

SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

NOTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, August 14, 2013

PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Meeting Room A –7:30 P.M.

Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: James Begin, Alyce Bush, Robert Cerutti, Wendy Kaczerski (8:00), Lydia Robinson, William Wolfe

ABSENT: Harry Cooke, Holly Nelson

ALSO PRESENT: Jack West, Land Use 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 10th day of December, 2012.

MINUTES

- a) May 8, 2013 - Motion was made by R. Cerutti and J. Begin seconded the motion to approve the minutes from May 8, 2013. The vote was 4-0 in favor from those eligible to vote. Motion carried.
- b) June 5, 2013 - postponed to next meeting
- c) June 12, 2013 - postponed to next meeting
- d) June 19, 2013 - postponed to next meeting
- e) July 15, 2013 - postponed to next meeting

APPLICATIONS

- a) ROI Development
255 Nassau Corporation
Site Plan/Use Variance/Bulk Variances
255 Nassau Street
Block 48.01, Lots 7 & 8
File #Z1313-029PUV
MLUL Deadline: 10-10-13

Representatives for the Applicant: Josh Mann, Esq., Budd Lerner, PC; Larry Murphy, Green Site Engineering; Linda Fahmie, ROI Development; Hugh Connolly, Connolly Architecture; Craig Peregov, Staigar & Peregov; Rocco Carnevale, Applicant.

Josh Mann, Esq., legal counsel for the applicant, stated that the former use was the Davidsons Market and prior to that it was an auto dealership. Larry Murphy, engineer for the applicant, stated that portions of the building will remain and the interior space renovated. They are proposing commercial use for the first story and 16 residences on the remaining floors. He then presented a color rendering of the site plan and stated that a majority of the site is impervious. The lot to the rear, Lot 16, is owned by Princeton University. The parking as it exists with 38 parking spaces is

not in compliance with the standards, 57 parking spaces are being proposed and the site will be fully conforming. The total square footage of the building is 30,166 SF. The commercial uses on the first floor will total 9,900 SF. Mr. Mann stated that a two-way driveway is proposed east of Pine Street because they do not have access to Lot 16, the applicant has attempted to secure access to lot 16 from the University but they were unsuccessful. Craig Peregov, traffic consultant for the applicant, stated that because a curb cut on Nassau Street is proposed for the driveway and two retail uses are proposed for the first floor, the applicant is required to satisfy NJDOT standards. Ms. Fahmie stated that she attended over a dozen meetings with the University and the applicant redesigned the site twice. After some time, the University's attorney advised they would not provide an easement but did offer a temporary license.

Mr. Murphy stated that the existing footprint of the building and the pavement covers 99% of the site, the impervious coverage is reduced with the proposed improvements. Within the plaza, bike racks and a kiosk are proposed. The parking area will have assigned parking spaces along the southern property line for the tenants. Mr. Mann advised that stacked parking is not proposed so a variance is required. A hardship variance is also needed because of the restrictions placed on them pertaining to the allowable tenants on the first floor and a variance is needed for parking in the front yard.

Mr. Murphy described the proposed landscape plan for 325 plants including trees, shrubs and grasses. He advised that they prefer not to have the required 6 foot high parking lot buffer because this would create a wall and the proposed landscaping would block the view of the headlights. The design of the parking area will reduce the amount of impervious surface and runoff on site. The applicant is considering a compost area in the rear of the property in response to the PEC report, if one is provided residents would be responsible to bring their compost down to the bin. Mr. West asked how a garbage truck will access the site. Mr. Murphy stated that the dumpsters would be moved out of the fenced area for easy pick up, a truck would cross over the drive aisle and pick up the trash and then back out of the site. Mr. West stated that the movement is awkward. Mr. Murphy stated that the NJDOT did not allow a second access point so this is the only option available. The trash area will have a gate to shield the view of the dumpsters. Mr. West asked for a different material for the gate frame so it is more durable. Two trash containers are proposed in the plaza, W. Kaczerski asked for one recycling container. She also asked for a food waste composting bin in the plaza. Mr. Murphy advised that a loading space is proposed although this is not required and the drainage will be handled by the existing system which fully complies with the regulations. R. Cerutti asked about snow removal and Mr. Murphy stated that the snow will be trucked off site.

Hugh Connolly, architect for the applicant, presented photographs of the existing building and a rendering of the proposed building. He stated that access to the basement will be provided from the lower level of the new stairway. The historic Dodge dealership medallion will be removed from the existing building and placed on the Nassau Street façade of the new building. He then presented samples of the proposed materials. The third floor tenants will have a private terrace space, separate from the common terrace area. The common terrace area can be accessed by employees of the businesses within the building, the applicant is considering a trellis with ivy to separate the two spaces. Board members suggested a metal frame with frosted glass partition. A. Bush asked if soundproofing between the apartments is provided and Mr. Connolly confirmed this. Balconies are proposed for the second floor tenants, the balconies will be five feet in width

in order to provide usable space. The mechanicals for the building are proposed on the rooftop of the first story and the parapet adjusted to visually shield the commercial HVAC system.

R. Cerutti stated that the triangular windows proposed for the fourth story is not compatible with the remaining building. Chairman Wolfe commented that there is a lot of glass on the façade but only four skylights and suggested more skylights and less glass. The applicant advised that this will be reviewed. Mr. West asked if two tenants can be placed in the first floor office space. Mr. Connolly stated that it is possible but they would have to include a rear entrance to the elevator so they don't anticipate this unless there is a strong interest before the building is constructed.

Pertaining to the environmental aspects, a summary of the 41 LEED credits was distributed to the board. Mr. Murphy stated that they will not be applying for LEED certification. Mr. Connolly stated that additional LEED points may be gained under the energy star category. Solar panels were considered but the building is not optimally oriented for this. Chairman Wolfe stated that the building's west slope is facing solar south so solar is viable. W. Kaczerski commended the applicant for their environmental efforts. Chairman Wolfe stated that vinyl windows are discouraged because they deteriorate rapidly.

Mr. Murphy stated that storage space is offered within the building for the tenants, for a fee. Chairman Wolfe questioned why only 9 storage units are proposed for 16 tenants. W. Kaczerski asked for additional bike racks since only two are proposed. Mr. Murphy stated that the applicant will consider more racks or a rack design that will hold more than four bikes. The board requested bike storage for a minimum of 12 bikes in the plaza area. Chairman Wolfe asked about the kiosk. Mr. Bridger advised that the SB zone offers a definition of the uses permitted in this zone including a kiosk. Mr. Murphy stated that the kiosk will be 250 SF in size and it is unknown at this time what type of business will be in the kiosk.

Pertaining to lighting, external illumination of the front façade is proposed. A. Bush asked if the lights will be on timers and Mr. Murphy stated that this has not been determined yet. Board members recommended denial of the variance for external illumination of the building (3.3(g)) and suggested that the applicant install lighting on the cornice near the commercial use and along the side of the building. Lighting above the doors for the terraces is proposed, uplights may be considered. Chairman Wolfe stated that the lights above the doors should be shielded.

During the meeting, SPRAB engaged in much discussion about the existing shared vehicular access location being much better for this congested section of Nassau Street, and conducive to better parking arrangements for both commercial uses along the access drive. The applicant represented that they were unsuccessful in obtaining access from this drive from the University, and then were faced with a conflict between existing zoning and NJDOT use restrictions based on a new curb cut. We ask that the Applicant present testimony to the Zoning Board as to why the existing vehicular access from Lot 16 cannot continue, thus avoiding an additional curb cut to Nassau Street.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by Mr. Cerutti, seconded by Mr. Begin and carried by a vote of six ayes to classify this application as a major site plan and recommend approval, endorsing the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated July 25, 2013 and revised July 31, 2013 with the following recommendations:

1. SPRAB thinks the proposed LED lighting of the corbeled cornice would be inappropriate and recommends denial of the bulk variance listed as 3.3(g) in the Engineering/Zoning Report.
2. If the added curb cut is proven to be necessary, SPRAB recommends that the Zoning Board approve all other variances. However, Princeton University should be invited to participate in the use variance discussion.
3. A steel framed gate for the trash dumpster area was recommended for durability.
4. Either three separate receptacles or compartmentalized containers should be provided within the plaza to separate recyclable materials, compostable food waste, and other trash.
5. The applicant was asked to present to the Zoning Board how the municipal compost program would operate for the 16 residential units.
6. Two decorative bike racks are proposed in the plaza. The applicant was asked to provide additional bike capacity for a minimum of 12 bikes.
7. The HVAC units proposed on the rooftop on the west side of the building would be next to the adjacent apartments and will need to be in conformance with the municipal noise ordinance.
8. The windows should be thermally broken with insulated Low E glass.
9. SPRAB members agreed that the large triangular areas of glass at the loft level are not stylistically consistent with the rest of the building, nor appropriate for the individual bedrooms served. The applicant should consider redesigning the fenestration in that area. Use of more skylights instead may benefit the loft spaces.
10. The design for the partition separating the common area and private terraces at the third floor is unknown at this time, but the applicant proposed that the partition be 6 feet high. Some SPRAB members suggested that it should be compatible with the lower railing, but with frosted glass, plantings, or similar additions to provide privacy. The final design should be presented before the Zoning Board.
11. It was recommended that the parking lot buffer ordinance requiring plantings to be 6 feet tall should be waived. SPRAB agreed that the proposed landscape design for the eastern parking island was adequate.
12. Prior to the Zoning Board hearing, the applicant was asked to issue a summary of any sections of the professional reports where they are in disagreement, and explain their proposed alternative. Otherwise they should satisfy all comments.
13. A report from the Municipal Traffic Consultant is anticipated regarding the NJDOT standards pertaining to the restriction of a second retail use at the site. The applicant did not show evidence of this before the SPRAB meeting, and this should be required before the Zoning Board meeting.
14. In order to accommodate the crosswalk between the site and Pine Street, the driveway and curb cut should be shifted slightly to avoid the existing fire hydrant.

COMMENTS

The Borough Council recently added a limited size branch bank to the allowed retail uses at this applicant's request. This section of Nassau Street is especially narrow, restricting traffic flow, truck service, and parking. After many discussions with commercial and residential neighbors, the Council reached general agreement about encouraging mixed small retail uses at street level and residential on upper floors. Cooperation with the owners of lots 16, 17 and 9 (Princeton University and Mr. Bratman) had been urged in order that the large amount of paved area could be better used to provide easy and efficient parking for customers of these adjacent properties while satisfying the University's desire for access. In the opinion of Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Cerutti and

Ms. Robinson, failure to reach such an agreement should not be justification for changing the master plan intent in order to intensify use of one property.

The applicant was commended for their environmental efforts as the green building checklist ordinance was not in effect when the application was filed. The applicant advised that they will achieve at least 40 of the LEED points presented in the LEED Credits Summary prepared by Connolly Architecture.

Mr. Wolfe encouraged the applicant to do something more imaginative and conducive to conversation than the bench layout proposed in the plaza area. He also asked the applicant to consider benches with backrests.

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded adjourn the meeting at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry A. Philip
Secretary