

SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

NOTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING Wednesday, December 2, 2015 PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING Meeting Room A –7:30 P.M. Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: Alyce Bush, Robert Cerutti, Holly Nelson (8:30), Pamela Rew, Lydia Robinson, William Wolfe

ABSENT: Harry Cooke, Robert Freudenberg, Dana Molina

ALSO PRESENT: Jack West, Municipal Engineer; Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer; Kerry A. Philip, Secretary

Chairman Wolfe called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. reading the Opening Statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, acknowledging that notice of this meeting was issued on the 23rd day of November, 2015.

REORGANIZATION

a) Nominating Committee

A. Bush and L. Robinson volunteered to be on the nominating committee. They were asked to poll the board members about their choice of Chair and Vice Chair for 2016. A report will be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

- [1] 2016 Calendar
- [2] Appointment of SPRAB Secretary
- [3] Fixed Charges for Meeting Notices
- [4] Special Meetings

Motion was made by A. Bush and L. Robinson seconded the motion to approve the resolutions for the 2016 Calendar; Appointment of SPRAB Secretary; Fixed Charges for Meeting Notices, and; Special Meetings. The vote was 5-0 in favor. Motion Carried.

For: Bush, Cerutti, Rew, Robinson, Wolfe

Against: None

Abstain: None

MINUTES

a) October 29, 2015 – postponed

APPLICATION:

- a) West Windsor Real Estate (continued from 9/2/15)
Prelim/Final Major Subdivision & Site Plan w/var.
176-188 Bayard Lane
Block 6802, Lots 44, 45 & 46
File #Z1414-107SPF/UP
MLUL Deadline: 11/8/15

Representatives for the applicant: Christopher DeGrezia, Esq.; Drinker Biddle & Reath; D. Geoffrey Brown, Princeton Junction Engineering; Howard Rabin, Principal for Applicant; Robert Fania, RMF Architect, LLC.

The applicant returned to the board with a revised plan. The applicant is proposing to consolidate the three existing parcels and re-subdivide to recreate three conforming parcels (in lot area) to construct three two-family structures on each lot (seeking a D-1 variance). This zone only permits one single family structure on each lot. The applicant is seeking to construct a two-family structure on each lot, which is not permitted, creating the D-1 variance.

Christopher DeGrezia, Esq., legal counsel for the applicant, stated that the applicant appreciates the details and comments provided at the October meeting to further refine the plans. Several design changes were recommended. D. Geoffrey Brown, engineer for the applicant, was asked to speak. Mr. Brown stated that the board requested one curb cut for the driveway access and this has been done, the width of the driveway was expanded to 20 feet. J. West stated that he recommends the driveway width to be 16 feet, the impervious coverage may be exceeded with a 20 foot wide drive. He advised that the ordinance is not clear as to whether using porous pavement reduces the amount of impervious coverage on site but this 25% reduction of porous pavement would result in more green space and it helps preserve the existing trees. Chair Wolfe stated that the applicant's plan shows only the shade trees that are being saved and it appears that only small trees are being preserved. P. Rew agreed noting that the graphics are deceptive and she encouraged more accurate drawings of the landscaping and suggested a variety of tree species on site.

P. Rew asked about a sidewalk connection. Mr. Brown stated that there is no room for a sidewalk. Chair Wolfe stated that one sidewalk connection is recommended at each end of the site, one at the northerly end and another at Birch.

Mr. Brown then discussed stormwater management, he stated that they met with the Municipal Engineer and the Stormwater Consultant and he believes that they can make the drainage work. Mr. West stated that nothing is unsurmountable.

Robert Fania, Architect for the Applicant, presented Sheet SD-4. He stated that their first submission lacked architectural differences for the three structures. Two alternative renderings of the new proposal were presented, he stated that each building will resemble a single family residence with the garages set back from the street. The roof lines were changed and the façade offers different combinations of materials, columns and railings. He then presented the sample board of two cultured stones titled "Ledgestone Tennessee and Ledgestone Wisconsin" manufactured by Stonecraft Industries. The siding material board was presented offering seven colors of stucco and one sample of cream colored siding. The applicant is also considering brick

for the façade of one of the structures. Mr. Fania stated that the specific colors have not been chosen but the architectural elements will not change. He presented a photograph of another home with a similar color pallet that was constructed by the applicant at 24 Lakeshore in West Windsor Township. Mr. Fania stated that he attempted to give the structure the look of a single family residence. A recessed area offers more space for the front door and a porch for one unit so two front doors will not be seen from the front elevation. Column spacing offers another option for variety.

Chair Wolfe stated that the roof spans visible on the side gables of the proposed structures makes them out of scale with existing nearby residences and noted that he had suggested a simpler roof shape during the previous meeting. Chair Wolfe asked the applicant to consider having a hip roof for the other unit and this could be done so that the roofs would not jog.

P. Rew suggested bringing the roof elevation as shown on Sheet SD-10 down so it does not appear as a big box.

R. Cerutti was opposed to having one material on the façade that does not wrap around the structure. Howard Rabin, Applicant, stated that the material can be around the whole house if this is recommended. The Board found it acceptable to have the brick or stone on three sides of the structure, with siding on the rear.

Mr. Fania then distributed a second photograph of a home at 66 Harrison Street which is similar to what is being proposed.

R. Cerutti stated that the shutters are shown only on the front and he recommended that shutters be on the sides of the buildings also. Single shutters are proposed for double windows and this is not recommended, and does not make historical sense. Double windows without shutters will look better. A. Bush disagreed because offering shutters makes it uniform.

Board discussion took place about the colors and materials.

L. Robinson and A. Bush noted that they liked the color differences as presented in Scheme 2 because it provides variety. Chair Wolfe also supported Scheme 2 as this change of materials is what SPRAB had requested. The materials on the structures should not run on only one side of the façade but on three sides. Siding in the rear is acceptable.

P. Rew advised that she likes Scheme 1. R. Cerutti stated that he did not have a preference.

Chair Wolfe suggested that the front walks to the units be reconfigured to align with the location of the doors. The walkways would be more graceful if they were separate and bent towards the garage side. He suggested a reduced width of the drive to 16 feet as was recommended by the Land Use Engineer. The landscape plan should provide a variety of deciduous trees in groups in addition to an evergreen buffer. Mr. West suggested that this could be reviewed by the municipal landscape architect and the municipal arborist.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by R. Cerutti, seconded by A. Bush and carried by a vote of five ayes to classify this application as a Major Subdivision and Site Plan, endorsing all the recommendations contained in the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated August 19, 2015 and recommends approval with the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The proposed exterior wall materials, including stone or brick, should extend on three sides of the buildings. Siding only for the rear of the buildings is acceptable.
2. The applicant was asked to provide separate front walks from the units' front doors to the drive, curved or angled towards each individual driveway.
3. The applicant agreed to provide two sidewalks connecting their drive with the public sidewalk along Bayard Lane.
4. Reduce the width of the interior drive from 20 feet to 16 feet, enlarging the planting area along Bayard Lane.
5. The horizontal fascia board shown for the side elevations should be eliminated, when materials above and below are the same.
6. Revise the side elevations to eliminate long shallow gables. It was suggested that one side elevation have a continuation of the front gabled roof, and the other side have a hipped roof.
7. The applicant was asked to provide shutters for all single windows on the front and side elevations. SPRAB discourages shutters for the double or triple windows.
8. The color and material variations presented that distinguished between each of the three buildings were acceptable to the Board. The middle building was all brick. The end buildings had stone and clapboard siding but were different colors.
9. A landscape plan must be prepared identifying all trees that will be preserved along with the proposed landscaping for review and approval by the Municipal Landscape Consultant and Municipal Arborist.
10. A dense evergreen buffer along the street is recommended, and the applicant was asked to plant a variety of deciduous trees.
11. The landscape plan should provide additional planting in the areas between paired driveways, to buffer the view of the garages.
12. SPRAB recommends that any exterior AC condensers be sound screened from adjacent units and that cedar privacy fencing be added between decks or terraces of adjoining units

COMMENT

Ms. Rew suggested that instead of a hip roof, the second unit could have a gable on the side and a valley returning into another ridge running front to back.

