

# Architectural Design Review Committee

## Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021

In-person Meeting – Town Council Chambers

**7:00 p.m.**

Meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 pm.

Members in attendance were Tim Eagles, Myles Brown, Sheldon Crosby, Jack Kemper, Tim LeBouthillier, David Quisenberry, and Bob Sanford. Also, in attendance Town Planner Rutherford.

Absent: Dean Burhoe and Peter VanBeckum

**1. Thomaston Savings Bank – 2 South Main St., Unionville – sign package**

Alyson Ibbotson was in attendance for the applicant / owner to present the proposed sign package to the committee. The committee members asked some clarifying questions regarding the material, lighting, and location of the signs. The Committee agreed the signs were acceptable as submitted and issued a positive referral to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ).

**2. Thomaston Savings Bank – 2 South Main St., Unionville – façade improvements**

Mark Marzi, Don Hammerberg Associates and David Occhialini, Reno Properties were in attendance on behalf of the owner / applicant to discuss the proposed façade upgrades to the existing bank building located at 2 South Main Street, Unionville. Mr. Marzi presented the proposed elevations to the committee, highlighting the changes to the façade material with the introduction of a brick veneer base course, fiber cement siding, accent columns at the corners, and modification to the roofline. Mr. Marzi also discussed changes to the windows on the east elevation – a change from five sections to four sections, and the addition of a window on the south elevation near the entrance door.

Comments from the Committee:

1. Do not like the traditional façade treatments on a modern style building.
2. Do not like the changes to the roof to make it look like a mansard roof. The roof should be ‘re-freshed’ without making a whole scale change. Consider a lighter colored roofing material.
3. Columns are not helping improve the appearance of the building.
4. The proportions are wrong. The building is short and adding the brick base course makes the building appear shorter.

5. Consider façade changes that complement the ‘mill’ history of Unionville. A simple approach with fewer competing materials.

Dave Occhialini requested the committee review and specifically comment on the proposed four windows on the east façade.

6. The members agreed the four windows were a suitable replacement for the existing five windows on the east façade. However, the committee noted the simulated divided lights should be removed. The darker grille separating each window into quarters may remain.
7. The four windows with the changes noted above received a positive referral from the ADRC to the TPZ.

The applicant agreed to review the elevations and consider comments made regarding the façade improvements. The applicant will resubmit revised elevations for review by the ADRC. The committee agreed to conduct some reviews via email.

### **3. JRF Management LLC & Kaoud Real Estate Development LLC – informal review of the Midpoint Development located at 1371, 1349 Farmington Avenue and adjacent Lots 8218, 8237 Farmington Avenue**

Representing the application were Land Planner Phil Doyle and Architect Todd Clark. Also present for the applicant were Architect Ashley Clark, and Owner / Developers Barbara Duffy, Abe Kaoud and Jeff Scott.

Phil Doyle began the presentation with an overview of the property and a summary of the permitting status since they last met with the ADRC in November 2020. Mr. Doyle explained the site plan changes made to date and discussed how these changes address comments previously received from the ADRC. Todd Clark reviewed changes to the architecture in response to comments and also discussed the mix of the proposed uses in the ‘McCallum’ building. Mr. Doyle and Mr. Clark discussed the change to the western-most residential building and western-most commercial building, indicating both buildings will change to mixed use buildings with retail / commercial on the first floor and residential on the upper floors.

The committee members asked a variety of clarifying questions and offered the following comments.

1. All members were very pleased with the changes to the site plan and architecture. They recognized the considerable efforts made to achieve the modifications presented. The reduction in the number of garage doors is a notable improvement to the residential buildings and the site layout.
2. The development feels like two distinct developments part of one project – a residential development next to a retail/commercial development, rather than a

mixed-use development. Consider adding more mixed-use throughout development.

3. Reconsider the location of the clubhouse. If the clubhouse is to be the focal point from the main entrance from Rte 4, the clubhouse should shift to better align with this entrance driveway. Alternatively, consider shifting driveway to align with clubhouse, or consider changing the residential building to the west of the main driveway to allow a shift in the driveway.
4. Consider connecting the mixed-use building on the Rte 4 frontage to the mixed-use building in the site and remaining commercial /retail located within the western portion of the development. Be mindful of pedestrian connectivity among these buildings / uses.
5. Explore differing building materials for the residential units to allow each building to be unique and provide a more 'village' feel rather than apartment complex feel.
6. Reminder to celebrate the history of the 'McCallum' building and incorporate historical information throughout the site.
7. Support services for the bike trail.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

8. Additional comments regarding the building architecture generated post-meeting are as follows:
  - a. The direction they have proposed for the existing buildings is positive (allowing each part to express itself for what it is and adapting them to the new use), but perhaps are being too literal with the interpretation of the new buildings. The architect is skilled in dealing with form, proportion, and scale, but don't believe they should emulate anything stylistically about the existing buildings. It would be optimal to relate to things like the materials, the large windows, the grid expression of the mill, etc. The new residential buildings have some nice scale and proportion but are perhaps a bit "Post-Moderny".
  - b. The McCallum building provides good 'inspiration' (for materials and forms) but it should not be copied onto other uses.
  - c. The McCallum building sets a nice tone for an adventurous project on this site. However, the architecture of the residential units does not reflect this idea. The vernacular style of the apartment units does not appear to reflect the uniqueness of the site or to integrate well with the existing McCallum building. The use of the townhouse model for the apartments is understood but wonder if each building could develop some more individuality in design.
  - d. The site plan is greatly improved but the concept of a focal point and its execution still needs work. A nicer / stronger boulevard entrance would greatly enhance the project and should ideally lead to a riverside event space.