

Minutes
Baltimore County Design Review Panel
July 14, 2010

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Minutes
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**
July 14, 2010

Call to order

Chair, William Monk, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County **Design Review Panel** to order at 6:03 p.m. The following panel members were:

Present	Not Present
Ms. Betsy Boykin	Mr. Thomas Repsher
Mr. John DiMenna	Mr. Derrick Burnett
Ms. Magda Westerhout	Mr. Christopher Parts
Mr. William Monk	Mr. Donald Kann
Mr. Francis Anderson (Resident Member – RRLR)	Mr. Scott Rykiel

County staff present included:
Lynn Lanham, Jenifer Nugent, Diana Itter, and Barbara Weaver

Minutes of the June 9, 2010 meeting

Mr. Monk moved the acceptance of the draft minutes as written and the motion was seconded by John DiMenna and passed by acclamation at 6:05 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

ITEM 1**PROJECT NAME:** 7115 Bellona Avenue**DRP PROJECT #:** 514**PROJECT TYPE:** Residential, Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Kevin Benhoff, on behalf of Benhoff Builders, presented the project to the panel. Benhoff Builders is proposing to build an approximately 3,000 square foot 1½ story single family home, with a side loaded attached 2-car garage on a .588 acre lot. The garage will create a front courtyard access to the home. The home has been engineered to fit comfortably within the building envelope, requiring no special zoning exceptions or variances. A driveway easement with 7111 Bellona Avenue exists on the site.

Materials for the project include HardiPlank Siding and Butler Stone masonry along with Azek trim and shingle roofing. The porches will have standing seam metal roofing. The garage doors will be in the carriage style.

The applicant intends to keep as much existing landscaping on the site as possible. An existing magnolia tree at the center of the site is one of the most desired trees to be retained.

At the June 9, 2010 DRP meeting the panel voted to have the project resubmitted at a later date to address the following issues:

1. Provide grading plan.
2. Provide landscape plan – Address screening issues.
3. Revise plans – location of house on site, architectural details (dormers, garage).
4. Conduct meeting with neighbors to address issues/concerns.

Mr. Benhoff presented the grading plan to the panel. He advised that Benhoff Builders has met with the neighbors. Although the house is situated as before, the neighbors are supportive of the minimal impact on the trees.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Anderson questioned the consistency of the gables and dormers and was advised that all roofs would have a 10/12 pitch including all gables and dormers. In regard to the connectivity between house and garage, the grading plan changed so that the architectural plan didn't have to.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Although not present to speak, a letter from Mr. Edward Eby of 6406 Pratt Avenue was introduced into the record in support of the project. Mr. Eby has met with the Benhoffs and is satisfied with the plans as presented.

Ms. Mary Beth Beaudry, 7111 Bellona Ave., stated she had previously had concerns, but was now supportive of the project.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Westerhout moved that the Panel approve the proposal as submitted with the revised elevation plan showing the roof gable and dormers with the 10/12 pitch submitted to staff. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 6:15 p.m.

ITEM 2

PROJECT NAME: 7823 Chelsea Street

DRP PROJECT #: 513

PROJECT TYPE: Residential, Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Laura Melville Thomas, Principal, Melville Thomas Architects, Inc. presented the proposal to build a 5 bedroom 4 ½ bath traditional two-story home on what had previously been a tennis court. The existing pool will be incorporated into the plan. The proposed structure includes a two-car garage, two covered porches and one screened porch. The two chimneys will be constructed of natural stone as well as the base of the house. Above the stone base will be HardiPlank siding. All roofs will have a 12/12 pitch and will be constructed of “Met Fab” in slate gray with historic detail. The height of the structure will be 33 feet.

The structure will conform to the 40-foot covenant setback, which is well within the 20-foot zoning setback. No changes have been made to existing grading. Regarding landscape screening, neighbors are in agreement that the property will be appropriately screened.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

There were no members of the public in attendance to speak on behalf of this project.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Anderson noted that immediate neighbor Andrew Poffel had expressed concern regarding landscaping screening. However, after meeting with the builder, Mr. Poffel was assured that his viewsheds had been maintained.

Ms. Boykin commented on the “flat” building site and the grading plan.

DISPOSITION:

Mr. Anderson moved that the proposal be approved as submitted. Mr. DiMenna seconded the Motion, which passed unanimously at 6:30 p.m.

ITEM 3

PROJECT NAME: 1107 & 1115 West Lake Avenue

DRP PROJECT #: 519

PROJECT TYPE: Residential, Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Mr. Robert Gentry, Vice President /Principal, Envision Builders, described the proposal to place 2 two-story Colonial style residences with full basements on two previously undeveloped properties. The original proposals, which were separately presented to the DRP at two different meetings, had been approved by the Panel in 2006. The driveways for both, come off West Lake Avenue side by side with a 10-foot easement between, which would have landscape screening as mandated per a zoning order.

1115 W. Lake Ave., known as “The Cooper,” which will sit on a ½ acre lot, is designed to be 54 feet wide, 42 feet deep (excl. front porch) and 33 feet, 10 inches high, with a side-load two-car garage. Materials include: 30-year architectural asphalt shingles for roof; metal seam porch roof; and, HardiPlank lap siding. Regarding landscaping, original plantings will be maintained as much as possible with supplemental plantings providing additional screening.

This house is intended to be built first.

1107 W. Lake Ave., known as “The Carroll,” sits on a 16,000-sq. ft. undersized lot with a 10-foot landscape easement along the driveway. The house is designed to be 40 feet wide, 46 ft. 4 in. deep (excl. front porch) and 35 ft. 2 in. high with a side-load two-car garage. The materials proposed are the same as those for The Cooper.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Envision Builders representatives, Bob Gentry and Al Guerieri, were available to answer any questions. There were no additional members of the public in attendance to speak on behalf of this project.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Anderson expressed concern regarding the irregular layout of the windows on the sides and back of the structures and questioned whether it was possible to realign the windows and reposition the bay window. Ms. Westerhout agreed with Mr. Anderson’s concerns and noted that quality design is evident in the front of the structure, but that more attention is needed on the back and sides. Mr. Monk acknowledged that interior design may make it difficult. Mr. Gentry stated that he would try and move the windows to achieve a more pleasing exterior look.

Ms. Boykin questioned grading and landscaping. Although there is not a specific grading plan, it would appear on 1107 that there is approximately a 10 foot drop in grade from the street to the rear. The Panel would need to see an appropriate plan with grading indicated. The plan should also indicate any outdoor air-conditioning units. Elevations of the rear were also requested to accurately show the basement walk-out conditions.

Mr. Monk observed that W. Lake Avenue is particularly busy at rush hour and suggested having one driveway come off W. Lake Avenue instead of two. This would immediately branch into a “Y” to access the individual homes. Ms. Itter commented that the previous zoning ruling had

created the easement and the two driveways. She doubted that a full hearing would be required to amend, although a request for the change would be necessary. Based on Ms. Itter's observations, Mr. Monk withdrew his suggestion.

Ms. Westerhout stated that the Panel needs to see all elevations, including the details of the walkout basement, in order to make a decision.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Westerhout moved that an updated plan, which would indicate full elevations, with grading and walkout, as well as refinements to side and rear elevations, be submitted directly to the Planning Staff without coming back to the Panel. Four members of the Panel voted in favor of the Motion, with Mr. Anderson voting against. The Motion carried by majority vote at 7:07 p.m.

ITEM 4

PROJECT NAME: Towson Swim Club

DRP PROJECT #: 518

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial, Towson

(Changed to last on the Agenda)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Towson Swim Club is a new community pool located on a parcel that was the former Women's detention facility for Baltimore County. The site is a backwards L-shaped lot of 2.08 acres at the northwest intersection of Towsontown Boulevard and Bosley Avenue. A separate .23 acre leasehold parcel was created on the site for the Warden's House, a historic property that is being restored and developed independently of the swim club property. The main portion of the property sits within a RO zone, and the west leg of the property sits within a DR 5.5 zone. All of the developed area of the site consisting of structure, retaining walls and deck area, occur in the RO zone. A play area is proposed in the DR 5.5 portion of the site.

The pool and pool deck will be set approximately at the middle of the site and will consist of a 25 meter 6-lane pool, with a shallow walk-in end and a diving well at the opposite end. A baby pool will also be located to the south of the main pool. A "sport court" area is proposed at the northeast corner of the site as well as a play structure, which is proposed between the baby pool and picnic area. A clubhouse is proposed at the southeast corner of the site, which will include a manager's office, vending area, toilets, showers, locker rooms, and storage areas. The entrance to the facility will be through the north end of the Clubhouse from Courthouse Court (former Baltimore Avenue).

The project does call for zoning relief in the front yard of 0 feet in lieu of the required 40 feet (from the former Baltimore Avenue right of way) and a front yard of 10 feet in lieu of the required 40 feet (from Towsontown Boulevard). A parking variance/modified parking plan is also requested to allow for 36 spaces in lieu of 51 spaces. The parking requirement is based on a Health Department formula, which is based on the surface area of the pool. The applicant found that based on anecdotal information and ratios provided by pool management consultants, the formula is high for a membership-only pool facility. Across the street from the project is a Baltimore County Revenue Authority parking garage that will be used for peak parking times, and large events.

Mr. Monk spoke briefly regarding the role of the Design Review Panel (DRP), which was established as a technical advisory panel by Baltimore County Code. The DRP's recommendations are binding on the Hearing Officer and County Agencies and address such items as site plan, circulation, building design, and landscaping. The DRP does not address variances or land use. A presentation before the DRP is the first step prior to going before the Zoning Commissioner.

Mr. Charles E. McMahon, Vice President, Towson Swim Center, LLC, presented an overview of the history of the property, which was the former Women's Detention Center and is owned by Baltimore County. The County leases the property to the Swim Club, with the exception of the historic Warden's House, a separate entity being leased and rehabbed by Azola and Co. The Swim Club will be a member-owned non-profit, with a maximum of 400 members, run by a member-elected Board and managed by a Professional Management Company. The pool hours

will be 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily with 4 swim meets scheduled for the season. Input was sought and support received from members of the community.

Chris Parts highlighted features, such as:

- Vehicular entrance off Bosley Ave.
- Trash enclosure at the North end
- One point secure entry to pool area through Pool House
- 6-ft. fence around play area and pool
- 6-lane, 25-meter, 14-ft. pool; baby pool
- Sport court, picnic grove and play lawn (current site area is below grade and will be filled)
- Pool House is designed with a masonry base, split face block with HardiPlank above
- Hot water solar panels will be placed on the south gable.

Ms. Nugent presented the preliminary comments of the Director of Recreation and Parks. Mr. Robert Barrett indicated that the plan was open and available to the public and must meet the American Disability Act parameters. Ms. Nugent presented an overview of the staff report from the Planning Office and requested to see more details on trash removal, storm water management, fencing, streets/ parking circulation, and a clearer definition of signage/lighting, with poles not to exceed 25 feet.

To date, a decision on the SWM being grandfathered in has not yet been decided by DEPRM.

Staff recommended approval with certain conditions and subject to conditions and recommendations by the Design Review Panel. The Staff Report is filed as Appendix C.

For full disclosure, Chris Parts is a DRP Panel Member but is not involved as a reviewer for any item on this agenda.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Ms. Boykin agrees with Planning Staff comments.

Mr. DiMenna questioned why the SE corner of the building was so close to the main road. The developer advised that the placement was to accommodate the Sport Court and to make it possible to monitor those coming in. He also questioned whether or not landscaping would be appropriate at the top edge adjacent to the pool deck and sidewalk, since there is landscape screening at the lower edge of the path. Mr. DiMenna also expressed concern over the building being so close to the corner.

Mr. Monk would like to see the dumpster enclosure detail provided as well as detail for the sign and sign foundation planting and all fencing. He questioned providing an alternative path, for instance widening the sidewalk on Towsontown Blvd. Mr. Parts stated that one of the primary concerns at the community meetings was a safe path away from Towsontown Blvd. Regarding water and drainage: there appears to be a spring in the swale. Mr. Monk questioned where drainage from the pool goes. The developer responded that the storm drain system will accommodate.

The panel questioned whether the sidewalk could be moved further from Towsontown Boulevard and regraded to provide a tree lawn.

Ms. Westerhout noted that there are paths in the Roland Park community behind houses that have successfully provided a safe route to the Roland Park pool. Some paths are very close to residents' homes. She expressed her concern with the corner of the Pool House being located so close to the street. She acknowledged the difficulty of the elevation, but wondered if the building could be pushed further uphill.

Mr. DiMenna stated that he was concerned with the split face block coupled with HardiPlank and wondered if a stone face might be more appropriate. As designed now, the building doesn't seem to fit with the architectural character of the overall Towson vernacular.

Mr. Monk stated that the building façade needs further study. He suggested possibly flipping the building with the Sports Court to better advantage the site layout. The developer stated that he will look into the matter.

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Mr. William O'Donnell, who lives behind the property at 227 Bosley Ave., noted that the area designated for the open play area was once a quarry. He sees several safety issues including the lack of sidewalks on Alabama and the close proximity to the County Court House with criminals being taken in and out.

Mr. Carroll Cook, 231 Bosley Ave., the last house before the pool, who has his own pool and garden in his back yard, has concerns that his quality of life will be affected in regard to sound, sight and privacy. He would like to have the pool bonded against interfering with his privacy.

Ms. Molly McConnell, 200 Old Bosley, at the corner of Alabama Ave., stated that parking is already a big problem in the neighborhood and can only increase when the pool is in session. Mr. Monk responded that the Zoning Hearing will deal with the requested variance for parking.

Ms. Carolyn Brooks, 411 Alabama Ave., observed that there is water in the quarry area, which is also wooded. She would like to see a hydrology study conducted and pointed out that filling in the quarry was not in the original plan.

Mr. Andrew Brooks, 411 Alabama Ave., commented that there is no sidewalk next to Alabama Ave. and the mini-park, which creates unsafe conditions for walking to the pool.

Ms. Elizabeth McHenry, who lives and works at home at 229 Bosley Ave., expressed multiple concerns, including bright lights, noise from music and PA system, and parking problems. She would like to see a water impact study as water collects in yards now. She feels that the quarry provides a good buffer and asks that it not be used in any other way.

Ms. Heidi Cook, 231 Bosley Ave., stated that she had accepted the original swim club plan; however, she now opposes the plan that recently included converting the quarry extension and putting in a walkway behind neighboring properties. She feels that cutting trees in the ravine will have a negative impact. Any replanting will take a long time to mature. Also of concern is that the fence will not be of sufficient height to insure privacy. Pedestrian lighting would shine on her property. She would like the applicant to explore extending the sidewalk on Towsontown Blvd. as opposed to the pathway.

Brad Nesbitt, 6 Alabama Court, stated that he would not want children to walk along Towsontown Blvd., but would support the pathway. Filling in the ravine might be a good idea as it would alleviate the problem with trash accumulation.

Gregory Rowland, 412 Alabama Rd., a pool manager for 7 years at Stoneleigh and at Fallston Pools, advised that keeping the neighbors happy is a priority. He found that working with technical professionals, it was possible to direct the sound of music, as well as lighting, inward.

Mark Rudolph, 406 Carolina Rd., agrees that a park that doesn't have a sidewalk is a problem; however, he would not want to see children walking along Towsontown Blvd.

Pat Jones, 431 Alabama Rd., questions whether the path behind the houses on Bosley as designed would work with strollers and bicycles due to grade changes and steps. Could another walkway that leads into Courthouse Commons be used? Why did filling in the quarry and the "lawn" area come up at the last minute? Chris Parts responded that the area was part of the original lease, however, it had not been confirmed if the property fell into the "wetland" category. Now that it is clear that it is usable land, it would be an asset to the Swim Club.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Boykin finds the plan reasonable; however, she would like the developer to take another look at the pool house.

Ms. Westerhout would like to see a diagram of the connectivity of the pathway. As far as the ravine is concerned, she would like the developer to take another look at the design and keep as many mature trees as possible. The exterior architectural details need re-evaluation to see what can be done toward integration.

Mr. Monk urges the applicant to go back and study:

- Building location relative to Bosley Ave.
- Building materials
- Pedestrian circulation, including pathway
- Lawn/Quarry area

He further asks that the applicant engage with neighbors, seeking a common ground, and come back to the Panel when ready.

Mr. DiMenna moved that in consideration of comments from the Panel, the project needs further study and resolution before coming back to the Panel. Ms. Westerhout seconded the Motion, which passed unanimously at 9:15 p.m.

ITEM 5

PROJECT NAME: 3903 Naylor's Lane

DRP PROJECT #: 516

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial, Pikesville

(Taken out of sequence as "No. 4".)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The site is a 1.16 acre vacant property zoned OR-1. The applicant proposes to construct a one story 7,020 SF single use tenant office building. The site is in the Urban Boulevard area of the Pikesville Revitalization District. Off-street parking will be provided to serve the office building with convenient access to its main entrance.

The building's exterior walls will be constructed of brick veneer with cast stone window sill bands. Different brickwork patterns will be articulated to enhance the character of the facades. There will be a main entrance feature with building signage and the storefront system will be clear anodized aluminum with low E tinted insulated glazing and a prefabricated flat metal canopy.

David Karceski, Esquire, Venable, LLP, introduced the development team, including Shellie Curry, President, Curry Architects, Nikki Stoffel, Senior Project Manager, Curry Architects, Neil Kahn, Goodman-Gable-Gould Adjusters International, Kevin C. Anderson, Jr., Vice President KCW Engineering Technologies, Michael Meisel, Meisel Capital Partners, and Lynette Pinhey, Human & Rohde, Inc., Landscape Architects.

Mr. Karceski presented letters in support of the project from Sherrie Becker, Executive Director, Pikesville Chamber of Commerce and from Peirce Macgill, Baltimore County Department of Economic Development. A neighbor to the site, Ms. Nancy Paige, who lives on Old Court Road, has reviewed the site plan and elevations on behalf of the Pine Ridge Association, and finds the orientation of the proposed building to Naylor's Lane, parking plan, lighting, and maintenance of existing wooded area between the proposed building and Old Court Rd. beneficial to the neighborhood. However, she is against the Office of Planning recommendation to provide a sidewalk with pedestrian access from the building site to Old Court Rd. Mr. Karceski also noted that Mr. Zuckerberg of the Pikesville Community Assoc. had no objection to the project.

Mr. Kahn described the business, which will employ approximately 23 – 25 people. As public insurance adjusters, they tend to go to their clients, rather than have a lot of clients coming to them. Mr. Curry focused on the architectural details and the site plan. Ms. Pinhey described the landscape plan, which meets minimum requirements and has been reviewed by Avery Harden, Department of Permits and Development Management. Appropriate screenings will be placed on the site and as much original planting maintained as possible. The dumpster is tucked into the slope of the property.

Ms. Nugent, Design Review Panel Coordinator, stated that the Office of Planning found the proposed plan positive in respect to site design, form and image, parking and circulation, signage and lighting, and in compliance with the spirit and intent of the Pikesville plans for revitalization. Insofar as furthering "walkable" Pikesville, Planning recommended sidewalk access to Old Court Rd. but will defer to the Panel's decision. The Staff Report is filed as Appendix D.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. DiMenna questioned whether the entrance sign parapet could be a little higher. Mr. Curry answered that, as the architect, he felt that the contrasting colors of the brick work would be sufficient. Mr. DiMenna concurs with the owners in being opposed to “inviting” the public in via a rear walkway.

Ms. Boykin commented that she felt the plan had been done well.

Ms. Westerhout commended the developer for the selection of materials. She asked that another look toward optimum screening be given to the sight lines to the HVAC unit. One possibility would be to raise the center element a bit to screen the air conditioning units. She questioned why the entrance sign was set at an angle and was advised by Mr. Kevin Anderson that the positioning put the sign in view of traffic on Reisterstown Rd.

In further discussion by the Panel, Mr. Monk indicated that his “planner” instinct would support a sidewalk to/from Old Court Rd., but that he would defer to the other Panel members.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

There were no members of the public in attendance to speak on behalf of this project.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Westerhout moved that the plan be approved as submitted with additional attention of the center element and screening the HVAC unit. Mr. DiMenna seconded the Motion which passed unanimously at 7:42 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Code Statement: Section 32 – 4 – 203 (i) (2) of the Baltimore County Code states, *The Panel’s recommendation is binding on the Hearing Officer, and on the agencies under subsection (l), (Directors of the Office of Planning, the Department of Permits and Development Management and the Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management), unless the Hearing Officer or agencies find that the Panel’s actions constitute an abuse of its discretion or are unsupported by the documentation and evidence presented.*

Approved as of September 15, 2010