



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
Design Review Committee

Town Hall, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890

Juli Riemenschneider, RLA, ASLA, Chair
Ellen Spencer, Vice Chair
Adrian LeBuffe, LEED
Eileen Casciari, RA
Mary Grassi
Tracy Vartenigian Burhans
Jamie Devol, AIA

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 7:00 pm – Meeting by Zoom

Present: Riemenschneider, Spencer, Devol, Burhans, Casciari, LeBuffe, Grassi
Recording Secretary Nancy Upper

1. Open meeting. Vote to approve October 5, 2022, meeting minutes

All in favor - 7-0.

2. Sign Permit – 7 Church Street, Santander Bank branch

- The proposed signs — logo-only blade sign affixed perpendicular to the building façade, and Santander lettering affixed onto the building façade — are internally illuminated so do not meet sign requirements set forth in:
 - The Town Code of Bylaws, Chapter 9 SIGNS, Section 2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, [Subsection 2.2.b](#).
 - [The Sign Book, Section 5, second bullet](#), which quotes Subsection 2.2.b:
Internally illuminated signs are prohibited: “No sign may utilize translucent panels, canvas or other fabric, letters, devices or other similar components to create an image by allowing light to pass through.” Signs must be lit directly or by a completely concealed indirect source.
- DRC member Jamie Devol noted that no other sign in Winchester Center is internally illuminated, so “this can’t be the only one.”
- Eileen Casciari observed that the lowercase letters in the existing Santander sign are the same height as the façade stones, whereas the lowercase letters in the proposed sign are taller than the stones.

- To make the entrance door of the building accessible to people of all physical abilities, the applicant proposes to
 - Build a brick ramp leading to the entrance door.
 - Edge the ramp with a sturdy white railing.
- Ellen Spencer said the white railing looks harsh against the stone façade.
- The applicant proposes six bright red 2-foot-7-inch-wide awnings varying in length from 5-feet to 10-feet.
- Jamie Devol noted that the awning depth is “awkward,” because rain drips onto pedestrians.
- Juli Riemenschneider mentioned that the application includes a sign with “brushed aluminum lettering” and a “freestanding sign.” She asked where these signs will go.

DRC requests of the applicant:

- Specify where the brushed aluminum lettering and freestanding sign will be located.
- Make the “Santander” façade lettering smaller.
- Illuminate the “Santander” façade lettering to comply with Sign Bylaw requirements.
- Submit architectural drawings of the proposed ramp and railing.

3. Sign Permit – 165 Washington Street

Guest presenter Holly Gorrell, Owner of Zodiac Signs LLC

- Gorrell explained that the posts of the existing sign are “in good shape” and sturdily seated in the ground, but the slats between the posts are peeling and deteriorating.
- Gorrell said the dimensions of the new, two-sided slats will be the same as the existing, but the new slats will be:
 - Made of better materials that will withstand weather conditions.
 - Easier to read than the existing.
- Gorrell showed an image of the proposed replacement sign.
- DRC members thought it legible and in good taste. They had no further comment on the proposed sign.

4. 18 Chester Street - Winchester MA

PETITION NO. 3981-That of PETER and CLAUDIA MITCHELL concerning the property at 18 CHESTER STREET, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners are seeking Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(6) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to construct a detached garage where the total floor area of the house and the garage is greater than 3,600 square feet. The property is located in the RG (General Residence) zoning district and contains 10,020 +/-square feet.

Guest presenter: Peter Mitchell, homeowner

- The proposed 1½ - story, 24' x 44' garage will sit in the property's back yard.
- The garage will have the same 12-foot roof pitch, roofing material, windows, siding, and style as the existing house.
- Mitchell and his architect, Don Anderson, intend the proposed garage to match the house, "to look like it has always been there."
- The garage will hold bays for two cars, a workshop behind the bays for Mitchell's woodworking and metalworking, storage space in the half-story above.
- The existing driveway will be extended to the new garage.
- DRC Chair Juli Riemenschneider appreciated Mitchell's need for workspace. She noted that the project meets all Town requirements for ratio of greenspace to hardscape, and all setback requirements.
- Emerson Court is a cul-de-sac behind the first three lots of Chester Street. The property most affected by the proposed garage is 9 Emerson Court at the end of the cul-de-sac.
- Jamie Devol expressed concern that the 44'-long garage, six feet from the property line, would block views and light from 9 Emerson Court.
 - She asked why the garage could not be placed on the side of the back yard away from 9 Emerson and a new driveway put in to the right of Mitchell's house.
 - Mitchell replied that he wanted to use the existing driveway rather than incur the expense and disruption of building a new one.
- Devol strongly objected to the size of the garage, saying it looks almost as big as the house and is larger than 9 Emerson Court.
- Drawings of the proposed garage show a shed dormer on each side of the pitched roof. The fronts of the dormers align with the first-story walls of garage. To make the garage look smaller:
 - Some DRC members suggested setting back the dormers.
 - Others suggested removing the dormers.
 - Mitchell said he "would be okay with eliminating the dormers."

Ellen Spencer made the motion for favorable action with the conditions that:

- a. The dormers are removed. — or —
- b. The dormers are made smaller.

Vote 6-1.

Jamie Devol cast the dissenting vote, citing the size of the garage. She said, "It is almost as long as the [18 Chester] house and is bigger than the adjacent 9 Emerson house."

Eileen Casciari said, "Per the site plan provided, the garage is in

fact longer than the main house.”

5. 959 Main Street - Winchester MA

PETITION NO. 3982-That of FRATT LLC concerning the property at 959 MAINSTREET, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioner is seeking a Special Permit from Section 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to change from one non-conforming use (exotic pet store and antique shop – Group IV: Use 1: Retail) to another, less detrimental non-conforming use (café/bakery – Group IV: Use 3), as well as alteration to non-conforming structure. The property is located in the GBD-3 (General Business District 3) and contains 4,696 +/-square feet.

Guest presenters: Philip Frattaroli, owner of 959 Main, co-owner of
Ristorante Lucia
Fulton Harley, architect

ALTERATIONS

- Exterior alterations to the west elevation include:
 - Create a more attractive main entrance.
 - Fill in the “well” in front of the left side of the façade to level the property and add a secondary entrance.
 - Install a steel canopy above each entrance.
 - To enhance and open the façade:
 - Add two decorative dark bronze panels to contrast with the beige bricks.
 - Above the panels, install folding doors that open onto a shallow balcony.
 - Above the folding doors, install two transom windows.
 - Frattaroli said, “The transom windows will flood the space with light.”
- The south elevation faces a three-story multi-family building. Window panes in the south elevation will be frosted glass.
- Interior alterations include “fun stuff to watch” such as facilities for making of pasta and breads for Lucia’s.

USAGE

- After he establishes the bakery and café, Frattaroli envisions a sidewalk space for café tables (but no waiter and waitress service).

DRC Comments:

- A member asked about trash storage. Frattaroli said that Lucia’s has nightly trash pickup. He will continue the practice of inside storage and nightly pickup at 959 Main Street.
- Juli Riemenschneider asked Frattaroli’s plans for landscaping.
 - Eileen Casciari agreed that “It would be nice to add greenery

to soften the brown brick.”

- Frattaroli replied, “We want to get use approval before deciding on landscaping.”
- Ellen Spencer suggested that black panels would look better than bronze, also balcony railings and other trim. Eileen Casciari, Adrian LeBuffe, and Tracy Burhans agreed that black would look better than bronze.

Juli Riemenschneider made the motion for favorable action on change of use.

Vote 7-0 in favor.

Before voting for favorable action on alterations, DRC members want to see:

- a. Drawings that show more detail of the building’s front façade
- b. Colors of materials.
- c. Streetscape and landscape plans.

6. 29 Calumet Road – Winchester MA

PETITION NO. 3979-That of BEN and CAROLINE SACKS concerning the property at 29 CALUMET ROAD, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners seek Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(5) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to be permitted to construct an addition where the total floor area of the single family dwelling will be greater than 5,000 square feet. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 18,000+/-square feet.

Guest presenter: Ben Sacks, homeowner
Caroline Sacks, co-homeowner
James Sullivan, contractor/builder

- The Sacks family proposes to build a 1½-story garage attached to the house by a one-story mudroom / powder room connector.
- DRC members viewed photos of the existing house, and drawings, by Daus-Haberle Design, showing front, side, and back elevations of the proposed addition.

DRC Comments:

- Ellen Spencer: “In recent years we are seeing more and more of these big, old houses getting attached garages.”
 - “I don’t think the current proposal matches the house.”
 - “This house would look much better with a detached garage.”
- Eileen Casciari added that the garage would look better “pulled back from the house.”
- Jamie Devol and Ellen Spencer agreed that they would favor a detached

garage. A beautiful, spacious porte-cochère at the front entry, original to the house, already provides shelter from the elements.

- Devol continued:
 - “Compared to the original house, the garage and its connector look fussy, small, and not in keeping with the generous proportions and elegance of the house.”
 - “The oriel window in the garage second level looks crowded into the gable.”
 - The side elevation of the proposed garage, uninterrupted by a horizontal eave line with curved tapers at its eave ends, is more in keeping with the substantial shingled wall planes of the house. (In the proposed design, the continuation of the horizontal eave above the garage doors breaks this scale.)
- Juli Riemenschneider: “There is not enough shingle around the busy windows in the addition.”
- Spencer: “We need to see alternative plans.”
- Homeowner Ben Sacks emphasized, “We really want an attached garage.”
- Co-homeowner Caroline Sacks said:
 - “We hired an architect who has done historic homes in the neighborhood.”
 - “We do all we can to restore the house to its original appearance.”
- James Sullivan pointed out that gable roof on the proposed garage does not match the gambrel roof on the house. He said, “The front side [front elevation] of the garage needs work.”
- DRC members noted the tapered lower edges of the house’s hip roof. Tracy Burhans suggested “they carry out these tapered edges in the garage roof.”

Conclusion:

- Riemenschneider asked the design team to come to DRC’s Wednesday, December 7, 2022, meeting with revised drawings of a garage that better matches the existing house.

7. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Bylaw – Discussion as to the wording and scope of design reviews.

DRC discussion:

- Juli Riemenschneider: “If an ADU is attached to the existing house, it should match the house style. If detached, the ADU can have more freedom of design.”
- Adrian LeBuffe referred to item 4. in the proposed ADR Bylaw. He said, “We should reword item 4. with design language to include more than just style.”

- Wording of item 4. as proposed by Town Planner Brian Szekely: “4. Any exterior changes for an accessory dwelling unit shall be constructed similarly in style to the primary residence.”
- Jamie Devol summarized DRC members’ suggestions for revised wording: “4. Any exterior changes for an accessory dwelling unit shall be designed to complement the primary residence, site, and neighborhood through appropriate scale, form, and materials.”
- November 2, 2022, Juli Riemenschneider submitted DRC’s revised wording to Brian Szekely, Planning Board Chair Diab Jerius, the Planning Board, and the Design Review Committee.

8. 10-16 Mt. Vernon Street – Winchester MA

Preapplication discussion of proposed third-floor addition to 10-16 Mt. Vernon St.

Guest presenters: John Leavitt, Manager of 10-16 Mt. Vernon Street LLC
John McConnell, Architect, adjunct professor at Boston College.

- A pdf, dated November 18, 2020, on the Town website, shows a [letter from John Leavitt to the Planning Board](#) proposing a “third floor addition to the existing 2 story corner building in the East Corridor of the CBD.”
 - The letter states that the third floor will consist of “4 residential units ranging in size of 399 sq. ft to 519 sq. ft.”
 - The letter quotes Bylaw [Section 7.3.20.1, item 4.](#): “No vehicle parking is required for additions or changes in Allowed Uses to structures listed as Historic Resources and shown in the Historic Resources Map 7.3.4 located in [Section 7.3.18.](#)”
 - The letter mentions that the building is an “800-foot walking distance of a transit station, bus stop or taxi stand.”
- Ellen Spencer noted that this same project had come before the DRC in 2020, and that the committee had recommended unfavorable action. She read from DRC’s [September 30, 2020, meeting minutes](#):
Committee recommends unfavorable action 5-0 for the following reasons:
 - a. [Per 5.10.1](#), proposed addition to this flat roofed building is a substantial change in character, proportion and massing.
Proposed 3rd floor should be set back from building facades such as to minimize visual impact
 - b. [Per 7.3.15.5](#) item 7, proposal would have highly significant impact on historic resources thru modification of existing historic building
- John McConnell pointed out the prominent cornice and oriel windows on the building’s second floor. He said:
 - The cornice on the proposed third floor will be smaller to not compete with the second-floor cornice.

- For structural reasons, the third floor cannot be set back from the second floor.
- Jamie Devol quoted from Section 5.10.1 of the document, Regulations Governing Section 7.3 Center Business District (CBD) Zoning Bylaw:
 - “Additional stories should be designed to minimize visual impact on the proportions and massing of the original structure. The most common approach to meeting this guideline is to step additions back from the façade or side building plane.”
- Devol said, “The Bylaw strongly recommends that floors added to flat-roofed upper stories should be set back to minimize visual impact.” She added, “I am not enamored of the proposed design and it blocks viewsheds.”
- Architectural drawings showed that in all the proposed units, only the peripheral bedrooms have windows.
- A DRC member asked if the units could be studio apartments to let more light into their interiors.
- Tracy Burhans disapproved of the design which puts all bedrooms on street sides of the third floor. She added, “The units do not have adequate windows for the living space.”
- Eileen Casciari asked if the third story could have a mansard roof.
- McConnell: A mansard roof would be out of character with the existing building.
- Devol called the ornate second-floor cornice a “capping piece.”
- Adrian LeBuffe: “With such a heavy cornice, anything above it is not going to look diminished.”
- Juli Riemenschneider: “I was not aware that this design is almost the same as what we looked at before.” See above excerpt from [September 30, 2020, DRC meeting minutes](#).

The DRC maintained its recommendation of unfavorable action, 7-0.

9. 8 Bridge Street – Winchester MA

PETITION NO. 3980-That of EMERALD HYPNOSIS LLC / EMER T. MORRIS concerning the property at 8 BRIDGE STREET, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioner is seeking a Special Permit from Section 3.1.2, Group VI (2) and 9.4 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws, so as to be permitted to establish a home occupation where clients come to the house for consultation. The property is located in the RG (General Residence) zoning district and contains 11,778+/-square feet.

- Juli Riemenschneider: The exterior architecture of the building will look

the same, but the front living room will be converted into an office.

- Ellen Spencer: Since the petitioner seeks a Special Permit for an interior change only, this does not fall within our purview.

10. 326 Highland Avenue – Petition 3977 (Revised design) – See [DRC October 5, 2022, meeting minutes, item 3](#).

Guest presenters: Christopher Patzke, Senior Landscape Architect, Zen Associates

Peter White, Landscape Architect, Zen Associates

Joe Randolph, neighbor across the street at 325 Highland Ave.

Kathryn Maffei, Joe Randolph's wife and co-resident at 325 Highland.

Patzke and White answered questions DRC raised at their October 5 meeting and showed slides of the revised plans the Committee requested.

Revised plans, drawings, and renderings included:

- Sizes of existing trees to be removed.
- List, sizes, and images of proposed plant species to be added.
- Images of the existing stone wall Zen will match and images of proposed fencing.
- Images of updated elevations and sections.
- Renderings of updated elevations and sections to show Zen's solution of using screen plantings to soften the look and width of the proposed retaining walls.
- Updated planting plan and rendered views of the updated plan.
- Christopher Patzke: "Our intention is to pick plants that will grow to the right height for the right place, to screen but not overpower the house and the new construction."
- Eileen Casciari: "We really appreciate how you updated your plans, drawings, and renderings."
- Juli Riemenschneider: "I am concerned about how the pool filtration system will affect the roots of existing trees."
 - Patzke assured her the construction would minimize root damage.
- Neighbor Joe Randolph showed three satellite photos of the area. He said:
 - "We are directly across the street at 325 Highland, so we will be looking at this project every day."
 - "A pool in the front yard is a very unusual thing."
 - "Pools end up having a lot of activity around them, and things tend to accumulate around a pool, such as tables, chairs, towels, floating devices, a gas grill, etc."
 - "The sight line from our house looks directly at the pool

terrace, so we want more screening around the pool terrace than the current plans show.”

- “Placing the pool in the back would require fewer ‘heroics’ than are required to put the pool in the front yard.”
- Patzke: “The back yard has ledge, so would require blasting that may damage the house.”
- Mark Andersen, homeowner: “We did extensive studies, and the front yard was the best place to put the pool.”
- Randolph: “Any owner can put any furniture on the pool deck forevermore, so we are concerned.”
- Kathryn Maffei: “There are children in the [Andersen] house, there will be parties, splashing, sounds — a pool is an activity center. It’s like having a playground put in across the street from us.”
- Adrian LeBuffe: “The revised plan is a huge improvement. The question of noise is a ZBA [Zoning] question.”
- Riemenschneider: “What triggered this petition to us was the grade change.”
 - See [Bylaw Section 9.5.1](#) “... site plan approval from the Board of Appeals shall be required before any of the following is commenced:” [Item 7](#). “Changing the grade of more than five hundred (500) square feet by more than six (6) percent.”
 - Riemenschneider: “The [Zen team] addressed our screening concerns with added plantings.”

Juli Riemenschneider made the motion for favorable action based on the revised plans.

Vote 6-1.

Jamie Devol cast the dissenting vote, citing [Zoning Bylaw 9.5.7.1](#) which states: “1. Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials, and scale of buildings in the vicinity.”

Devol said, “A pool, hot tub, and pool equipment in the front yard is ‘unreasonable departure’ from neighborhood character and sets an unsuitable precedent.”

11. Adjourn.

SUMMARY of Design Review Committee VOTES — November 01, 2022			
Minutes #	Item	Address	Vote
4.	Petition 3981	18 Chester Street	Favorable action 6-1
5.	Petition 3982	959 Main Street	Favorable action on change of use 7-0.

			Before voting on building alterations, DRC requested drawings of proposed façade details, proposed colors of materials, streetscape and landscape plans.
6.	Petition 3979	29 Calumet Road	No Vote. DRC requested revised garage design.
8.	Preapplication discussion	10-16 Mt. Vernon Street	Unfavorable action 7-0
10.	Petition 3977	326 Highland Avenue	Favorable action 6-1.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 07, 2022, 7:30pm Location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Nancy Upper.