

Issued January 17, 2023

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
\*\*\*DRAFT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES\*\*\*  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022  
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

**AGENDA**

**Call to Order/Roll Call:** 4:30 P.M.

**DRAC ATTENDANCE:** Chair Jeffrey Gebrian, Vice-Chair Sheldon Crosby, Ray Giolitto, Kimberly Parsons Whitaker, Brian Flemming. Alternates: Jim Lawler

**ABSENT:** Hugh Schweitzer

**Staff:** Todd Dumais, Town Planner, Brian Pudlik, Associate Planner

**REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:**

1. **900 Farmington Avenue** – Formal referral from the Town Planner on Site Plan Application #1397. The site plan seeks approval for the redevelopment of the West Hartford Inn property into a new residential multifamily use and includes the demolition of the existing restaurant building and the construction of a new residential wing with community amenity space on the first floor and apartments above. (*Initial Study Session on 11-10-22, additional study session on 12-1-22*)

*Mr. Dumais introduced the project and noted that this the third study session for this project. He then read written comments from absent DRAC member Hugh Schweitzer, who wrote that the parapet extension and cornice elements were not necessary and detract from the overall design.*

*D. Goslin – Project Architect – Provided some brief background on the project and the changes made since the December 1<sup>st</sup> study session.*

*All DRAC members stated that the proposed parapet extension and cornice elements detracted from the building and should be eliminated. The committee was supportive, however, of the vertical blade for the sign.*

*J. Gebrian – DRAC member – Indicated that the proposed landscaping and other outdoor enhancements were well thought out and provided benefit to the property.*

2. **1700 Asylum Avenue & 1800 Asylum Avenue** – Study session preparatory to the submission of a potential new Special Development District application for the redevelopment of the former UConn campus. The applicant contemplates the redevelopment of both the eastern and western portions of the campus with multifamily housing and mixed-use development including commercial, retail,

restaurant, residential and office uses. (Initial study session on 10-27-22, additional study session on 11-10-22).

**Mr. Dumais introduced the project and noted that the applicant made some changes to the plans in response to DRAC comments during the prior study sessions.**

**B. Fischer - Project Architect – Began by outlining some of the concerns raised by the DRAC at the prior study session, which included the following: the placement and size of the residential building on Lawler (east campus), the lack of a coherent theme across the project and the desire to move all commercial uses to the east side of the project area and restrict the west side to residential uses.**

**Mr. Fischer went on to describe some of the challenges with developing commercial on the east side of the campus and residential only on the west side. Principally, he noted that costs associated with required environmental clean up to accommodate first floor residential on the west side campus is prohibitive. He also noted that if commercial uses were exclusively on the east side, a single point of entry into the development would be problematic from a traffic management standpoint. Due to these considerations, he noted that the preferred approach is to move forward with the previously presented plan for mixed-use residential and commercial on the west side of the property.**

**L. Gilmore – Project Architect – Indicated that one of the primary objectives on the west side of the development is to create a community gathering space. Regarding the East side of the development, she indicated that they are calling for a mix of four and five story residential buildings – with the four story ones abutting Trout Brook Drive. The total unit count on the east side will be approximately 400 and around 90 units on the west side.**

**Ms. Gilmore presented a series of site sections to emphasize the proposed buffers between the street and the new development on both the Asylum and Lawler frontages.**

**Mr. Dumais suggested that the buffers needed to be larger on both street frontages. Also suggested that parking lots at the southwest portion of the site be reconfigured to reduce the overall number of egress points onto the “Main Street”. Mr. Flemming, DRAC member, agreed.**

**J. Lawler & R. Giolitto – DRAC members – Suggested again that the west side should be exclusively residential with more open space and the east side should be commercial only. Mr. Giolitto also noted that a larger buffer was needed on Asylum and was concerned with the placement of the grocery relative to the Lawler neighborhood.**

**Mr. Dumais asked whether the Lawler entry on the west side of the campus could be eliminated to allow for an extended planted buffer.**

**K. Parsons Whitaker – DRAC member – Asked how many parking spaces are proposed throughout the site. Answer: 1,000-1,200 on the west side and 650 on the east side.**

**J. Gebrian – DRAC member – Indicated that he was bothered by residential building on the east side of Trout Brook Drive and by the lack of proposed open space on the site. Suggested that the building currently proposed in the middle of the Trout Brook frontage be removed to accommodate an area of**

*open space, which would be located directly across from the open space on the west side of Trout Brook. He suggested that the other buildings could be made larger to make up for the loss of a building.*

*All DRAC members reacted positively to the Newman concept sketches for the buildings and pedestrian experience along the “Main Street”.*

*B. Flemming – DRAC member – In response to the conceptual architectural sketches presented by Mr. Fischer and Ms. Gilmore, stated that the northerly entrance to the west campus off Trout Brook Drive is more successful than the entrance off Asylum Avenue. Suggested that if the medical office building were move to the east campus, it would free up the west side for smaller scale office spaces to improve the Asylum approach into the development.*

**APPROVAL OF 2023 REGULAR MEETING CALENDAR:**

1. Draft 2023 Calendar – Motion: Giolitto/Second: Parsons Whitaker – Approved 5-0

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

1. None.

**TOWN PLANNER’S REPORT:**

2. None.

**ADJOURNMENT: 6:15 PM**

Cc: Rick Ledwith, Town Manager  
Dallas Dodge, Corporation Counsel

Duane Martin, Community Development Director  
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk