

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, February 6, 2002 @ 11:00am**

1. Chairman Stephen C. Osman called the special meeting to order at 11:25am. In attendance were:

Commission

Stephen C. Osman, Chairman  
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer  
James I. Nixon  
Neal M. Jewell

Staff

Laszlo Papp, Executive Director  
Bruce A. Goldberg, General Counsel  
Durelle Alexander

Consultants

Alan Plattus, URC Design Advisor

Absent

Eric M. Wormser, Vice Chairman

2. Mill River Corridor

(a) **Archstone/Re-Use Parcel 21** - Scott Shaul, Vice President of Archstone Communities, said, "After a tremendous amount of work on behalf of Archstone and the property owner, Steve Hoffman, who wants to see a successful project on the site, we are back here before you with a much more defined project, I think an improved project, and hopefully one that you will agree is ready to proceed." He introduced Omar Calderon, as associate with Perkins Eastman Architects, who briefly reviewed the project as follows:

- a 244-unit all street oriented building located on 1050 Washington Boulevard
- roughly an L-shaped building along Washington Boulevard & West Park Place
- the massing of the building deliberately arranged to provide a very strong street wall pushing all the density toward the street
- landscaping featuring a "face to every side;" i.e., on West Park Place, a planted boulevard with five parking spaces along that street; on Washington Boulevard, plantings designed to deal with both the pedestrian and automobile scale. To deal with the traffic, the building has been moved back about 25-feet or so from the curb. On Whittaker, landscaping along the face/entrance to the park, and then along the park, landscaping that terminates in a scored concrete pattern.

Mr. Calderon distributed design/development plans dated April 27, 2001 and August 13, 2001, showed three dimensional images and a sample of the materials and inverted louvers chosen by the architects to treat the large expanses of garage. He said, "The use/concept of inverted louvers is to allow a certain amount of ventilation and light into the garage and, at the same time, block the headlights of the cars and block visual access to the cars from the outside." Continuing with his presentation, Mr. Calderon pointed out the addition of the canopy and the flag, noting that the intent behind these elements was to give an indication of more activity at the western end of the building. He then showed their designs of what the commercial space could look like.

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In regard to the building skin/materials, Mr. Calderon explained, "To highlight some of the major corners, we have an accent brick masonry at the base of the building. That will be supported by bands of split-face block and then, back further, ground face block (samples of which were shown to the Commission). We go from a rough texture to smoother as we go up on the building. As we've reached the level of apartments, we have three additional stories of masonry and then beyond the fifth story, we switch to EIFS and there we utilize two colors, a light gray with a darker accent trim to follow the outline of the building.

Commissioner Nixon asked for clarification. He said, "What is right under the window on the drawings/model you are showing?" Mr. Calderon responded, "The window unit is actually composed of glass panels and then there will be in-fill opaque panels." Commissioner Nixon asked, "What are the edges of the balcony?" Mr. Calderon responded, "Concrete." Mr. Shaull added, "A lot of what we are bringing before you today is just further definition and evolution of the design. One thing we should say is that really we haven't changed much from what you saw several months ago (at the preliminary presentation). The exception is that we've broken up how we've placed balconies and bay windows and that was really market-driven more than anything else. We looked at what the market demanded and we tried to program that as well as possible. We haven't changed anything other than that ... we have just made further refinements."

URC Design Advisor Alan Plattus asked, "How about the elements dividing the balconies. What are they faced with?" Mr. Calderon responded, "They're faced with EIFS all the way down to the plaza level, which is about 24-feet above the street. So the first time you will see that material is at 24 feet height." Director Papp asked, "What are the areas shown in brown?" Mr. Calderon responded, "Those are the mechanical grills. The mechanical system we are using is compartmentalized to each unit so that each unit has its own mechanical room and in it, there is the furnace, hot water heater, etc."

Mr. Calderon continued, "One of the concerns we've heard about the design is that perhaps this elevation looks a little too busy, specifically with regard to the prow, what we call the hat of the building. We wanted to respond to that with a couple of things that we did ." Referring to the model, he showed the increased amount of masonry on the lower levels so there would no longer be a different color in-fill panel. Also, the amount of accent color EIFS has been decreased so that it occurs mostly at the top of the building. The architects also looked at what the building would look like without "the hat." Mr. Calderon said, "We stood back a little bit and tried to look at it three dimensionally - what happens with the removal of the hat and what opportunities are there to enhance and create a composition, a volumetric composition, in the corner that somehow addresses the two very arbitrary street angles. One alternative we came up with is to increase the presence of the bay window and let that be the expressive element in the corner, and then allow the brick to basically run up the eight stories uninterrupted on either side of it." Mr. Plattus asked, "What is determining the vertical dimension of the hat?" Mr. Calderon responded, "The vertical dimension really is determined by repetition of the floor-to-floor height, so it's a full floor high."

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Mr. Plattus also asked about the rear elevation, where the division between the brick facing and the EIFS occurs at a different level - do you drop it down a level, at least one story? Mr. Calderon responded, "Yes, along the plaza level." Mr. Plattus continued, "And the whole end elevation - what's going on there?" Mr. Calderon noted that the EIFS comes down to the top of the parking there and the projecting bay has hung brick on it. He said, "The design notion of the corners really was something that we proposed early on - to have the two main materials of the building somehow be layered across the building."

