

MINUTES
Riverwoods Architectural Committee
of the Planning Board
September 7, 2017

The committee of the Planning Board designated to discuss the architectural design for the Riverwoods project met on September 7, 2017. The group met in the upstairs meeting room of the Durham Public Library

Present – committee members

Barbara Dill, Planning Board member
Audrey Cline, Building Official
Beth Olshansky, citizen
Walter Rous, citizen
Nancy Webb, citizen
Michael Behrendt, Town Planner

Present – applicant

Sharon Cuddy-Somers, attorney
Jim Klett, architect
Russell McLaughlin, architect
Justine Vogel, CEO

Present – others

Lee Skinner, citizen

Michael thanked everybody for attending the meeting. He said that the Town's architectural regulations do not apply here but said he appreciated the applicant's willingness to meet with the committee.

Scale and horizontal banding

Michael asked if the scale could be brought down. Justine said the changes in color should be helpful and make the building more interesting. She likes the multiple colors.

The group discussed the horizontal banding of colors and materials. Audrey said the horizontal banding is awkward in a few places where the change at floor level – extending to the floor above or below - seems random. It was noted that the architectural design is still conceptual.

Justine said the architects are taking notes of the meeting. She said some units have balconies but not all.

Nancy asked when there will be revised drawings.

Walter said there are conflicting means of organizing the façade.

Materials and colors

The architect said the material will be hardiboard. They showed some paint colors. He said these are not the actual paint colors for hardiboard but they are close. The paint on the hardiboard will be factory applied except for the rust color (in the gables) which will probably be applied on site. The architect said they would email the colors to Michael.

Barbara asked about the color of the marketing center (former barn building) which will be the Riverwoods Durham color and why it is not shown on the building. Justine said she did not think it would work on the main building and that it might be part of the marketing materials also. Justine said they don't want to use any colors that need to be custom produced.

Stonework

Barbara asked about the stonework. She said it seems cold and heavy, especially where it goes above the first floor. The architect said they don't have a picture of the proposed stone but will send a picture of it.

It was noted that AG Architecture did not design the Exeter buildings.

Audrey suggested using larger stones on the bottom and smaller stones above. Michael suggested having larger stones as the foundation.

The architect said that cultured stone is individual and there are many types. Nancy asked if they could use real stone. The architect said there are different manufacturers and some have a more natural look. Justine said they will bring a sample to the Planning Board meeting. Barbara said the stone wall at Riverwoods (The Woods) is real stone and looks very good. Justine said the wall might be cultured stone but she will check.

Other items

Michael said we don't yet have a rendering for the entrance porch. The architect said they are still working on this.

Justine said there will be 150 independent units with about 220 people at the start. The number usually drops later on.

Barbara asked about the carport and who is served by it. Justine said the residents in independent units. Walter suggested extending the first floor over the carport, using it as patio space.

Walter asked about the courtyard toward Route 4. He said showing a cross section there would be helpful, that it is narrow and tall and many units won't get very much sunlight.

Walter said this design is very different from Exeter. Those properties looked more generous. He said if they removed some units it would feel less like a hotel or dormitory.

Sharon said some interesting points are being made and they will consider the comments. They are also dealing with marketing issues.

Michael asked about the stone wall, particularly rendering 1 on sheet AI500. He said the wall is pretty prominent there and the proposed landscaping is low. He asked about adding windows, dressing up the wall in some manner, or using a different material.

Black windows

Nancy asked about using black windows. Beth said that black windows (not the trim but the window itself) were used at Madbury Commons and looks very good. The architect said they are not thinking of this.

Materials and colors

The off-blue color, called "Delft blue" by the architect, will be used at the top of the gables. Beth questioned this color. Michael thought it would like nice as a contrast.

Michael asked about the trim color. He said he hoped it would not be white or bright white. The applicant said it would be neutral and if it were white it would not be a stark white. He said hardiboard is being used for the trim.

Walter suggested considering Boral as a material.

Brackets

Audrey suggested using larger brackets in the gables.

Interior corridors

Walter asked about the long corridors and suggested having more space for residents to sit and gather in the corridors. Justine said there will be more nooks and crannies on the interior and there will be common rooms on each floor.

Sharon said every decision is a balancing act about how to spend every dollar.

Landscaping

Beth suggested having as much landscaping as possible. She said we like buildings that are nestled in the woods. Justine said The Woods project in Exeter is about 23 years old and has benefitted from growth all that time. She said they will plant now what they can afford and it will grow. They also continually adjust the development of the site to the opinions of the residents. There will be committees established that provide input.

Window muntins

Michael asked about the muntins on the windows. He said the committee discussed this and recommends a grid with a profile be placed on the exterior of the window instead of a flat grid sandwiched between the panes of glass. Justine said there are cleaning concerns with placing them on the outside. Audrey said this should be less of a concern if a 2/1 pattern is used [with only one bar on the top sash]. Michael suggested using the exterior grids on the side of the building that is most visible, toward Route 108 and using interior grids on the rear of the building. Justine said they would look at this.

Window trim

Michael encouraged the applicant to use fairly wide trim around the windows. The architect said the trim will be at least 4" wide everywhere.

Michael asked if the windows are operable. The architect said the lower sash can be raised ("cottage style").

Railings

Michael asked what material is being used for the railings. The architect said it will be aluminum.

Model of building

Michael said the Planning Board might want to have a model of the building so they can see better how it sits on the site. The applicant questioned the value of this with the video that was produced. Audrey said having a model is valuable as it really shows the massing effectively.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Behrendt
Town Planner