



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

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September 25, 2008

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Eric Schantz
Planner

RE: 132 N. Main Street Site Plan
SCTM# 300-171-2-5
Application # A0520060233

Last Review Date: July 23, 2008 (Public hearing closed September 24, 2008)

Items and Date Received: Public Comments (various dates)

Background Information: Site plan application is made to remove an existing building with a commercial use (approved for residential use as per C.O.) and replace it with a two-story building of 4,673 sq ft. of gross floor area. The first floor is proposed to be retail, whereas the second floor will contain two separated units of office space (total of 2 uses proposed as per Code).

The parcel is 19,836 sq ft. in size and is situated in the N. Main Street corridor in East Hampton. It is zoned Neighborhood Business and surrounded by residential and commercial uses. A Town-owned parcel purchased with Community Preservation Funds (CPF) sits on the opposite side of the road at 131 N. Main St. (the Labrozzi property SCTM# 300-163-6-31).

The site is currently 100% cleared of native ground-level vegetation with a few remaining mature trees. The site is gently sloping, located in flood zone X and has a shallow depth to groundwater (3.5' as per application).

Issues for Discussion:

Public Comments

A public hearing was held on September 10, 2008. The hearing was left open for two weeks and the public record was closed on September 24, 2008. At the hearing, no members of the public spoke in favor of the project. 10 members of the public spoke in opposition to the proposal. The Board has also received written comments from the

public. A total of 30 individual letters have been submitted in support of the project. A total of 11 individual letters have been submitted in opposition to the project. Additionally, a petition, formed in opposition to the project received a total of 261 signatures.

Arguments in favor of the project focused on a variety of issues. Many supported the proposal for its aspects of “green design” and certification under LEEDS. Others pointed to the fact that the building meets all applicable current zoning restrictions, an attribute that is in contrast to many of the pre-existing commercial buildings on N. Main Street. In regard to the compatibility of the proposed building with the surrounding neighborhood, it was stated by one resident that there is no “one style” of architecture or appearance that dominates N. Main Street. It was also cited that although the Selah Lester House is within close proximity to the project site, this area of N. Main Street is not within any formally established historic district and thus should not be forced to comply with a particular established aesthetic.

Arguments were also made in opposition to the project. Most of these comments received centered around the issue of the compatibility of the proposed building with the surrounding neighborhood. Incompatibility with the general scale of buildings within the area, the general appearance and divergence from the architectural styles of neighboring buildings, and the proximity of the site to a historic property, were all cited as undesirable aspects of the proposal. Additional comments were made regarding flooding problems both on the subject property and those of adjacent properties and roadways. The issue of the impact of increased parking demand on N. Main Street was also brought up and the Board was asked to mitigate these effects to the greatest extent possible.

Addressing the public’s concerns:

The Planning Department notes that all required parking will be situated on-site. Additionally, in regard to drainage and flooding, the Town Engineer has reviewed the submitted information and has verified that the drainage structures proposed can contain all storm-water run off on-site as per Code requirements. Therefore, these concerns of the public should be considered resolved. However, the issue of whether or not the project will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood is, as was stated in various submitted comments both for and against the proposal, open to a degree of interpretation.

The Board should refer to the attached section of the Town Code which lists the site plan standards, of which physical compatibility is included. As the term “compatibility” has been used in many different ways, both for and against the proposal, the Board should confine its discussions regarding compatibility to the specific term as defined under the Code. The Planning Department notes that neither the overall scale of the project nor the architectural style of the project is directly addressed by this section of the Code. Scale is regulated by the established dimensional regulations of zoning but may also be considered by the Board in determining the functionality of the site. Architectural styles are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Architectural Review Board. The proximity of the project to the Selah Lester House was also cited in opposition to the proposal. The Planning Department notes that the majority of the existing commercial buildings within

this area do not mirror the design of the Lester House. Additionally, the subject parcel is not within any established Town, State or Federal historic districts, which could have specific design requirements for new construction.

Conclusion:

The Board should discuss the physical compatibility of the project with the surrounding neighborhood, particularly in relation to the issues mentioned above. The Board should discuss whether or not additional information will be required in order to resolve this or any other issue and make an appropriate declaration under SEQRA. The Planning Department has attached the complete list of SEQRA questions and the Board should pay particular interest to questions #11, 12, 13, 18 & 19. Also attached is a copy of the visual addendum. The Board should determine whether or not this addition to the EAF Part 2 is applicable and should be completed.

The site plan standards state that “the Planning Board may call upon expert advice in varied disciplines to assist it in making the determination required of it.” Therefore, the Board should discuss whether or not to request additional information at this time. The Planning Department notes that no specific comments have been received from the Architectural Review Board and that Town historical consultant Robert Hefner has not been contacted subsequent to the applicant’s revisions to the facade of the proposed building.

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Planning Board Consensus

Have the issues of drainage and parking been addressed appropriately? Will additional information be necessary?

Additional comments: _____

Does the Board require any additional information at this time in order to make an appropriate SEQRA declaration and/or to address the public’s concerns regarding the issue of physical compatibility?(Comments from ARB? Bob Hefner?)

Additional comments: _____

Should the visual addendum to the EAF Part 2 be completed?

Additional comments: _____

Additional Board Comments:

