

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION VIRTUAL MEETING

MAY 11, 2021

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Acting Chair
Scott Seyer
John Fitzgerald

Members Absent: Jonathan Kubow
Kirsten Kingsley

Also Present: John Green, *Groundwork Ltd.* for Crescent Place
Jake Zunamon, *Housing Trust Group* for Crescent Place
Sue Weimer, *Turnstone Development* for Crescent Place
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

Acting Chair Eckhardt 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.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 27, 2021

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2021. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 1. MULTI-FAMILY REVIEWDC#21-025 – Crescent Place – 310 W. Rand Rd.

John Green, representing *Groundwork Ltd*, **Jake Zunamon**, representing *Housing Trust Group*, and **Sue Weimer**, representing *Turnstone Development*, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. This project requires Plan Commission review and Village Board approval for Rezoning from B-2, General Business District to R-6, Multiple-Family Dwelling District. Because this project is going to the Plan Commission, the role of the Design Commission is limited to building and signage only.

The petitioner is proposing to build a new four-story apartment building on an existing vacant site. Overall, the proposed design has a modern aesthetic that will fit well with the adjacent recently refreshed Stonebridge Apartments. The design does somewhat lack a residential feel, which could be enhanced with balconies for each apartment. However, the petitioner has reported that balconies are not possible due to the specified mechanical system which requires louvers under every window, thereby prohibiting balcony doors.

The primary exterior materials consist of brown brick combined with white and blue fiber cement siding panels, which are nicely varied and balanced on all sides of the building. However, the areas of blue siding panels do appear a bit monochromatic and flat. It is recommended to consider adding an enhanced window trim detail to add more color contrast and depth to the blue siding wall, such as shown in Image 1 of the Staff Report.

In the perspective view rendering from Rand Road, the large white wall with blue rectangular panel at the third and fourth floor has a bold appearance that is a focal point which detracts from the rest of the design. It is recommended that the blue rectangular panel be omitted, and the brick wall at the third floor be continued across to reduce the size and prominence of the white wall.

All exterior mechanical equipment is required to be screened from public view. The plans indicate three mechanical units to be located on the roof. The proposed design includes perimeter parapet walls which should screen the view of the equipment. However, if the equipment is visible from the adjacent public way, then additional equipment screens will be required around each unit.

All exterior wall-mounted equipment and meters must also be screened from view. Where possible, all equipment and meters should be located inside the buildings. For equipment that is required to be on the exterior, it shall be located on the side or rear elevations, away from the street frontage, and screened with an appropriate enclosure or landscaping.

One monument style ground sign is proposed at the intersection of Chestnut Avenue and Rand Road. In a residential zoning district, development identification signs are permitted and shall be no more than 25 square feet in area and six feet in height. The proposed sign is no more than six feet tall, and the sign panel is 13.7 square feet, which complies with code. The sign design is very nicely done with colors and materials to match the building design.

With these comments and suggestions, Staff recommends approval of the proposed design.

Mr. Zunamon, Senior VP of Development with Housing Trust Group, said that they have partnered with Turnstone Development to bring this development to life and have applied to the State for funding. He thanked Staff for their initial feedback that has elevated their original design to what is being presented tonight, and he introduced John Green, who has taken the design from start to where it is tonight.

Mr. Green said that the site is very long and very narrow, 150' from north to south and several hundred feet deep, which is one of the more entertaining elements of dealing with this project. The proposed apartment building has been

oriented north/south because it is the only way it can work on the site, and it will meet all requirements for setbacks, fire lanes, etc. They are proposing to change the existing B-2 zoning on a portion of the site to R-6, so the entire site will be zoned R-6 and will meet all R-6 requirements with no zoning variations needed. They are also working with IHDA to achieve approval of their requirements. There are Village requirements to try to connect this site into the existing surrounding pedestrian systems, and they are proposing to extend and build some sidewalks on the site to create that loop opportunity. Because the site is long and narrow, there is an additional constraint of a gas main that runs through the site, east to west and approximately 30-feet north of the south lot line, which pushed their site even tighter; however, they feel the proposed project has successfully accomplished bringing the entire site together and making all elements work to meet all R-6 zoning requirements.

Mr. Green referred to the overall building floor plan and said that the building is a non-age restricted, family apartment building with a total of 40 units, comprised of an equal mix of 1 and 2-bedroom units, with 10 units on each floor. The color coding on the floor plans depict units designed to meet accessibility needs, based on IHDA requirements, and the entire building is designed to become completely adaptive to meet the needs of those with disabilities. All of the units have been increased in size by a minimum of 15% so space can be put where families will need it most. A communal neighborhood within the building has also been created by providing a lot of community space and setting them on each floor of the building so that residents are brought together as a neighborhood both inside and outside. Windows are located at the ends of the halls to bring the outside in as well.

Mr. Green said that they have been working with Village Staff for six months on the building design, receiving valuable comments and suggestions, and as a result, the original design has evolved. Revisions to the design include large corner windows added at the second and third-floor on the west elevation (right side) of the building that are designed to feel and look more contemporary while keeping the building exciting, useful, and inviting, as well as have depth and character on the long and narrow site. Interesting and unique materials are being proposed that are intended to be bright and include the color 'Summer White' on the lighter of the panel areas, 'Summer Night' on the darker panel areas, and 'Iron Spot – Vulcan Velour' for the utility brick. The louvers of the mechanical units will match the brick color, and the white windows were changed to casement windows, to help modernize the building.

Mr. Green also clarified that the left side of the south elevation at the top, the upper element is about 18 to 20-feet further away than the masonry element below it. The entire west end of the building embraces the floor plan, and where the elements come through, they let them come through, and where the elements step back, they let them step back. Negative space was also created; the entry cuts into the corner at the northwest side and then lifts up, which was also a Staff suggestion, and the canopy extends over both ends. They want to embrace the parking at the east side of the building by making that elevation as welcoming to the residents as the west side.

Mr. Green referred to the renderings and said that after working with Staff, the entry was lifted, bays are located on the four-story sections of the building to allow for expansion of the bedrooms of the 2-bedroom units, and stairs are located behind the brick sections that go all the way up the building. Staff suggested dressing up the corner of the building where the outside refuse is located, and although the refuse is stored inside the building, it needs to be wheeled outside without being visible; therefore, they added a pergola to cover the outside refuse area. A few levels of landscaping are not shown on the rendering, such as evergreens in the foreground, higher landscaping at the corner to the left of the refuse enclosure, and landscape screening for the transformer. **Mr. Green** also said that since the original design was submitted, the projection of the bays was increased from 8-inches to 2-feet by offsetting the west wing about 1 and ¼-feet so the building could be shifted, while still working within the narrowness of the site.

Mr. Green responded to the suggestions in the Staff report. He presented a new rendering and elevations dated May 7th, that showed 4-inch white trim surrounds at all the windows that are set in the blue panel areas. Instead of pulling the windows out as suggested by Staff, they decided to push the windows in to create a sense of depth, but only at the areas of the blue panels. The upper section of the south elevation has also been changed to eliminate the blue rectangular panel, and the height of the masonry has been married to the masonry to the right to be consistent. Although they do not object to this change, they are also open to having a discussion about it. **Mr. Green** clarified that

all equipment and meters will be located inside the building; the only outside meters will be gas and water, which will not be on the front of the building, and the transformer has been relocated to the back of the building and screened. All signage will meet code.

Acting Chair Eckhardt asked if there was any public comment on the project and **Mr. Hautzinger** said there is one hand raised at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alice Sylvester, thanked the petitioner for developing this property that has been empty for a very long time; it is exciting to see development here. She asked about density and how the 40 units fit into this particular plot, and she also had questions about traffic patterns on Chestnut, although she understood that is not this commission's purview. She said the building design is nice and fits in pretty well with nearby Stonebridge, and she presumed that studies were done on whether or not the blue color is a good color culturally for most of the cultures in this immediate community.

Acting Chair Eckhardt said the commissioners will be discussing the blue color, and density and traffic will be discussed at the Plan Commission review. He clarified that the petitioner is asking that the entire site be zoned R-6, which provides for the density being proposed.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Seyer** said that overall the massing and design are nice, and he was glad that the process of working with Staff was productive and the design improved. He was in favor of the revised elevation (dated May 7) of the southwest corner of the building that eliminates the blue panel and continues the brick, as suggested by Staff. He wanted to make this a requirement to move forward. He found the blue accent panels to be a little too playful, and was not a fan of any of them because the massing itself is nice enough without the panels. The panels feel like the potential for a window that will never be there, or that the panels are covering up a window that was there that cannot be there. He also felt the panels take away from the canopy. **Commissioner Seyer** was in favor of all 3 blue panels being removed. He also commented that although he could see the material of the roof screening in plan, he did not see them in any elevation, and he asked if they are all covered below any existing parapet. **Mr. Green** said the parapets are designed to cover the roof screening.

Commissioner Seyer said the revised 4-inch wide white trim detail is very nice and added a level of enhanced detail; he would recommend moving forward with this revision. He pointed out that it looked like the revised south elevation with the continued brick did not show the horizontal stone sill, and he wanted to be sure these sill accents will remain because they greatly help give the massing and scale that it has. **Mr. Green** confirmed that the horizontal stone stills are still there. With regards to the color palette, **Commissioner Seyer** said the renderings show the metal louvers for both the brick and the blue siding to appear darker, and the metal doors that are adjacent to any brick appear to blend nicely; however, when he looks at the material sample palette, it looks like Louver 1 is a lot lighter, which he was unsure how well it would go with the brick, and the blue color of Louver 2 looks really light. He was concerned about how well the colors really blend the way they are intended. The renderings look nice, but the material sample palette, especially the photo, give him pause. **Commissioner Seyer** also commented that the canopy itself did not need the white background where there is signage; if it was all blue it would be sharper, and it would be nice if the signage was a contrasting series of numbers. He also said that the monument sign looked nice.

Commissioner Fitzgerald agreed that the project looks nice and he had a lot of the same comments as Commissioner Seyer. He appreciated that the building looks good on all four sides and asked why the rooftop screening color is a different color than the blue or white on the building. **Mr. Green** replied that they want a more neutral tone and felt the proposed putty color seemed more of a natural color for the screens that are set back about 15 to 20-feet from the roof; however, he had no objection to going with white for the screening, although it is a bit stark. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** preferred that the screening color blend with the building and not be a new color on the building. He liked the revised elevation dated May 7th that shows white trim around the windows, and he was in favor of omitting the blue panel on the south elevation and adding the brick as shown. He was unsure how he felt about the blue panels on the first-floor; he acknowledged the blank wall that they are on, and that the loading zone on the south end does not allow for

landscaping there to help soften that wall. He was interested to hear comment from the other commissioners on this. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said that the monument sign is very nice and he asked how it would be lit at night, and **Mr. Green** said it would be up lit from the ground. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** liked that the transformer was moved to the back of the building, and he agreed with the previous comment about the color of the louvers and the suggestion to remove the white color behind the numbers on the canopy.

Acting Chair Eckhardt was in support of the other commissioners' comments. He said that when he first looked at the color palette, the white color really jumped out, and he understood Staff's comments that the building looks a little institutional without balconies. He liked that there are 3 colors on the building and he liked the massing; however, he was concerned about the white color, specifically the top parapet that is very tall with a lot space above the windows, as well as the elevation section on the Rand Road elevation. He liked the petitioner's solution on the revised elevation dated May 7th to carry the brick over on the upper section of the south elevation, and he was in favor of eliminating the blue panels. He felt the massing of the building was done very well, especially with the corner of the building facing Rand Road.

