

APPROVED

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
JANUARY 9, 2018

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

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Michael Porto, CA Ventures for *Sigwalt Apartments*
Mark Hopkins, HKM Architects for *Sigwalt Apartments*
Tony Divizio, Divizo Group for *523 W. Ridge Ct. & 504 S. Mitchell Ave.*
Piotr J. Janota, Miyako Investments LLC for *223 S. Dunton Ave.*
Brian Hyde, Greenscape Homes for *626 N. Harvard Ave.*
Don Forlani, Owner of *626 N. Harvard Ave.*
Keith Ginnodo, Kingsley/Ginnodo Architects for *132 W. Northwest Hwy.*
Michael & Ellen Para, Owners of *132 W. Northwest Hwy.*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 12, 2017

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2017. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 6. CBD COMMERCIAL REVIEW**DC#17-155 – 132 W. Northwest Hwy.**

Keith Ginnodo, representing *Kingsley/Ginnodo Architects*, and Michael & Ellen Para, the owners, were present on behalf of the project.

Chair Fitzgerald and Commissioner Kingsley recused themselves from the project and left the room.

Acting Chair Eckhardt asked if there was any public comment on the project and there was no response from the audience.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. The petitioner is seeking approval of the architectural design for a second floor addition and a single-story attached one-car garage addition to an existing single-story commercial building in the Downtown (B-5) Zoning District. The property is a triangular site on the north side of the railroad tracks, directly west of the Mobil gas station. The existing vacant building was previously used as an office, and it is proposed to be converted to a retail store. The second floor addition will be a single-family dwelling unit to create a live/work mixed-use building. The scope of the project includes modifications to the existing parking lot as well as new landscaping. This project requires Plan Commission review and Village Board approval as a Planned Unit Development, as well as approval of setback variations.

Style and Materials. The proposed design is a complete makeover of the existing single-story pitched roof building to create a new modern style building, and the second floor addition is proposed to be clad with a dark gray, horizontal fiber-cement lap siding. With reference to the Design Guidelines, the Design Commission should evaluate the proposed modern style with the context of the surrounding buildings, and evaluate the use of horizontal lap siding as the primary wall material, and consider whether a masonry façade would be more appropriate for a feeling of permanence and a better relationship to neighboring buildings.

East Elevation. The east elevation is the back of the building, but it will be highly visible from Northwest Highway and Vail Avenue. As proposed, the upper façade of the east wall is a blank wall of siding. The wall is approximately two feet from the east property line, and preliminary building code review concludes that window openings are not allowed where exterior walls are less than five feet from the property line. With reference to the Design Guidelines, it is recommended that the design of the east wall be enhanced for a more attractive appearance. Options for incorporating some windows should be explored such as stepping back sections of the wall or using fire rated glazing. In addition, consider adding vine cables (as shown on the west elevation) for architectural interest and to promote the growth of vines onto the upper facade.

Storefront. The proposed retail storefront faces Northwest Highway on the south and west walls of the building. As proposed, the retail storefront has an understated appearance and it does not stand out as a commercial space. With reference to the Design Guidelines, it is recommended that the two existing punched opening windows on the west wall be changed to a full storefront in order to maximize the window display area for the retail space. Additionally, it is recommended that the southern balcony bay be omitted to provide an unobstructed view of the storefront. As an alternate, the size of the balcony could be reduced and cantilevered for a lighter appearance above the storefront.

Signs. There is no clear sign frieze provided for retail signage. With reference to the Design Guidelines, it is recommended that a sign frieze be incorporated into the design to accommodate wall signage and to further enhance the appearance of the retail storefront. Separate sign permit applications are required for all signage.

North Elevation. The north elevation is predominantly a blank solid wall facing the public sidewalk. It is recommended that additional windows be added to break up the blank wall and add interest along the sidewalk.

Landscaping.

New Landscaping is being proposed throughout the site, including a new row of shrubs along the south edge of the property to screen the view of the parking lot. Overall, the landscape design is nicely done, but the following recommendations should be considered to enhance the design.

- Provide specialty paving within the plaza area along the west and south building walls.
- Provide a detail of the proposed decorative fence for review, which the petitioner submitted today.

Staff is supportive of this project to renovate and improve this property; however, it is recommended that the Design Commission require revisions and re-review the proposed design, based on the recommendations in the Staff report.

Mr. Ginnodo said that the owners are urban dwellers that have found the perfect spot for themselves in the suburbs, and their vision is to develop a live/work environment; live on the second-floor and work below, with separation between the two. He responded to the comments in the Staff report as follows:

1. He reviewed the context of the area, pointing out other modern style buildings such as 116 W. Eastman located directly across the parking lot, the red brick AT&T building, the church on Dunton Avenue, and the gas station. They feel the modern language being proposed is appropriate for this location and are not interested in trying to traditionalize it; it also suits the owners' appetite, style, and way of living.
2. A masonry facade was considered instead of the siding on the second-floor; however, this would be costly and not in line with their budget; therefore, fiber cement siding was chosen, which is a quality, long lasting residential material. Also, this is a mixed-use project with one contextual language below with brick and storefront, and a second language above with a residential material and balconies; they feel it is appropriately designed.
3. No windows are being proposed for the east elevation, with the exception of the existing first-floor window that will remain. Modulating the exterior wall would be at cost and damage to what they are trying to accomplish with the floor plans, which is a very simple, clean, loft-like floor plan, and adding windows above the kitchen or in the closet area would require a variation process. The proposed landscape plan has accommodated for a 2-foot area between the building and the adjacent gas station, where climbing hydrangeas will grow up the side of the building.
4. Cost would be a factor in changing the two existing punched opening windows on the west elevation to a full storefront, and eliminating the small strip of wall in between would result in the loss of display space for shelving products. There is also a second storefront entrance in the middle of the elevation, which is intended to be used as a second entrance for the office and the store.
5. Cantilevering the balcony was suggested early on by the owners; however, cost was a factor. They are trying to capture outdoor living with southern balcony because there is no yard space for the building.
6. A nicely designed sign is currently in the works for the project; however, the sign will adapt to the architecture of the building; they do not want a sign frieze because the second-floor would be compromised by a separate band. They understand there are sign requirements for the retail, and the sign will be located on the south elevation, on the second-floor wall material.
7. Adding windows on the north wall along the sidewalk would be impractical because of the interior stair that starts to the left of the door and goes up, and the building is located immediately on the sidewalk, so privacy and security concerns are trying to be addressed.
8. Specialty paving at the front of the building near the storefront entrance would be a cost issue compared to the concrete being proposed.
9. He presented a detail of the proposed decorative fence.

Mr. Ginnodo said that he is hoping to come to an agreement tonight with the design being presented, with any recommendations or requirements, so the project can move forward.

Commissioner Kubow loved the proposed design and felt it was fantastic. Although he appreciated Staff's comments and understood where they were coming from, he respectfully disagreed with some of them, specifically making the west wall a full storefront. He understood trying to attract people to the building with an open storefront, but he felt the architecture would do that on its own; the building will have no trouble attracting attention. Besides the architecture, he really liked the location of the building, and the cool modern building that people coming eastbound into Arlington

Heights will see. In his opinion, the Village needed more modern, contemporary buildings, and this building acts as almost a gateway into the downtown. He really did not have much constructive criticism for the project; it is a really cool space, and he would love to see some windows facing east, but it just does not work when the building is on the property line. In terms of signage, **Commissioner Kubow** felt it would make sense potentially at the corner to have a sign that projects southward off the corner approximately 3-feet, very rectangular but still modern, that will capture east and west traffic and maybe some traffic on Eastman. He asked if a ground sign was being proposed and **Mr. Ginnodo** said no, although there is an existing ground sign on the property. **Commissioner Kubow** was in favor of the project and looked forward to watching it be built and the business thrive.

Commissioner Coon said that he had a lot of comments that are meant to be seeds that the petitioner can ponder and think about. He felt there was no reason to re-review this project, he felt it was really fantastic. He had questions about certain materials and how some things are resolved and some suggestions. In terms of the materials, it was unclear to him what material is being proposed for the planter boxes, the deck, and the underside of the deck. **Mr. Ginnodo** replied that the structure that projects from the building will be steel, with lattice work above, welded steel planters, and the floor will be decking material. **Commissioner Coon** liked the geometrical simplicity of the north façade, but felt that a little more glass in the stairwell could help to tie it into the south facade of it coming down, although he was unsure if it warranted it. **Mr. Hautzinger** clarified Staff's suggestion to add windows to the north wall was in relation to the space underneath the stairs; perhaps there was an opportunity to create a window as part of the retail storefront, resulting in visibility on the north side as well as the south and on the west. **Mr. Ginnodo** said the space under the stairs is proposed to be a closet for storage, as it is not useful.

Commissioner Coon also questioned the necessity of the glass garage door and the type of glass being proposed. **Mr. Ginnodo** replied that the glass would be frosted and he preferred the option of glass, although they are still considering this expensive feature. **Commissioner Coon** felt the glass would draw attention to that area, and he had concerns about a glass overhead door appearing architecturally significant, especially with the cost. This cost could be put toward making a full storefront on the west wall as suggested by Staff, although he was not really bothered that there is no storefront except for the existing under the new balcony. He would rather see the storefront door on the south elevation stand alone and the 2 sidelights removed and infilled with brick, which would establish a rhythm that works with the other punched windows openings, linking the older building with the new building on top.

With regards to the east elevation that faced the adjacent gas station, **Commissioner Coon** pointed out that the floor plans show the wall to be very thick, which he thought related to sound rating issues from the adjacent gas station, and **Mr. Ginnodo** stated that it was a drawing error. **Commissioner Coon** felt that a green wall could be an improvement to the east wall, as opposed to adding some decorative fluff.

Acting Chair Eckhardt understood the east wall and that it is next to the gas station, but felt there were some opportunities to break up the east wall by building a 10-foot arbor structure. He was also concerned about the deck not having a pergola for sun shade, and the security issue of having the stairs to the second-floor residential space so close to the retail storefront entrance, which was very disturbing to him. He was also concerned that the windows on the first-floor did not scream retail business, and that the building appeared top heavy; however, if signage was located on the side of the building, he might have a different opinion. On the north elevation, he loved the idea of the three contrasting materials being proposed, but felt it looked odd where the white panels meet the existing first-floor brick, underneath the new second-floor. He considered the suggestions made by Staff, but ultimately felt the design was fine as proposed, and he agreed with Commissioner Coon's suggestion to reconsider the glass overhead door and save money. **Acting Chair Eckhardt** was also concerned about this smooth white panels being damaged by graffiti vandals, since there is nothing like this and it is an attractive billboard for graffiti. He asked about exterior lighting, which he felt there should be an abundance of since this building is in the downtown.

Mr. Ginnodo responded to the comments. He said that a the front section of the terrace will be a deep planter, supported by the garage roof, that will include small trees for shade, as well as other large trees being proposed around the building. A gate will be located on the stairs leading to the second-floor. If it is a requirement, they will do it, but if it is a recommendation they will seriously consider the suggestion about the full storefront on the west wall.

Acting Chair Eckhardt strongly recommended the owner consider the suggestion to make a full storefront on the west wall, which will allow for more product displays. **Mr. Ginnodo** had no response regarding the corner on the north façade, although he will consider the comment, and he understood the comments about the glass garage door, which they will reconsider. He added that exterior lighting is part of the Plan Commission review, and will include can lights above the overhang and rear door, and a light bar at the garage door. No site lighting is being proposed; however, there are street lights all around the site. In the absence of Chair Fitzgerald, who designed the landscaping, **Mr. Ginnodo** reviewed the proposed landscape plan, which included bringing trees onto the property, and continuing the existing landscaping around the site for continuity. **Acting Chair Eckhardt** commented about the climbing Hydrangeas on the east elevation, which he has at his home, and how they will become very heavy and woody over the years and may require a wire mesh on top of the brick wall to allow the plant to hold onto.

Acting Chair Eckhardt reiterated his concerns about the corner on the north elevation and wanted to see something done with it. **Commissioner Kubow** said that he liked the juxtaposition of what is being proposed, and wanted to keep it as three distinct and different shapes. **Mr. Ginnodo** clarified that the grey siding projects out 2-inches from the white panels. **Commissioner Coon** clarified his previous comments about the garage door; he was not implying that a residential style door found at a big box store be proposed; he preferred something contemporary, clean and simple like the adjacent walls.

Mr. Ginnodo summarized the commissioners' comments. Consider changing the two existing punched window openings on the west wall to a full storefront; clarification on how the wall sign will be hung up and used; consider something other than glass for the garage door; and clarification on exterior lighting. Additional comments included concerns about security and protection for the stairs leading up the second-floor; and consider adding a window on the north elevation below the stair;

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COON, TO APPROVE THE DESIGN FOR 132 W. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY. THIS APPROVAL IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS DATED AND RECEIVED 12/11/17, 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 RECOMMENDATION TO STUDY THE STOREFRONT SYSTEM ON THE GROUND FLOOR, TO POTENTIALLY ACCOMMODATE MORE GLAZING TO MAKE IT MORE STOREFRONT AND RETAIL LIKE.
2. A RECOMMENDATION TO RECONSIDER THE GLASS GARAGE DOOR FOR SOMETHING THAT WOULD BRING LESS ATTENTION TO THAT AREA.
3. A RECOMMENDATION TO ADD A WINDOW BELOW THE STAIRS ON THE NORTH ELEVATION.
4. A RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER ADDING VINE CABLES ON THE EAST ELEVATION TO HELP WITH EITHER PLANT GROWTH UP FROM THE GROUND OR ADD PLANTINGS AT THE TOP OF THE WALL TO GROW DOWN.
5. ALL SIGNAGE MUST MEET CODE, CHAPTER 30.
6. 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.

Acting Chair Eckhardt commented about climbing concerns with the horizontal balcony railings, and suggested further research by the petitioner to determine the best wires for the climbing plants.

KUBOW, AYE; COON, AYE; ECKHARDT, AYE; KINGSLEY, RECUSE; FITZGERALD, RECUSE.
MOTION CARRIED.