

Issued December 20, 2023

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

AGENDA

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

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Chair, Ray Giolitto; Members: Jenna McClure, Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker, Hugh Sweitzer. Alternates: Jim Lawler

ABSENT: Brian Flemming, David Hines, Liz Pang

Staff: Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL:

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:

1. **579 New Park Avenue** – Study session preparatory to the submission of a site plan application under the newly adopted Transit-Oriented Development zoning district. The application contemplates the redevelopment of 579 New Park Avenue to include the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new five story, mixed-use building with associated site improvements. (Prior study sessions held on May 11, 2023 August 17, 2023 and September 14, 2023)

B. Pudlik – Senior Planner – Provided a brief introduction of the project and reminded the DRAC that this is the fourth informal study session for this project.

M. Joyce – Project Architect – Noted that the team has developed the design of the building further since the last study session. HVAC units are now shown on the roof, the prominent southeast elevation has been further refined, site grading has been refined, which included dropping the FFE of tenant space “A” by 12 inches to better greet the street. Lastly, exterior building materials have been defined to include a brick veneer base, three colors of insulated, commercial-grade vinyl siding, Hardy-brand panels for accents and top cap and traditional corner boards at 4-6” widths.

J. Cassidy – Project Engineer – Reminded the DRAC that the site has a 13-foot difference in height from east to west, with the west side being the lowest. This change in grade introduced challenges in the site design, which included having to connect upper and lower patio areas with an ADA compliant ramp system. To facilitate that, the grade of the upper patio was dropped by 18 inches, which allowed for shorter ramp sections. The garage floor was also raised by six inches from the previous design. Regarding landscaping, trees will be added in new tree wells along New Park Avenue and on

the north and west sides of the property, a mix of arborvitae and ornamental trees would be used to screen adjacent properties.

R. Giolitto – DRAC member – Questioned what material the fences will be made of. Mr. Joyce indicated they would be made of wood and vinyl depending on location.

H. Schweitzer – DRAC member – Questioned whether any of the mechanicals (RTU's) on the roof would be visible and whether the proposed parapet is actually necessary. Suggested that the design team study this issue.

J. McClure – DRAC member – Questioned whether any of the RTU's could be located on the lower roof to further hide them. Mr. Joyce indicated that a portion of them could be placed on the lower roof. Ms. McClure also asked whether the lower rear corner would be well lit. Mr. Joyce indicated that it would be. Lastly, Ms. McClure whether the rear of the patio could be screened from the parking area. Mr. Cassidy indicated that they would explore options for doing so.

H. Schweitzer – DRAC member – Indicated to the design team that the project appeared very well thought out and refined at this juncture of the process and suggested that the design team next focus on a formal application submittal.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

2.
 - a. None

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

3. None

ADJOURNMENT: 5:15 PM

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

Duane Martin, Community Development Director
Leon Davidoff, Town Clerk