Acting Chair Eckhardt also commented about the colors; the blue color really jumps out and the white is very bright, they are very contrasting colors and he tried to visualize a lighter brick color, something more taupe colored so there is not much contrast; however, the petitioner probably intended these bold colors to make the building more exciting. He wanted the other commissioners to talk more about the color palette being shown, as well as hear from the petitioner about why they chose the bright white color.

Commissioner Seyer said that he liked the colors shown in the rendering, which he could support, but he was concerned that the colors in the rendering do not match the colors of the material sample board, especially the blue panel color that feels much stronger on the sample board. He felt the metal color for both Louver 1 and 2 should be darker than the brick and darker than the fiber cement panels, but right now they are lighter; he felt darker will look better. He was okay with the brick color, he felt the color of Louver 1 should be darker to better blend in, he was okay with the white color of Panel 2, but he was concerned about the blue color of the fiber cement panel and the blue color of the louver.

Commissioner Fitzgerald agreed with comments from Commissioner Seyer. He wanted to see the real colors being proposed because Louver 2 does not look like it matches Panel 1, but rather like an additional color. He liked the white color and the idea of the blue color, and he was okay with the boldness of the colors; however, he wanted the louvers to match the colors they represent; Louver 1 to the brick and Louver 2 to Panel 1.

Commissioner Seyer felt this could be easily fixed by looking at opportunities for other colors to go darker and maybe a bit more muted on Panel 1 for the blue siding; he would be happy to support Staff's approval of that. **Acting Chair Eckhardt** agreed with Commissioner Seyer's comments about the colors. **Mr. Green** held up the actual sample board and said that the color for the blue panel is lighter than the color shown in the photograph of the sample board. He explained that the panel on the sample board has a lot of texture and grain to it; however, they are proposing a smooth panel.

Acting Chair Eckhardt said that the virtual meeting did not allow the commissioners to see and touch the material samples in person. He was looking for a recommendation that the Louvers match the panels, or that they be a darker tone, but not a lighter color. He said the commissioners prefer a more muted blue color for Panel 1, similar to the real sample held up by Mr. Green tonight. He asked if Staff was comfortable with interpreting the commissioners' comments about the blue color for Panel 1, and **Mr. Hautzinger** said yes.

Acting Chair Eckhardt asked if the petitioner had any further comments at this time. **Mr. Green** appreciated the comments and asked for clarification on omitting the 3 blue panels; is the preference to change the panels from blue to white, or completely eliminate the panels. **Commissioner Seyer** said to eliminate the panels completely because the panels draw your attention to the idea that something could be there, or something was there and has been

replaced. **Mr. Green** said the commissioners also suggested changing the placard for the address on the building, and they would probably go with the white colored numbers that are even bigger and mounted on the blue. **Commissioner Seyer** said that by eliminating the panel, it will allow for a slightly bigger sign so it stands out as well as a richer canopy. **Acting Chair Eckhardt** asked the petitioner to prepare an exhibit on what that might look like and submit it to Staff as part of their final review, as well as add to any motion tonight. **Mr. Green** agreed with the request.

Commissioner Fitzgerald agreed with omitting all 3 blue panels, and he clarified his preference to eliminate the white background but keep the black letters on the canopy. **Mr. Green** asked that they be allowed to check with the Fire Department to verify that their requirements for contrast are still being met. **Commissioner Seyer** asked for clarification on a previous comment that the transformer was moved, and **Acting Chair Eckhardt** said that the alternate elevation presented tonight by the petitioner dated May 7th, shows the trash area moved toward the direction of the building, and the transformer being moved to behind the edge of the building so it is not seen from the front entrance. **Mr. Hautzinger** said the transformer is covered under the purview of the Plan Commission as a site design element; therefore, he recommended this item be left out of any motion made tonight. **Mr. Green** appreciated the commissioners' feedback on the new location of the transformer.

