

Representative: Peter I. Tzilos
Property Owner: AA-Davis, LLC c/o Lambros Stassinos
Location: 5 Mile Road (East of Winchester) ID #77 051 99 0001 000
Request: New 3080 SF Single Story Office Building
Action: Approve, Approve with Conditions, Postpone, or Deny

Referring to her March 11, 2020 letter, Township Planner Frey gave the review for this request for site plan approval for a new approximately 3,000 square foot office building on vacant land on 5 Mile Road, immediately east of Northville Forest Apartments. The property is zoned B-1 Local Business, and office is a permitted use in the B-1 District.

Landscape and Tree Replacement:

A bioretention system is proposed on the west side of the site, within the required side yard setback. Typically detention ponds are not permitted to be located within required setbacks, because ponds prohibit or significantly limit the ability to provide the required landscape. However, in consideration of Wayne County's new requirements for infiltration, the small size of the site, and most importantly the 12" depth of the bioretention area that allows for the required amount of plant material to be provided, the location of the proposed detention was found to be acceptable.

1. Not all of the required tree replacement could be accommodated on the site; the equivalent of 23 trees were proposed to be contributed to the Township's woodland replacement fund.
2. The ordinance allowed the Planning Commission to waive certain landscape requirements if it determined that dimensional conditions unique to the site prevent the development of certain landscape elements. Due to the small size of the site, the applicant was requesting the Planning Commission waive the following requirements:
 - a) To reduce the depth of the planting beds at the front of the building from 8' to approximately 18". Corabells (a perennial flower) were proposed within the foundation planting beds and were appropriate for the size of the planting area.
 - b) To eliminate the requirement for 1/3 of the required parking lot trees (the equivalent of one tree) to be located within the paved portion of the lot. The total number of required parking lot trees were provided at the perimeter of the parking lot.

Building elevations

1. The material on the face of the peaks, above the doors, needed to be identified.
2. The ordinance standards require a minimum 80% of each facade be brick, excluding the window areas. However, there was also a provision that allowed the Planning Commission to approve alternatives on a project by project basis provided the Commission determined the application of the alternatives was consistent with the intent and purpose of the building design requirements contained in the ordinance.
 - a) For the front elevation, the applicant was requesting the Planning Commission consider the totality of the masonry products (brick and stone

base) as meeting the intent of the 80% brick requirement. The front elevation had 64% brick and 36% stone, after the area for windows and doors was removed.

3. The percent of brick and stone identified for the front elevation (Sheet A-2) did not exclude the glass area. The notes needed to be updated to reflect 64% brick and 36% stone.

Stantec (lighting) and the Township Department of Public Services had both approved the plan.

Chair Zawodny invited the applicant to make his presentation.

Peter Tzilos, Architect, 18277 Filmore, Livonia, MI said the building would be 2,940 square feet, total gross floor area. The landscaping strip in front of the building was not 8 feet as required, but was 2 feet wide between the sidewalk and the building. This was a very small lot, with 50 foot setbacks to the west and north residential areas. The lot itself was only about 130 feet wide.

Mr. Tzilos continued that the proposed use was for an office building to serve a machine shop in Plymouth. The stone at the front of the building would enhance its aesthetic value. The remaining three elevations would be all brick. The driveway would need to be 25 feet wide, instead of the 20 foot width shown, to meet County standards. The bioswale was 6 inches deep, and would not hold standing water for any period of time.

Chair Zawodny noted that due to the virtual nature of this meeting, he would ask each Commissioner to comment in turn, with appropriate discussion following each comment.

Commissioner Anderson asked about the following:

- Was there concern regarding standing water in the retention system, given the proximity of the bioswale to the apartment building?

Mr. Tzilos said the depth of the bioswale in comparison to the surrounding area was 6 inches, so any time the bioswale was full of water it would still only be 6 inches deep. The swale was designed to allow water to seep into the ground, with any extra water going into the storm water system. They did not expect to have any standing water on the property.

Township Planner Frey said the Township Engineer felt comfortable the bioretention system would function as designed and felt comfortable with the landscaping and bioswale being located in the required setback. The County also supported the bioretention system.

Mr. Belair agreed with the assessment regarding the bioretention. The only times there might be standing water on the property would be during intense rain events, such as a 50-year or 100-year rainfall. Normal rainfall would seep into the

ground reasonably quickly. If the bioswale plugged up for any reason, the applicants would need to perform normal maintenance to open it back up again.

- It appeared that there was a single family building behind the commercial building to the east. Had there been any discussions with that property owner regarding providing a landscape barrier?

Mr. Tzilos said there was heavy landscaping around the building, including at the rear.

Township Planner Frey said the numeric requirements for the buffer were met. There might be some supplemental woodland replacement plantings also included, to the extent possible.

- It appeared that there could be up to three commercial uses in the building. Was parking adequate for that number of uses?

Mr. Tzilos said 10 parking spaces were required; 11 were provided. Township Planner Frey added that the Township had reviewed parking requirements for two office suites and one potential medical office use. She agreed there was one excess parking space.

Commissioner Anderson said she could support the two requested waivers.

Commissioner Guerriero said his questions regarding parking and the bioretention system had been answered. He viewed this as an attractive project, one that was appropriate to the site. He supported granting the two waivers as requested.

Commissioner Lark asked about the waiver request to reduce the depth of the planting beds at the front of the building from 8' to approximately 18". Was there any ability to move the building back, to reduce the size of that waiver? Also, what was the east side setback?

Township Planner Frey said the east side setback was 10 feet. Regarding moving the building back, the building was meeting its setback requirements; there was no room to move it back without requesting a variance. She thought it was preferable to reduce the foundation plantings rather than to seek a variance to move the building closer to the residential area to the north. Planting perennials in the front of the building would provide a softening effect. With a building this small, the reduced foundation plantings were less of a concern.

Commissioner McCarthy said he supported the site plan as presented.

Commissioner Shadko asked for information regarding the surface of the bioretention swale. Mr. Tzilos said it would be covered with plant material.

Commissioner Shadko said he supported this application.

Commissioner Watson supported the application and the waivers as requested.

Chair Zawodny asked about the following:

- There were trees close to the perimeter identified on the plans as being retained. Some of those trees might be lost during the construction process. How was that factored into replacement counts?

Township Planner Frey explained that if trees to be preserved near or on the property line were removed or damaged during construction, the Township would require they be replaced or additional contributions be made to the tree fund. In this instance, removed or damaged trees could probably be replaced on site; this would be required during the construction process.

Commissioner Shadko asked if protective fencing was required around the tree driplines. Township Planner Frey said the engineering drawings would typically show Limits of Construction and grading. Tree protection fencing was required for trees shown to be preserved to the extent that was possible. On this small site, it might not be possible to get all of the drip edge behind the protective fencing. The trees would be monitored during construction and at final inspection.

Mr. Tzilos said the landscape architect was aware of the conditions of the site. They would protect the trees as best as they were able; they did not want to have to replace trees if they could help it.

- Would the firs proposed along the west side of the bioswale become an imposition on the Forest Apartments parking lot?
- Regarding the driveway, the County requirements pertained to the width of the driveway as it crossed the property line. Was it possible to maintain a smaller driveway beyond that point?

Mr. Tzilos said he would talk to the County regarding this question.

- Was the foundation planting 24" or 18"?

The foundation planting area was actually 24".

- Regarding the parking, the last car adjacent to the building on the east side would open its door onto the sidewalk area.
- The applicant should clarify the stone design on the front elevation, along with the material that would be used for cladding the built-in gutter.

Mr. Tzilos said the stone on the front elevation would match the stone on the material board. The gutter would have a 20-year roof membrane as lining. The

exterior would be clad in a metal trim. The soffit under the gutter would be the same material – although perforated – as the small amount of engineered siding used on the building ends.

Chair Zawodny said he would support the waivers as requested, which appeared to be consistent with the intent of the ordinance. He commented that at least 3 signs should be in the bioswale instructing that plant materials not be cut within the bioswale.

Commissioner Lark asked if the sidewalk along 5 Mile Road should be a condition of approval. Township Planner Frey explained that the sidewalk was shown on the plan and would be part of site plan approval. The applicants were going to reach out to the apartment property on the west to see if they could work out a connection to that sidewalk also.

Mr. Tzilos further explained that the site plan showed they were curving the sidewalk around a utility pole on the southwest corner of the site. However, the County had asked them to work with Edison to see if the pole could be moved so the sidewalk did not curve around it. Township Planner Frey said the sidewalk could also curve around the pole to the north, thereby remaining on the applicant's property, as long as an easement was provided for that use.

Commissioner Shadko asked for more information regarding the residential home to the northeast of this property. Township Planner Frey explained that the setback for the commercial site to the east was nonconforming. The setback for the residential home north of that was conforming. There would be a landscape buffer to the northeast, as shown.

Chair Zawodny noted that adjacent zoning districts were identified on the site plan as R-4 Single Family, but the references to setbacks showed R-3 and RM-1 zoning; this needed to be resolved. Mr. Tzilos said the property to the north was R-4, and the property to the west was RM-1; they would make sure this information was consistent. Township Planner Frey said the setbacks were 50 feet in each case, as required.

Chair Zawodny indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION by Shadko, support by Guerriero, that the Planning Commission approve PSPR20-0001, Site Plan for a structure on 5 Mile Road (ID #77 051 99 0001 000), east of Winchester between the Northville Forest Apartments and Rumi's bakery,

With the following condition:

- Conformance with comments and conditions set forth in the March 11, 2020 Township Planner's review letter

And that the waivers be granted as requested:

- a) Reduce the depth of the planting beds at the front of the building from 8' to approximately 18".

trim and eaves. A resilient metalized textured panel that was reminiscent of a wood material would be used on the underside of the eaves.

The rendering of the south (front) elevation showed stacked stone on the main columns, limestone/cast stone around the windows, and the Norman brick as the primary material.

The south elevation schematic sheet provided elevation material calculations demonstrating that the building met the 80% masonry requirement, if the combination of brick and stone were allowed. The total building footprint had not changed from what was originally approved, with the main entry on the south side, and dedicated entry points on the other three elevations. The landscaping was also identical to the original approval.

The rear north elevation showed the treatment of the entry point there, with stacked stone elements around the windows with brick in between, and a stacked stone column supporting the cantilevered canopy element that would come out to the edge of the curb.

The north and west elevations also showed the location of the HVAC/RTU units with the prefabricated enclosure. They were anticipating two units that would be about 17.5 tons each.

Mr. Rader concluded his presentation.

Commission discussion was as follows:

Commissioner Anderson said she thought the applicants had done a good job with what was presented this evening. She noted that signage was shown on the site plan. Was the signage part of tonight's approval?

Township Planner Frey said signage was not part of site plan approval, but would be handled separately through the building permit process. Tonight's request was for the building elevation modifications and revisions to the building materials, and the requested waiver to consider masonry as a totality of all the masonry products. The applicants would also need to update the lighting, because that would change with the new elevations.

Commissioner Guerriero said he also thought the applicant had done a good job with bringing this design into harmony with the various discussions and suggestions from the Commission over several meetings.

Commissioner Lark said he generally liked the design. He had the following questions:

- Why were clerestory windows shown on original Concept "C" been changed to a brown fascia?

Mr. Rader said based on feedback received, they had reduced the size of the side wings. Accommodating the cantilevers and the associated structure on the reduced structure meant eliminating the clerestory windows.

- Did the new faux wood paneling change the 80% calculation on any of the façades?

Mr. Rader said that even with the use of the faux wood they met the 80% masonry requirement if the Planning Commission allowed them to consider the aggregate of all masonry materials.

- What color would the metal panels on the north elevation and on the sides be?

Mr. Rader said the metal panels would be solid with a ribbed design. Stacked stone elements would break up the ribbed metal panels on the tower element.

- On the side elevations, why was the stacked stone used on only one of the three columns at each entryway?

Mr. Rader said the stacked stone would emphasize the column that came out about three feet to support each protruding entryway, and would provide design consistency with the front/south elevation.

- Was the prefabricated enclosure – labeled “premanufactured shroud system” on the plans – for the RTU units going to be painted a dark color so it would blend in?

Mr. Rader said the prefabricated enclosures were available in a variety of colors; the enclosure would be as close in color to the adjacent bronze trim as possible. He pointed out that a pedestrian would have to be standing quite a distance from the building in order to see the enclosure.

Commissioner McCarthy said he felt the building would be a good addition to the neighborhood and he would support this application.

Commissioner Shadko said he liked this design and would support the application. On a side note, more and more the Commission was being asked to use non-brick materials in the masonry calculations. Did the ordinance need to be changed to reflect this ongoing trend?

Commissioner Watson also liked the design of this building. Like Commissioner Lark, she missed the clerestory windows. Using the different materials along with the brick on the south elevation did present warm, natural and balanced appearance. She had the following comments and questions:

- The north elevation showed a large expanse of cast stone, giving a cooler effect than the front of the building. Commissioner Watson would prefer that element be more neutral, as it faced the residential neighborhood.
- Would the screening enclosure of the HVAC unit on the north elevation blend in with the middle tower? This was important as the homeowners on adjacent properties would see this building from a distance.

Mr. Rader reiterated that the prefabricated shroud enclosure for the RTU units would match the bronze trim as much as possible. Seeing the RTU units would be very difficult from a pedestrian perspective, based on the extended eaves and the location of the unit nestled up against the front tower element.

Commissioner Watson said the residents would be seeing the rooftop from a distance, and it was important to keep their perspective in mind.

- Would the metal panels under the top tier be slatted?

Chair Zawodny said that the applicants had done a significant amount of work with this design. He had been resistant to changing from the sloped roofs as shown in the originally approved elevations for this site, but he now felt the 16 foot roof lines, with the additional eave line at 11-12 feet, compared favorably to the previous monolithic sloped roof which had been 23 feet at its midpoint and 34 feet at its ridge. Also, the purpose of the Usonian style was to minimize the building in its setting and to help it blend in by using horizontal lines and using more natural, darker, materials. He felt the applicants had done a great job pulling this together, and in the long run this building would be less conspicuous than the originally approved building. It would have been better if the landscape plan had been available this evening, as a good landscape plan would help blend the commercial building and bring it further down in scale relative to the surrounding sites and environment.

Regarding questions and comments discussed earlier, Chair Zawodny thought the side entrances with one stone column that protruded out from the façade, as mentioned by Commissioner Lark, could be enhanced with complementary landscaping. The expanse of cast stone at the rear, as mentioned by Commissioner Watson, could also be enhanced by landscaping including, for instance, ornamental trees close to the building.

Chair Zawodny asked the following questions.

- What was the actual roof height?

Mr. Rader said that depending on the section, roof height would be 4-6 inches below the overall top trim height. There was only a very small parapet, to allow room to slope the roof membrane down to conductors that would take the water away from the building.

- Would 17.5 ton HVAC units actually be hidden by the tower element or the prefabricated enclosure? Would the applicants consider using more units with lower tonnage?

Mr. Rader said the RTU units of 17.5 tons would not exceed the 6-foot differential between the roof location and the upper portion of the tower element.

- Would the entrance lobby be taller under the tower element?

Mr. Rader said that was the case.

Chair Zawodny completed his comments by saying he appreciated that the elevations were now broken up with projections at the window lines, projecting eaves, wood-like material on the underside, etc., reducing the mass of the original appearance. He did want to make sure that the expressed eaves would have a high quality metal finish.

Chair Zawodny read questions listed by participants in the ZOOM webinar chat, summarized as follows.

- Claire Shaw: "The 7 Mile building looks so different from the neighboring businesses on 7 Mile road. It is much more modern looking and doesn't even try to blend into the neighborhood it is becoming part of. Why is this development not required to adhere to the original site plan/elevation requirements for a peaked roof, percentage or brick use, etc. that it appears neighboring businesses have adhered to? If the developer didn't like the original elevation, why not allow him to redesign but while still adhering to the requirements?"
- Mark: "Is there parking or just a path on North side of building (rear)?"
Mr. Rader: "It's the same site plan and parking that was originally approved last year."
- Ashley Peper: "For the CAD image on the 'Concept "C" Design, looking at it, there appears to be a significant overhang (past landscaping and sidewalk) on the right side; however, the drawings appear to have a smaller overhang. Just looking for clarification . . . How far does it overhang?"
- Mark: "Any chance Jeff has a rendering with both office and day care to get complete picture?"
- Ashley Peper: "Is the parking included in that 50ft buffer?"
- Jennifer Frey: "No – 50 [foot setback] is all landscape."

Mr. Rader pointed out that the parking had not changed from the originally approved plan. There was parking and service vehicle access to all sides of the building.

Regarding Ms. Peper's question about the Concept "C" Design, Mr. Rader said that Concept C was just a design sketch. They had significantly reduced the scale and proportion of that design. The proposed overhang at the 16-foot height was four feet. At the 11-12 foot eave height the overhang was approximately 2'4"

Chair Zawodny opened the meeting to public comment.

Scott Frush, 18441 Stoneridge Court, asked if the Daycare Center was already approved. Also, regarding the office building, many residents didn't want that to be built. Had their input been considered?

Chair Zawodny reviewed the process and history of this application. Tonight the Commission was reviewing a development that already had an approved site plan, building elevations, and approved uses. The applicant was asking for revisions to the office building that would effectively change the character of that building from a traditional sloped roof design to the Usonian, Prairie School design as shown.

Township Planner Frey added that this project had been the subject of many meetings with much public input. Modifications to the Premier Academy day care center had been approved. The overall site had been approved in terms of use, size of the buildings, landscaping, and other improvements for the site. Again, what was before the Planning Commission this evening was a request to modify the elevations for the office building, without changing its location or footprint. Earlier proposals that would have made other changes to the use, footprints, etc., had been taken off the table. The process had been a good one, with positive results for the developer and the community.

Ashley Peper, 19450 Smock, said that she agreed with Commissioner Watson regarding the broad mass of cast stone on the north elevation that would face the residential neighborhood. Could that be decreased? Also, could landscaping be added to the rear to further soften the building and provide buffering for the neighbors?

Chair Zawodny noted that the approved landscape plan had not been part of tonight's documentation. However, the landscape plan did require a significant investment in plantings, including between the day care center and the office building, and between the office building and the residential area to the north.

Township Planner Frey added that the landscape plan required buffering above and beyond a typical landscape plan. However, the Township could look at that further and if some landscape materials could be shifted to better protect the residential area that could be done. The 50-foot buffer area had a significant amount of proposed plant material. If anyone wanted to see the landscape plan it could be shared via email while the Township Offices were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair Zawodny thanked the presenters and also the public for their participation over many meetings. He felt the result was an improved development project that would bring character and quality to the neighborhood and the Township.

Commissioner Shadko asked if the applicants would agree to reducing the cast stone on the north elevation. Mr. Rader said the cast stone had a warmer appearance in reality than shown on the drawings. In response to a further question from Commissioner Shadko, Mr. Rader said the cast stone did not have mortar joints per se, but rather utilized seams and butt joints.

- Opening newly created hiking and biking trails on eastern end of old State Hospital property sometime after Memorial Day.

Eric Lark, Board of Zoning Appeals

- ZBA would meet May 20.

Extended Public Comments:

Scott Frush thanked the Commission for their service.

Chair Zawodny again thanked the public for their participation this evening and throughout the past hearings for the 7 Mile Road project approved this evening. The ongoing public participation ultimately resulted in a better final project.

Adjournment:

Motion by McCarthy, support by Guerriero, to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 pm.

Voice vote: Ayes: All.
 Nays: None

Motion approved unanimously.