

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
DRAFT MINUTES
January 16, 2024

Members Present: Chairman Geiger, Hart, Lopatynsky, Janis, Morrison, Reilly

Staff Present: Hamon

Meeting held in room 119 of Darien Town Hall.
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Motion by Chairman for change in Agenda to accommodate Great Island schedule passed.

ARB-1-2024 (ARB-1-2024 (PL-24-2 in Viewpoint online system))

Great Island - Access Way, Curbs, Gutters 0 Great Island Road submitted by Ed Gentile, Darien Public Works

Proposal for new access road, retaining walls and curbs as well as reorienting existing pillars at entrance and a new plantings

Craig Flaherty of Redniss & Mead (civil engineering firm), Matthew Popp of ELS Landscape Architects (Landscape Architect – landscaping plan) presenting. Monica McNally, chair of the GIAC, Darien Board of Selectman and Ed Gentile of Darien Public Works present.

Proposed is a new 22' wide asphalt driveway to replace the existing 12' drive in order to provide public access to Great Island. The existing road and existing notable river rock curbing/gutters are to be removed – the granite curbing of said gutters is to be reused for the new road and river rock to be salvaged and stored on island for future reuse. Additionally, a 5' walking path is to be added alongside the drive. The widening of the road necessitates the removal and/or relocation of the northly pillars to make way for the road and pedestrian path. As such two alternative entrance designs are proposed with varying widths between the pillars. The historic gates are to remain – however will be permanently open as the grade will not allow for workable gates. A one way loop is proposed for public access on island and wayfinding signage and arrows are proposed. Also proposed are four new lamps to light the road for safety and direction – several options given, all are black-sky compatible and 3000 kelvin. Finally proposed are new plantings to replace the necessary removal of existing trees and to provide screening for the neighbors.

The board clarified that the proposal is only in regards to the driveway.

The board expressed a wish for a bike path independent from a pedestrian path and concern over safety. Flaherty reiterates that space is limited. The board suggested an on-road bike path that ques drivers that they share the space with bikers to slow down drivers.

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Flaherty reiterates that 3 lots have access to the road and future development must have unimpeded access to the road.

In regards to the pillar spacing options, the board expressed concern over the width of the entrance gates and asked that the entry feel more intimate with keeping of the cultural landscape of the area. The board wants the entrance to reflect the era and specialness of the island. The board suggests that the pedestrian path and vehicular experience be decoupled on the island including the entry.

An apron is to be included at the entry.

The board expressed disappointment in the loss of the existing gutter/curb detailing. The board suggested reusing the existing gutter detail in replacement of a double yellow line that would separate the lanes to demarcate the lanes. Popp suggests that likely the detailing will be accidentally paved over in the future. Board suggests wouldn't be gutter but instead flush with surface.

During discussions and independently of each other the board, Flaherty and staff (Hamon) came up with an idea to rework the smaller pillars to create a more intimate entrance and the illusion of pedestrian and vehicular separation. All agree this is best entrance option.

Popp suggests several light fixture options for pillars with preference for up lights on pillars. Board agrees a simple uplight is enough. Popp also discussed street light options including copying one of the four that are on property already. Board likes option (c) a residential light on property. Discussion of dark sky compliant. Flaherty expresses concern over neighbors with light glare. Hamon points out that Great Island is zoned residential and not commercial therefore commercial lighting standards need not apply and are at discretion of GIAC and ARB. Even if use is public interest, the zoning remains residential. Board has source recommendations for similar lighting.

Popp presents planting plan to replace and add to existing trees. Popp notes neighbors are concerned about lighting hitting their home. The board noted that the current planting plan is for the benefit of neighbors (screening) and suggested that the neighbors will likely install their own hedging thus making the cost redundant. The board also asked if a tree allee in keeping with the era of the island was investigated and whether a planting plan in homage of the era was investigated. Popp suggests an open an informal planting plan is proposed. The neighbors currently have an open view to Long Island Sound so the intent is to maintain that for the neighbors.

The schedule currently is to break ground in April and complete for public access in July.

The ARB suggested the landscape be forward thinking to future residential development along the road instead of addressing existing conditions and plant accordingly. Flaherty suggests too narrow

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to do a robust planting plan. Board considers this and suggests that keeping historic elements subtle and pulled in will be enough.

The board reiterated that neighbors will likely plant their own arborvitae as the Zeigler property is developed and that portion of the property will feel heavy thus lighter planting is suggested.

The board again repeated that the preservation and reuse of the existing curbs as an architectural element be investigated and seriously considered. Specifically, the board asked that the existing gutter river rock detail be reused as a way to divide the asphalt drive. The board restated that this detailing would also serve the benefit of slowing down traffic as well as preserving some of the historic details of the property.

Retaining Wall to be orthogonal granite with visible bead to match existing walls on island with NO CAP. Wet lay – not a veneer.

The board expressed concern that having an asphalt walkway might feel like too much hardscape. The idea of stone dust i.e. Waveny was discussed. Concern with asphalt paths being used by cyclists was raised. However, the grades at 8% also bring up concern with migration of aggregate.

The Board issued a Favorable Report. The board requests the reworking of the pillars as discussed at the entrance, the lighting style to match option (c) as provided (the residential style in front of the white home), the retaining walls to be orthogonal granite to match existing with no cap, and a preference for a 2 foot stone parapet as guard rail (as opposed to wood – budget depending).

Old Business

ARB-48-2023 (PL-23-181 in Viewpoint online system)

770 Boston Post Road, House of Trizia Jewelry Designs, submitted by Monica Rospigilosi

Proposal for wall sign and blade sign.

Monica Rospigilosi presenting.

New proposal for wall sign – light blue with gold border on ½” fiber board. Board is to be printed by signs.com. The sign is to be 54” wide by 24” height. The sign is to be affixed with bracket to the siding – the brackets are to be hidden (not visible).

Blade sign proposed to be 30” wide by 22” high. Sign is to be affixed to existing real estate style pole sign in front of property. Sign is double sided attached to PVC board.

The Board issued a favorable report.

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Other Business

Anna Janis was nominated as new vice chairman of ARB and unanimously approved.

December minutes submitted by Hart were unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Janis

ARB/ELG