

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION VIRTUAL MEETING

APRIL 13, 2021

Chair Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: John Fitzgerald, Chair
Kirsten Kingsley
Ted Eckhardt
Jonathan Kubow

Members Absent: Scott Seyer

Also Present: John Anstadt, JMB Architects Ltd. For *735 N. Dunton Ave.*
Natalie LaPorta, Owner of *735 N. Dunton Ave.*
Keith Ginnodo, Kingsley/Ginnodo Architects for *216 N. Haddow Ave.*
Jonathan Kuzynowski & John Mauer, Wold Architects for *Timber Ridge School*
Julie Jilek, NSSEO for *Timber Ridge School*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

Chair Fitzgerald read the following statement: I find that the public health concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic render in-person attendance at the regular meeting location not feasible.

Chair Fitzgerald also reminded those speaking tonight to state their names before speaking. **Mr. Hautzinger** added instructions for public attendees that want to speak tonight, as well as muting when not speaking.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 30, 2021

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 30, 2021. COMMISSIONER KUBOW ABSTAINED. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 3. SCHOOL REVIEW

DC#21-023 – Timber Ridge School – 201 S. Evanston Ave.

Commissioner Kingsley rejoined the meeting at this time.

Jonathan Kuzynowski and John Mayer, representing *Wold Architects and Engineers*, and Julie Jilek, representing *NSSEO*, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. The petitioner is proposing a new gymnasium and classroom addition to the existing Timber Ridge School. This project requires Plan Commission review and Village Board approval for Special Use approval to allow an existing elementary school with the proposed addition within the R-3, One-Family Dwelling District. Variations are also required for parking and to allow a 30.5-foot-tall building where 25 feet is the maximum allowed. Because this project is going to the Plan Commission, the role of the Design Commission tonight is limited to building architecture/design and signage only.

Timber Ridge School is a therapeutic day school serving kindergarten through eighth grade students with special needs or disabilities. The school is owned and operated by the Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO), which is a non-profit entity funded by local school districts to provide special education services to their students. The proposed two-story addition includes a new gymnasium, elevator, stairway, toilets, fitness room, two classrooms, three offices, a positive sensory lounge, and additional support spaces.

Overall, the proposed design is nicely done with materials, colors, and massing to match or complement the existing building. The red brick, cast windowsills and clear anodized aluminum windows have been selected to match the existing building, and the punched window openings align horizontally with the existing classroom windows. The gymnasium is proposed to be constructed with vertical precast concrete panels painted to match the existing limestone wall panels, with a horizontal blue accent stripe, which is the school's theme color.

The precast concrete gymnasium will be a prominent feature of the new addition since it will be highly visible from Kensington Road. The blue accent stripe is a nice idea to emphasize the school's theme color. However, the blue stripe is quite large and bold, and it intersects the single-story brick portion on the west elevation in an awkward way that obstructs the view of the stripe at the front (west elevation) of the building. Additionally, the remaining "tan" portion of the precast walls are lacking detail.

Further design development of the precast concrete gymnasium exterior is recommended. Additional horizontal reveals are recommended to be added to break up the large tan walls and create a panelized look. Additionally, alternative layouts for the blue accent stripe should be studied. Consider a smaller accent stripe or stripes. For additional interest and refinement, consider adding horizontal reveals in the brick walls to align with horizontal reveals in the precast concrete and window openings/mullions.

With regards to the mechanical equipment, there will be one new rooftop mechanical unit on the new addition which will be partially screened by the building's parapet walls. The remaining portion above the parapet will be screened with a separate screen attached to the unit.

Staff recommends further design development of the gymnasium portion of the addition.

Mr. Kuzynowski said their intent with the blue accent stripe is to bring some of the character, color, and pride within the school to the exterior of the building; the school has a unique group of students. He appreciated the comments and understood the concerns about the blue color; it is a very distinct color, and they have looked at a more muted color that would match the brick color.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was any public comment on the project and **Mr. Hautzinger** said there was none at this time.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Kingsley** commended the petitioner for proposing such a bold design that is not just an extension of the existing building, but rather it shows some flare and personality. She liked that there is some brick in the addition because it extends the look of the existing building, which will bring in some harmony. She concurred with Staff's comments regarding the pre-cast concrete areas and the blue stripe; a little more development in these areas would help. With regards to the blue stripe, she said the location of it could maybe be at the top of the wall, or maybe it could be a different color. While the west elevation is being highlighted in the rendering, the north and east elevations will be very visible, which are 2 sections of the gymnasium that are somewhat blank; she wanted to see further development on that. **Commissioner Kingsley** also asked about the materials for the RTU screening, and **Mr. Hautzinger** said the screening would be a unit screen attached to the unit, intended to match the silver metal panels at the entrance, which **Commissioner Kingsley** appreciated. She had no further comments at this time.

Commissioner Kubow agreed with Staff's comments, which were very comprehensive. He loved what the petitioner is doing with the existing building, and felt these designs can sometimes be challenging, especially with a strict budget. He referenced a similar project, although different use, of the new addition at the Arlington Ridge Center. He felt that design cues could be taken from that building, with respect to some of the pre-cast portions of the building, some of the reveals, some of the horizontality, the vertical reveals, and maybe even the introduction of some windows. Although this adds cost, he felt this type of fenestration could go a long way because this building has a lot of exposure with people walking and driving past, and although he liked the direction so far, he felt some improvements were still needed.

Commissioner Eckhardt agreed with both Staff and the other commissioner's comments about the lack of details of the pre-cast walls. In general, the east elevation is a very strong elevation and quite resolved; however, he agreed with Staff that when it turns the corner it falls apart on the west elevation. This could be resolved by raising the parapet wall up to the height of the single-story building; it looks a little squashed as currently shown and it could be raised up to match and align with the blue line. He also suggested making the roof cap blue. The very strong horizontal line being seen on the east elevation makes perfect sense, but it stumbles when it gets around to the west elevation. **Commissioner Eckhardt** also said that additional horizontal lines in the pre-cast will help break up the big, flat panel look; there needs to be at least a 1-footer at the top to create a little cap. **Commissioner Eckhardt** had no further comments.

Chair Fitzgerald agreed with Staff's comments. He was okay with the west elevation as shown and felt the brick ties it in beautifully. He was okay with the blue color, the size of the blue stripe and how it incorporates with what is already there. To him, the north and east elevations do not tie into any part of the original building, and there is no question that this is an addition because the colors and materials do not match. He also agreed with Commissioner Kingsley's comment that the main view of this building will be from the north and the east. He was also concerned about the color of the concrete to match the limestone and wanted Staff to be sure that the color coordinates. **Chair Fitzgerald** was also open to adding some of the blue color as a coping on the top of the building, and he reiterated his main concern that some part of the addition belongs to the original building, versus just a complete add-on, especially the east elevation.

Mr. Hautzinger had no additional comments at this time.

Chair Fitzgerald asked the commissioners for any additional comments, or whether a motion could be made tonight. **Commissioner Eckhardt** did not want to hold up a project and felt the current design was very close. He pointed out that the blue stripe on the west elevation would not actually be seen from the sidewalk level, it would be visible from farther away, and if the blue stripe is raised up, the same visual condition would happen. He was unsure if he was making more of this than it really is. He was comfortable with Staff reviewing the addition of reveals to the pre-cast to help break up the large, flat areas, and Staff could determine if it should come back to this commission or not.

Commissioner Kingsley also did not want to delay a project, but she felt there was quite a number of comments tonight from the commissioners that needed to be worked on by the petitioner, especially hearing Chair Fitzgerald's comments that the east elevation does not tie directly into the existing building, which she agreed with, and concerns about the coloring of the concrete. She agreed with Commissioner Kubow's suggestion to look at the new pool building at the Arlington Ridge Center for inspiration and how to integrate the addition with the existing school building. **Commissioner Kingsley** wanted to see the project come back for another review and giving a specific date would help the petitioner move the project forward quicker.

Commissioner Kubow agreed that there were many concerns and comments given tonight, as well as the exposure of this building on Kensington; he felt the project should come back for another review. **Chair Fitzgerald** agreed and asked the petitioner how much time they needed to address the concerns given tonight.

Ms. Jilek said she was not strongly tied to the blue stripe and was very open to the suggestions given tonight; however, she was very concerned about delaying approval of the project because of the short timeframe they are under. When looking at the north elevation, she agreed with the comments made, and she suggested painting the bottom half of the pre-cast to match the brick color. She also agreed that the color of the stripe could be different, possibly the color of the brick. She asked the commissioners for feedback and direction tonight on her suggestions.

Commissioner Eckhardt was okay with the three colors being proposed for the building and said that painting the bottom pre-cast to match the brick on the north elevation might be too much of the brick-colored paint color. **Commissioner Kingsley** agreed that painting the bottom pre-cast to match the brick was not the solution. Painting it a different color might help, but she was unsure if it should just be the bottom half; it would have to be in its entirety with the blue stripe and evaluating the cream color might also be important. **Commissioner Kubow** said it was hard for him to visualize the impact of painting the bottom pre-cast on the north elevation, although it could be an improvement. He also wanted to see some windows introduced on that elevation. **Chair Fitzgerald** was unsure how painting the concrete pre-cast to match the brick on the north elevation would wear and whether it would remain in good appearance over time. He wanted to see more of the materials from the original building brought onto the gymnasium addition, or maybe more of the new blue color onto the original building; tie the two buildings together a little more so they feel like they belong together. **Chair Fitzgerald** also said that he was okay with the blue color being proposed.

Mr. Kuzynowski asked what the earliest date for a re-review with the commission would be, and **Mr. Hautzinger** said the next Design Commission meeting is on April 27, 2021, but revisions would need to be submitted to Staff no later than the beginning of next week. The next meeting after that will be on May 11th. **Mr. Hautzinger** said that either meeting date will work with the Plan Commission review which is scheduled on April 28th; however, the Design Commission review must be completed prior to the Village Board's review of the project. **Mr. Kuzynowski** said they can make the schedule work for April 27. **Mr. Mauer** said they will do whatever they need to do for their client, however, they are under a very strong time constraint. This project has already been bid and everything awarded, and shop drawings have been processed on pre-cast because of the very long lead time, which makes it very difficult to introduce form windows into the pre-cast, but they can look into the status of fabrication. They will try to make the next meeting on April 27th.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KINGSLEY, TO CONTINUE THE REVIEW OF THE TIMBER RIDGE SCHOOL AT 201 S. EVANSTON AVENUE, DC#21-023, TO DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING ON APRIL 27, 2021.

**ECKHARDT, AYE; KINGSLEY, AYE; KUBOW, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE.
ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**