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Mar 19 2021

Village of Dobbs Ferry
Building Department

Plan Submittal Form

Address: 156 PALISADES

Application #: _____

Project: 156 PALISADE

Name: PADDY STEINSHLEDER

Email: arch329@gmail.com

Phone: 914-693-5093

Plans attached are being submitted for:

Building permit application 1 PDF copy & 2 paper copies ¼ scale

Amendment to an application or permit, 2 sealed copies

Final As Built to close permit, 1 sealed copy

Final survey to close permit, 1 sealed copy

Plans attached are submitted at the direction of the Building Inspector for review by the following board:

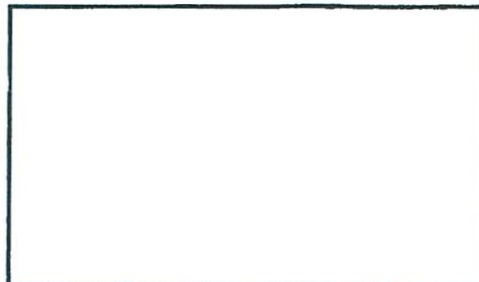
BOT- 1 PDF copy + 5 paper copies ¼ scale

PB - 1 PDF copy + 7 paper copies ¼ scale

ZBA - 1 PDF copy + 4 paper copies ¼ scale

✓ AHRB - 1 PDF copy + 2 paper copies ¼ scale

Received Stamp:



GOTHAM

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March 18, 2021

Dobbs Ferry Planning Board
112 Main Street
Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522

**Re: 156 Palisade Street
Site Plan Review**

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MAR 19 2021

Village of Dobbs Ferry
Building Department

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

This Letter is to request that the Public Hearing opened at the February 4, 2021 Planning Board and continued at the March 4, 2021 Planning Board meeting be continued at the April 1, 2021 Planning Board meeting.

While we thought we had made progress at the February Planning Board meeting in terms of demonstrating that the design of this project is based directly on context and program, the Planning Board indicated at its March meeting that it needed to understand better why a building coverage of 32.8% would not be optimum for this project. As we understand it, the 32.8% building coverage has been calculated on the basis that the appropriate building coverage in the MDR-2 zoning district should be limited to 40%, an increase from the building coverage of 27% that was determined appropriate for the MDR-1 zoning district. Again as we understand it, the reduction from 40% to 32.8% building coverage is the application of the "Sliding Scale" that was established for the OF Residential zoning districts for oversized building lots.

Submitted with this letter, please find an 11 x 17 inch sheet showing the reduction of the design presented at the March Planning Board meeting from 36.22% to the 32.8%. This is a reduction from 3,142 square feet to 2,845 square feet. This has been accomplished by eliminating the full brick veneer, removing the elevator from the program, and reducing the length of the building. Given the concern that was expressed for increasing the garden area facing the street, we have pushed the left volume and center volume back approximately 6 feet further from Palisade Street. The right volume remains in the same location, since this length of driveway is required to get down from the street grade to the proposed garage elevation. If we were permitted to raise the height of the building by approximately one foot, we would be able to set the front back 2 feet instead of 6 feet, which would then move the back of the building 4 feet further to the west, increasing the size of the back yard, which would address one of the concerns expressed by neighbors.

While a reduction in footprint for the building of 287 square feet could seem relatively small, it does tighten the size of the units by just enough to compromise the size of the bathrooms in the units on the second and third floor so that they will not be ADA compliant. Eliminating the elevator obviates the problem with these not being ADA compliant, since they will no longer be accessible. The ADA requirements for this building are that at least one ADA unit be provided and that any units accessible be ADA compliant. With the reduction in size, the first floor would be reduced from three one-bedroom units to two two-bedroom units. Both would be ADA compliant.

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We have not included the elevations of the reduced footprint building, since the changes are insignificant. The front and back would be exactly the same and the only change to the two sides would be the shortening of the overall length of the building by 6 feet.

For the two units on the first floor to be accessible without the elevator, we need to retain the ramp. However, the ramp would be able to be pushed further from the street to enlarge the planting strip. We would be able to increase the planting buffer between the sidewalk and the ramp from 2 feet to 4 feet and increase the separation between the ramp and the porch.

We understand and appreciate the work that the Planning Board has been investing in determining the appropriate building coverage and impervious coverage standards for the MDR-2 zoning district. Since it continues to be misunderstood, I will repeat that the 27% and 54% coverages that are listed in the Zoning Ordinance were never determined or calculated for the MDR-2 zoning district. The 27% and 54% were the numbers in the previous Code for the TF zoning district, which was two- and three-family homes on a minimum lot of 5,000 square feet with 2,500 square feet of site area required per residential unit. The new zoning district created in the 2010 Code for Palisade Street was intended to address the fact that its existing land use was completely inconsistent with the TF zoning district. Given the current confusion that the MDR-2 is somehow related to the MDR-1 zoning district, it may have been a mistake to use "MDR" for both of these districts, as well as for MDR-H zoning district, which is also a very different zoning district. Each of these three districts is substantially different from the other two.

The concept of a "sliding scale" is usually based on the underlying use being the same or at least similar, with the only difference being the size of the property. When Dobbs Ferry adopted the sliding scale shown on Table B-3 in the Code, the intent was to prevent overly large homes from being built on existing larger lots that were within established neighborhoods. For example, a house on a 20,000 square foot lot in the OF-6 zoning district, which requires a 5,000 square foot lot and limits building coverage to 27%, or 1,350 square feet on that sized lot, could not have a building footprint of 5,400 square feet. Table B-3 limits a house on a 20,000 OF lot to 3,600 square feet. In hindsight, the B-3 Table should probably have been labeled One Family Dimensions and Coverage. The MDR-2 zoning district is not the next step up from a MDR-1 zoning district. While the MDR-1 be associated with the OF zoning districts, MDR-2 is a multi-family zoning district. The model that was used for the MDR-2 zoning district was the 40 foot wide, 5,000 square foot lot already improved with a three story, six unit building. The coverage of those buildings is 2,700 square feet, which is 54%. As we have noted, the 40% proposed for the MDR-2 zoning district leaves a number of buildings significantly non-compliant. For example, four of the eight properties in the Context Zone for the 156 Palisade Street property exceed the 40% building coverage. The building coverages on two of these neighbors are 61.94% and 73.37%.

When it was announced that the numbers for the MDR-2 zoning district would be recommended at 40% for building coverage and 60% for impervious coverage, we felt that it was tighter than it should be for other properties, but numbers that we could work with.

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We did not learn that there was to be a "sliding scale" in addition these base numbers or that an 8,675 square foot parcel, in a neighborhood requiring a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet, would be considered overly large until after we had made the adjustments to comply with the 40%.

In Table B-3, the first threshold is for a lot with 7,500 square feet of site area. That is the minimum required lot area in the OF-5 zoning district, which permits 25% building coverage, not the 22% that was used, which is for the OF-4 zoning district with a minimum lot area of 10,000 square feet. It retrospect, it really should have been the coverage requirement of 25% for the OF-5 zoning district. Right now, the sliding scale limits the size of a house on a 7,501 square foot lot to 1,650 square feet, while a house on a 7,499 square foot lot can be 1,875 square feet. The 27% in the MDR-1 zoning district is not relevant for the MDR-2 zoning district.

The relationship of building coverage to site area in the MDR-2 zoning district, as relative to the MDR-1 zoning district, should have to take into account the difference in the permitted density. The MDR-1 zoning district required 2,500 square feet per unit with 27% coverage in a 2.5 story building. This bulk yield on the 5,000 square foot minimum lot is 3,375 square feet, or 1,687 square feet per unit. The MDR-2 zoning district requires 800 square feet of lot area per unit in a 3 story building. With 27% being the building coverage for MDR-2, this computes to 675 square feet per unit. That is not consistent with the apartments in the MDR-2 zoning district.

Working backwards from this with the idea that the model for the MDR-2 zoning district has apartments that are approximately 1,250 square feet, two units per floor in a 3 story building would have a building coverage for the six units permitted on a 5,000 square foot parcel of 50%. 40% site coverage on a 5,000 square foot parcel yield a footprint of 2,000 square feet, or 1,000 square feet per unit.

We previously suggested a different way to handle the building coverage limit in the MDR-2 zoning district, which we contend would accomplish the goals in a way that does not excessively constrict the smaller lots. We recommended 54% be the base for a lot 5,000 square feet or smaller. Instead of a sliding scale, lots larger than 5,000 would permit additional building coverage, but at a reduced percentage. At first we considered 27%, but that would allow 3,692 square feet on the subject lot, or 42.56%. 22% had previously been discussed, although applied to a base with 27% for the coverage. 22% for the coverage with 54% for the 5,000 square foot base would allow 3,508 square feet on the subject lot, or 40.04%. Without the reduction described above, we are proposing a footprint of 3,142 square feet, or 36.22%. Assuming the 54% base of 2,700 square feet, this would be 12% coverage for the area of the site exceeding 5,000 square feet. While that would work for 156 Palisade, it is too restrictive for some of the other properties. Since the Planning Board always has the power to require a reduction in the size of a building, where contextually appropriate, either the 22% for the coverage, or simply the 40% without any consideration of a sliding scale make more sense than sliding scales.

We are submitting the drawings that we presented at the March 4 Planning Board meeting, which are different from the drawings submitted for that meeting.

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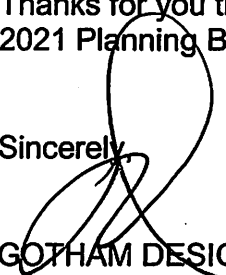
We are going to take a look at trying to increase the size of the planting area between the sidewalk and the ramp to 3 or 4 feet. We agree that having planting in front of the ramp is nice, although we have also noted that there seems to be an impression that more of the existing properties have a front garden area than actually is the case.

The drawings submitted have been prepared by Gotham Design & Community Development Ltd. in collaboration with David T. Kim, R.A., Aspect 120 Landscape Architect, Sirius Miandoabi of Integral Engineering Services, and Hudson Engineering and Consulting, PC. include the following, which are dated 3-18-2021 as submitted to the Planning Board:

Sheet CS	"Location Map, List of Property Owners, Design Criteria Table"
Sheet SP-1	"Site Plan, Zoning Table, Building Coverage, Impervious Coverage"
Sheet SP-2	"Proposed Plans and Building Sections"
Sheet SP-3	"Proposed Elevations"
Sheet SP-4	"West Elevation"
Sheet SS	"Streetscape Elevation and Context Area Site Plan"

Thanks for your time and attention. We look forward to presenting this to you at the April 1, 2021 Planning Board meeting.

Sincerely,



GOTHAM DESIGN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LTD.
Paddy Steinschneider, President
As Agent for 156 Palisade Street LLC.