



WELLESLEY DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Regular Meeting

September 11th, 2019; 6:30PM

Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall

Members Present: Jose Soliva, Chair; Sheila Dinsmoor; Iris Lin

Members Absent: Rob Skolnik, Vice Chair; Juann Khoory

Staff: Tucker Beckett, Planner

Also Present: Brandon Schmidt, Joel Lunger, James Manzolini, Shawn Vann, David Winchester, Soosie Lazenby, Jason Indelicato, Peter Tamm, Brian O'Connor, David Hall, Allie Adams, David Juliano, Steve Dazzo

1. Call to Order

Mr. Soliva called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 pm.

Public Comments on Matters not on the Agenda

Mr. Soliva asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak on matters not on the agenda. No one addressed the Board.

2. New and/or Continued Applications

(All documents from the Board meeting are on file with the Planning Office.)

DRB 19-36 M: Town of Wellesley - Natural Resources Commission [NRC], 525 Washington Street; Design Review: Duck Pond Pedestrian Footbridge, Minor Construction

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Minor Construction Application
- Revised footbridge plan

Discussion:

Mr. Soliva invited the applicant, the Town of Wellesley - NRC, for the Duck Pond Pedestrian Footbridge to present the project, continued from 8/14/2019 to the DRB.

Mr. Schmidt, NRC Director and Joel Lunger, an independent consulting engineer, presented updated plans for the proposed Duck Pond footbridge to replace the existing wooden bridge. Mr. Schmidt pointed out changes to the proposed bridge in response to comments from the previous Board meeting, specifically the removal of the decorative geometry underneath the bridge and the reduced thickness of railing pieces to widen gaps. He also noted the addition of a camber on the top rail to aid in drainage.

Mr. Schmidt emphasized that the goal of the NRC was to construct a bridge that meets current building codes, meets ADA standards, has high durability, and is low maintenance. He discussed the evaluation of alternative materials to the recycled plastic (FiberForce) lumber, noting that Mr. Lunger determined white oak to be the most suitable natural alternative. He also stated that the Department of Public Works had concerns about the use of wood and preferred the use of FiberForce due to its durability.

Mr. Soliva thanked the applicants for their responsiveness to the Board's comments. He reiterated that the Board's concern was with the central and iconic nature of the bridge, being in the public view in close proximity to Town Hall. He stated the Board's preference that in a combination of the materials, the horizontal decking could be FiberForce while the more visible vertical structures should be white oak. He stated a desire for a balance between utilitarian and aesthetic concerns.

Ms. Dinsmoor supported this statement, citing the historical context of the site. Ms. Lin noted that on other synthetic lumber bridges in the town, the railings are very splinter-resistant. Mr. Soliva supported the idea of having a FiberForce cap on the railings as well as the horizontal deck. Board members discussed the aesthetic concerns of blending the materials.

Mr. Schmidt discussed the historic context of the bridge and site, noting that much of Fuller Brook Park has historic significance and also has synthetic lumber footbridges. Mr. Soliva asked if the white oak/synthetic blend discussed would be acceptable to the NRC. Mr. Schmidt stated that the NRC would be satisfied, but that the DPW had concerns about the continued maintenance needs of a wooden structure. Concerns were also raised about the amount of wooden waste that would be generated by the cutting of white oak lumber to fit the specific portions of the bridge that were discussed. Mr. Schmidt reiterated the advantage of FiberForce in maintenance needs.

Mr. Lunger discussed the safety, lifespan, and durability implications of using wood over FiberForce and further detailed concerns about the waste generated in acquiring the specified pieces of wood.

Mr. Soliva stressed the need for an aesthetic standard due to the context of Town Hall and asked Mr. Lunger if the proposed blend would be more desirable than a wood-only design.

Mr. Schmidt stated that either option proposed would be acceptable. Mr. Soliva and Mr. Schmidt discussed a compromise.

Mr. Lunger asked the Board to confirm that compromise would involve white oak on all structures visible from the side of the bridge and FiberForce horizontal decking and railing

caps. This compromise was discussed among Board members and Mr. Lunger. The textured light grey FiberForce was specified.

Recommendation:

The Board motioned to approve the application with the following recommendations:

1. The vertical structures of the bridge visible from the side should be constructed of white oak.
2. The horizontal decking and railing caps should be wood-textured light grey FiberForce.

Mr. Soliva made the motion, Ms. Dinsmoor seconded it. The Board voted unanimously to approve (3-0).

DRB 19-40: 169 Great Plain Avenue, Town of Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility [RDF]; Design Review: Sheds, Minor Construction

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Minor Construction Application
- Memorandum re project description from James Manzolini, RDF Director
- Project Description
- Shed Renderings (2 cut sheets)
- Plan View of Shed Locations and Photographs (4 sheets)
- Site Plan

Discussion:

Mr. Soliva invited the applicant, The Town of Wellesley - RDF to present the application continued from 8/14/2019.

James Manzolini, RDF Superintendent, and Shawn Vann presented the project to the Board. Mr. Manzolini addressed the Board's previously-stated desire that they investigate alternative structures similar in size and function to the existing structures. He reiterated that the existing structures were the third such iteration that had failed to meet the needs of the RDF, citing increased volume and demand for can and bottle deposit. Mr. Manzolini explained that per the comments of the Board, he had contacted personnel from approximately 10+ other municipal facilities and from this research came to the conclusion that can and bottle deposit was a growing operational challenge for municipalities. 4 of these facilities had halted collection efforts altogether, while other facilities had leveraged volunteer organizations to process deposits. He emphasized the volume of these deposits, the effort required by the RDF to process them, and the need for bagging and storage to stay ahead of this challenge. He stated that these efforts would require the proposed sheds.

Mr. Soliva restated the desire of the board that alternative structures to the proposed shed be investigated and inquired if any alternatives would meet the needs of RDF. The pitch of the shed roof was discussed.

Ms. Dinsmoor raised concerns about the height of the shed and visibility to abutters. After discussion, the Board agreed that this would not be an issue.

Ms. Lin stated that a more simplified structure would be desirable. She asked if it was possible for the shed to have large windows through which deposits would be made, so that people would not have to enter the shed. Mr. Manzolini responded that they would have the deposit barrels very close to the door so that entering the shed would not be necessary.

Mr. Soliva discussed the possibility of having a rear door for RDF access and a front door or window for deposit access, and asked if a flat slanted roof would be acceptable.

Mr. Vann raised concerns about loss of interior space from a flat roof. Mr. Soliva inquired as to the ceiling height that would be required. Mr. Vann stated that a 7-8 foot ceiling would be necessary. The structure and angle of the roof and interior lighting were discussed between Board members and applicants.

Mr. Soliva stated that the exterior structure and roofline were the concern of the Board, and the operation of the shed in terms of door/window placement was at the discretion of the RDF. A staff review of revised plans was discussed, and Mr. Soliva asked for a motion.

Recommendation:

The Board motioned to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. The roof should have a single slope.
2. The higher end of the roofline should face the public.
3. The public should not have to enter the shed for deposit.

Ms. Lin made the motion, Ms. Dinsmoor seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve (3-0).

DRB 19-42: 276 Washington Street, Loyal Companion; Design Review: Sign Permit

(Staff had been notified prior to meeting that applicant would not be able to attend, application was pushed to next meeting on 9/25/2019)

DRB 19-43: 200c Linden Street, Club Pilates; Design Review: Sign Permit

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Sign Permit Application

- Landlord Authorization
- Sign Renderings and Specifications

Discussion:

Mr. Soliva invited the applicant, David Winchester of Ready2Run Graphics and Signs, to present the application to the Board.

Mr. Winchester explained the signs proposed and answered questions from the Board regarding letter height, sign dimensions, and entrance height. Members of the Board questioned whether the sign matched those of neighboring tenants, as the renderings provided did not appear to show this. Mr. Winchester directed the Board to an image from the DRB 19-44S application (for which he was also the contractor for the same applicant) and stated his belief that the visual discrepancy was due to a flaw in the rendering rather than a difference in dimensions.

Mr. Soliva raised concerns about the positioning of the lighting bar, which was to be moved from above the formerly-existing sign to below the proposed sign. Mr. Winchester stated that the landlord had moved the lighting bar already without consulting the tenant or contractor.

Mr. Soliva raised further concerns that upwards-facing lighting would bleed over the top of the building. Mr. Winchester stated that he had no control over the placement of the lighting and asked for clarification of the role of the Board in considering lighting. Mr. Soliva responded that the lighting was related to signage and questioned whether the landlord had a master plan in terms of lighting. Mr. Soliva stated that the Board would require confirmation that the lighting placement would be consistent across the building before approving the project.

(At this time the business owner, Soosie Lazenby, arrived to the meeting.)

Ms. Lazenby apologized for her late arrival and introduced herself as the business owner. Mr. Soliva communicated the current discussion over the lighting bar and asked if she knew of a master plan for the lighting bar. She confirmed that the landlord's plan was to move all of the lighting bars down. Mr. Soliva stated that approval of the project would be contingent on confirmation of this.

Mr. Soliva queried Ms. Lazenby on the size and position of the sign, to which Ms. Lazenby confirmed that the sign would match the neighboring businesses, and that the window sign would be centered on the door. Ms. Lazenby also asked for clarification on whether window signs 12" or shorter were allowed above the limit of 1 window sign per business. Mr. Beckett responded that signs smaller than 1 square foot were allowed under Town Bylaw. Members of the board discussed design elements and location of signage.

Recommendation:

The Board motioned to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. All lights on the section of the building must move down to match.
2. All signage must be centered on the doorway and consistent with neighboring businesses.

3. The applicant shall remove the second window sign from the application.

Ms. Dinsmoor made the motion, Ms. Lin seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve. (3-0).

DRB 19-44: 200b Linden Street, Stretch Lab; Design Review: Sign Permit

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Sign Permit Application
- Landlord Authorization
- Sign Renderings and Specifications

Discussion:

Mr. Soliva confirmed that the substance of the application was similar to the previous application (DRB-19-43S). Mr. Soliva asked if there were any additional comments from Board members.

Recommendation:

The Board motioned to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. All lights on the section of the building must move down to match.
2. All signage must be centered on the doorway and consistent with neighboring businesses.
3. The applicant shall remove the second window sign from the application.

Mr. Soliva made the motion, Ms. Dinsmoor seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve (3-0).

DRB 19-45: 200 Linden Street, Beacon Hill NRO; Design Review: Sign Permit

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Sign Permit Application
- Mockups of Proposed Designs

Discussion:

Mr. Soliva invited the applicant, Jason Indelicato, owner of NRO, to present the application to the Board.

Mr. Indelicato asked the Board if there were any questions regarding his application. The Board asked for clarification of the location of the business and the size/distribution of the presented signs. Mr. Indelicato presented additional drawings of the proposed signs with updated designs not included in the initial application.

Mr. Indelicato clarified that the proposed signs would match exactly the dimensions of neighboring business' signs. Members of the Board expressed confusion over the scale of the drawings and questioned the degree to which the drawings represented the actual proposed signs. Mr. Indelicato attempted to clarify.

Ms. Dinsmoor emphasized the need for consistency among neighboring signs. Mr. Soliva suggested that the applicant ask his designer for scale drawings of the signs to ensure his satisfaction with the final design. Mr. Indelicato explained that his branding was already well-established and that the design was less important to him than the color and style.

Mr. Soliva stated that were there to be any changes to the design, it would need to be resubmitted to the Board.

Recommendation:

The Board motioned to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. The designs presented must be accurate.
2. If any changes are made, the application must be re-submitted.
3. Updates must be sent to planning staff.

Mr. Soliva made the motion to approve, Ms. Dinsmoor seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve (3-0).

Wellesley Office Park Residential Project- Presentation & Discussion

Representatives of the Hanover Company Peter Tamm, Brian O'Connor, and David Hall introduced themselves and their associates to the Board. Mr. Tamm stated the intentions of the Hanover Company in seeking early comment from the Board and presented an overview of the proposed project. Mr. Tamm emphasized the portion of affordable housing units and the proposed improvements to critical municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Soliva expressed a desire to see the developers return to town boards after addressing feedback and asked if they would return to the Design Review Board within a 30-day window after the October 24th hearing, to which Mr. Tamm confirmed that they would if asked to.

Mr. O'Connor presented a slideshow detailing the design features and layout of the proposed building.

Mr. Hall provided information regarding Hanover Company and its previous projects, and discussed municipal impacts of the project and the timeline.

Mr. O'Connor continued the slideshow presentation, discussing pedestrian uses of space surrounding the proposed building, amenities and retail at ground levels. Mr. Soliva discussed the control of access to resident-only outdoor areas. Mr. Hall responded that an access-controlled gate would be constructed, allowing room for limited public access.

Ms. Lin raised concerns about the height of the courtyard and the degree of shading that would occur. Mr. O'Connor suggested that other access to sunlight and outdoor areas was readily available, and referenced other Hanover projects that utilized similar smaller courtyards.

