

Via Electronic Mail

May 26, 2021

Architectural Review Committee
101 Field Point Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

Re: **Greenwich American Center, 1 American Lane
Application PLPZ202100131**

Dear Members of the Architectural Review Committee (“ARC”):

This firm represents Greenwich American Center (“GAC”) in its application for exterior alteration review of a new window wall to replace punched windows at the base of the building at a property located at 1 American Lane in the BEX-50 zone. The application proposes replacing the existing punched windows on the terrace level of the southern façade of the American Can building. The purpose of the window modification is to facilitate appropriate utilization and enhancement of the terrace level space. Over the past decade, GAC has had great difficulty in leasing space on the southern terrace level due to the lack of natural light, even with the existing skylights spaced throughout. In the past, prospective tenants who have examined the space and declined to lease it have commented that the lighting was insufficient for business operations. Recently, GAC’s proposed window modification, with operable windows to allow for greater air circulation post-COVID, has garnered interest from prospective tenants and GAC is hopeful that it will be able to lease this space with a modification to the existing windows.

While GAC recognizes the history of the building, it is important to keep in mind several points. First, the building is not within an historic district or overlay district and is not landmarked as an historic structure. Nor are there any neighbors proximate to the building. Second, the existing building was modified in 1986 to add the existing punched windows on the terrace level of the southern façade. The punched windows were not part of the original design and were added approximately 17 years later by a different architect than the original architect of the building. Finally, ribbon windows currently exist on the terrace level of the building’s northern façade. In this light, GAC respectfully submits that it should be permitted to modify the windows on the

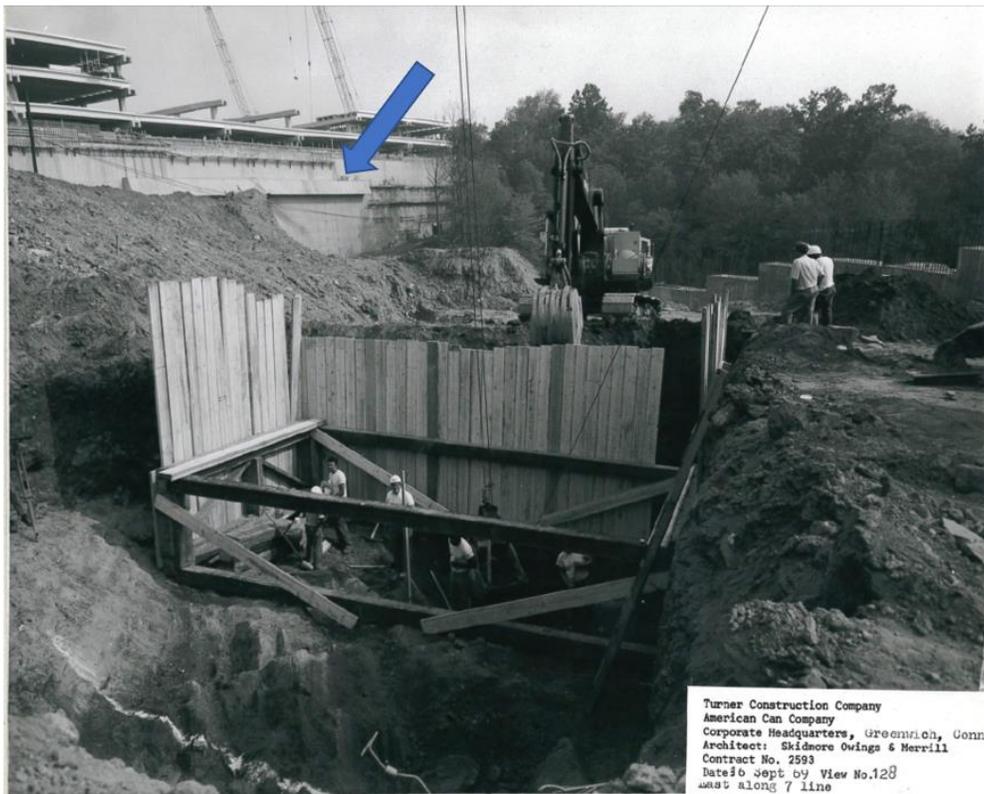
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southern terrace. GAC has submitted two new design proposals for the Committee's consideration which respect the history and design of the current building.

I. The Punched Windows Were Not Part of the Original Design

At the April 21, 2021 ARC meeting, much of the discussion focused on the historical significance of the original design of the building, the need to try to respect the character of the original design, and how the proposed windows are different than the "existing historic windows." See ARC Minutes, April 21, 2021 at 2. It appears that the Committee mistakenly believed that the punched windows were part of the original design from circa 1969 by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill ("SOM"). However, the punched windows were not part of SOM's original design. The photograph below shows the building under construction in 1969. The blue arrow identifies the southern terrace level where the punched windows now exist.

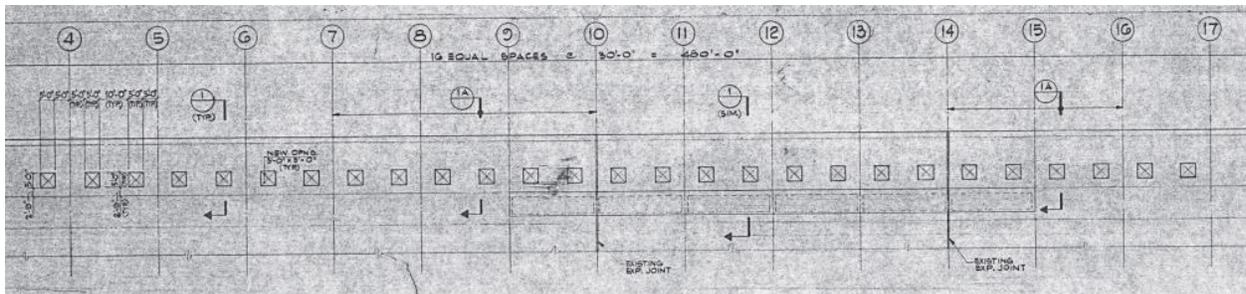


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About seventeen years later, the original design of the building was modified to add the punched windows in their current location on the south façade. Design plans excerpted below show 27 punched windows on the terrace level which were added in 1986 by a different architect.

The Punched Windows Were Added in 1986



The addition of the punched windows in 1986 demonstrates that the Town has previously recognized that modifications to the building in the form of window additions were appropriate at that time. In fact, the terrace level on the northern façade is already developed with ribbon windows and, upon information and belief, was part of the original design. The ribbon windows proposed on the southern terrace would be similar to those which already exist on the northern terrace.

The Northern Terrace Level is Developed with Ribbon Windows



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II. The Proposed Window Modification is Consistent with the Original Design

GAC has provided two new design options for the Committee's review. The new designs respect the original design of the building and contrast with the horizontal windows which are located on the upper three levels of the southern façade, as desired by the Committee. Shown below is an image of the three design options. Option 1 is the original design considered by the Committee on April 21, 2021 and is discussed below only for purposes of comparison with Options 2 and 3 – the new designs which respond to the Committee's comments at the April 21, 2021 meeting.



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

GAC has no preference as to design Option 2 or 3. GAC seeks the Committee's input and blessing to move forward with one of the two options. The design options are discussed below.

Option 1

This is the original design which was reviewed by the Committee on April 21, 2021. It proposed replacing the punched windows with ribbon windows and included vertical columns throughout. In total, there were 6 vertical columns matching the existing color of the building. The vertical columns were to be located 60 feet apart.

Option 2

This design would include more than twice as many vertical columns than Option 1 (13 compared to 6) throughout the ribbon windows. The 13 total vertical columns would match the color of the base of the building, would create rhythm with more masonry, and would help to further contrast the proposed terrace level window with the horizontal windows on the upper

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levels. These changes are in furtherance of the Committee's comments that the proposed windows should not mimic the window design on the upper levels and respect the purity of the modernist structure. Furthermore, the 13 total vertical columns are more in keeping with the appearance and distribution of the existing punched windows. This design is also consistent with the "fortress" appearance of the base of the building on the southern façade and creates a vertical break with the horizontal windows located above (which appear to be "floating").

Option 3

This design would be similar to Option 2 in that it would also include more than twice as many vertical columns than Option 1 (13 compared to 6) throughout the ribbon windows. The columns would be located 30 feet apart. However, the column cover cladding could be either a dark grey metal finish to match the window frames or spandrel glass. Both cladding options would essentially make the columns disappear feeling more like a continuous ribbon similar to the ribbon window on the northern terrace. In response to the Committee's comments, this design proposal would no longer mimic the windows on the upper levels, would include a different color scheme, and would appropriately contrast with the rest of the building.

III. Conclusion

GAC thanks the Committee for its thoughtful comments and recommendations. GAC hopes that the Committee will consider and appreciate the two new design options it has presented, which contrast with the upper level windows and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the rest of the building, including the existing windows on the northern terrace level. GAC respectfully requests that the Committee approve one of the two options on June 2 so that it can move forward on leasing its space. Each option will significantly provide more natural light to facilitate greater utilization and leasing of this space, much of which has remained vacant for the past decade. GAC looks forward to addressing the Committee on June 2.

Sincerely,



Evan J. Seeman

Copy to: Marisa Anastasio, Senior Planner, Town of Greenwich