Mr. Wolfe suggested the roofs would look better if the approx. 8 over 12 roof pitches were maintained on all sides, and that it was possible to eliminate the staggering of the front roof planes between the units by connecting the roof sloping away from the street to the roof with the front gable with a single valley. The unit with the hip roof (or side facing gable) could have the same ridge height as the gabled unit by inserting a low slope cricket roof between the front to back ridges of the two units. This would be out of sight.

H. Nelson joined the meeting. R. Cerutti recused himself from the following matter.

- b) Princeton Maclean LLC
Major Site Plan with Variances
30 MacLean Street
Block 17.03, Lot 73
Z1515-237UVP
MLUL Deadline: 1/30/16

Representatives for the applicant: Christopher DeGrazia, Esq., Drinker Biddle & Reath; Arturo Ponciano, Joshua Zinder Architecture & Design; Joshua Zinder, JZA&D; Aubrey Haines, Applicant.

The applicant is proposing an adaptive reuse of the existing building to contain ten residential units, an addition that includes an enclosed stairway, and associated site improvements. The applicant will convert the three-story building to a four-story building by respacing floors within the existing envelope.

Christopher DeGrazia, Esq., Attorney for the Applicant, stated that the project is an adaptive reuse of a building built in the 1920s. The building was used as a club and the proposal is to convert this to a lesser intense use. Ten residential units are proposed, two of which would be considered affordable housing.

Arturo Ponciano, Architect for the Applicant, presented a power point presentation and stated that the existing building (Masonic Temple) is white stucco. Joshua Zinder, Architect for the Applicant, arrived to the meeting.

Mr. DeGrazia stated that most of the lot is developed, the only green space is between the building and the parking lot. Mr. Zinder stated that two open areas on the sides of the tower can be made into green space but the applicant is proposing this area as patio space for the tenants.

A mechanical room is located on the first floor, the entrance to that room will be from John Street and will be shielded from view. The building will retain the same footprint and 50% of the tenants will have their own entrance. The brick will be cleaned and painted to match the trim on the building.

The stair tower addition would be used by the tenants for the five units on the upper levels. A corrugated metal panel system is proposed for the stair tower. Mechanical units are proposed on the roof of the stair tower and screened by louvered parapets which provide circulation. A glass bridge is proposed to connect the existing building to the tower. The colors proposed for the addition are soft hues to blend with the existing building.

A. Bush asked the applicant to make the tower less modern since the building has historical significance. Mr. DeGrazia stated that the original structure should retain the historical significance and the addition should contrast, this approach is very typical of development involving historic structures. Mr. Zinder stated that they met with the local residents of the neighborhood and the residents were in favor of the design.

Chair Wolfe stated that the proposal is tripling the density that is permitted. P. Rew stated that she is concerned about all of the variances which culminate in an impact to the neighborhood and in particular the parking. Changing this to a residential dwelling is a nice idea but the very large

capacity results in challenges that will impact the neighborhood and exacerbate the existing parking problems.

Mr. DeGrazia stated that the applicant looked at the issue of density, the building is the same height and same dimension. The number of units addresses the issue of offering a variety of costs and housing styles to those who reside there. Two COAH units are also proposed. Other units are also small, making them more affordable. Aubrey Haines, Applicant, stated that the studio apartment would rent for \$1000 per month. Other apartments range from \$1500 to \$1700 per month rent, and the duplex will be \$2500 per month.

Mr. DeGrazia stated that they are also proposing to restore the Masonic Temple plaque for the façade and another plaque will be prepared about the history of the building. It will retain the historic character.

P. Rew stated that the increasing the density is a great impact on the community. Mr. Zinder stated that the project will meet the needs that the community has and some of the variances have nothing to do with the density.

Mr. DeGrazia then identified the variances associated with this project. The light spillage can be adjusted or removed. The parking stall size of 18' x 8' provides them with 10 parking spaces. 15 parking spaces are required, the applicant can only provide one space per unit but the parking impact is substantially less than when it was a club. P. Rew suggested that the five additional parking spaces could be located off site, the applicant should try to comply with this requirement so as not to set a precedent.

H. Nelson stated that if we permit increased density without sufficient parking, then this will continue to plague this part of the town.

Mr. Zinder stated that this is a unique building. The proposal results in a density issue and the applicant is trying to provide a space that maintains the character and is affordable. He feels that this would not set a precedent because there are no other buildings like this one, it is an existing building and the envelope of the building was maintained.

A. Bush noted that the units are small on the first floor and she has concerns about their close proximity to the mechanical room.

Mr. DeGrazia advised that a variance for open space is required, there is available open space but that is being used as part of this design for the stair tower. A height variance is needed but this is pre-existing. Mr. DeGrazia stated that density and FAR variances seem to be what the members are concerned about. Once converted as a multi-family these variances would be required so they are trying to use the space as efficiently as they can to provide affordable housing. Mr. Bridger stated that two units would be permitted in this building, anything greater than that triggers the density variance.

The traffic was then discussed. Mr. DeGrazia stated that one parking space is ADA compliant. The applicant's traffic consultant reported that there is plenty of parking available and there are no negative impacts especially when compared to the club use for the past 75 years.

Chair Wolfe stated that the density is three times what is permitted so he has trouble with the quantities involved but the concept is good.

P. Rew suggested reducing the number of units by making two of the units larger. This would create a better balance of the requirements to get the number of variances reduced and so a precedent is not created. Mr. Haynes stated that if the number of units are decreased, 20% of the units must still be set aside for affordable housing. Two affordable housing units are included in this proposal and two units would be required if the number of units are decreased.

H. Nelson stated that too many units are proposed in the building and that a quarter of the mass of the development is the stair tower. Mr. Zinder advised that the large size is required to allow for a future elevator. Chair Wolfe stated that the idea of restoration and reuse is good but density is three times what is permitted so he has trouble with the quantities involved.

A discussion about the window wells took place. Chair Wolfe noted that the shared window wells in the alley take up half of the sidewalk which is a dangerous situation. He suggested that the applicant eliminate the wells and make the windows shorter. J. West stated that the three window wells must be removed otherwise another variance is triggered.

Chair Wolfe stated that the plans should provide the details for attaching the stainless steel guardrail, handrail and cables for the stair edge. No thickness is shown for the sloped masonry stair stringers on the John Street and Maclean Street elevations. The applicant should consider eliminating the masonry stringer to avoid trapping moisture and debris. The site plan indicates replacing the existing chain link fence with black painted aluminum fencing (site detail). Details also indicate black painted aluminum for guardrails in the rear. This conflicts with the architect's drawings showing stainless steel cable rail and should be corrected. Mr. Zinder stated that the fence near the parking area is black painted aluminum and that all corrections will be made.

Chair Wolfe stated that the trash enclosure is shown as board on board, he advised that there are aluminum systems that mimic wood. Mr. Zinder stated that they will look into this.

Chair Wolfe advised that the driveway at the sidewalk needs a retaining wall. Mr. Zinder advised that they will provide a section of the grade change, and the detail of the berm or a retaining wall.

Mr. Zinder advised that the plaque and corner stone identifying the Masonic Temple were requested to be included by the former owner and this will be done. Chair Wolfe asked that this be clarified on the plan. Mr. Zinder advised that the front door of the building is identified as painted metal but a wooden door may be chosen.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by W. Wolfe, seconded by L. Robinson and carried by a vote of three ayes and two nays to classify this application as a Major Site Plan, endorsing all the recommendations contained in the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated November 5, 2015, revised November 23, 2015, and with the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SPRAB recommends that the Zoning Board consider very seriously the magnitude of the proposed change in density represented by the requested variances for the number of SF per habitable room and for the FAR. The proposed site plan has a lot area that is 1/3 that

- required by the number of habitable rooms even with the efficiency units not counted, and an FAR that is nearly three times what is permitted. SPRAB questions whether the consequences of this crowding to the neighborhood and community is justified by the provision of more affordable housing. Aside from the two affordable units, SPRAB members were concerned that the rents quoted for the other eight apartments are not nearly “affordable”, and thus do not justify the quantity of variances.
2. If the Zoning Board believes the density is justified, then SPRAB recommends approval of the bulk variances 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.9.
 3. As this neighborhood is very short of on-street parking, the applicant should address the deficiency of parking in Item 3.7, possibly by sourcing dedicated parking nearby.
 4. The applicant stated that no elevator is proposed or required. The applicant should consider shrinking the addition.
 5. SPRAB asks the applicant to consider reducing the number of apartments and absorbing the stairs into the existing shell. By eliminating the addition, the useable open space and the number of parking spaces could be increased.
 6. The elevations should be corrected to properly identify the materials proposed. If the addition is maintained in the proposal, multiple color options are recommended to be presented to the Zoning Board.
 7. Three window wells shown on the ground floor plan (A1-1) and the (north) alley elevation (A3-1) would be hazardous and would trigger another variance. The applicant agreed to remove them.
 8. The landscape plan does not appear to allow any dimension for the construction of window wells along the John Street façade. Nor is any drainage indicated. Details should be developed.
 9. The window well nearest the stair is dangerously close to the bottom of the stair. SPRAB recommends that the applicant consider turning the last two or three risers of the stair 90 degrees to face John Street, with a guard/handrail at the end of the landing adjacent to the window well.
 10. The details for attaching the stainless steel guardrail, handrail and cables for the stair edge should be shown. No thickness is shown for the sloped masonry stair stringers on the John Street and Maclean Street elevations. The applicant should consider eliminating the masonry stringer to avoid trapping moisture and debris.
 11. The site plan indicates replacing the existing chain link fence with black painted aluminum fencing (site detail). Details also indicate black painted aluminum for guardrails in the rear. This conflicts with the architect’s drawings showing stainless steel cable rail and should be corrected.
 12. SPRAB asks the applicant to include more information in the drawings about the Masonic Temple plaque that will be replaced and the corner stone providing the history of the site.
 13. The applicant is asked to provide a detail section of the grade change between the parking and the sidewalk and at the edge of the driveway where the municipal engineer has suggested a retaining wall.
 14. SPRAB asks the applicant to consider substituting more durable materials for the board on board fencing proposed for the trash enclosure. Possible suggestions include steel framing, two-inch nominal treated wood or cedar planking, and an aluminum system.

COMMENT

Ms. Nelson stated that the excessive variances required for this application would set a bad precedent in the neighborhood.

Ms. Rew stated that the applicant should find a way to provide more useable open space for the benefit of the residents. She was also very concerned about the quantity and extent of the variances; she recommends not allowing those variances that directly impact the quality of the neighborhood and neighbors.

Ms. Bush asked the applicant to consider changing the material and color of the stair tower to make it more compatible with the preserved building.

Mr. Wolfe thought that the number of units should be reduced and the addition eliminated.

Ms. Robinson thought that the increased density was an acceptable trade-off to preserve the existing building.

Vote on motion:

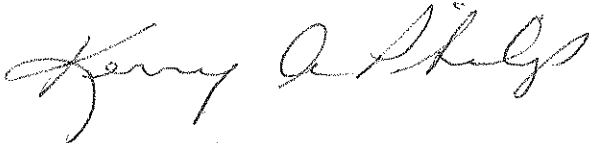
For: Rew, Robinson, Wolfe

Against: Bush, Nelson

Abstain: None

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kerry A. Philip". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kerry A. Philip
Secretary