Commissioner Nixon asked, "What is the ratio of one, two, three bedroom units?" Mr. Shaull responded, "There are no three bedrooms, 157 (64%) one bedroom units and 87 (36%) two bedroom units." Mr. Plattus asked, "How many square feet is the commercial space that you are providing on West Park?" Mr. Shaull responded, "The commercial space is about 5,200 divided up into 4,700 for the space that is intended for the café/restaurant and a smaller one at the other end of the building." Commissioner Mellis asked, "Where would the parking be for the commercial tenants?" Mr. Shaull responded, "We have a limited amount of parking that will be available on the street, also some guest parking and, if there is a large event, people will probably utilize one of the City's parking lots." It was noted that nothing specific is required by zoning or is reserved for the commercial space at this time.

Mr. Calderon distributed a booklet prepared for Archstone entitled "Precedents on EIFS" and encouraged the Commission to visit buildings in the area listed as "good examples" and successful uses of EIFS.

Following further discussion, Mr. Plattus said, "Overall, this is a critical site. This is a very strong building that has a very good sense of self awareness about the importance of the site in the way that provides transitions from the City to the river and the park. I think there has been a real effort to create significance and interest on all sides of the building but in a different way, responding to the different conditions. On a macro level, this is an extremely strong proposal which I think would do credit to the URC and hopefully get things rolling on the larger vision of the Mill River Corridor development."

Mr. Plattus continued, "When you get down to the next scale the entrance corner, the kind of signature corner, is quite appropriately articulated as a special place not only for the building but for the City. Having said that, I think that that corner is still evolving. I think it has a little bit of an identity crises, top to bottom. The latest rendition now has a somewhat classical cast stone marquee, a kind of comprehensive cornice above the entrance but the top is from a very different vocabulary, very abstract ... interesting, but different. So when you see the whole corner element together as it stands right now, not as it ultimately might be, you see it in a state of evolution. It is not clear to me what the design vocabulary is ultimately going to be."

Following discussion, Mr. Plattus outlined his concerns as follows:

- (a) the "hat" or the prow - the top of the building.

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Mr. Plattus said, "I am supportive of the idea of 'the hat' because I think it would give a strong urban scale element at that point. It just needs, as you become more specific about it, to understand its role in the overall composition of the building."

- (b) the level of exposure of the elevator core at the north end of the building because that north end is exactly what oncoming traffic down Washington Boulevard sees.

Mr. Plattus explained, "The idea of stepping back the building and having some volumetric differentiation at that end is good but the amount of raw elevator core that becomes the principle element of that building might be worth reconsidering. If the step-down at that point of the building were a story or two higher, I think it would more effectively subordinate the elevator core."

- (c) the corners of this building are critical, not just the dominant corner but the other corners as well.

Mr. Plattus noted, "The only corner which isn't predominantly EIFS is the entrance corner. The other corners actually have a tendency to expose the EIFS as the material that turns the corner. It seems to me that using EIFS as an in-fill material is less problematic in terms of quality control, design, etc. but I would like to see a stronger material, like the brick, on the prominent corners."

- (d) the balcony elements.

Mr. Plattus said, "I am not thrilled with the size and prominence of the exposed mechanicals in this location; that is, again set into a field of EIFS. The balconies project the most prominent element and the vertical stripe of mechanical rooms that comes all the way down to the parking level will interfere. Would there be a way of incorporating the grills and the access doors with the balconies?"

Mr. Shaull noted that they had tried different color grills, selecting a color identical to the EIFS, but it hadn't come out that way with the different manufacturers. He also noted that painted surfaces peel and become problematic. Mr. Plattus asked the architect, "Could you treat that mechanical bay as part of the balcony composition? Could it all be made more like your bay window element ... metal frame with panels set into it?"

Mr. Shaull summarized, "By way of the LDA, there are three review phases for the Commission. First was the preliminary design, which we've been through. This would be the design development, prior to submission of final construction documents. What I hear from Alan and the Commission is that there are things we need to go back and work on before we come back to you for the final stage of construction drawings: the top of the prow, exposure of the elevator shaft, the grill work on the balconies and the three-story step-down and the corners."

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General Counsel Bruce A. Goldberg joined the meeting at 12:55PM. He advised the Commission that they could approve the design development documents subject to resolution of the issues/conditions outlined by URC Design Consultant Alan Plattus prior to their submission of final construction documents. Attorney Goldberg also asked Archstone for a full set of plans as submitted on this date.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to approve the design development documents submitted by Archstone on this date subject to resolution of the four issues outlined above as: (a) the top of the building; (b) the level of exposure of the elevator core at the north end of the building; (c) the corners of the building, and (d) the balcony elements. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried unanimously. It was noted that these four issues will be approved separately before the Redeveloper submits construction drawings.

The Chairman called for a brief recess at 1:10PM. The meeting was resumed at 1:25PM.

3. Southeast Quadrant


- (a) **Park Square West Phase II & Phase III** - Marty Jones, President of Corcoran Jennison Companies, briefly updated Mr. Plattus on recent changes presented to the Commission at its Special Meeting on January 22, 2002. It was noted that Corcoran Jennison has agreed to retain a Consultant, such as Fred Kent, to research the programming of its tenants in future phases.

4. Adjournment

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 14, 2002 at 6:00PM.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 2:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer