

May 20, 2021

VIA E-MAIL & HAND DELIVERY

Michael Wrinn
Planning and Zoning Department
Town of Wilton
Town Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897
Michael.Wrinn@WILTONCT.ORG

Re: Architectural Review Board Application
Address: 141 Danbury Road, Wilton, Connecticut
Applicants: FDSPIN 141 DR LLC (Contract Purchaser) & FAB 5 LLC (Owner)

Dear Mr. Wrinn:

Our firm represents the above-captioned applicants, who seek Architectural Review Board ("ARB") review of a proposed redevelopment of property located at 141 Danbury Road, Wilton Connecticut (the "Property"). The Property is approximately 4.28+/- acres and is located on the westerly side of Danbury Road. It is designated as Tax Lot 2 on Map 70 in a DE-5 Design Enterprise District. The Property is currently improved with a warehouse style office building and a large surface parking lot used by Melissa & Doug, Inc. Melissa & Doug, Inc. will be relocating to a larger facility. The proposed redevelopment would remove the existing structure and replace it with a new 4 ½ story multi-family residential building, dense landscaping and associated site improvements.

In furtherance of the proposed applications, please find enclosed the following materials:

- 2 Letters of Authority executed by the Applicants;
- 1 ARB Application Form, including a Project Background & Statement of Compliance with ARB Review Criteria;
- 1 reduced-size copy of Architectural Plans prepared by Lessard Design, dated May 20, 2021, entitled:
 - "A.01 – Cover;"
 - "A.02 – Illustrative Site and Roof Plan;"
 - "A.03 – Ground Floor Plan (GR/G1);"
 - "A.04 – Residential Floor Plan (R1);"
 - "A.05 – Typical Floor Plan (R2-R3);"
 - "A.06 – Residential Floor Plan (R4);"
 - "A.07 – Loft Floor Plan;"

- “A.08 – Building Sections;”
 - “A.09 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.10 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.11 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.12 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.13 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.14 – Building Elevation;”
 - “A.15 – Building Elevation – Alternative;” and
 - “A.16 – Material Board;”
- 1 reduced-size copy of a Landscaping Plan, prepared by Environmental Land Solutions, dated May 20, 2021, entitled “Landscape and Lighting Plan, LP-1;”
 - 1 reduced-size copy of a Site Plan prepared by Tighe & Bond, dated May 20, 2021, entitled “Site Layout Plan, C-101;” and
 - 1 reduced-size copy of a survey depicting the Property prepared by D’Andrea Surveying & Engineering, P.C., dated April 22, 2021, entitled “Topographic Survey Depicting 141 Danbury Road in Wilton, Connecticut, Prepared for FDSPIN 141 DR LLC.”

Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional materials. Otherwise, we look forward to presenting the proposed redevelopment to the ARB at the regular meeting to be held on June 3, 2021.

Sincerely,

Lisa L. Feinberg

Lisa L. Feinberg

Enclosures.

cc: D. White Daphne.White@WILTONCT.ORG
L. Russo Lorraine.Russo@WILTONCT.ORG
Development Team

May 19, 2021

Mr. Michael Wrinn
Town Planner
Planning and Zoning Department
Town of Wilton
Town Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897


**RE: 141 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT (the "Property")
Letter of Authority**

Dear Mr. Wrinn:

FDSPIN 141 DR LLC is the contract purchaser of the property located at 141 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT (the "Property"), I hereby authorize the attorneys of Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey, LLP, with offices located at 707 Summer Street, Stamford, Connecticut 06901, to act as agent for FDSPIN 141 DR LLC in connection with the enclosed land use applications. Thank you for your acknowledgement of said authority.

Sincerely,

FDSPIN 141 DR LLC

By: 
Samuel B. Fuller
Duly Authorized

May 19, 2021

Mr. Michael Wrinn
Planning and Zoning Department
Town of Wilton
Town Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**RE: 141 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT (the "Property")
Letter of Authority**

Dear Mr. Wrinn:

FAB 5 LLC ("Owner") is the owner of the property located at 141 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT (the "Property"). I hereby authorize the attorneys of Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey, LLP, with offices located at 707 Summer Street, Stamford, Connecticut 06901, to file the enclosed land use applications on ownership's behalf in connection with the Property. Thank you for your acknowledgement of said authority.

Sincerely,

FAB 5 LLC

By: 

DOUG BERNSTEIN
Duly Authorized

**WILTON PLANNING AND
ZONING COMMISSION**

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD/VILLAGE
DISTRICT DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPLICATION**

FDSPIN 141 DR LLC

c/o Lisa L. Feinberg, Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey LLP,
707 Summer St, 3rd Fl, Stamford, CT 06901

APPLICANT'S NAME

ADDRESS

FAB 5 LLC

PO Box 590, Westport, CT 06881

OWNER'S NAME

ADDRESS

141 Danbury Road

Design Enterprise District

PROPERTY LOCATION

ZONING DISTRICT

1959

0092

70

2

4.28

WLR

VOLUME

PAGE

TAX MAP #

LOT #

ACREAGE

THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS SHALL BE ATTACHED:

- * Eight (8) complete **COLLATED/FOLDED** sets are required – 11" x 17" Plan Copies
- * All plans shall be equal in sheet size, collated into sets (either stapled or clipped), with **maps folded**, not rolled.
- * All submitted plans and documents shall bear an **original signature, seal, and license number** of the professional responsible for preparing each item.



ELECTRONIC EMAILED SUBMISSION OF ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS (CONSOLIDATED INTO ONE OR TWO PDFs MAXIMUM)



i. An application form;



ii. A statement describing the proposed project (use page 2 or attach separate sheet);



iii. The following plans, where applicable, based on the nature of the proposed project:



1.

An A-2 survey for any proposal involving the physical enlargement of a building, structure, parking area and/or vehicle access aisle.



2.

A site plan drawn at a scale of no greater than 1" = 60', incorporating an A-2 survey (when required), of the property sufficient to show the location of:

- a. wetlands, upland buffers, watercourse and flood zones, if any;
- b. existing and/or proposed buildings and appurtenances thereof;
- c. existing and/or proposed parking accommodations;
- d. existing and/or proposed lighting
- e. existing and proposed buffer strips and landscaping;
- f. access and egress details for pedestrian and vehicular traffic;
- g. existing and/or proposed signs, and
- h. adjacent roads, curb cuts, and width of rights-of-way and travel way.
- i. easements, regulatory setbacks, historic covenants or other historic assets.

- ☒ 3. Floor plans at each level showing the basic divisions of the building, all entrances, exits and loading and service areas.
- ☒ 4. A description of the architectural vernacular of proposed construction and its architectural relationship to other buildings within 500 feet.
- ☒ 5. Elevation drawings of all sides of the building, with dimensions, finish materials, fixtures, lighting, signage, landscape and colors indicated.
- ☒ 6. Samples of all finish materials to be used on the exterior of the building.
- ☒ 7. A roof plan showing all mechanical equipment, vents, hatches, skylights, solar arrays, wind turbines, green roofing etc., and the type and extent of screening to be provided.
- ☒ 8. A signage plan with a scaled drawing showing the design of any proposed signage, including dimensions (length, width, height), a drawing of sign design and content, colors of sign, materials for construction and illumination, together with a site plan showing location of proposed free-standing sign and/or building elevations showing location and proportions of wall signs.

THE APPLICANT understands that this application is to be considered complete only when all information and documents required by the Commission have been submitted and is responsible for the payment of all legal notices incurred.

THE UNDERSIGNED WARRANTS the truth of all statements contained herein and in all supporting documents according to the best of his or her knowledge and belief; and hereby grants visitation and inspection of the subject property as described herein.