Ms. Lin discussed the façade of the parking garage and asked about the integration of the garage into the building. Mr. O'Connor stated that the garage would not be integrated **directly into the building and discussed different façade coverings under consideration.** Different options for the activation of the garage rooftop were discussed. Mr. Soliva asked about the integration of photovoltaic power generation into the garage roof. Mr. Hall stated that they did not plan on constructing it immediately but were ready and willing to.

Mr. Soliva discussed activation of the ground-floor area surrounding the garage was discussed. Mr. Hall raised concerns regarding traffic and maintaining the number of units. Mr. Soliva discussed the revitalization of the office park; Mr. Hall mentioned that parking requirements were going down and that preparations for a car-free future should be made. He discussed the potential of repurposing parts of the garage for non-car uses in the future. Access to public transportation was discussed.

Mr. Tamm discussed flexibility of zoning at the site for adaptive reuse and long-term vision.

Potential programming and use of the highway-facing side of the building. Ms. Lin asked if there had been consideration of placing the garage on side facing the highway. Concerns about visibility and overall layout were discussed in explaining the proposed position of the garage.

Ms. Lin questioned the necessity of the motor pool and asked if it could be incorporated into the courtyard to create a larger public space. Mr. O'Connor explained that the geometry made this difficult and made control of the public/private divide more difficult. Mr. Tamm suggested that the amount of off-site usable public space surrounding the Charles River made up for the smaller amount of outdoor space within the site. The potential programming and activation of the parks and trails was discussed.

Mr. Soliva raised concerns about the safety of the walk to nearby public transit stops. Increasing accessibility of the Elliot and Waban Green Line stops was discussed, as well as dissemination of information regarding transit options.

Ms. Dinsmoor raised the issue of elementary school districts around the site. The capacity and infrastructure cost share were discussed, as well as school bus service and traffic studies.

Mr. O'Connor elaborated on the design of the roads surrounding the site. He confirmed that the designs are aimed at Complete Streets compliance and discussed the landscaping of the auto park, and road.

Mr. Soliva questioned how realistic the landscaping visuals were for the courtyard given the shade of the building.

Mr. O'Connor presented rendering of the facades of the building. Design elements to break up the larger contiguous facades were discussed. Mr. Soliva expressed that public reception of the project was very important and that the Board wanted the project to succeed.

Signage and town design guidelines were discussed.

Mr. Soliva reiterated the desire of the Board for continued collaboration and expressed their support of the proposed project.

3. Minutes - March 27th 2019 and August 14th 2019

The Board reviewed the minutes from the 3/27/2019 and 8/14/2019 meetings.

Ms. Lin corrected statements from 8/14/2019 regarding DRB-19-35R, stating that her recommendation was to keep elevation changes below 30”.

Ms. Dinsmoor pointed out several typos in the 8/14/2019 minutes.

The Board motioned to approve both minutes with these corrections.

Mr. Soliva made the motion, Ms. Dinsmoor seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion (3-0).

4. Design Guidelines Handbook Update - Discussion

Mr. Soliva began by emphasizing that more DRB members should be present for the next meeting on 9/25/2019 for a more thorough review of comments.

Mr. Beckett presented a compilation of comments from DRB members on the most recent draft of the Design Guidelines.

Ms. Dinsmoor emphasized that the building pictured on page 5 no longer exists.

Ms. Dinsmoor stated that her rewritten and expanded neighborhood descriptions should be implemented on page 6.

Mr. Soliva stated that the commentary should be re-ordered based on feedback and distributed to DRB members. He also stated that less emphasis should be placed on 3D renderings throughout the handbook.

Ms. Lin requested that title pages be added to the commentary for all sections and that more comments were needed on the 'Open Space' section.

Mr. Soliva requested that full notes be provided on procedure diagrams.

Mr. Soliva reiterated that greater attendance from the Board would be required for the next meeting to review the commentary prior to recommendations to consultants.

Board members discussed content of next meeting. Mr. Soliva asked Mr. Beckett to confirm receipt of all documents and information and requested that a hard copy of the commentary be brought to the next meeting.

5. Adjourn

Mr. Soliva motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lin. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion (3-0).

Next Meeting: September 25, 2019

Minutes Approved: September 25, 2019

Minutes compiled by: Tucker Beckett, Planner.