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HDC/ McLean Zone3 Subcommittee Meeting Minutes October 21, 2021 Meeting via Zoom

Review on comments on Landscape & Architecture

Attending

HDC Subcommittee members:

- Carol Moyles (Acting Chair)
- Carl Solander
- Stefan Ahlblad (secretary for the meeting)

Lisa Harrington was absent.

Others in Attendance

- Robert Hummel, Town of Belmont's Senior Planner
- Alan Aukman, Ryan Associates
- Michael Breau, TAT
- Edward Bradford, TAT

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

1. ELIOT CHAPEL AND NEW GARAGE

Not fully resolved issues from the previous meeting included the introduction of the new elements on the old Chapel, separation between the Chapel and the new garage. The height, the roof, detailing and the location of the garage on the site, landscaping and walkways all needed further evaluation.

Suggestions and considerations: TAT Team presented four design alternatives of the garage which showed different roof angles as well as turning the garage 90 degrees. All schemes used a similar adjusted position on the site in the relationship to the Chapel building. The garage was shifted away from the chapel by 5' compared to the previous proposal. The garage and surrounding landscape was also lowered by 14". Landscaping was added along the chapel facing wall. The lowering of the driveway required two additional steps up to apartment entry.

The roof pitch was suggested as a 30degree angle, lower than the original proposal. With the lower elevation of the garage and the lower angle of the roof pitch, the ridge is 42" lower than the originally presented scheme. The detailing was simplified as had been earlier proposed in comments by HDC. Coping caps were introduced at the roof gables to allow the brick wall to reach up without roof overhang. The alternative 90 degree rotated scheme (Scheme #3), was preferred by the architect because it makes the garage appear smaller seen from the street.

Carl Solander agreed that 90degree turn seemed beneficial and made the garage appear lower.

Carol Moyles noted that the roof overhang at the garage doors became beneficial as rain protection at the doors in Scheme#3 (90 degree).

Edward Bradford noted that the extra grading allows better planting between the garage and the Chapel.

Seen from the opposite direction the garage is lower (because of being set deeper into the hill. In addition existing trees seasonally block much of the garage from view.

Edward Bradford noted that the foundation wall will require filling for the landscaping along the chapel wall. Issues of the impact will be determined by condition of the foundation wall and the structural requirements.

Carol Moyles noted that the additional landscaping makes the Chapel stand out more and the proposed solution reduces the need for retaining walls.

Carl Solander in response to the suggestion of either slate or shingle roof stated that a slate roof is pretty important with relation to the chapel.

The two car garage is intended to serve the upper apartment unit of the renovated Chapel. The lower unit is currently without garage, which raised the question of how to address this shortcoming.

Alan Aukman noted that the paved area below the new terrace structure above is intended for onsite parking. Alan stated that other committees had questioned whether there should be a second garage.

Carol Moyles questioned whether a driveway somehow could be tucked into hillside or under the proposed terrace serving the lower unit. She also brought up the question whether street parking along the streets would be allowed in the area, while also noting that parking in front of a historic building does not seem like an attractive alternative.

The architect showed the design response to the earlier request by HDC regarding new windows on the chapel walls to be set deeper into the wall and give them narrower and more vertical dimensions to match the existing windows in other locations. The architect also noted that more fine tuning details will need to be worked out in connection with the construction drawings.

Carl Solander requested what type of brick is proposed?

Alan Aukman presented a picture of brick samples that was intended to match the brick used in the chapel. The chapel is built with bricks using Flemish bond as presented on a photo of the chapel wall. The garage wall is proposed to use a cavity wall with brick and concrete block resulting in a 14"-15" thick wall.

Carl Solander suggested that the garage walls can be built differently from the Flemish bond used in the Chapel and instead use a simple running bond in order to distinguish it from the original structure. For the coping of the new garage gables either copper cladding or stone (matching the chapel) could be appropriate.

Carol Moyles noted the standing brick course above some windows in the chapel is an attractive element, and appreciated the proposed solution of standing brick courses over the garage doors.

2. SUBDISTRICT B BUILDINGS:

Carl Solander noted that the initial review of the Subdistrict B buildings and comments were related to compliance to the Secretary of Interiors Standards, zoning stipulations, Historic Preservation Agreement etc. An initial concern beyond complying with the standards was to avoid making the buildings appear

too massive.

Michael Breau stated that the design responds to an analysis of the regulatory requirements, particularly the zoning requirement that the building be designed in such a way as to break up the large mass of the building.

Alan Aukman expressed his view that the scale is compatible with the McLean campus.

Michael Breau explained that the apartment building blocks have been designed to appear as three building units combined to one to mitigate the impact of the overall scale. The form language is abstracting rather than copying that of the older campus. Balconies serving as separating elements between the building blocks are seen by the architect team as an appropriate amenity for the residents. Adding gables on the roof over the balcony area MB considered problematic.

Michael Breau stated that the apartment block sits on an underground large (and expensive) garage structure. The upper wall portion of the garage is exposed due to site grading. This wall is currently proposed by the architects to be clad with the same yellow/ orange brick as used for the corner portions of the apartment building. In response to the controversy of using red vs yellow brick MB explained that the yellow brick is intended to relate to the brick used in the existing large Administration building on the McLean campus. The McLean hospital buildings all use red brick while the Administration and the newer Service building use a yellow/orange brick. MB explained that the architects considered the connection to these buildings and their color more uplifting than relating to the Campus hospital buildings. The material choice for the apartment buildings and its relationship to the townhouse shingle style exterior is not yet finalized.

A perspective view up along the street towards the apartment complex was presented to show the transition from low duplex residences to the larger apartment block further up the road relating to the larger scale buildings on the McLean Campus seen beyond.

Carl Solander noted that the material warm color palette based on presented samples is positive. Seeing a presentation of brick patterns and colors will be helpful for the whole committee.

Alan Aukman noted that due to the road circulation pattern there will be no through traffic on the site (but access for emergency vehicles). There is separate entry for the residential site and the McLean hospital campus.

Carol Moyles observed the sequence downhill from the hospital to the site is connecting to the landscape below. Issues relating to the landscape will need further discussions.

Edward Bradford requested advice on how to best move forward towards the planning board meeting.

Carol Moyles stated that the townhouse parcel needs further discussion.

Carl Solander suggested that another working session may be needed.

Carol Moyles moved to close the meeting at 8:50 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Stefan Ahlblad