



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Monday, June 24, 2019

Site Walk: 5:00 p.m., 191 South Main Street, Newtown, CT

Meeting: 7:00 p.m., Lower Meeting Room, Edmond Town Hall, 45 Main Street, Newtown CT

Present for site walk: Peter Cloudas, member; Agni Kyprianou, alternate; Eric Roise, Landscape Architect; Greg Wilson, Landscape Architect with Kaestle Boos; Alex McKeton, Architect with Kaestle Boos; Chief of Police James Viadero; First Selectman Daniel Rosenthal

Present for meeting: Phil Clark, Chairman; Peter Cloudas, member; Agni Kyprianou, alternate; Frank Caico, alternate; Greg Wilson, Landscape Architect with Kaestle Boos; Alex McKeton, Architect with Kaestle Boos; Chief of Police James Viadero; Christine O'Neill, Clerk

A site walk took place at 5:00 p.m. at 191 South Main Street.

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Business

Application by Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc., for a property located at 191 South Main Street, as shown in a set of plans titled "New Police Headquarters for the Town of Newtown, 191 South Main Street, Newtown, CT" dated 5/28/19 and supporting documents submitted 6/21/19.

Mr. Wilson began by stating that the road is roughly 22 feet lower than the parking lot of the building, which limits visibility of the site from the road. He also mentioned the fence that was a subject of debate last meeting, pointing out that they added grasses and perennials behind it and changed it to black vertical picket aluminum. The fence is virtually not visible from the road. The Board agreed that the modifications made to the fence were a significant improvement.

Mr. Cloudas explained that the rubble stone wall seems to be the most prominent New England feature of the site, but it is currently being hidden by the vegetation. He was thinking they could use the on-site material to relocate it closer to the driveway and bring it up to the flagpole. Mr. Roise pointed out that a portion of the wall would need to be taken apart anyway to do the grading for the sally port.

Mr. McKeton presented the renderings of the different views from the road and parking lot. Mr. Roise mentioned that the lack of visibility of the site from the road is actually a challenge for them, because they want drivers to be able to identify the headquarters in time to know they are making the turn. He stated that the sign will need to come up over the existing stone wall.

Ms. Kyprianou wondered if there would be signage ahead of the building. Chief Viadero replied that they would put up wayfinding signage ahead of the site to direct drivers.

Mr. McKeton presented three different options regarding the material for the main entrance and sally port. The first option is Nichiha (a fiber cement panel), which is softer against the brick. Mr. Clark asked if they would be paying a premium for the custom gray color, to which Mr. McKeton replied yes but it was still within their budget. There would be rock-cast on the bottom of the entrance with poly-ash about two feet up from the ground as a horizontal baseboard. It would be a painted smooth finish.

Mr. Caico asked where the metal panels would be, and Mr. McKeton demonstrated above the bricks. Mr. Clark asked the Board if they were okay sticking with the metal panels. Mr. McKeton explained it was closer to the material from the existing building. Mr. Clark replied that he was hung up on the metal paneling but is sympathetic that budget is an issue. Mr. Clark and Mr. Caico wondered if the architects had explored more New England looking options. Mr. McKeton replied that they had begun with a wood look but ultimately decided to stay with what was there. Chief Viadero said that they had spoken with Director of Public Works Fred Hurley about the wood finishes, but Mr. Hurley was concerned with the level of maintenance it would require.

Mr. Clark wondered if they could get more traditional New England columns and a pitched roof in the entrance. Mr. McKeton was concerned that by mixing two architectural approaches, the building would look like a hodge-podge of modern and old-fashioned.

Mr. Caico stated that he has an issue with the location of the sally port. He wished that the architects had come before the Board sooner, because he didn't like the idea the sally port being so close to the entrance. Mr. McKeton explained that the ledges and topography of the property limited their options. Mr. Wilson pointed out that they had looked at moving it to the back corner of the building, but with the steep ledge it wasn't practical. Mr. Caico felt that the sally port was going to be the least attractive part of the site but that it would be front and center as someone drives onto the property. Mr. Cloudas concurred. Ms. Kyprianou explained that adding reveal channels could "dress up" the sally port without having to move it.

Mr. Clark wondered if some landscaping could cover the front corner of the sally port. Mr. Cloudas pointed out that this is where he was envisioning the stone wall being moved.

The Board was also concerned about the two lights over the garage doors of the sally port, and how it would look at night. Mr. McKeton confirmed that no windows could be put in for security reasons.

Option two is what was discussed at last meeting. A corrugated metal panel would be for the front entry, with fiber cement siding for the sally port. Option three is a fiber cement board, which Mr. McKeton described as compromise between the institutional feel and a softer look. Mr. Caico wondered if there would be trim board for the corners. Mr. McKeton explained that Nichiha makes 4x4 corner pieces.

Mr. Clark asked if the metal panel would be on the upper half of the building no matter which option was selected, and Mr. McKeton confirmed that this was the case.

Mr. Cloudas reviewed the regulations for the South Main Design District, and the Board came to the conclusion that the regulation for keeping the New England character of the neighborhood and the regulation for reinforcing the look of the original building are conflicting in this case.

Mr. Clark wondered if the sally port could be pushed back to be flush against the corner near the back of the building, just to get it a little further back from the road. He didn't want those driving by to be looking at a garage. Mr. Wilson explained that the internal functionality would be affected and the ledges would still be a concern. Mr. Clark asked if a bit of landscaping could be placed along the side of the sally port. Mr. Caico

returned to Mr. Cloudas's idea of a stone wall or a tree to make that a focal point as opposed to the sally port. He also suggested making the sign directing traffic at the "Y" portion of the driveway nicer looking.

The Board asked Chief Viadero if from a security standpoint it would be okay. He said he didn't mind the idea of a bit of landscaping at the Y to soften the site, but he was concerned with moving in the stone wall and putting too much shrubbery around.

Mr. Cloudas suggested a gate, but Chief Viadero thought that would be a security concern which would delay getting someone who has been arrested into the building. Mr. Cloudas wondered if they could make the garage doors look more like barn doors, but Mr. Roise and Chief Viadero wanted to discourage the idea of making the sally port appear welcoming, considering its function. Ms. Kyprianou suggested light sconces for the sally port.

Mr. Caico stated that option three with the fiber cement panel, including rivets to give it texture, was his favorite. Mr. Clark liked the idea of breaking up the entry, and was torn between the options.

Mr. Clark asked about the light poles and light features. Ms. Kyprianou felt that they went with the building, and the Board agreed that they were a better fit than what was originally proposed.

Mr. Cloudas asked the Chief which option he preferred. Chief Viadero said that he liked the first and third option, but deferred to the Board. Mr. Cloudas shared that option one comes closer to being a New England feel, if he had to choose between one and three. The Board agreed that if they were still considering option two, that was the most New England of the three.

Mr. Clark asked about the stone below the seal at the main entrance. He was wondering if it could be tied into the other stone wall by changing it to New England fieldstone. Mr. McKeton was amenable to the idea, but said he would need to look into the pricing. Ms. Kyprianou supported the idea of using fieldstone to tie in the New England feel.

Mr. Cloudas asked about the wideness of the stairs. Mr. Wilson estimated that it would be about 10 feet wide, and that the perspective of the rendering may have been confusing.

Mr. Clark asked if they would produce a rendering of the stone wall. Mr. Wilson clarified that it would appear on the site plan and site plan detail for the Planning and Zoning Commission, when they applied.

Ms. Kyprianou asked if they could put fieldstone along the bottom of the sally port (front side only). Mr. McKeton said they had looked at that earlier this week but unfortunately they had to cut it because of the budget. The Board agreed that it would look very nice.

Mr. Cloudas wondered if they should make a similar recommendation to last time, which asked P&Z to make it a condition of approval that the applicant return to the DAB to demonstrate that they had incorporated the discussed changes. Mr. Clark felt that because this was a public project with limited funds, they should not require the architects to come back. Mr. Caico felt they could simply make a list of their recommendations and present it to P&Z, and Mr. Clark commented that he also planned to attend the meeting and speak.

Mr. Clark decided it would be best to have the architects create a rendering, then email it to the Board members. If the Board members had no comment, they would not reply and it would be considered acceptable; if anyone had a comment, another meeting would be set.

Recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission

The DAB recognizes that the proposed sally port is “reinforcing the existing building” as per Newtown Zoning Regulation 2.02.420(b).

Mr. Cloudas made a motion to recommend that the Planning and Zoning make it a condition of approval that the applicant update its plans based on a letter incorporating the following recommendations:

1. That a stone wall be erected as a focal point near the entrance Y to create a New England feel, and as an attempt to pull the flagpole and associated landscaping forward.
2. That exterior wall sconces be affixed between the garage doors to replace the existing light fixtures.
3. That of the three existing renderings, the Board prefers option 3 (fiber cement panel).
4. That an indigenous fieldstone veneer water table be added to the front of the sally port.
5. That the stone water table at the entrance be changed from thin veneer stone to a more indigenous fieldstone veneer to match the site.
6. That cheek walls of the main entrance stairs be changed to a more indigenous fieldstone to match the site.

Mr. Caico seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Development of a DAB of Application, Application Documents Requirements, and Application Process

Mr. Cloudas made a motion to table the discussion of DAB application. Mr. Caico seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Minutes

Mr. Cloudas made a motion to approve the minutes of April 16, 2019. Mr. Caico seconded. All were in favor and the minutes of April 16, 2019 were approved.

Mr. Caico made a motion to approve the minutes of June 11, 2019. Mr. Cloudas seconded. All were in favor and the minutes of June 11, 2019 were approved.

Adjournment

Mr. Caico made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cloudas seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Christine O'Neill, clerk*