

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2012

1. At 6:11pm, Chairman Jackie Heftman called the special meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Jackie Heftman, Chairman
Christopher D. Meek
Taylor R. Molgano
Peter Sciarretta

Absent:

Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer

Staff:

Rachel A. Goldberg, Interim Director
& General Counsel
Durelle Alexander
Daniel Doern, Architectural Consultant
(arrived at 6:20pm)

Attendees:

Frank Edwards, VP Design & Construction, Trinity Financial
Xuan Phan, Project Manager, Trinity Financial
Attorney William Hennessey, Sandak, Hennessey & Greco
Attorney Lisa Feinberg, Sandak, Hennessey & Greco
Jim Lohr, Carpenter's Union

Commissioner Molgano made a motion to address the agenda items out of order. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meek and carried by unanimous vote.

3. (a) Annual Meeting Date – Commissioner Meek made a motion to hold the Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 8, 2012 at 6:00pm prior to the regular Commission meeting on that date. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Molgano and carried by unanimous vote.

2. Southeast Quadrant – Park Square West/Trinity

(a) **Review/Approval Design Documents Phase IV & Parking Garage** – Attorney Goldberg noted that at the last Commission meeting on August 1, 2012, the Board approved a set of schematic plans and design development plans for the Phase IV building and the parking garage. She said, “The developer, Trinity, has submitted construction drawings for the Phase II building which staff has reviewed with the Commission’s Consultant Dan Doern. They’re not before you. They would only come to you if there were substantive changes in the development that we needed to approve and there haven’t been any. What you do need to approve are the design development drawings for the Phase IV building and the garage.” A memorandum by Mr. Doern reviewing the design (attached as part of these official minutes) was distributed prior to the Commission meeting. Items still outstanding include the public art and final location of bicycle rack parking. Attorney Goldberg said, “There is a small structure that has been added in the garage at grade in the triangular area which will serve as the sprinkler room for both garages. One other item which has improved from the original design addresses the view of the glass tower. Above that, as shown in the schematics, is a metal cladding on the structure that hides an extension of the stair tower up to the highest level of Trinity’s parking.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2012 – PAGE TWO:

Mr. Edwards indicated today that the tower has been revised and the metal won't go higher than the glass, with the stair structure hidden behind the existing wall. Chairman Heftman asked, "Will there be parking on the top of the garage?" Mr. Edwards responded, "Yes, there will."

The Chairman asked Mr. Doern to summarize what was different from last time in the design plans. He said, "There are a few things we pointed out last time that I wanted a little more information on. I received that information and am satisfied that they are developed enough to know enough about what they're going to look like. Some of those things, for example, were the building entries. They were very sketchy in the previous scheme ... there is more detail in these drawings that shows you how the different planes of the elevation work and how the doors are set back. They're just right. They're attractive and noticeable without being too monumental. The automobile passage, that underpass that goes from Washington Boulevard to the garage, didn't have a lot of detail. Mr. Edwards and I spoke about this and I think it's going to be nice. The columns from above come down from the inside. I think they are making the best of what could be an unpleasant space, an underpass, by the way they're treating the materials along the sidewalk and continuing them around. I think it will be as inviting and attractive as it can be. The openings will let enough light and ventilation in for a quick pass-through. Pedestrians will use it, too, and I think they have thought of that." Chairman Heftman asked, "Is there a sidewalk there?" Mr. Doern responded, "There's a sidewalk on the outside of the wall north of the wall and then there's a sidewalk along the building." Chairman Heftman asked, "Will a pedestrian be able to walk from Washington Boulevard to Summer Street through the garages?" Mr. Edwards responded, "Yes."

Mr. Doern continued, "One of the other questions I had in the previous design where there wasn't enough detail is how a lot of the walls and columns meet the sidewalk since they were just shown diagrammatically. Now there's more detail and I am satisfied that they meet the sidewalk in an attractive, durable and appropriate way. Also, they didn't give us any additional materials/samples. I would just suggest that we ask the developer/architect for a final material selection, a snapshot of what they're going to use, so we'll have a reference point if they end up using something different." Mr. Doern said, "A question was raised after the last meeting and before this one about the glass curtain wall that wraps the existing stair. Rachel and I discussed this and concur that the URC should allow the glass to remain in place. Once the whole PSW complex is complete, the visual effect of the glass sliver will be greatly diminished." Attorney Goldberg added, "When you're inside that elevator tower, except for where the floors are, you'll still be able to look through the glass, but you'll be looking into the new garage structure which I think is very helpful because it doesn't add more darkness and it still feels open." Mr. Doern said, "You'll still see the glass from the floors of the garage."

It was noted that no additional details have been provided about the public art element. Mr. Edwards said it is a "work in progress." The developer is in ongoing discussions regarding easements and a right-of-way along Summer Place and the final design for the public art for Phase II depends on these issues being resolved.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2012 – PAGE THREE:

Attorney Goldberg said, “I have one question that Dan and I talked about. In the Phase IV retail area in the back inside the structure, there’s a ramp that leads to the alley way to the north. Is this an access way for the public or simply a service access?” Mr. Edwards responded, “We’re trying to mitigate the grade from the easement road down ... the residential portion of the building on the first floor is a couple of floors higher than the retail space because of the grade. This will just be used for service.”

Mr. Doern concluded, “The development from the last set of drawings to this one is positive and the building remains attractive, appropriate and desirable.” Following discussion, Commissioner Meek made a motion to approve the two design development sets except the public art which has yet to be developed; further, to authorize Attorney Goldberg, working together with Mr. Doern, to accept the materials/cut sheets for the formal record provided that they are consistent with what’s been presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sciarretta and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Adjournment

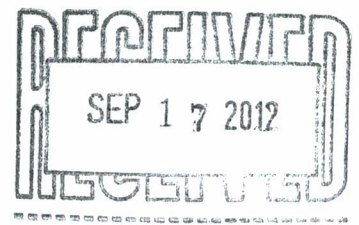
There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 6:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher D. Meek
Acting Secretary

Attachment: D. Doern Report dated 9/11/12



DANIEL DOERN
ARCHITECTURE + DEVELOPMENT

REVIEW OF DESIGN - UPDATE

Park Square West Project, Stamford, CT

Phases II, IV, and Garage

Architect: Icon Architecture, Inc.

Developer: Trinity Stamford LLC

September 11, 2012

Project materials reviewed for original Review of Design:

- Phases II, IV, and Garage Zoning Board Special Exception Application and Site and Architectural Plan Review, 40 pages provided by architect.
- Materials samples presented by architect at URC meeting, August 1, 2012
- PSW Public Art Proposal for Park Square West Phase II and IV
- Detailed Phase IV first and second floor plans provided by developer.

Project materials reviewed for Update:

- 66 Summer Street Final Bid Set (Phase II), October 14, 2011. With;
Addendum #1 issued November 18, 2011
Addendum #2 issued December 7, 2011
Addendum #3 issued January 25, 2012
Addendum #4 issued February 6, 2012
Addendum #5 issued August 24, 2012
- Phase IV Design Development Submission, August 24, 2012
- Park Square West Private Garage and Alterations to Existing Garage Design Development Submission, August 24, 2012.
- Email regarding garage with attached photographs of garage sent by developer, August 30, 2012.
- Email regarding details sent by developer, September 15, 2012.

This updated review is based on and a continuation of the original Review of Design dated August 8, 2012.

MAJOR CHANGES SINCE LAST REVIEW

There have been no major changes to the design of either the Phase II, Phase IV or Garage buildings since the original review. The architect and developer have provided more detail in the drawings and that detail has satisfactorily addressed questions raised in the original review. Those questions are examined below.

One detail change is worth noting. Due to ongoing discussions with the electric utility, the area on the Ground Floor of the Garage extension in which electrical equipment is located remains unresolved. A bike rack shown in the original scheme was removed in the updated drawings and an enclosing fence was added. The commission should continue to monitor the development of this area to ensure it is resolved satisfactorily.

PHASE II AND PHASE IV BUILDING ENTRIES

In the original review, I noted that the main entries to the two apartment buildings were appropriate and attractive but sought more detail. That has been provided in the new set of drawings.

The Phase II entry is nicely modulated. A frame around it is expressed as a protrusion on the façade, the actual doors are recessed into the building, and a fixed canopy protrudes above. These details, and the capable handling of the materials arrangement and selection, should make a solid feeling and attractive entry. It will have an appropriate presence on the sidewalk.

I was not provided as much detail on the Phase IV entry due to this building being in the DD stage. Yet, enough detail is provided to ease any concerns about the appropriateness of the entry. The entry sits in an optimal location on Washington Boulevard, just around the corner from the retail space and adjacent to where the first two floors recess at an angle towards the passageway to the garage. A prominent canopy is suspended above. The materials shown are an appropriate continuation of those typical for the ground floor.

PHASE IV AUTOMOBILE PASSAGE

Little detail on this area was provided for the original review. More has been provided in the DD set. The large wall on the north side of the building has two large openings and is shown to be clad in cast stone and metal panels. Five structural columns supporting the building above are placed just inside this wall. (Inside in this case is the interior of the passageway.) These columns are clad in concrete on the lower half and metal panel on the upper half. While not the most interesting of spaces to occupy, this passageway is

adequately detailed to create an attractive and comfortable vehicular and pedestrian passageway. The sidewalk along the building is paved with the same materials as the Washington Boulevard sidewalk and should feel like a continuation through the building and to the garage. The details and the spaces double height should make the place inviting and pleasant enough for its purpose.

COLUMN COVERS, CURTAIN WALL

In the original review I asked how the various details and exterior facing materials met the sidewalk. In the latest drawings, adequate detail is provided to evaluate these conditions. The metal panel column covers in Phase IV have a four-foot high cast stone base. This will protect the metal panels from being damaged or dented and help the building maintain its good condition for longer. The curtain wall and panels details are similarly sensible.

FACADES

The recent drawings show panel joints and more detail on connections between materials. The joints are in appropriate places and there are enough of them to give the façade some rhythm and texture. The connection details shown are sensible and correct for the materials shown.

MATERIALS

No additional materials samples or specifications were provided. The developer should provide the URC with a list or detailed sample board of the selected materials for each building so as to avoid confusion later on. An important part of the design approval is based on materials selections and, as far as I know, this has not been finalized.

EXISTING GARAGE STAIR TOWER GLASS CURTAIN WALL

In response to the issue of the narrow glass return on the side of the stair tower Frank Edwards, representing the developer, wrote this:

Existing Curtain Wall at the Garage: Understanding that the curtain wall is a quite attractive visual, we had looked into relocating the glass but came to the conclusion that it was not feasible and perhaps not resulting in much visual and/or economic benefit for the following reasons.

- 1) The glass serves as a necessary weather enclosure for the stair egress stair and elevator lobbies – so relocation as suggested would require putting back glass to protect those elements.
- 2) If you removed it – whether wholesale or the return – there didn't seem to be a location where the salvage could be installed and viewed from a good vantage point
- 3) A bit of the return will be seen at the top – and helps with that limited view, and also small sections will be visible (albeit obliquely) through the spandrel panels.
- 4) Using the glass at the few vantage points (looking up the pedestrian way from WPP for instance), diminishes the “free area” for natural ventilation of the garage. We would like to avoid powered ventilation.

The practical arguments are legitimate and the observations on the impact of the green glass are astute. I suggest the URC allow the glass to remain in place and require no changes to the garage layout. Once the whole Park Square West complex is complete, the visual effect of the glass sliver will be greatly diminished. And, it would seem a bit odd to have fragments of glass out of context. If some signal or sign were desired to guide parkers from Columbus Park into the garage, the most effective place to do that would be along the street wall on West Park Place. Perhaps this can be incorporated along with the Phase III building since it is this building that will close off the view of the garage and complete the pedestrian passageway at the end of which the glass was intended to be seen.

PUBLIC ART

No additional detail was provided. The developer explained that it is in ongoing discussions regarding easements and a Right of Way along Summer Place and that the final design for the public art for Phase II depends on these issues being resolved. The public art concept is an interesting one and the Commission should encourage the developer to continue to make progress on the design of both Phase II and Phase IV art installations.

SUMMARY

As stated in the original review, this project is an example of good urban design and good building design. The additional detail provided was adequate to answer any questions raised in the original review. More detail on the final materials, transformer area and public art is desirable but the submission is sufficient to approve the design.