



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

B-C Conference Room

Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland Massachusetts 01721

February 6, 2020 – Approved at Feb. 20, 2020 meeting

1 ***Call to Order***

2 Patrick McKelvey called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Sara Hines, member, Cathy Rooney,
3 member and Aaron Ladd (left early), member, were present. Emma Snellings, Assistant Planner
4 was also present.

5
6 **Review of Minutes**

7 The minutes from January 2, 2020 were reviewed and approved, 4-0-0.

8
9 **Administrative Matter**

10 Mr. McKelvey shared that he had a discussion with Tricia Kendell, Planning Board member,
11 Peter Matchak, Town Planner, and Emma Snellings, Assistant Town Planner, on how to better
12 communicate and coordinate with the Planning Board. This will be an ongoing discussion
13 between the committees.

14
15 **81 West Union Phase II Public Discussion**

16 Peter Barbieri, Bill Rodenhiser and Jon Ward presented the changes to the 81 West Union Phase
17 II project. Mr. Barbieri described the changes to Building 1. Building 1 now includes 8 2-
18 bedroom residential units on the second and third floors, and 4-5 commercial spaces on the first
19 floor. The utilities for the first floor will be in the basement, and the utilities for the second and
20 third floor will be on the roof. The height of the building is 5'11" less than what was last
21 presented to the Committee. Mr. Ladd asked about signage. Mr. Ward and Mr. Rodenhiser
22 explained that there will be signs on the glass windows, and sign bands will be added in advance
23 of the Planning Board meeting. Ms. Rooney inquired about outside lighting and whether the
24 building would contain restaurants. Mr. Rodenhiser clarified that there will be no restaurants or
25 medical offices in the building, and the lighting will be recessed under the overhang of the
26 building.

27
28 Mr. McKelvey inquired about building materials. Mr. Ward shared that all the buildings will
29 have vinyl siding and asphalt roofs. The board and batten is currently sterling gray in the wider
30 option. Mr. Rodenhiser added that this is an upgrade for buildings 2 and 3 because the covenant
31 excludes the use of metal siding. Mr. McKelvey asked why the applicant changed from
32 Hardiboard as presented in the last meeting to vinyl siding. Mr. Rodenhiser explained that there
33 was an increase in cost for buildings 2 and 3 to be vinyl, so to compensate for that building 1 was
34 changed to vinyl. Ms. Hines commented that a mansard is usually a floor, not a roof that sits on
35 top of a floor, and that one mansard was curved while the other was straight.

36
37 Mr. Ladd asked if the roof rendering showed the mechanical units. Mr. Ward highlighted the
38 guardrail around the mechanicals on the roof. Mr. Rodenhiser added that the top of the roof will
39 be a flat rubber roof, not asphalt. Mr. Ladd asked what the mechanical area and roof will actually

40 look like. Mr. McKelvey suggested that the applicant look at the Dunkin Donuts next to the
41 Speedway in Ashland as an example of architectural roof screening. A discussion about the
42 possibility of a green roof followed. Mr. Ladd noted that pedestrian access from buildings 2 and
43 3 to the front of the site does not exist on the plan.

44
45 The committee then considered building 2. Mr. Ward explained that the residential units are all
46 on one side of the building, and the building height was 44' and is now 30'3". A discussion
47 followed comparing buildings 1, 2 and 3, and how building 2 looked less residential and more
48 industrial. Mr. Ladd commented that the garage doors looked very industrial, and suggested
49 adding more windows. Mr. Ladd asked about the ceiling height, which is 16' to the first eave
50 line. Ms. Rooney also commented on the fact that the building could benefit from more
51 windows. Mr. Ward suggested that they could add a row of high windows. Ms. Rooney asked
52 about reducing the amount of asphalt on site, and Mr. Rodenhiser explained that the site plan is
53 the same as before, and reducing the amount of asphalt isn't possible because of the fire
54 department turning requirements. Mr. Barbieri pointed out that residential uses also require more
55 parking than commercial uses. Mr. McKelvey asked if the applicant had considered changing the
56 footprint of the buildings. Mr. Rodenhiser replied that with the reduction of the height, a smaller
57 footprint would not work economically.

58
59 Ms. Rooney asked about the buffer on the side of building 2. Mr. Rodenhiser stated that the
60 buffer consists of a fence, trees and bushes, and that the transformer is located on the side of
61 building 2. A discussion followed of transformer placement. Mr. McKelvey suggested that the
62 residential spaces need to look more residential. Ms. Rooney asked if buildings 2 and 3 could
63 look more like building 1. Mr. McKelvey stated that might be hard with the presence of garage
64 doors. Mr. Ward stated that there is not enough room for four individual doors, thus the two
65 double garage doors. Mr. McKelvey asked if the roofline and entrances can mimic those of
66 building 1. Looking at the windows on building 2, Ms. Hines suggested using two story windows
67 which would evoke loft space. Mr. McKelvey stated that the relationship between the windows
68 and the dormer was not quite right, and there is too much dormer.

69
70 Mr. Rodenhiser presented building 3. There are 2 residential units in each back corner of the
71 building, the applicant is discussing with the Planning Board whether this building could not
72 have residential units. Mr. McKelvey confirmed that the roof has dropped 6' in height since the
73 last time it was presented. Mr. McKelvey asked about the accessibility of the units, to which Mr.
74 Barbieri replied that there is a certain percentage of units that are required to be accessible, and
75 this is fulfilled by building 1 where there is an elevator. Mr. McKelvey asked if the mechanicals
76 are inside, which was confirmed. A discussion of the windows, and possible addition of
77 windows, followed. Mr. McKelvey confirmed that all buildings are sided in vinyl, and the
78 applicant added that cedar impressions would be used for the dormers in buildings 1 and 2.

79
80 Mr. McKelvey opened the floor for public comment. Brandon Bond, abutter, commented on the
81 reduction in building height, and asked if a shadow study could be done, as well as a detailed
82 drawing of the boundary line between this property and his property. He also asked if the
83 external staircases on building 3 could be enclosed.

84

85 The committee decided to continue this discussion to the next meeting on February 20 with a
86 vote of 3-0-0.

87

88 **Discussion of Sign Bylaw**

89 Mr. McKelvey has drafted a letter about sign bylaw enforcement. The committee would like to
90 present and discuss the letter with the Planning Board. Ms. Snellings will look into when this can
91 be put on the Planning Board agenda.

92

93 **Discussion of Design Review Bylaw and what triggers Design Review**

94 Ms. Snellings shared the square foot triggers from some neighboring towns, and stated that the
95 Planning Board might be considering adding a square foot trigger to site plan review, in which
96 case Design Review could possibly just add that trigger as their own. Ms. Hines thought a 2,000
97 square foot trigger would be good. The committee agreed to discuss this amendment further next
98 meeting.

99

100 **Discussion of possible future bylaw amendments**

101 Ms. Rooney presented some pictures of layered landscaping, which could be a possible design
102 goal for Ashland. Ms. Rooney provided a draft possible planting list. A brief discussion followed
103 about the accessibility of these types of plants. Ms. Rooney will bring more materials next
104 meeting to continue the discussion. Ms. Rooney stated that the landscape design should be
105 analyzed as closely as the building design is analyzed. Ms. Snellings clarified that if the plant list
106 is added to the Design Review Guidelines, this addition will have to be approved by the Planning
107 Board.

108

109 A few possible bylaw amendments were suggested to be added to the agenda next meeting.
110 These included triggers for design review that are independent of site plan review, parking
111 trigger when parking lots are being redone, and how to require maintenance of landscape.

112

113 **Staff Updates and Administrative Matters**

114 The next meeting will be as scheduled on February 20th, 2020.

115 The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.