

SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

NOTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Meeting Room A –7:30 P.M.

Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: Alyce Bush, Robert Cerutti, Harry Cooke, Robert Freudenberg, Pamela Rew, Lydia Robinson, William Wolfe

ABSENT: Lisa Marcus-Levine, Holly Nelson, Lydia Robinson

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

Secretary Philip 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 of November, 2015.

MINUTES

- a) December 2, 2015 – Postponed
- b) January 13, 2016 – Postponed

APPLICATION

- a) 50 North Tulane LLC
Minor Site Plan w/variances
50 North Tulane Street
Block 27.02, Lot 46
File #Z1414-110UVP
MLUL Deadline: 4/2/16

Representatives for the applicant: Thomas Letizia, Esq., Pepper Hamilton LLP; Lorine Murray-Mechini, Architect for the Applicant; David and Debra Walters, Owners.

The applicant is seeking Minor Site Plan approval, use variance approval to increase the FAR and bulk variance approval for the front yard, side yard and parking setbacks in order to renovate the building and expand the existing one bedroom dwelling into a three bedroom unit. A small kitchenette previously added to the rear of the first floor is proposed to be removed to make room for a new elevator serving all three floors of the building.

Thomas Letizia, Esq., legal counsel for the applicant, stated that this is a minor site plan application with variances to permit the construction of a 900 square foot addition in a joint occupancy building. The property contains a 2464 SF building that received prior approval for office use on the first floor and residences on the 2nd and 3rd floors. At this time the owners would like to

maintain the office space on the first floor and expand the residence portion for their use. The proposal requires an FAR variance since a maximum of 60% is permitted and 73% is proposed.

Mr. Letizia stated that the front yard setback is pre-existing and non-conforming, this is not being increased. Chair Wolfe stated that the proposal increases the non-conformity by putting two more stories at the existing setback. Mr. Letizia stated that a variance is requested for rear yard setback, the plans are being revised to eliminate this. Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer, stated that relief for parking was granted in 1985 and the parking spaces were calculated based on the square footage. Chair Wolfe asked if one more parking space can be provided.

Lorine Murray-Mechini, Architect for the Applicant, provided a power point presentation. She stated that the signage and lighting will remain the same. A column is proposed to support the addition. The owners will be occupying the second and third floors. The expansion in the front of the structure is for a dining room bedroom on the second floor and a bedroom and dressing area on the third. She advised that the variance for parking is proposed to be eliminated, the applicant is shifting the line to provide for a four foot setback. Existing landscaping will be relocated along with infilling. The adjacent residential structure (54 N. Tulane) is three stories in height and the same width as what is being proposed. The proposed roofline will also be similar to 54 N. Tulane. The municipal parking garage is behind the structure so the height would blend. Mr. Letizia stated that the applicant agrees to all recommendations in the reports.

Chair Wolfe stated that most of the structures on this street, including 54 N. Tulane, are 2.5 stories with one story front porches. The street is in between these residential scale structures, the upper stories of which are set further back. A three story structure in line with the one story porches would be a large change to the street and a major infringement on the front yard setback. There is one other three story structure on the street that is set further back than the upper floors of its neighbors so the mass is not disturbing.

R. Freudenberg asked the proposed material for the siding. Ms. Murray-Mechini stated that all the vinyl siding will be removed and replaced with "Hardy plank".

P. Rew stated that a three story mass is not recommended for this street at the existing setback. She recommended the applicant make the front of the structure look like a porch.

Chair Wolfe stated that the proposed large block engulfing a two dimensional trace of the old house has no positive architectural character. R. Cerutti stated that he does not see how the public would benefit from this. Discussion took place and the board members were not in favor of the 2nd and 3rd story front additions but the improvements to the rear are acceptable.

Chair Wolfe stated that the proposal is too large for this site and does not fit the pattern of the street. He stated that dormers can be added in the front and still respect the pattern of the street. He asked the applicant to return with a revised design.

Mr. Bridger advised that a reduced dormer on the third floor set back from the roof edges may be acceptable even if resulting in one sideyard setback variance.

Chair Wolfe stated that the rear porch and the balcony interfere with the parking in the rear so he suggested the entrance be placed on the side into the stair landing (since it is near grade and will

not increase the square footage). The exterior entry to the elevator should be moved to the other side.

Mr. Letizia asked that the board not take a vote and that the applicant return with a revised plan.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED DESIGN CHANGES

The applicant should revise the rear parking area to accommodate five parking spaces as originally required by code and apparently needed. The applicant was asked to consider aligning all five spaces perpendicular to the western edge of the property, and to work with the land use engineer on dimensions for both the parking spaces and the required planting areas along the side and rear property lines. Minor variances from the ordinance can be made for these dimensions.

The applicant should take down the wood fence that parallels the chain link fence on the western property. This will add two feet to the planting and parking area and allow maintenance of the landscaping.

SPRAB was not in favor of the applicant expanding the structure in to the front yard. The proposed improvements to the rear of the structure are acceptable.

SPRAB would entertain a reduced shed dormer added to the front roof providing it is at least a foot back from the front and two to three feet back from both side roof edges. Such a symmetrical dormer addition on the third floor front could comply with the combined sideyard requirement and not increase the non-conformity of the smallest side yard.

The proposed new rear porch and balcony interfere with vehicular movement in the parking area so it was suggested that the applicant look into either placing the rear entrance on the stair landing at or near grade or to the south of the new elevator.

Chair Wolfe stated that the coherent scale and character of this street depends on the uniformity of the front setback of the main two story masses on the structures as well as the uniformity of the setbacks of the one story porches on both sides of the street. The required setback is between these two existing setbacks. A neighboring residence that has a three story front façade is set even further back, and therefore does not intrude into this coherent space. This suggests that the existing two story brick structure should remain, and that the front entry/reception area should resemble an enclosed porch.

Board members agreed that the proposed three story version of this project intrudes well beyond both the existing neighboring structures and the required front yard. It provides no redeeming character and they see no public benefit to this proposal.

The applicant was advised that on Sheet 7, a line is missing between the existing dormer and the rear addition and that the rear chimney has been removed from the floor plans but is shown "to remain" on the elevations.

Board members requested a revision to the zoning table to reflect the new configuration and to accurately indicate any increased non-compliances.

- b) Hun School of Princeton
Minor Site Plan
Edgerstoune Road
Block 8203, Lot 1 & Block 9301, Lot 21
File #P1515-295P
MLUL Deadline: 4/30/16

Representatives for the applicant: Christopher DeGrezia, Esq., Drinker, Biddle & Reath; John Hatch, Clarke Caton Hintz; Michael Cjakowski, Hun School.

The submission by the Hun School is for minor site plan approval to construct an addition to the existing Buck Building allowing for the conversion of areas to classroom use and onsite improvements. The application is comprised of small additions on various sides of the existing building.

Christopher DeGrezia, Esq., legal counsel for the applicant, stated that the middle school building which was constructed in 1972 is surrounded by other Hun buildings in the center of the site. The proposal is to renovate the building and make it more modern, a very small impervious increase is proposed (400 sf).

John Hatch, architect for the applicant, stated that the exterior of the building will be upgraded and a vestibule is proposed to be added. The façade materials are metal, aluminum framed windows, and glass spandrel panels in red and green for a pop of color. A cast stone treatment is also proposed for the base of the building which relates to the other buildings on campus. The building requires insulation so exterior insulation is proposed. Roll up doors are proposed for the multi-purpose room and the outdoor center space will be filled in for additional classroom space. The entire building will be dedicated to the middle school. Material samples of the opaque spandrel panel, stone, and tinted glass were also provided.

Chair Wolfe felt the area between Chesebro Academic Center and the Buck Building was over-filled with handrails, guards, and redundant pathways and asked the applicant to consider removing some of these. Michael Cjakowski, applicant, stated that he was in agreement and that he will take a look at this.

Chair Wolfe stated that the red panel wall proposed at the entrance to the building extends out in to the middle of the main path from the upper campus. He suggested cutting it back or creasing it to parallel the path. Path handrails appear to be in direct conflict with the proposed entry expansion, so he asked that handrails near the entry be shown on the plans. Mr. Hatch stated that he will take a look at this.

R. Cerutti stated that the red panel color is best used to denote the various entrances. The color appears overused in the curtainwall spandrels, making this building unsuitably aggressive in the campus context. Chair Wolfe agreed with Mr. Cerutti and asked if the applicant would consider using a stone similar to the grey stone on the other major campus buildings as the material for the vertical walls at the main entry.

Mr. DeGrezia stated that the red color was determined by committee and he asked that SPRAB not make this a requirement.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by Mr. Cerutti, seconded by Ms. Rew and carried by a vote of six ayes to classify this proposal as a minor site plan and endorse the joint Engineering/Zoning report dated February 24, 2016 with the following additional recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The applicant was asked to examine the configuration of the wall by the main entrance and sidewalk. As designed the wall extends well into the main entry path and creates a potential pedestrian conflict.
2. The applicant was asked to reduce the existing assemblage of handrails in front of this building.
3. The proposed handrails must be shown on all the plans.

COMMENTS

Chairman Wolfe pointed out that the two paths that approach the entry at strong angles to this building are perpendicular to each other and derive from the dominant geometry of the campus. He felt that the projecting entrance canopy and associated elements should respond to these angled paths.

Chairman Wolfe also suggested that the applicant introduce a similar gray stone from the other campus buildings for use at this building on the prominent walls on either side of the entrance. He also suggested bringing this material into the lobby.

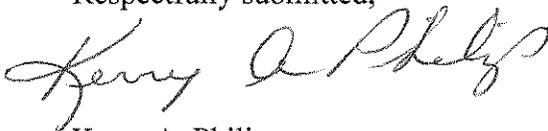
Mr. Cerutti asked that the red accent color be used sparingly, maybe just to accent the entrances.

Vote on motion:

For: Bush, Cerutti, Cooke, Freudenberg, Rew, Wolfe
Against: None
Abstain: None

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kerry A. Philip
Secretary