraby said if you look at the addition in relation to the existing, you have no mutons, no double-hung windows, no standard glass. It does not relate as a commercial addition. It looks like a different use. As the addition is a part of the same building, the windows should be similar, the windows that are 'blind' should be eliminated.

Mr. Stresemann responded that he felt that the HDC now wanted "matchy matchy" which is possible. The applicant wanted the addition to be complementary but not be mistaken for the original.

Mr. Toraby further stated that this construction will be here for a long long time. With the present design, it is open to criticism – it belongs but it doesn't – all because of the fenestration. The rest of it is benign.

Mr. Stresemann said that he is fine implementing the double-hung.

Ms. Smith commented that she didn't like the height and massing of the first design. (Addressing the applicant) - As you managed to lower it down, I didn't mind the glass break to separate it from the other building. Continuing, she is not a fan of the spandrel. Ms. Smith suggested removing the ground floor window.

Mr. Stresemann responded and said that you need something on the ground floor to make it a little more important.

Ms. Smith said that it doesn't have to be all brick. The cornice . . . the band is separated by a brick ridge that she didn't mind separating the glass.

Ms. Williams asked, where the stairwell is, are those three functional windows? I would be comfortable with a brick treatment on the ground level.

Ms. Williams asked if the applicant could take all five of the windows and do a treatment like a herringbone?

Mr. Stresemann said that presently we can take out the window, keep a recess in the wall and repeat the pattern of the window without being a functional window.

Mr. Toraby looked at the window facing the parking lot, . . . that window is intersecting your landing. How will that work?

Mr. Stresemann said that having the windows keeps the proportions and keeps it friendly, not monolithic.

Mr. Stresemann asked what HDC wants addressed.

Mr. Bishop asked that the applicant will put five double hung windows in and the windows on the elevator shaft will be recessed.

Mr. Bishop asked about the entrance.

Mr. Stresemann responded that it will be 'dressed up' and he will come up with a design to make it interesting (no window).

Ms. Smith stated that she liked the brick was curious about how accurately it could be matched.

Mr. Stresemann said that it was relatively easily to match the brick but would be happy to return with a sample for HDC approval.

Mr. Toraby wanted to know if the front window was all one slab?

Mr. Stresemann confirmed.

Motion to approve the design as presented with the changes:

The previous "fake" windows at the elevator shaft be replaced with brick recesses;

The recess next to the new entry to receive a cast-stone plaque with the building number;

The single-pane windows be substituted with double-hungs, matching the existing building;

The cast-stone base of the addition be increased in height;

A 7" brick indentation be added where the addition meets the existing building;

The existing brick will be matched (a sample will be presented)

The above changes must be confirmed with an electronic version for the motion to take effect

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Ms. McGinnis

Unanimous

Voting in favor: Ms. Smith, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Bishop

2. ADVISORY TO PLANNING & ZONING
10 Glenville Street (NRHP)
Greenwich, CT 06830
Owner: The Mill Owners Company LLC
Represented by: Granoff Architects

Continuation from April 10, 2019 – focusing on 1881 Mill building (windows and doors); 1981 Office building (window and balcony); Central Mill building (window and door)

(Andreas Stresemann presenting)

1981 Office building

Mr. Stresemann began his presentation identifying one of the issues that was to be clarified was the windows. The applicant had a sample window installed. Seeing how it looked both in and out, the decision was that it wasn't really desirable and decided that a bigger visual panel was needed. What is being presented is to have bigger vision panel with the center panel slightly bigger but the proportions are basically the same.

Mr. Stresemann stated that the applicant struggled to find a happy medium (based on cost and design) and what has been chosen and is being presented is the best solution.

Mr. Toraby asked how it operates.

Mr. Stresemann replied that it is a single-hung that has a lift that you just pull up. When you first open it up, it stops at 4 inches. Then you must press a button to open it further (this complies with code).

Ms. Smith commented that the windows that are on the ground floor may allow for animals to come in.

Mr. Toraby asked why not make the center operable. Mr. Stresemann responded that the manufacturer said that it is not possible for this window height and if it were custom, then the price triples.

Mr. Bishop reminded the Commission that they need to examine how the product looks – that the operation does not fall under the HDC jurisdiction.

Ms. Smith said that you could have a transom and a double-hung.

Ms. Stresemann reiterated that price was a consideration and that her suggestion is a costly one.

Mr. Stresemann announced that the applicant is looking for a tax credit and that the State is looking for certain changes to be made as well in order to qualify for a restoration tax credit.

Mr. Stresemann continued saying that slight changes were also made in the area that has a gym and balcony. The applicant needs HDC to sign-off on those changes before the application goes to building department.

Motion to approve the revised triple divided window arrangement as presented with the plans and the changes to the balcony as presented

Moved by Mr. Toraby

Seconded by Ms. McGinnis

Voting in favor: Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Bishop

Opposed: Ms. Smith

CENTRO BUILDING

Mr. Stresemann stated that the apartment layout has changed which affects the layout of the sliding doors.

Motion to approve the changes to the first level of windows and doors reflected in the revised layout as presented.

Moved by Ms. McGinnis

Seconded by Ms. Williams

Unanimous

Voting in favor: Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Smith

THE MILL/1881 BUILDING [SHPO overview]

Mr. Stresemann stated that SHPO did not want to see as many of the HDC approved changes occur on the building if a tax credit were being sought [SHPO asked for less changes].

The original office addition had different windows which have no muntins. SHPO wanted the applicant to keep the original windows (double hungs without muntins) even though the applicant wanted to have them replaced. SHPO wants the original door and restored in kind and wants it kept as a door. The other doors which were designed as "French doors" and SHPO asked that the original look of the building be kept so the "French doors" no longer have muntins but have a similar pattern to the other windows. Similarly, SHPO wants the existing entrance door kept and the applicant will give the door the same treatment.

Ms. Smith asked about the original windows not having muntins.

Mr. Stresemann pointed those windows to her. He stated that SHPO's approach is to 'freeze' time at the moment that the building was sanctioned (NRHP). So the lack of uniformity is to be kept.

Mr. Toraby commented that the building is so large that the conditions that there is so much consistency elsewhere in it, that if some elements are not the same, there isn't a problem and the presented proportions and design are perfectly acceptable. He further stated that he does not see any problem with the changes being presented.

Motion to approve the new layout of the windows and doors and their design as presented on the 1881 Building on all three elevations.

Moved by Mr. Toraby

Seconded by Ms. Williams

Unanimous

Voting in favor: Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Smith

[Ms. Sheridan departed at 8:14]

3. ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING – HISTORIC OVERLAY
55 Arch Street
Greenwich, CT 06830
Represented by Rudy V. Ridberg, AIA, Ridberg & Associates Architects PC

Continuation from June 12, 2019 meeting

Mr. Rudy Ridberg is presenting. Mr. Ridberg identified that his return to HDC is based on the fact that P&Z asked the applicant to return to HDC for a few minor changes.

Mr. Ridberg conducted more research on the building and discovered that there is clapboard on the original building and that is what will be matched (the shingles were only placers).

Mr. Ridberg continued that on the floor plan, there was a door going to the elevator directly. Now there is to be a vestibule that you enter that will take you to the elevator. The handicapped elevator will be for the entire building. Office will be on the second floor and there will be two one-bedroom apartments on the top floor.

Mr. Ridberg intends to have all the original details be brought back to the '1910 version' as appropriate. All the gables and all the returns at the eaves will match the photographs.

Mr. Ridberg moved to discuss the base of the building stating that P&Z asked why not have a brick base as they thought that would have been used at the time. Mr. Ridberg disagreed with that assessment feeling that brick would not have been used. He also mentioned that the expense of using brick in this fashion would be quite expensive. Mr. Ridberg felt that the base would more likely have been stone. He further mentioned that P&Z did not like "black" for the base and he is fine with painting it white.

Mr. Ridberg further wants to leave the water table as a demarcation point and paint the stucco there white so that it blends. He further added that there is to be white

clapboard, black shutters (not louvered but paneled) and then black asphalt shingle roof (which is what is there now).

Mr. Ridberg asked if HDC could reapprove the plans and he would return with a better set of working designs and of course discuss the base of the building.

P&Z had questions about whether the fence around mechanical units was necessary (did not want a wood fence around the air conditioning). Also, P&Z thought the railing should be more traditional.

Now what is being proposed is an evergreen material that can be pruned into a narrow hedge. The boxwood is changed to a hearty version.

Motion to recommend and approve the application as revised and submitted. The applicant is to return with construction documents. The landscaping is acceptable.

Moved by Mr. Toraby

Seconded by Ms. McGinnis

Unanimous

Voting in favor: Mr. Toraby, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Mr. Bishop, Ms. Smith

Motion to end meeting

Moved by Mr. Bishop

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm