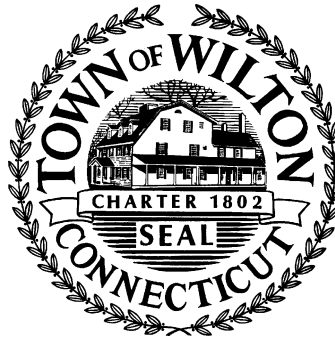


VILLAGE DISTRICT  
DESIGN ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE/  
ARCHITECTURAL  
REVIEW BOARD

Telephone (203) 563-0185  
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TOWN HALL ANNEX  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, Connecticut  
06897

Robert Sanders, AIA, Chairman  
Samuel Gardner, AIA, Vice-  
Chairman  
John Doyle,  
AIA Kevin  
Quinlan, AIA

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD/ VILLAGE  
DISTRICT DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR (ELECTRONIC) MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, September 7, 2023  
5:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Rob Sanders, AIA, Chairman, Sam Gardner, AIA, Vice Chairman  
Kevin Quinlan, AIA, John Doyle, AIA, and Kathleen Poirier, AIA

**ALSO PRESENT:** Daphne White, Assistant Town Planner

**I. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**

- A. Call to Order** – at approximately 5:07 PM
- B. Roll Call**
- C. Work Session**

**1. Fuller Development, LLC, 64 Danbury Road** – Proposed 100-unit  
apartment complex

Present with the applicant, Sam Fuller, were Chris Lessard, Juhi Bhardwaj, and Ulises Montes de Oca (all from Lessard Design), and Henry Conroy (Spinnaker Real Estate Partners). Spinnaker and Fuller are 50/50 partners in this development.

Mr. Fuller began by introducing his team. He then turned the presentation over to Mr. Conroy to discuss details of the site at 64 Danbury Road. He described the various of architectural styles of the adjacent buildings and how it would be difficult to fit their building to one specific style.

Mr. Montes de Oca then initiated discussion of details of the application as presented. The complex would consist of nine, three-story buildings. Each unit would have an independent entry, some with private garages. He then described entry points to the complex and the internal roads feeding the garages. He also discussed the importance of the most prominent building as viewed from Danbury Road. They proposed a 50' setback with space for landscaping. He then visually described potential designs with a goal of creating a modern yet timeless look.

Mr. Fuller then discussed how their planning dealt with the elevation change as the complex moved eastward away from Danbury Road. Small buildings along the driveway would have grade increases and the opportunity for mews between buildings creating a neighborhood feel.

Mr. Montes de Oca then discussed flat roofed, three-story buildings, and the exterior features, such as window sizing, coloring, balconies, and recesses. Another style he detailed featured significant glass (ground to ceiling), balconies, and a tower.

Mr. Sanders then requested that the discussion move to site circulation and how it would respond to grade changes. Mr. Fuller then reviewed the earlier discussion and mentioned the 20' grade change from Danbury Road to the back of the property. Mr. Sanders then inquired about the watercourse on the property and how it would be dealt with. The existing structure is partially underground. Landscaping would be incorporated to rejuvenate the area around the wetland.

The meeting was then opened up to the Board. Mr. Gardner commented that the design was something that could be residential or an office building, and a style that he is seeing often. He said that he was intrigued by the style of the second design shown by Mr. Montes de Oca. Mr. Sanders addressed his concerns over the narrow entry points, with garage doors lining both sides, and the inevitable dumpster at the end of the garages, which is a product of the density and blocky character of the buildings. He noted it was too dense. Mr. Gardner

mentioned that the complex will be about cars. Also, Mr. Sanders stated that there should be more differentiation between the nine buildings and the adjacent office buildings.

Mr. Quinlan mentioned his concern about the number of garage doors upon entering the development and the amount of parking and paved area versus green area. He stated his preference for the timber frame and steel option and felt that it created more energy and could lead to different roof forms; the first rendering, he felt, was too predictable.

Ms. Poirier was also in favor of the new versus original design. She felt the new version appeared more vibrant. She was concerned, however, about large windows facing each other from as little as 30’.

Mr. Doyle expressed concern over the topography and the slope from the back to the front of the property. He also expressed concern about traffic entering from Danbury Road, into the rotary, and exiting into the complex with the entrances being so narrow. Another concern was about the southern most building and its close proximity to the Hartford Health building. In response to this concern, Mr. Fuller said that they added landscaping to help shield views to that building.

## **2. AMS Acquisitions, 131 Danbury Road – Proposed 208-unit apartment complex**

Mr. Rafi Mitnick of AMS introduced himself and his team, as well as representative architects, civil engineers, landscaping architects, zoning & planning consultant, etc.

Mr. Mitnick started by giving a description of the project. It would entail taking down a mostly vacant office building and building a high-end rental apartment building, targeting a growing workforce and downsizers who would like to stay in Wilton. Mr. Seelan Pather (Beinfeld Architecture) then took over to discuss the designs. Sense of place and sense of community are goals of his architectural designs. The first pass rendering reflected a proposed two-story building (38’ height, 105’ width, 30’ depth), barn like and wood framed, meant to be the signature of the development and create the first impression, and visually control the mass of the 4-story building behind it. There would be a bridge connection

between the two buildings. Landscaping would frame the building and provide screening.

Mr. Pather stated that the building would be set back 150' from the road with a 75' setback from the amenity building. 150'. The primary building is set back 100'. The primary building would have 208 units, with 18 units having lofts. There would be 339 parking spaces (1.6 per unit), with 218 being covered and 121 uncovered on the periphery. He stated that he believed that there would be no bad units based on side setbacks for outer units, as well as internal units that overlook a "dramatic" internal courtyard. He then discussed materials, and showed a rendering using shou sugi ban wood siding on the front façade.

Mr. Jason Williams, landscape architect, then took over to discuss landscaping. He detailed the drop-off area beneath the bridge at the front of the main building, which would be curb-less and delineated by lighted bollards and planters. He then described the framing of the amenity "jewel box" front building with stone walls and wild flower meadow, and a lawn area abutting Danbury Road. On the north side of the property there is an existing tree (spruce and fir) buffer with the 141 property. Moving to the rear of the building traffic would turn southward into a covered area before exiting on the south side of the building. To the west there would be work done to remove the invasive plants that run down to the river and create a restored buffer, with walking paths moving north/south. Evergreen screening would be used on the south side of the property.

Meeting opened to discussion. Mr. Doyle started by expressing that he liked the design, highlighting the front building set back from the road with the landscaped framing. He also liked that the first parking area is set back 100' from the road. Mr. Quinlan spoke next and opened by saying that he agreed with everything that Mr. Doyle said. He liked the incorporation of an internal courtyard, the exterior materials, and the landscaping elements. Ms. Poirier also liked the presentation details, highlighting the jewel box in front and the interior courtyard. Mr. Gardner followed by stating that the details presented did a good job of handling a very dense building. Mr. Sanders liked the concept of foreground and background, as well as the level nature of the buildings from the road and the way the grade change was handled. He posed a question relating to the strip of parking in the rear of the building (west side), and if it could be permeable. He opined that the building is an example of contemporary expression and upscale feel.

Mr. Sanders then stated that he had consensus amongst the members of the Board's endorsement and indicated that the application was ready for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The ARB portion of the meeting then adjourned.

## **II. VILLAGE DISTRICT DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **A. Call to Order - 6:56 PM**

### **B. Roll Call** Rob Sanders, AIA, Chairman, Sam Gardner, AIA, Vice Chairman, Kevin Quinlan, AIA, John Doyle, AIA, and Kathleen Poirier, AIA

### **C. Work Session**

#### **1. Cactus Rose Restaurant, 5 River Road – patio w/awning for outdoor dining**

Mr. David Weitowitz represented the applicant. The scope of the project is 225 SF of additional awning. Mr. Weitowitz started the presentation by showing a photo of the existing awning and stated that they would like to expand the awning in the same style. Fire Department approval has been granted. The proposed plan is to expand the awning outward so that in good weather seating can be open air, but when weather is inclement, plastic curtains can be drawn down.

Mr. Quinlan stated that he thought the awning blended in seamlessly and softened the corner and appeared to be a natural continuation of what is there. Mr. Doyle asked if the doors swings could be a code issue. Mr. Weitowitz responded that he believed that based on the capacity it would be approved by WFD. Mr. Doyle, Ms. Poirier, and Mr. Gardner then stated that they liked the appearance of the awning. Mr. Sanders then stated that he did not like the appearance of the awning, especially the roll-up vinyl which looks shabby. Perhaps they could somehow be concealed when not in use. He also noted that the brown, fiberglass doors look unappealing. He stated that this would be the first view someone would have entering a prime retail area in Wilton and it could look better and asked if a different style/color door work. Mr. Gardner stated support for Mr. Sander's contention that approving this application as is would be continuing work that was done beyond the scope of the original approval.

The Committee indicated that they would like Mr. Woitowitz to discuss with the owner ideas for making the enclosure of the space more attractive (drapery, motorized shades, etc.) and that revised details would need to be submitted.

**2. Glengate, 47 Old Ridgefield Road** – alternative sign package, landscaping, and lighting

Jordy Scott and Sean Gerrity spoke on behalf of Glengate. Mr. Scott started by showing a survey detailing the property and where signage would be placed. A free standing Glengate sign would be placed where it could be viewed from Old Ridgefield Road, where the previous tenant had a sign. On the side, bordering the Chase Bank property, would be parking signage, detailing spaces assigned to Glengate. Also, on this side would be a single sign indicating the rear employee entrance. They plan to utilize the canopy, previously a bank drive-thru, so it will not be removed but be repurposed and there would be parking signage along Hubbard Road along with a free-standing sign. Also, wall mounted signage was proposed around a corner facing both Old Ridgefield Road and at the intersection of Old Ridgefield Road and Hubbard Road. Mr. Scott then showed the additional signage that would be located on the property, including building mounted signs and window signs.

Mr. Sanders then asked about lighting. Mr. Scott noted that each of the freestanding signs will be up lit, landscape style, two light fixtures facing each sign face, LED, 15-watt, 60-degree, par 36, 3000K. Mr. Quinlan stated that he liked the signage package. Mr. Gardner didn't like the quantity of signs, thinking that landscaping could be a sign unto itself. Mr. Sanders concurred. They asked that one of the monument signs be removed and replace the free-standing sign along Old Ridgefield Road. They asked for fewer parking signs, and they suggested that the window signs be moved up higher.

The Committee approved unanimously the signage with their suggested changes, and said that they would review the landscape plan once it was complete.

**3. Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road**

Caroline Mandler (Executive Director of Wilton Library) and Sandy Stein (Chair of the Board of the Marketing Committee) spoke for the Wilton Library. They

proposed hanging sixteen double-side banners hanging from existing poles in the parking lot. Size, material, and placement of the signs would be the same as when the library was promoting their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Everyone liked the banner design very much, with a suggestion to enlarge the lettering of the bottom right wording on each banner. Mr. Sanders was against changing the font of the lettering for the library, saying that the font “is the library font”, but noted that the font size could be considered for the text in the lower part of the banner. The Committee supported the signage being year-round. All were in favor.

**4. Kimco, 5 River Road**

Tabled.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. July 6, 2023**

Tabled until the October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS**

No discussion

**V. ADJOURNMENT – 8:07 PM**

**Respectfully submitted by Rich Callahan – Recording Secretary**

**\*MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN REVIEWED BY THIS BOARD/COMMITTEE AND  
MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVISION IN FUTURE MINUTES. FULL AUDIO**

RECORDING OF MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT: [Minutes, Agendas & Videos/Audios | Wilton CT](#)