

Department of Planning and Zoning

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TO: Design Advisory Board
FROM: Ryan Morrison
DATE: May 22, 2018
RE: 18-0899CA/MA; 56, 58, 66 North Avenue

Zone: RM Ward: 3C
Owner/Applicant: Sara Holbrook Center / Duncan Wisniewski Architecture

Request: Expansion of Sara Holbrook Community Center at 66 North Avenue, demolition of a duplex and garage 58 North Avenue, and demolition of a duplex and a shed at 56 North Avenue.

OVERVIEW:

The applicant proposes to combine three parcels into one 20,545 sf parcel and renovate and expand the existing Sara Holbrook Community Center, totaling approximately 12,500 sf. The project will result in the addition of a multi-purpose/gym space for pre-middle school children; toddler space on the first floor; improved kitchen and food prep area for snacks, lunches and community dinners; a vehicle drop-off to the main entrance; an office expansion; an art space; three after-school care classrooms – keeping two existing classrooms for adult ESL classes; and a total of 15 new parking spaces.

The proposal also includes the demolition of two adjacent duplexes (one each at 56 & 58 North Ave.), and demolition of two accessory structures. While the duplex structures were constructed circa 1899, neither are listed on any historic registers, and have both seen exterior modifications over the years.

The current project was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee on January 11, 2018. Previous renditions of the project went through sketch plan reviews with the DRB on September 16, 2014 and January 28, 2016. Those renditions differ slightly from what is currently proposed.

ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

No land division will occur. The project review will include the merger of three parcels, which can be accomplished as a boundary line adjustment.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

No significant or important natural features exist.

(b) Topographical alterations

No topographical alterations have been included within the plans, and are not anticipated.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no protected views from any of the three parcels.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

While the Center has been serving the community since 1937, the existing building is not identified as historic. The two duplexes are over 50 years old, both being constructed around 1899. While not listed their age makes them eligible for consideration as historic. However, while the massing of the original buildings remains, there have been considerable exterior modifications to both over the years. This application proposes the demolition of both of the structures. The new construction will greatly improve the Sara Holbrook Center, an important community resource. Thus, the loss of these buildings at this location is acceptable due to the greater community benefit resulting from the project.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

No renewable energy resources are specified but the applicant is considering adding such resources into the project proposal.

(f) Brownfield sites

The property is not identified as a brownfield by the State of Vermont.

(g) Provide for nature's events

The applicant notes that the site has virtually no stormwater control. The stormwater design will utilize the existing underlying sandy soils to infiltrate runoff from the building rooftop and parking area using a proposed underground infiltration facility located to the east of the proposed building. How snow removal/storage will be handled is unknown at this time, and shall be planned for prior to the upcoming Development Review Board hearing.

(h) Building location and orientation

The proposed development is an extension of the Sara Holbrook Center footprint. It is oriented toward the street front with a curved entry driveway to provide a safe off-street drop off. The existing building is setback from the existing development pattern and rhythm of structures along the existing streetscape. The addition will maintain the same setback. Given the use and modern design of the building, this is acceptable. The mass of the building, surface articulation, fenestration, and building features clues that this is a different use than other smaller scale residential structures along North Avenue. Also with other large structures in the vicinity along North Avenue and North Street this structure is not an anomaly in the overall neighborhood.

(i) Vehicular access

While a single access drive currently serves the community center, a drop-off area off North Avenue that doesn't require backing out to the street is proposed, in combination with a driveway at the south end of the parcel, which will go under the second level of the new addition. This will facilitate quick and easy delivery of children and materials. It may be problematic if used as short-term or unauthorized parking. The site plan does not, but should, indicate the intended pattern of traffic flow within the drop-off lane (one way directional).

A 15-space parking lot is proposed will be effectively concealed from the street by locating behind the addition.

The applicant states that the existing and proposed vehicle trip ends, based upon the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition, show increases in vehicle trip ends of 18 AM peak hour and 17 PM peak hour when comparing the proposed development to the existing development. VTrans Traffic Impact Study Guidelines identify the need for a traffic study when a site generates 75 of more trip ends in a peak hour.

(j) Pedestrian access

An entry court accessed directly from the public sidewalk will provide a direct pedestrian route to the building. Additionally, walkways are proposed along the front and rear of the building, allowing pedestrian access from the parking area.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

The building will be required to meet all ADA standards. Review of compliance is under the jurisdiction of the building inspector.

(l) Parking and circulation

Vehicular entry will occur at a southerly driveway, with the ability to enter the drop-off area or access the parking lot. It is recognized that two existing curb cut (for 56 and 58 North Avenue) will be eliminated with the plan.

The 15 space parking area is accessed through and under the building, and is located at the rear at the southeast portion of the site.

(m) Landscaping, fences, and retaining walls

Two street trees existing within the greenway between the sidewalk and North Avenue, and will remain. The landscape plan identifies planting islands with various shrubs and grasses in front of the existing structure and at the southwest corner of the lot. The project also proposes two new red maple trees – one along the south property line, and the other at the rear of the parking lot.

A chain link fence exists along the north property line and behind the existing community center. A stockade fence exists along the rear property lines of 56 & 58 North Avenue, and will remain. A stockade fence also exists along the north property line of 52 North Avenue. No new fencing is proposed as part of the project.

(n) Public plazas and open space

An entry patio is proposed on the North Avenue frontage; a smaller rear patio with a connected walkway leading to the parking lot will locate to the rear of the building. The rear lawn will be used for play space.

(o) Outdoor lighting

A lighting plan has been submitted, which incorporates soffit mounted recessed LED lighting, as well as parking area LED lighting designed to meet dark sky standards. The lighting will have to meet the lighting performance standards of Sec. 5.5.2 CDO.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

Exterior storage areas, machinery and equipment installations, service and loading areas, utility meters and structures, mailboxes, and similar accessory structures shall utilize setbacks, plantings, enclosures and other mitigation or screening methods to minimize their auditory and visual impact on the public street and neighboring properties to the extent practicable.

Rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened by the stair and vertical transportation elements that extend above the roof.

Utility and service enclosures and screening shall be coordinated with the design of the principal building, and should be grouped in a service court away from public view. On-site utilities shall be placed underground whenever practicable. Trash and recycling bins and dumpsters shall be located, within preferably, or behind buildings, enclosed on all four (4) sides to prevent blowing trash, and screened from public view.

The site plan indicates a garbage/recycling bin enclosure at the rear of the parking lot

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment

1. Massing, Height, and Scale

The proposed design will see an extension of the existing structure along the North Ave. frontage. The height of the addition will be consistent with that of the existing structure. The new Center entrance is at the west end of the building and opens into an entrance lobby. The frontage along North Avenue contains other smaller scale residential structures along North Avenue, but also includes other large structures in the vicinity along North Avenue and North Street. Thus this structure is not an anomaly in the overall neighborhood.

2. Roofs and Rooflines

The development includes flat roofs. The current building has a flat roof and the new construction repeats this treatment. While there are few other flat roofs, the ones that exist are on larger non-residential structures – the police station and the “Mermaid” Building at the corner of North Avenue & North Street (two lots away).

Roof-top mechanicals shall be screened from view from the public street, and should be incorporated into and hidden within the roof structure whenever possible.

As noted above, roof top mechanical equipment will be screened by the stair and vertical transportation elements that extend above the roof.

Solar panels, light colored ballast or roof membranes, split roof clerestories, planted or “green” roof technologies (with a clearly articulated maintenance plan) and “gray water” collection are encouraged. Active rooftop uses are also encouraged to add to the visual complexity and activity of the city’s skyline, and afford public access to otherwise unseen views of the city and surrounding landscape.

As noted, the rooftop is flat. The roof is designed to accommodate the installation of solar PV, which will be included as budget and fundraising allow.

3. Building Openings

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and readily identifiable from a public street whether by a door, a canopy, porch, or other prominent architectural or landscape

features. People with physical challenges should be able to use the same entrance as everyone-else and shall be provided an “accessible route” to the building.

The primary accesses are clearly identifiable.

Attention shall also be accorded to design features which provide protection from the affects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage.

The entrance to the Center is under a canopy and a vestibule will provide safe and comfortable respite from inclement weather.

Window openings shall maintain consistent patterns and proportions appropriate to the use. The window pattern should add variety and interest to the architecture, and be proportioned to appear more vertical than horizontal. Where awnings over windows or doors are used, the lowest edge of the awning shall be at least eight (8) feet above any pedestrian way, and shall not encroach into the public right-of-way without an encroachment permit issued by the dept. of public works.

An irregular pattern of window placement on the primary North Ave. façade, exhibiting an informality and freshness that exudes a playful quality appropriate to the intended neighborhood users, is proposed.

(b) Protection of important architectural resources

None of the buildings within the plan are listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no protected public views from the site.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

The proposed development is setback to provide safe drop-off area for children. There is a front plaza that adds interest and provides circulation space. The proposed entry for the Center is a 12 ft. wide opening to the entry doors. This provides an easily identifiable and accessible entry.

Non-residential buildings should provide visual access into the interior of building at the street level through the use of large transparent windows and/or window displays in order to create a dynamic and engaging public streetscape. The use of mirrored, frosted, or tinted glass shall not be permitted along an active pedestrian street-level façade.

The use of the building is not necessarily conducive to needing glass along the entry. The ample entry opening provides clear access to the interior.

(e) Quality of materials

Façade materials include brick masonry, fiber cement or other composite material lap siding, fiber cement or other composite material panels, stucco or EFIS, and metal siding accents. All new operable windows will be fiberglass, storefront entry door systems will be anodized aluminum, storefront fixed windows will be fiberglass, and some existing windows that are in acceptable condition will remain.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI. Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances. The applicant is exploring rooftop solar PV, a green roof over the enclosed courtyard, and permeable paving in the parking area.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

While not advertising, the applicant notes that the use of the SHC logo on the entrance façade is intended to be a playful expression of the buildings true purpose.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

A fully enclosed trash/recycling bin will be located to the rear of the parking lot, out of sight from the public street. Rooftop mechanical equipment will be concealed behind the rooftop equipment screen located to minimize any visibility from the street level.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

The building entrances and parking area will be adequately lit for safety.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Forward to the Development Review Board with the following conditions:

1. Indicate a traffic flow pattern for the site on the site plan.
2. More definitive height measurements shall be identified on the elevation drawings.
3. Spec sheets for all new windows, doors, light fixtures, siding, roofing materials, mechanical units, etc. shall be submitted.