

# GOTHAM

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July 16, 2020

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

**Re: 156 Palisade Street**

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

This letter is to request that the above referenced project be placed on the agenda of your August 6, 2020 meeting. We have made a number of changes to the scope of the project and the design and would like to review these with you. We have been paying attention to the work that the Planning Board has been doing to consider changes to the MDR-2 zoning district, particularly that work that is creating an understanding of special character that the Palisades Street neighborhood provides. We would like to confirm whether or not we are moving in the right direction.

While the property consists of 8,675 square feet, which permits one residential unit per 800 square feet of site area and computes to 10 units being permitted on this property, we have reduced the number of units from the previous 8 requested to 6 residential units in a building with three stories above a basement garage. It is anticipated that there will be 2 residential units on each floor and that all of the units will have two bedrooms. The building will have an elevator and be ADA compliant. We have also made the following changes to the massing and setbacks:

1. We previously requested a variance for a reduction in the side yard setbacks or that the requirement be changed. The redesigned building now complies with the 10 foot side yard requirement and the requirement that the total side yard minimum is at least 20 feet..
2. We previously requested a variance for a reduction in the front yard setback. We have confirmed that the prevailing setback for the property determined by the Context Area is 7.8 feet. We have proposed a front yard setback from the property line of 10 feet, which is compliant with Code.
3. The number of parking spaces required for 6 two-bedroom units is 9 spaces. It has been determined that the property is entitled to 3 existing curb-side spaces that serve the existing use. We have proposed the garage with 6 parking spaces, which means that no variance nor PILOP should be required for parking.
4. The proposed building coverage has been reduced from 46.68% to 39.99%, where the Code limit is 27%. The Planning Board has acknowledged a need to adjust the 27% upwards, but has not yet determined what that percentage will be.
5. The proposed site coverage has been reduced from 62.87% to 57.80%, where the Code limit is 54%.

6. We have changed the design from a pitched roof to a flat roof, eliminating the eave, which was previously at 29.33 feet, where the limit is 28 feet. We are not clear on exactly how the height of the building is being measured. The permitted height in the MDR-2 zoning district was reduced by the Village in 2017. The definition of Building Height in the Code stipulates that the measurement is to the existing grade. Measured to the existing grade at the front of the building, we have proposed a height of 26.87 to the flat roof where 30 feet is permitted. Measured to the existing grade at the back of the building, we have a proposed height of 28.67 feet where 30 feet is permitted. However, there are areas on the site within the footprint of the proposed building where the measurement from the existing grade to the flat roof may exceed the 30 foot limit.
7. We have changed the massing to reduce the apparent width of the building by making the portion of the building that is closest to the street, set back 10 feet, approximately 28 feet wide. While the total width of the building is 55.5 feet, it does not appear to be this wide and is in scale with the smaller buildings on the street. The building then steps back from the street an additional 4.75 feet to the front of an open porch facing the river on the first and second floors. These porches cover the garage door facing the street and the door to the storage area, which are in the wall set back an additional 8 feet at the back of the porches. This makes that wall set back 22.75 feet from the front property line.
8. We have changed the massing to reduce the apparent height of the building by making the portion of the building that projects towards the street a height of 26.87 feet from the existing grade. Since we will be regrading from the sidewalk to the front of the building, this will result in the height of the flat roof on the front of the building 29.66 feet high from the paving in front of the building. That flat roof area will provide terraces for the third floor units. The flat roof above the third floor ranges in height above the existing grade from approximately 33.5 feet to 28.67 feet.
9. We have provided a front entryway demarcated by a canopy and a stoop in the center of the building facing the street. This is in the portion of the building set 10 feet back from the property line, which makes it approximately 18 feet from the street curb. The intent is to create a public/private realm in front of the building which could be landscaped with plantings, paving, and street furniture to make it a place where residents could sit outside and participate in the street life.
10. The configuration of the massing creates a strong horizontal read of the building, while also providing it with a base, middle and top.

The following documents have been submitted with this letter:

- A. A copy of a Memorandum prepared by Gotham Design & Community Development Ltd. pertaining to the Worksession on the Changes to the Code, dated as revised July 15, 2020.

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- B. A set of six sheets of drawings prepared by Gotham Design & Community Development Ltd., in its role as Land Use Planners, dated as submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals July 16, 2020 including the following:

Sheet CS "Cover Sheet"  
Sheet SP-1 "Concept Site Plan 02-21-2020 B"  
Sheet SP-2 "Concept Plan 02-21-2020 B Floor Plans Building Sections"  
Sheet SP-3 "Concept Plan 02-21-2020 B Elevations"  
Sheet SP-4 "Concept Plan 02-21-2020 B West Elevation"  
Sheet SS "Streetscape Elevation Context Area Site Plan Concept Plan 2-21-2020 B"

- C. A copy of the February 3, 2016 Memorandum prepared by Dwight Douglas and Hahn Engineering submitted to the Planning Board addressing the MDR-2 District.
- D. A digital copy of the slides in the PowerPoint Presentation prepared for the August 6, 2020 Planning Board meeting.

We look forward to presenting this project to you at your August meeting.

Sincerely,

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