Acting Chair Eckhardt briefly summarized the commissioner's comments. In general, the commissioners like the 4-inch wide alternate window detail; there are concerns about the color palette, with Staff to review the actual sample of the blue siding color of Panel 1, with the commissioners' preference that the blue color be more muted; the louvers should either match its adjacent surface or be a darker tone, with the final color to be approved by Staff; a suggestion to eliminate the white surround behind the address numbers on the canopy, subject to Fire Department requirements for contrast; continue the brick over on the backside of the elevator, consistent with the May 7th exhibit; eliminate all 3 blue panels; the monument sign is well received with no comments; the roof screening appeared to be painted an off-white color, not bright white. **Commissioner Seyer** clarified that the color of the roof screening is shown as 'putty', and **Acting Chair Eckhardt** was okay with that.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED DESIGN FOR *CRESCENT PLACE APARTMENTS* TO BE LOCATED AT 310 W. RAND ROAD. THIS RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON THE PLANS RECEIVED 4/23/21, THE PERSPECTIVE RENDERING VIEW FROM RAND ROAD RECEIVED 4/26/21, DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS, COMPLIANCE WITH ALL APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

1. A REQUIREMENT TO REMOVE THE 3 BLUE PANELS AND REPLACE THEM WITH THE MATERIAL SURROUNDING IT.
2. A REQUIREMENT TO CONTINUE THE BRICK AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER ON THE THIRD FLOOR, PER THE MAY 7, 2021 ELEVATION.
3. A REQUIREMENT TO INCORPORATE THE WHITE 4-INCH WIDE TRIM AT THE WINDOWS WITHIN THE BLUE COLORED FIBER CEMENT PANEL ELEVATIONS, PER THE MAY 7, 2021 ELEVATIONS.
4. A REQUIREMENT THAT THE METAL COLORS FOR THE DOORS AND THE LOUVERS MATCH THE MATERIAL THAT IS ADJACENT TO THEM, AND THAT THE ACTUAL SAMPLES BE RE-SUBMITTED, ALONG WITH THE ACTUAL MATERIALS FOR THE FIBER CEMENT PANEL AND THE BRICK, FOR STAFF TO REVIEW AND APPROVE BASED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' REQUIREMENT TO MATCH THE COLORS.
5. A REQUIREMENT TO REMOVE THE WHITE BACKING ON THE CANOPY ADDRESS AT THE ENTRANCE, AND ONLY HAVE THE COLORED FIBER CEMENT ALONG WITH SINGULAR LETTERS THAT WOULD BE A PROPER CONTRAST TO MEET FIRE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS.
6. A REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT MATERIAL SAMPLES FOR THE FIBER CEMENT SIDING PANEL COLORS FOR STAFF REVIEW AND APPROVAL.
7. THIS REVIEW DEALS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE AN APPROVAL OF, OR TO HAVE ANY OTHER IMPACT ON, NOR REPRESENT ANY TACIT APPROVAL OR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED LAND USE OR ANY OTHER ZONING AND/OR LAND USE ISSUES OR

DECISIONS THAT STEM FROM ZONING, BUILDING, SIGNAGE OR ANY OTHER REVIEWS. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL TECHNICAL REVIEW, PERMIT DRAWINGS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER COMMISSION OR BOARD APPROVAL CONDITIONS. IT IS THE PETITIONER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INCORPORATE ALL REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS INTO THE PERMIT DRAWINGS, AND TO ENSURE THAT BUILDING PERMIT PLANS AND SIGN PERMIT PLANS COMPLY WITH ALL ZONING CODE, BUILDING CODE AND SIGN CODE REQUIREMENTS.

8. ALL SIGNAGE IS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH CHAPTER 30 SIGN CODE, OR SEEK VARIATIONS.

Mr. Hautzinger asked for clarification on requirement #6; specifically that the blue color be a more muted blue as discussed tonight. Commissioner Seyer clarified the intent for approval is to bring in actual material samples that match the colors shown in the renderings, which the commissioners feel are appropriate and a pleasing aesthetic. Acting Chair Eckhardt added that in the event that Staff is not comfortable approving those materials, then it should come back before the Design Commission.

FITZGERALD, AYE; SEYER, AYE; ECKHARDT, AYE.
ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.