

Design and Construction Board of Review
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2019

A regular meeting of the Design and Construction Board of Review was held at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers of Rocky River City Hall with the following members present:

Jim Larsen, Chairman
Jill Brandt, Member
Michael Tomsik, Member

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| 1. DAVID GENTILCORE | Garage Addition |
| 22250 Detroit Rd. | APPROVED |

Present: David Gentilcore, Homeowner

- Three-Car garage addition on lower level with second and third story, two bedrooms, master bath, laundry room, and a covered front porch
- Materials were discussed – Hardy Board or engineered wood product siding; gables to be hardy shake material
- Limestone on attached garage front to match or contrast with existing foundation
- Grey siding and red windows
- Metal roofs over two porches in grey or charcoal color
- Dormer roof to match shingle roof
- Existing detached garage to be removed

Mr. Tomsik moved to approve the garage addition, as presented. Mrs. Brandt seconded.

3 Ayes – 0 Nays
APPROVED

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| 2. ROCKY RIVER PRESERVATION | <u>Pre-Preliminary Review</u> |
| PARTNERS (700 Lake Project) | Multi-Family and Townhouse |
| 22732 Lake Road, et al. | Development |

Present: Alexandra Yonkov, Brickhaus Partners, John M. Carney, Rocky River Preservation Partners, Vince Monachino, Construction Manager, Kim Crane, Project Realtor

- Applicant, Alexandra Yonkov, explained that in order for a project to be a success, their approach includes 6 elements. A project must be on time, on budget, meet the clients' requirements, keep up with quality, be respectful to the environment and fit into the neighborhood. She explained that they communicate with design and construction consultants, as well as sales consultants to be sure they meet all of the 6 components of a successful project. Some of those consultants are in attendance. Because of this approach, they have been very successful.

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- They have found a way to eliminate the underground parking deck and the Planning Commission is in support of that idea. This gave them more flexibility to balance the site.
- In an effort to clarify the grading, Ms. Yonkov said that the setback from the sidewalk to the wall of the townhouse units is 25' and the buildings have been sunken by approximately 2.5' to provide a courtyard for the units and so that the buildings do not appear so tall. She provided sections of the grading in order to see how the topography works.
- Where there was previously a dip in the grade, the townhomes are now at the same level as the sidewalk and just the entry dips down. The grade on either end of the buildings is at grade with the sidewalk but the townhome entries are several feet down from the height of the sidewalk.
- Mr. Larsen asked when the Civil Engineer will give them the topo and Mr. Monachino said that since they are still discussing the new grading concept with the sunken front doors and courtyard, so they have not done the grading plan and topo for the entire site until this solution is approved. Mr. Larsen said he has expressed that he does not understand the topo and he requested big drawings in order to understand. He is still confused about how these different pieces fit together nicely, as a logical solution. He does not understand what is going on in the entire front area and he would still like to see the topo.
- Ms. Yonkov responded that the renderings are very accurate and will help explain the grading because they show views of the townhomes from the east and the west sides. The concept is to make the grading in front of the townhomes even with the sidewalk. From west to east, the sidewalk drops down by 6'. Each group of townhomes is at a different level, in order to accommodate the 6' drop in grade of the sidewalk. The grading in front will be level with the sidewalk and they go down with the entry stairs at each unit. The difference between the grading at the sidewalk versus at the entry is 2.5 to 3.5'.
- Mr. Larsen said he likes how they are depressing the buildings in order to reduce the height, but that is as far as he will go to tell them that the grades are good.
- Mrs. Brandt said that it appears that the applicants are asking them to comment on how this relates to this Board's concerns about how it addresses the street and sense of entry and Ms. Yonkov confirmed that. She asked what the distance from the retaining wall/planting berm to the sidewalk. Ms. Yonkov responded that the front wall of the units to the sidewalk will be 25' and there will be 8' courtyards in front.
- Regarding the articulation of the units, Ms. Yonkov said that this Board has expressed that they want to avoid a row of "soldiers" with the townhomes and they should not all look exactly alike. She feels that they have achieved that by combining classic architecture with the use of different materials of stone and brick that are applied in a different context. The brick they are presenting is a modern interpretation of a brick building and the stone represents classic architecture. They feel there is a nice combination of style and materials that blend into the neighborhood and the community.
- Ms. Yonkov said that their design intent was to break down each townhome by the entry and the color was used so it could disappear in the back and exemplify the stone and the brick. They have worked to make this a residential, human scale, and

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they express that by using punched windows in accordance with the material and style of each townhome. In the townhomes of classic architecture, the punched windows are slightly longer and wider but with a residential appeal. The punched windows on the brick townhomes are a little more narrow which make them more of contemporary architecture element, and the interpretation is of an older brick building. The courtyard for each unit provides the residential scale and a sense of privacy. They welcome the owners to their home and give each unit a personal appeal. When you enter each townhome, there is an internal stairway which will have a different appeal during the day than at night because of the narrow glass. During the day it will look like one piece, but during the night it will be broken down.

- Ms. Yonkov explained that the entry doors will be made of heavy oak, which will be in line with the contemporary design of the whole entry. The doors are 2.5' to 3' below grade, so they will appear wide and very massive at eye level when walking along the sidewalk. The design being presented are preferred by them, as well as by their current clients and that is why Kim Crane is in attendance because she communicates with their clients.
- Ms. Crane said that they have over 40 pre-reservations and the clients are anxious for the next steps which they cannot present until they have final approval. There is high demand in Rocky River for single floor living and for luxury living with a savviness and there is nothing else like this development in the City. There is demand for this project and they want to keep the momentum going because it will benefit the community.
- Ms. Yonkov added that they were lead to this architecture by the fact that these two rows of townhomes connect the condo building to the single family residential nature of the neighborhood.
- Mrs. Brandt asked for more information about the wood screen wall or stair tower and the wood bump-out with different windows on the sides, which are new elements. Ms. Yonkov said that the townhomes have always been meant to have access to the rooftop deck and that is what Mrs. Brandt is referring to. They have a rooftop pergola to allow additional greenery because many of their clients are creating edible gardens on top. The pergola exists on the two buildings that line the entry to the development and the pergola extends from the rooftop to the ground so that they can provide a green wall element on either side of the entry. There will be brick buildings as end units on the townhomes which will each have a bump-out that will provide additional interior space and light to those units. The entry and bump-out material will be fiber cement panels and not wood.
- Mrs. Brandt said that she would like to start with what she likes about the project. She likes the way the massing is broken up and how the units are articulated. She understands the intention of blending modern architecture and traditional architecture and she likes the direction it is going. She likes the stone and brick materials, the pedestrian scale windows and the railings with the flower boxes. She likes the idea of the descending pergola and the green space at the entry on the end units. She does not like the bump-outs because it looks like it was added on at the last minute. She wants a more horizontal element or awning at the entry doors because the door gets a little lost unless you are walking past it.

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- Mrs. Brandt said that there is a level of detail and quality that is evident in the April 18th, approved by Council renderings. Those renderings have a higher level of detail and attention to materials and it seems a much higher quality than what they are seeing here. Mr. Monachino asked for examples of the higher level of detail in the approved renderings versus what they are presenting. Mrs. Brandt responded that it seems like the treatment around the windows has more depth to it and that the cornicing and multiple layers are very appealing. She is not totally sold on the wood on the rooftop patio level on today's presentation because it seems like it was a functional element that was simply added and painted black to disappear. She thinks there can be a richer level of detail there. She sees different coursing and more give and take on the approved renderings. She understands the concept of having a modern element with a totally different look, but she is not sure it is working. It seems flat, under detailed and under developed at this point. She wishes the brick version had more punch to it but she would like to see more over the entry.
- Ms. Yonkov said that they have explored having the same windows on the brick version as they have on the stone and framing them with stone. However, when they saw the renderings, the use of brick and stone did not make sense. That made the townhomes still look like a row of soldiers, which is why they decided to break it completely by using separate architectural detail for the stone and for the brick.
- Mrs. Brandt likes the fact that it looks like there is a thicker trim around the windows which is a level of detail that provides more depth and she would like to see more of that. She feels that the bump-out seems very disconnected. She would also like to see more development of the upper level and the details associated with it. She feels that the bulkheads above the stairs on the upper level don't look like it is a cohesive part of the building and Ms. Yonkov said she agrees with Mrs. Brandt. and that the stair towers are not depicted well on the renderings. Mrs. Brandt said that she likes the corner rooftop that just has the railing and the greenery because it is more cohesive than the other more modern rooftop element. As shown, she is not convinced that the rooftop elements have the right materials, massing, or location.
- Mr. Larsen said that he has a different take on this and read his previous prepared notes for the record. His direction for the applicants was to continue development of the approved renderings that accompanied the rezoning. What is before them is not a development of those renderings in more detail and it appears to be moving away from his directed look of the project. He named things that are no longer included in the submission, but which are shown on the April 18th approved renderings. The strongly defined break at the third floor line between the brick and stone that helped to visually lower the mass of the structures is gone, as well as the strong stone parapet details at the roofline, which helped to bring down the mass of the buildings. The handsome large and proud window openings seen as individual windows on the stop story and seen as openings framed by stone on the lower 2 stories are no longer there. He feels like the soldiers along Lake Rd. are still there, but they just have different coats on. He expects that differences should be articulated as different rooflines and different forms but that is not what is being presented. He especially likes the fact that the windows on the approved renderings turned the corner and that the side elevations continue the vocabulary and context of what is happening on the front. The continuity created by seeing the side walls as strongly as one would see the front walls when driving down Lake Road is important. There is no longer

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beautiful architectural detailing around the window openings on the lower floor and even on the upper windows. The copper header detail on the approved renderings is no longer being presented. There is no longer an attempt to include a vocabulary of architectural detail in the brick and stone that would be great connection to the existing architectural detailing of the homes in Beachcliff I. In a word, “no”. The latest iteration of the project is not acceptable to him.

- In response to Mr. Larsen’s comments, Ms. Yonkov said she would like to address the April 18th approved renderings that Mr. Larsen is referring to. On that rendering, there is artificial articulation of the façade and those renderings are not buildable. There is one level of the main massing and then a different level with the entry and a third level down below. With all of the cornices and the detail of them, they will look like they are applied and glued to the façade. They are leveling out the first building of 3 townhomes and the second building of 2 townhomes and they are leveling out the third building. When that happens, the articulation and all of the details that are artificially seen on the approved renderings, will disappear.
- Mr. Monachino said that all of the bands and cornices have to terminate at some point, whether it is at an inside corner or at the jogs, and they just don’t work. That will be a messy transition between a curved cornice that is stepping 1’ at each level because it makes it difficult to carry cladding details through an entire building. That will happen at the intermediate floor level and at the parapet wall. They have had a lot of experience building townhomes, and those types of transitions are very tricky.
- Mr. Larsen said that all of those problems are solvable and they just have to walk through it together. It reminds him of the topo, in that they are trying to explain a topo to him, yet they are not showing him a topo. He said that it is very doable and that the details have to be refined so that it can work. It is the richness of the detail of the April 18th approved rendering that is obvious so when he looks at it, he understands the feel of it. The quality, value and detail of it is clear and it is obvious in the rendering. He said that he understands that they don’t have the details figured out yet to make that rendering work, but what they are presenting does not represent the level of architectural detail in the approved renderings.
- Ms. Crane said that this project is unique, custom, luxury and high end. She feels that they are making this a little harder on this specific project, where other things such as Beachcliff Row have been approved right down at the corner of Lake Rd. and Linda St. which she feels represents soldiers. She added that this area is not technically referred to as Beachcliff I, which is actually between Wagar Rd. and the Yacht Club north of Lake Rd. This is a typical townhouse that is across the board being built in northeast Ohio and they are not recreating something that hasn’t been done before.
- Mrs. Brandt responded that the April 18th renderings demonstrate the quality and detail that was approved by City Council and the Design Board is being asked to uphold it.
- Regarding the cornices and the articulation of the façade shown in the approved renderings. Ms. Yonkov said that when they are leveled vertically and horizontally, they will look massive. Regarding the stone railing, it is a personal preference and they are trying to visually lower the height of the buildings. That is why they did not want to extend the façade treatment up to railing height. Mr. Larsen responded he

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does not agree that what they are presenting lowers the building height and in fact, without the banding, it looks taller than the approved rendering.

- Ms. Yonkov said that it was mentioned a couple of meetings ago regarding the treatment on the first and second level windows on the approved renderings, the way they are combined with a wider window opening as well as vertically, made them look commercial. Their approach is to divide the buildings vertically so that they can break the soldiers, whereas the approach on the approved renderings is to divide the townhomes horizontally. In that approach, they will see the first and second level of the townhomes being all the same with lined cornices and 8 windows that are repeated on Lake Rd. with nothing changing. On the third level, there will be 3 windows per home, which amounts to 24 windows in a row along Lake Rd. with no break. They have addressed that in their present design by diversifying how they apply the windows.
- Regarding the side elevations, Ms. Yonkov said that some of the windows do not work functionally because of the interior floor plan. They do not want to have a faux window to make the side elevation more interesting because they have to look at the interior. She referred to the floor plan and said that the bedroom already has windows up front, the stairs and the kitchen are located on the side elevation, as well as a closet and a garage. She agrees that they can work on the bump-out in order to make it more detailed, but they are not very flexible on the side elevations based on the functionality of the interior, but they will work on making the side elevations more interesting. Regarding the comment about copper, there was never copper material presented. What they are seeing in the elevation is the color on the ceiling on the interior of the rendering. Mrs. Brandt responded that it reads more as copper on the elevation.
- Regarding the entry doors of the approved rendering, since then, they have been instructed to emphasize the entry doors and the doors on the renderings are the same as the windows above, so they are not very special. The intent of the architectural style of what was previously approved was to create a design that is in line with the neighborhood and it is not the futuristic architecture that they are able to do and that they like. However, they want to be sensitive to the neighborhood. She feels that the reason that they submitted those renderings 2 years ago is to be sure that they are going to keep somewhat traditional/contemporary architecture here and they are not going to design the modern projects that they have developed in some of their other projects.
- Ms. Yonkov asked Mr. Larsen if she touched on all of his comments and Mr. Larsen responded that he doesn't know, but he wants to make sure that they hear from Mr. Tomsik.
- Mr. Tomsik said that the massing and the material changes here are dramatically different and they all recognize that. The delineation in the materials have moved away from where they were guiding them the last time, and now they have a very repeated soldier style. It is not as favorable as the richness of the previous April 2018 buildings. He questions some of the materials such as the wood material that he sees as weathering out early, unless they use a composite material. He is also not a fan of cement board siding because issues it presents. The very tall vertical stairway entry element being presented is almost shocking. He understands that it is a separation between the row houses, but that form of architecture is very foreign to

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this neighborhood. The 3-story vertical element takes them far away from the human scale they are attempting to create in the townhomes and it is not pedestrian friendly. He is not saying that new is bad, but he questions how the pane of glass is actually be constructed. He knows it will have to have mullions and those need to be shown.

- Mr. Tomsik continued by saying that brick offers so many opportunities for design and the applicant has chosen brick as their modern design material. However even within modern, there should be articulation. The brick townhomes are so small and so plain, and he feels that they are void of design detail. He encourages the applicant to restudy the brick and even in the use of stone on the other townhomes, to further develop some detail or delineation. He applauds the applicant for sinking the buildings and creating the lower patio space. He favors moving away from wood for the intermediate spaces, as well as more richness in the brick and stone. He is not quite accepting of the massing yet or the way it is presented with the recesses of the tall, dark masses and tall vertical element not being broken up. It was previously mentioned that there should be a hood over the entry door to lead to more of a residential feel.
- Mr. Tomsik said that he is not overly enthusiastic about the pergola coming down the wall. The renderings show living greenery, but he wonders how it will look in reality because we live in Ohio. He also wonders whether it really reads as a trellis because there may need to be more members so that it looks more like a trellis. Mr. Tomsik said that this is merely a concept that the applicant is showing and he encourages them to continue and cross-reference back to the April, 2018 approved renderings more.
- Ms. Yonkov responded that these are townhomes and they cannot make each one of them totally different. The stone townhomes on both sides of the entry are favorable to them because they feel it really reads as the entry. She asked how they feel they can articulate the townhomes more to get away from the feel of soldiers.
- Mrs. Brandt responded that the break between the second and third floor that Mr. Larsen brought up is a great articulation. Even if they don't change materials, having the opportunity for banding, and something that steps back, and then something that leads them to stepping back for the rooftop patio area is a way of getting some articulation in the massing, thus bringing the scale down. In addition, there is a different way they are treating the windows on the top than they do on the bottom, which she thinks is lovely. By setting back the entry columns, which she happens to like, it provides a great place to make changes to materials and provide returns. She said that she cannot be convinced by looking at the floor plans that they can't have windows on the side façades, and she believes that they need to do that. She agrees with Mr. Larsen that how the units turn the corner is visible from Lake Rd. and is very important.
- Mr. Monachino said that at the level of quality that has been discussed regarding the April 18th approved renderings, with stone cornices and everything they mentioned would not be built because nobody could afford it. Ms. Yonkov said that they did not go into the details of the constructability of the building and the intent at the time they presented the April 18th approved renderings, was to present a calm, classic architecture so that they could assure Planning Commission and City Council that they are not going to see futuristic, ultramodern architecture.

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- Mr. Larsen said that he is still looking for the personality that was shown to the community in the April 2018 approved renderings is the preferred expectation versus what he has seen today. He is not sure why they would show something to Planning Commission and City Council that is unbuildable. He said that the fact that they can't sell those units at the price they want to, so now it is our problem. They are asking them to accept something less than what they thought they were getting 2 years ago.
- Mr. Tomsik said that people expect to buy at a level of detail, which they are impressing upon the applicant, and whether 2018 renderings were buildable or not, here they are today looking at a new idea and they are being asked by the 3 Design Board members for detail and materials that are long lasting and of high quality.
- Mrs. Brandt said she agrees that the level of detail they are presenting now is watered down compared to what was approved. What is clear is that the April 18th approved renderings are conceptual, but the general concept is a high level of materials and detailing and not ultramodern design, so that is what the applicant needs to show them. She sees that some details are missing, but some details are there but they may be starting to tip-toe into the modernist a little too much.
- Ms. Crane said that she feels that the community is looking for something a little bit different and not the cookie cutter design of Beachcliff Row that is from the past. The price point for these units is over twice as much as those and there is demand for something clean, fresh and different. There are people who want high end quality and they want to stay in Rocky River but there is nowhere in the City to go.
- Ms. Yonkov thanked the Design Board members and said that they would like to bring details of the condo building as well as revisions to the townhomes to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Larsen, Chairman

Jill Brandt, Member

Michael Tomsik, Member