Lisa L. Feinberg

5/20/2021

203-252-2677

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE
(See enclosed Letter of Authority)

DATE

TELEPHONE

Lisa L. Feinberg

5/20/2021

203-252-2677

OWNER'S SIGNATURE
(See enclosed Letter of Authority)

DATE

TELEPHONE

PROJECT NARRATIVE:

PROJECT BACKGROUND & STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ARB REVIEW CRITERIA

I. BACKGROUND

FAB 5 LLC and FDSPIN 141 DR LLC (collectively, the “**Applicants**”)¹ seek Architectural Review Board (“**ARB**”) review in connection with the redevelopment of property located at 141 Danbury Road in Wilton (the “**Property**”). The Property consists of approximately 4.28+/- acres on the westerly side of Danbury Road and is designated as Tax Lot 2 on Map 70 in the DE-5 Design Enterprise District.

The Property, which is adjacent to the Norwalk River, is currently improved with a warehouse style office building consisting of approximately 47,000 square feet as well as a large surface parking lot. It is currently occupied by Melissa & Doug, Inc.; however, Melissa & Doug will soon be relocating to a larger facility leaving the current building vacant. The proposed redevelopment would remove the existing structure and replace it with a new 4 ½ story multi-family residential building with dense landscape and associated site improvements.

II. PROPOSAL

As noted in the 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development (the “**POCD**”), the “relatively high price of housing coupled with an available housing stock of detached single-family homes has more recently contributed to lower in-migration of younger working-age people and has increased the out-migration of empty-nesters and retirees.”² The trends of increased housing prices and decreased housing supply have only been exacerbated during the COVID-19 Pandemic. At the same time, “the community has increasingly expressed interest in increasing housing type variety and price points in design and location appropriate ways” to increase the Town’s overall housing stock and to attract and meet “the needs of occupants at different life and employment stages.”³ The current proposal is responsive to these trends and the vision identified in the POCD.

The proposed 4 ½ story multi-family residential building will be home to 173 apartments consisting of one-bedroom (40), one bedroom + den (4), two-bedroom (106), two-bedroom + den (7) and three-bedroom (14) units. Many of these units also feature lofts and private outdoor terraces. The building has been thoughtfully designed and positioned on the site to highlight its proximity to the Norwalk River. The types of materials and color palette are compatible with the environment, and the building mass and undulation enhance river views. It incorporates a variety of high-quality materials including brick, architectural stone, wood panels, fiber cement siding and metal accents, all meticulously placed to articulate the facade. The proposed lofts and

¹ FAB 5 LLC is the owner of the Property, and FDSPIN 141 LLC is under contract to purchase the Property.

² POCD pg. 8.

³ Id.

accompanying private terraces provide additional punctuation of the roof line, and the natural change in grade from east to west allows for the parking to be discretely hidden below the building.

The ground floor will include approximately 314 parking spaces (180 covered and 134 uncovered) as well as utility/trash rooms and building access points. All uncovered parking will be screened from view by landscaping. The first floor will include a 4,500+/- square foot lobby and amenity space which leads directly to an expansive outdoor courtyard featuring a pool. The remainder of this level, as well as the levels above will be comprised of residential units. In the northwest corner of the fourth floor, the building will include a 3,000+/- square foot roof terrace with stunning views of the Norwalk River as well as a 600+/- square foot club room. The lofts and private terraces will be located above this level. For further details about the building, please refer to the architectural drawings prepared by Lessard Design.

Robust landscaping frames the perimeter of the site including a 100-foot deep riverfront park for the residents to enjoy. This landscaped oasis will replace an asphalt parking lot and feature several overlooks with seating to enjoy the river. For further details about the landscaping, please refer to the "Landscape & Lighting Plan, LP-1" prepared by Environmental Land Solutions.

To facilitate the proposed redevelopment, Applications for Text Amendment, Site Plan, Special Permit Approval as well as Inland Wetlands Commission review will be submitted for consideration following ARB review.

III. STANDARD OF REVIEW

The proposal is in conformance with the review criteria set forth in Sec. 29.9-K of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Wilton as follows:

a. When reviewing a Formal Application, the ARB shall consider the following:

- i. Relationship of Buildings to Site and Adjoining Context
1. Buildings shall be organized in a coordinated and functional manner that is compatible with natural and historic site features and the desirable characteristics of adjoining context.

Like the existing building, the proposed residential building is oriented perpendicular to Danbury Road and setback approximately 80' from the Property line with roughly 40' of additional lawn and sidewalk between the Property line and the Danbury Road curb. This positioning generally maintains the existing building line with neighboring properties. The building itself is positioned on the site so that the shorter façade faces Danbury Road, and the remainder of the building maximizes views of the Norwalk River. Both the building materials and vast landscaping are compatible with the natural site features as further explained above.

2. A unified design theme for building massing, exterior treatments and signage shall be established where harmony in textures, lines, and masses is provided.

The building implements several organizing elements, details, materials and colors that unify the overall composition and showcase the attractive building facade.

The East Side facing Danbury Road (where the main entrance is proposed to be located) is treated with a mix of rusticated masonry (recessed and projected courses for rich texture) with a blend of metal and cementitious cladding secondary elements. This facade composition showcases a dominant cornice line at the roof line and separates the loft elements from the main building. The main entrance showcases attractive 2-story glazing to emphasize the main entry and activate the building frontage with its transparency.

Towards the corners and wrapping around the North, South and West facades, the architecture composition engages wood-like cementitious panels for a contrasting and harmonious play, with just the right mix of traditional and modern styles.

Two consistent, organizing elements are:

A) 25-foot-wide vertical bays with vertically-ganged double and triple windows and Juliette balconies that emphasize the residential character of the building. Such bays are consistently spaced out by approximately 12 feet where the wood-like treatment is implemented. These bays are consistently crowned with the second organizing element below.

B) 25-foot-wide Loft elements treated with dark gray cementitious panels, separated by private terraces of approximately 12 feet wide providing a playful roofline.

C) The North and South Facades are further enhanced by the introduction of a variation of the aforementioned bay, which maintains the language spoken by the other building elements. The top cornice is lowered to the 4th floor and the Loft element expression becomes a 2-story expression, using earthy colors at the base and lighter colors at the top. These bays are consistently spaced out in the same fashion as the other organizing elements described. The façade is further enlivened by recessed 12-foot wide and 4-foot deep recessed bays, that also provide transitions between the bay variations described.

3. Parking area configuration, curbing, paving, and plantings shall be treated appropriately in relation to the building design, the neighborhood, and community design standards.

A 48' green buffer shields the small surface parking area along the front of the Property from views traveling south, with approximately 20' of this buffer providing plantings to screen this parking along the property frontage. In the southeast corner there is approximately 120' of planted evergreen buffer and lawn between the vehicular drive and Danbury Road ROW providing screening for pedestrians and

vehicles traveling north. The remainder of the surface parking along the northern and southern site boundaries is also screened from neighboring properties by a 10' landscape buffer. All parking areas and associated curbing and paving are designed to allow for safe and efficient vehicular circulation and pedestrian accessibility.

4. The height and scale of each building shall be compatible with its site and existing (or anticipated) adjoining buildings.

The building has been designed to maximize the site's natural attributes. The change in grade from east to west allows the parking to be completely screened from view along Danbury Road. Moreover, the building height is paired with enhanced building setbacks from the Norwalk River and Danbury Road to ensure the structure is compatible with its surroundings.

5. A pedestrian-friendly streetscape and attractive landscape transitions to adjoining properties shall be provided.

The Applicants propose a 20 to 100' wide planted buffer along the Danbury Road frontage, significantly enhancing this portion of the Property. A meandering sidewalk is also proposed where none exists today. This latter improvement is dependent on Conn. DOT approval. A 10' wide landscape buffer continues along the northern and southern site boundary where it connects to a large riverfront park on the western side of the Property.

1. Landscape treatment shall be provided to enhance architectural features, shield unsightly areas, provide shade, and relate to the natural environment and topography.

From Danbury Road, the site will be heavily landscaped with a combination of grading, retaining walls and evergreen plantings to provide complete screening to the parking areas. The proposed plants will provide seasonal interest and 95% of the plantings proposed will be native plants to the eastern United States.

2. Plant material shall be selected for its ultimate growth, for hardiness, for compatibility with the character of the area, and for interest in its shape, texture, color and pollinator attractiveness.

All of the landscape plants have been chosen to be compatible to local conditions, provide seasonal interest, be native to the eastern United States and provide habitat for a wide range of pollinators.

3. Planting materials native to Connecticut used for landscaping and screening shall be preferred. The use of any plant designated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection as invasive species is prohibited.

No invasive plant species are proposed, and Evergreen materials are native to the eastern United States.

4. Pedestrian sidewalks, paths and trails shall provide safe and convenient connections within the site and between adjacent sites and, where found appropriate taking into account site, natural and environmental factors, shall generally be constructed of brick, concrete or paving blocks, rather than bituminous asphalt, gravel, earth or loose stone.

Meandering concrete pedestrian sidewalks are proposed along Danbury Road, pending Connecticut DOT approval. Pedestrian refuge is also proposed along the building front, and a stone dust path is contemplated in the resident park along the river.

5. Existing deciduous trees at six (6) inches or greater caliper and existing evergreen trees at a height of five (5) feet or greater, shall be noted on the site plan and incorporated into the design where practicable.

The existing trees on the site are being retained where practical.

ii. Building Design

1. Architectural features shall be evaluated based on the scale of the building(s), the quality of the design, and the relationship to surroundings.

Residential, and human scale is achieved with the proposed rich textures, alternating cornice line, playful roof line, building transitions (4-foot recessed sections), spaced bays and the arrangement of the building materials.

The architectural composition as previously described engages a consistent, yet playful range of elements that transition from richly textured earthy materials at the main entrance facing Danbury Road, to lighter, softer, sleeker materials towards the interior of the Property. The implementation of the wood-like panel celebrates the close proximity with nature.

The building includes an amenity terrace at the northwest corner which is meant to visually connect the residents with the Norwalk River and its surrounding wooded areas.

2. Facades and rooflines shall be articulated and/or varied to reduce the appearance of bulk and provide architectural interest.

As noted above, the inclusion of lofts with the fourth-floor units allows for variation in roof height. Further articulation of the roof and facade is

achieved with various building materials, changes in scale, and building recesses.

3. Building materials shall be of durable quality, substantial appearance, harmonious architectural character, and compatibility with the Wilton built environment.

Building materials include brick, architectural stone, wood panels, fiber cement siding and metal accents. These materials are both durable and high-quality. While this section of Danbury Road does not have a distinct architectural character, the Applicants submit that the proposed design is harmonious with the surrounding natural environment taking particular inspiration from the Norwalk River.

4. Building textures, colors, and components of the proposed structure(s) shall be harmonious and in context with adjoining buildings.

Neither of the adjoining buildings are architecturally significant. Thus, the project architect was guided by the natural environment. The proposed building textures, color palates and components are harmonious and in context with the site's surroundings.

5. Utility and service equipment areas shall be screened from public view with materials harmonious with the building. Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations, shall be underground.

The proposed electrical transformer will be located in the northeast corner of the site and screened from view by landscaping. All building utilities and mechanical equipment will be located within the building or on the roof, setback from the building edge.

iii. Signs and Lighting

1. Every sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates and shall be coordinated with the building architecture.

Signage has not been designed at this time. However, all signage will be designed as an integral element of the proposed building.

2. Exterior lighting, where used, shall enhance public safety, the building design, and the landscape.

Exterior decorative lighting is proposed throughout the site to ensure resident safety.

3. Lighting shall minimize point-source exposure, excessive brightness, glare, and spillover.

All lighting will be appropriately shielded to prevent any glare or spillage on neighboring properties.