

Village of Skaneateles Planning Board Meeting March 4, 2010

In the matter of the application submitted by Juliette Sharpe for a Critical Impact Permit under the provisions of Section 225-52H of the Zoning Law, for the development or redevelopment in the Downtown D District for the building located at 52 East Genesee Street in the Village.

Present: Bruce Kenan, Chairman
Lauren Waite, Member
Steve Krause, Member
Douglas Sutherland, Member

Jorge Batlle, Clerk to the Planning Board
Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the Planning Board

Robert Eggleston, Architect for the applicant

Clifford Abrams, State Street
Jim Falso, Crow Hill Road
Gregg Sgromo, Syracuse
Peter Elliot, Syracuse
Andrew Ramsgard, East Genesee Street

Absent: William Eberhardt, Member

Chairman Kenan opened the meeting at 7:59pm announcing the application of Julie Sharpe for 52 East Genesee Street.

Robert Eggleston, Architect for the applicant made the presentation. He said, "Julie Sharpe has owned and lived in this building for 25 or 30 years. It is actually one of the wider structures on Genesee Street, 31 feet of street frontage with 3875 square feet of lot area. The current building has 2 retail stores on the ground level. It has 1 apartment on the second floor level. It has 2 apartments on the 3rd floor level. Then there's a small office that Julie uses in the back level for massage therapy.

She'd like to continue to live in the building. One of the needs that she has is providing it with an elevator. The other element that we are concerned about is the existing back stairs are in poor condition. They are made out of wood and they are very – getting to then end of their life. So, she wanted to do a new stairway and she wanted to do an new elevator on the back. At the same time she wanted to renovate the 3rd floor two apartments and make it one apartment. So she is going from 3 dwelling units to 2 dwelling units. The other element is on the street front, she has a 1950s street front which probably will soon become historic in itself because they are all being torn out now., and going back to more historic early 1900s street fronts, we are decided

that this is kind of her last chance to do things to the building, so she wants to replace the storefront. We have gone through our historic photographs and found an early 1900s photographs that show a store front very similar to this, with the large panes, the transom windows above, that panels built in below.

In doing this, right now no one can get to the office without going down the back alley and around and in through the back. There is no public way to go from the street to the basement office. The door on the left goes to the upstairs, up to the apartments – second and 3rd floor apartment. What she's proposing is, she's taking out the very small store *Cate & Sally* and there'll be an entrance lobby. There will be a little extra space which will probably be given over to the Vermont coffee. We are providing a corridor that does go back to the back of the building.

The other interesting thing is, there is on record in the deeds an easement with Linda Roche's building just to the east – that they have the ability from the 3rd and 2nd floor to pass through the building – the partywall into to her hallway and use this stairway on the east side of her building. Wes Clark, when he owned the building 30-35 years ago, took out the doors. But the easement is still in tact, even though it hasn't been utilized. We do have a problem with the Building Code today that we can't have a door between 2 buildings crossing the property line.

So, what our solution is, and Linda Roche is interested in the use of the elevator and the back stairs. Currently she has no back stairs. They do have some doors from her building that pass out a couple of levels. One level you actually walk across the roof and you have to jump around some rails to get on the stairs and come down. So, she has worked out an agreement with Linda Roche to share the expense, but also will create an easement in the back and by Building Code, what we are doing is, we are putting in an exterior elevator. So, we pass out of the building and then you can pass into the elevator. We are going to make the stairs out of steel so as required by Code. You can't have more than a 2 story wood stair. It has to be steel, non-combustible.

So, we have designed this so that this corridor will pass to the back. Come out of the building into a partially covered area where the elevator is. You can pass into the doorways that exist into Linda Roche's building and then you have the stairway. So, the stairway will go from the parking level up to the 3rd floor. The elevator will go from the basement parking level all the way up to the 3rd floor and exit out into the common areas. So, both building have the ability to use the stairway and the elevator.

As far as the size of the elevator, it's just a small shaft in area. We are rebuilding a small basement level shed area in the back that will be taken off which is in the back corner right here. By doing the switchback stair – we actually have less coverage and make it more compact. We leave more room You can see where the stairs no longer are in the back. For maneuverability of the people parking and driving in this back area. Again, just the elevator and walkway area will be covered. Not the actual back stairs. The Historic Commission has thought that we have done a pretty good job back here. We will have a stucco finish on the elevator. We have put some small windows in the elevator shaft so that in the elevator, as you are riding up, you will pass these windows. It takes away the claustrophobic feeling of a small, enclosed elevator. There are just a couple of alterations because of the elevator shaft – comes over into part of this window....

there's a couple of windows in the side that are in the way that will be adjusted on the second floor. The door entrance into Julie's office will shift from further back here, just out beyond the stairway in this area.

As far as the front of the building, what we've done is to get handicap accessibility.... right no you have to step up into Vermont coffee. So, the sidewalk does rise as it comes to the east. So, what we are able to do is just like with the entrance in this building back several years ago, we are able to put a slightly ramped area that 3 or 4 inches at this end versus the 6 or 8 inches at the west end. So that in the recessed area we can ramp slope up into the door of Vermont coffee. We'll have a door on the side of this recessed area as well as the common entrance for the residents and going back to the office. Because of the size and location of the stairs, we've kept the door from the stairs going up to the apartments in its current location. We couldn't change that to the side as well.

