

2. **30-32 and 36-38 BROAD STREET (ZONE MCDD)** Request by John W. Knuff, Esq. for an informal discussion regarding proposed development of the above captioned properties.

John Knuff, Esq. 147 North Broad Street, Milford. Introduced Joshua Swerling from Bohler Engineering; Stephen McGrane, Architect, Gensler Architects and Russ Barton and Brian Aberton, principals of one of the two properties, all present on behalf of TD Bank. The properties are identified as 30-32 and 36-38 Broad Street. 30-32 is a vacant lot and 36-38 is the site of the former Harrison's hardware building. Mr. Knuff thanked the Board for entertaining them on an informal basis.

This proposed project is a bit of a hybrid. They are aware their proposal will receive considerable scrutiny because 1) It is located on the Green, which is the cultural and commercial heart of the city and 2) It is located in the MCDD zone and there are special design guidelines in regard to the building design and the signage that is applied to the MCDD that also reflects the importance of the Green. Also aware that it is the site of the former Harrison's Hardware building and even though it has been vacant for a number of years, it holds a place of nostalgia for many in the city. Does not think there is any true architectural significance to that building, but they understand how it is viewed by many. They have spoken to Mr. Platt, the **City historian** and hope to continue a dialog with him.

A bank in the MCDD is a permitted use. All that is required is a site plan application and with such applications, the board's discretion is very limited. They do not feel this would be an appropriate way to move forward with this proposed project, given the importance of this location.

They are looking to accomplish three things tonight: 1) Describe the present condition of the building and why it is unfit for commercial use; 2) Briefly describe the site plan and 3) Discuss the proposed architecture in the context of the

design guidelines. Aware that there are separate signage guidelines and that will be discussed as well.

The property at 30-32 Broad Street is a simple, narrow rectangle and is presently unapproved. The lot where Harrison's is located, 36-38 is a very oddly shaped parcel with an unusually shaped building on it. The parcels are subject to various easements, both for a right-of-way and for city parking. This design respects those easements. There are probably six or seven different encumbrances that somehow affect these premises.

Bohler Engineering investigated the condition of the Harrison's building to see if it could be reused in any commercially viable way. While their research focused on their intended use, the results show it is not suitable for any commercial use.

Highlights of the architectural report regarding the existing building: It is 100% wood frame construction on a rubble stone foundation. The exterior is combination vinyl siding and asphalt shingles and water damage is evident throughout the building. There are lolly columns approximately every 10 feet which are holding up the first floor ceiling. The ceiling is only 7-1/2 feet high, which is too low for any retail or commercial use. Described the decayed and structural deficiencies of the Harrison's building. Any user would have to bring the building into compliance with the current building code and ADA standards. Not possible to reuse the existing Harrison's building. Inquiries into using the existing building never worked out because of its condition.

Josh Swerling, Bohler Engineering. Proposed site plan that has been developed demolishes the Harrison's building completely. Tried to maintain the footprint but architects deemed it unfeasible. Site is 2/3 acre with the two properties. The proposed building is in the front of the building at 0 setback. 2,560 SF is being contemplated. Two lane drive-thru that can comply with the regulations and stacking requirements. 12 newly created parking spaces. 24 currently exist are incorporated into the municipal parking space. Circulation would be maintained through the existing drive aisle that is enter only. The exiting maneuver from the drive-thrus would be accommodated through a curb cut onto Broad Street. This would be consistent with other users on the street.

Bohler was asked if any of their retail clients would consider reconditioning the Harrison's building to which their response was negative based on the building's condition and the amount of work that would be necessary to rework it.

Stephen McGrane, Architect, Gresler Architecture Design and Planning. The building structure at present is not conducive for reuse and a new structure is proposed. The building structure would not be compliant with existing building codes, handicapped accessibility and would be an issue for anyone thinking of using the building. TD Bank believes it has to look to a new building design. A design has been developed that would be sensitive to the context of the

guidelines for Milford's downtown area. A building has been designed that adopts the materials existing in the downtown. The scale of the building is brought to the pedestrian level. Have incorporated details that incorporate historic details and are sensitive to the buildings around it. Recognize the need to be sensitive to what is existing. Proposing articulation with different colors of brick and articulating some of the windows that are similar to the neighboring buildings. Downtown district is more strict in signage than in other areas. What will be proposed will be harmonious with the context of the surrounding buildings and scale of the area.

[Renderings of the proposed building were circulated among the Board members.]

Mr. Sulkis: Asked Mr. Knuff to point out to the Board members what is the actual Harrison's site and what is the empty lot next to the Harrison's site. Also asked who Mr. Knuff was representing.

Mr. Knuff: Showed via the display the two parcels in question. Stated he represented TD Bank, as did those present with him. They do not represent the property owners of either parcel.

Ms. Rose: Asked Mr. Knuff if the project being presented was a done deal.

Mr. Knuff: Stated it was not a done deal. It would be a lease. He did not represent TD Bank on the transaction, which he did not believe was concluded yet. Attempting a dialog with the Commission to hear their thoughts about the proposed architecture and to follow the guidelines established by the City to the best extent possible.

Mr. Bender: Exiting onto North Broad with the drive-thru presents a concern, especially when there are fairs on the Green and a lot of pedestrian about. Also adding a lot more traffic to the one-way driveway that is there now.

Mr. Knuff: Does not have the same concern about cars entering the site. This will provide an easier way to access those spaces that the City has an easement on. Leaving the site will be only those cars going through the drive-thru. Drivers using drive-thrus are acquainted with the necessary procedure when coming to the street and pedestrian walkways.

Mr. Bender: Thought there was no room for error in that area if either the pedestrian or driver is not paying attention. It works in theory but may not work in reality.

Mr. Liddy: Agreed with Mr. Bender's comments. Suggested the bank be moved farther back and due to its location on a corner with pedestrians and a light, it presents a safety issue.

Ms. Rose to Staff: Asked if there was historical protection on the Harrison's building.

Mr. Sulkis: It is subject to the Demolition Delay Ordinance and it is on the Historic inventory, but there is nothing in the regulations that would prevent it from being demolished.

Mme. Chair: Asked if Mr. Platt could shed some light on the historic significance of the Harrison's Hardware building.

Richard Platt, City Historian. The Harrison's building is not part of any historic

district, which would be the most powerful protection any structure could have. It is on the Historic Resources Inventory List, which is an advisory list, with no legal status. It is over 75 years old and would be subject to delay of demolition, which gives those who want to save the building a chance to buy some time to find a viable alternative. The building is mainly a community landmark with no architectural significance. The mural on the side of the building is mentioned in the historic inventory. There are interior aspects of the building that could be used, for example, the wooden bins.

Mr. Ferrante to Mr. Platt: Asked what he thought of the proposed building that would take Harrison's place.

Mr. Knuff: Said he would talk to his client about retaining the mural or any other feature of the building the Board requested, if possible.

Mr. Platt: Thought the proposed structure would fit into the Green area. Stated that saying the structure could not be saved is a matter of opinion and any building can be restored.

Mr. Bender: How long has the building been empty?

Mr. Platt: Believes it has been vacant since 2006.

Ms. Rose: What is the estimated cost of demolition and the estimated cost of building the bank building.

Mr. Knuff: Stated he did not know.

Mr. Liddy: Asked if there were other TD banks in Milford.

Mr. Knuff: At the Milford Crossing.

Mr. Liddy: Liked the wooden floors of the old hardware store. Asked if they could be used in the proposed new building.

Mr. Knuff: Did not think it was possible to salvage just the floor.

Ms. Shaw: Asked what Mr. Knuff meant about not using the building for retail use. Noted the historic and nostalgic reference to Harrison's as an anchor to draw people to the downtown retail trade and retail establishments have suffered in the years since Harrison's has not been in business. The proposed project, not being a retail establishment will have a negative impact on Broad Street.

Mr. Bender: Four years for a building to be vacant is a long time. Believes some type of business should go in that space.

Mr. Ferrante: The 20-car drive-thru being squeezed onto the Green seems to

be more of a suburban use.

Mr. Knuff: Agreed about the required car stacking, especially where there are two drive-thru windows. Noted that this building was not a prototype building, but was designed specifically for this site. Stated that no tenant has attempted to use that property for the time it has been vacant speaks volumes as to the marketability and viability of that site.

Ms. Rose: Does not like the architecture of the building, especially on the side. Favorite downtown architecture is the Bistro Basque building. Thought it would cost TD Bank more money to raze and build a new structure than to rehab the existing building.

Mr. Knuff: It is cheaper to build a new building.

Ms. Rose: Agrees with Ms. Shaw in preferring a retail or restaurant to go into the space. Does not like the side of building.

Mr. Knuff: Used the adage, "The perfect be the enemy of the good", to describe the current situation whereby an image is established as to what "could" be, but in reality the potential of a restaurant or retail store renovating that building is not

likely, since those types of businesses have not made any real attempt to try to reuse that building.

Ms. Rose: Asked if some usable parts of the building could be donated to the Milford Historical Society.

Mr. Knuff: Anticipated such a request and will speak to the client about salvaging portions of the building of historical significance.

Mme. Chair: Why can't the new building be reminiscent of Harrison's? Can it be built new or use some of the components to look similar to Harrison's?

Mr. Swerling: The building has great nostalgic value to the community, but it does not have a lot of historical value. It does not stand up to any historic architectural guidelines.

Mr. Ferrante: The bank design does not incorporate the charm of Milford's New England Green.

Mr. Mead: Agreed with Mr. Liddy's suggestion of pushing the building back and suggested incorporating a step and large glass windows in the front, as the

hardware store had. Also, keeping the roof flat or an A-frame in the front would be in keeping with the downtown look.

Mr. Knuff: Will look at sliding the building back and review the Board's comments on the design.

Mr. Liddy: Asked Mr. Sulkis for his thoughts on the building's design.

Mr. Sulkis: These things are always subjective and his opinion is no better or worse than anyone else's, despite his years of experience. Gives the same guidance to any applicant who proposes anything downtown, which is this is a New England Green and the elements that the Board has always considered are pitched roofs, natural exterior products such as stone and wood. They have a flat roof and that is not a New England design.

Ms. Rose: Suggested the applicant look at some of the older photos of Harrison's before it was vinyl sided and incorporate some of those architectural features.

Mr. Knuff: Stated he was not diminishing the regard that those who grew up in this town have for the Harrison's building. He was speaking solely from the architectural aspect of the building.

Mr. Sulkis: Added this building is in the Commercial Core Subdistrict and the regulations recommend a minimum of two stories. Not unlike other banks along the Green, it is designed as one story.

Mr. Knuff: There are a number of other buildings that are one-story with flat roofs.

Mr. McGrane: Showed the Board another design of building that had a pitched roof in order to relate to some of the buildings downtown and also, to give the building more height. The tower is 23 feet high. The roof itself is approximately 20 feet high. Believe the flat roof would relate to the neighboring buildings.

Mr. Zwerling: One of the goals in designing this project is to be LEEDS certified. The type of roof is a factor in LEEDS certified development.

Mr. Liddy: What level of LEEDS certification?

Mr. McGrane: Will be LEEDS certified but not sure at this point to what degree. Could be a silver level of certification.

Mr. Knuff: Thanked the Board for giving the applicant so much of its time.