We will be replacing the windows on the 2nd and 3rd floor. In the historic photograph we actually saw that they had a 6 or one grid configuration. Julie likes that idea. So when she sits in here apartment she can actually look out and see uninterrupted down to what's happening on Genesee Street. I think we have provided you with a still photograph. You can see that this is the front. We have the transoms with the large panes in front of it. It had the 6 over one on that level. Oddly enough, it had 6 or 6 on the 3rd floor level. We thought that we would make that consistent.

Chairman Kenan asked, "so what does the structure over the elevator look like?" Eggleston said, "the structure over the elevator - what we have is a shed roof that will come over this extension which is probably about 8 to ten feet out. The only part that has a roof on it is the elevator shaft plus a 4 foot walkway that's on the 2 sides of it. Then the stairs are exposed and open ." The Chairman asked, "the elevator does not have machinery overhead?" Eggleston said, "o, it's actually a traction type elevator." Member Krause asked, "it's a 'LULA/' Limited use elevator?" Eggleston said, "limited use elevator." Member Krause asked, "so that's why it doesn't have an over run?" Eggleston said, "correct." Member Krause asked, "and you can get those that you can put up outside?" Eggleston said, "yes. You are in a closed space. It's a weather tight space." Member Krause asked, "doesn't that shaft have to be rated, the elevator shaft? So, how do you do it with windows?" Eggleston said, "we'll have to actually look at it. It's to the exterior. The separation itself is on the - only the 2 sides in there. We will double check that." Member Krause said, "I think that the entire shaft has to be rated. The other thing I would ask you to look at are again this exterior fire spread question. You have these buildings that over time have been extended past the fire walls, which were a good idea once they rebuilt the block - because the thing burned down. But over time those walls have not been respected. I think you have a couple of instances at this juncture between Julie's building and the adjacent. I think you also have problems on the other side but there's nothing in the applications that's dealing with the other side. So, I don't know if we can do anything about it now. At least on this east side we ought to clean it up."

Eggleston said, "Julie's when they rebuilt that back portion of Linda Roche's building, that is a block wall separated on the side there. So, Linda Roche's has a total fire separation all the way out to this point." Member Krause said, "but we are putting doors right next to each

other.” Eggleston said, “we can look at the ratings on the doors, if they need to be.” Member Krause said, “absolutely. That same question runs up and down the whole thing. What are the materials proposed for the new stroke front?” Eggleston replied, “we are going to use a Pella Designer window. Then we will have a panel. Whether it’s a – probably not a wood panel but a composite board panel. But it will look like it’s wood. We want like a raised panel type thing.”

Member Krause said. “it looks as though the elevator is blocking access to what is currently a garage.” Eggleston said, “it is not a garage. All it is is a 6 foot wide overhead door for bringing deliveries in. This originally was a furniture store, to receive big deliveries, Babcock’s. So what we’ll have is a 3 foot door for receiving deliveries and that’s totally satisfactory.” Member Krause said, “so we are not relying on that to satisfy parking requirements.” Eggleston said, “because we’ve eliminated an apartment we have reduced the number of cars. I have a table if there was a parking ordinance how we would comply with that.” The Chairman asked, “how would you comply?” Eggleston said, “we have – with the proposed parking ordinance, what they are saying is that everyone is grandfathered for what they had. Our requirement has gone from 16 to 12.5 because we have taken out a retail space and plus we’ve taken out an apartment. We still have 3 ½ cars on-site.”

Member Sutherland said, “it looks like the entrance to *Green Mountain* is no longer on Genesee Street. It hidden. Those are retail killers. When a customer needs to go in and make a second decision, it cuts down on the number of customers that go in by some amount – to the extent that that door can be a little bit like the historic photo with all the snow. So it’s clear and obvious where doors are that go into shops. I think that’s going to help the merchant in the long haul, and probably a little more fitting in terms of the architectural history of the way Genesee Street has always looked.” Eggleston said, “we will have to take a look and see what we can do relative to that.” Member Sutherland said, “in a way it’s kind of nice to consolidate stuff, and I can see what you’d do that. But it does not help the merchant in the long haul.” Member Krause said, “the shameless capitalist would make this recess smaller and you’d have more rental area – bring the door out to the street. Isn’t that what you’d do?” Eggleston said, “you are talking Julie Sharpe here. More places to put dog bags.” Member Sutherland said, “Bob, that’s going to be on the Minutes.”

Member Krause asked, “what do you propose to do about this exterior fire spread issue with the adjacent door and windows?” Eggleston said, “we will have to look and see - do we have to have a rated door because of the close proximity. I know that, I am familiar with the Code, the fire separation is only in the direction towards the property line, not perpendicular to the property line. Then it does raise the question whether Linda Roche’s have to be solid doors. They currently are solid doors that are in there and have a rating on them.”

The Chairman said, “our issue is again strictly a Critical Impact recommendation. Any more questions? Anyone have a motion? Do we need a SEQR statement on this one?” Galbato said, “yes you do. The Board should consider making them selves Lead Agency and I recommend that it be an Unlisted Action, and uncoordinated review. This is going to the Board of Trustees, so there is another agency looking at the project as well. And consider is having a Negative Delcaration that there is no significant environmental impact. The applicant has submitted the Short Form Environmental Assessment Form.” The Chairman asked for a motion.

Member Waite said, “I make a motion that we declare ourselves as Lead Agency, and this is an Unlisted Action with an Uncoordinated Review, and with a Negative Declaration of no significant environmental impact. Also, that we recommend to the Board of Trustees approval of the Critical Impact Permit.”

The motion was seconded by Member Krause. The vote was 4-0 in favor of the motion. The meeting was closed at 8:17pm.