

III. F – VISUAL RESOURCES

F-1 Comment:

So one is that they discuss about that this is a benefit because it will demolish a dilapidated barn. I just wanted to point out that I have no problem with the design of the barn and the building. I feel that it is actually dilapidated because the property owners have not maintained it or painted it and that's the same people who are going to be putting up a mammoth storage facility. So I don't think in and of itself it is a terrible building. It is just that the property owners allowed it to be degraded, and I wanted to make that point. That if you degrade something on purpose, then you can use it as a benefit now for a different use.

(Board Member Yergin, Public Hearing, April 1, 2021)

F-1 Response:

The Project Site was purchased by the current owners in 2000. It was the long-time site of a retail lumber yard business and helps to explain why the buildings look like they do.

- (522 Fenimore) the large barn was used for interior-grade lumber storage.
- (560 Fenimore) the Waverly/Fenimore corner building was the business office (2nd floor) and retail hardware store (1st floor).
- (416 Waverly) the block building housed the mill shop.
- (408 Waverly) used for lumber storage.
- There are existing large outdoor racks used for storing exterior-grade lumber.

At the time the Murphy Brothers became owners and took over the Project Site, their construction business operated differently. To provide the high level of service, it was necessary to employ many levels of skilled workers while stockpiling tools, equipment, trucks, and materials on-site. Today, Murphy Brothers Contracting has evolved into a Construction Management business. Over time, the need for the existing buildings and structures to operate as they were originally intended has become less and less and they are only so adaptable in their current configurations. In more recent years, some of the extra space no longer needed by Murphy Brothers Contracting was rented out to various small business enterprises and tradespeople.

The buildings in question have gone through many improvements over the years, most notably following the infamous March 2007 floods where 4+ feet of water filled the buildings that are located in the flood zone. Following that incident, major renovation work was performed on corner building (560) and the barn (522) including new 2nd floor office spaces, roof & siding. Since 2007, other interior upgrades and necessary structural repairs have been made to the buildings. With every heavy rainfall that floods Fenimore Road, the barn (522) fills with approximately 1 foot or more of water due to the poor drainage on the intersections of Fenimore/Waverly & Fenimore/Hoyt. This flooding has resulted in repeat damage to the exterior of the building and makes the first-floor interior virtually unusable in its current state. To update the building into a wholly usable space, it would need to be leveled and rebuilt or raised to be compliant with the flood zone code of the Village. This is true regardless of its perceived maintenance.

The proposed self-storage building addition will still be able to house small business enterprises and tradespeople as it does now, only in an energy efficient structure on a property that manages its own stormwater, something that raising the barn or simply painting the existing buildings would not achieve.

F-2 Comment:

When I see that, it actually fits seamlessly into the other building; they're not even trying to pretend it is a different building. (Board Member Yergin, Public Hearing, April 1, 2021)

F-2 Response:

The Proposed Action has always been presented as an addition and not a new building. The addition will operate cohesively with and be architecturally integrated with the existing self-storage facility.

F-3 Comment:

As far as my other comments go, without having the data and the detail, obviously, I have seen the pictures and I have seen the site, I think the visual concerns are extraordinary. I think it changes the qualitative aspect to a town or a village or a hamlet when you come in, it's a very different structure. I don't think – I may be wrong, I don't think the high school is of that magnitude, maybe I'm wrong on that, but certainly for a size of this – for a land parcel like that, it's extraordinary building both in terms of height, dimension and mass. (Board Member Neufeld, Public Hearing, April 1, 2021)

F-3 Response:

The existing Mamaroneck Self-Storage building is 40,492 square feet in gross floor area. The building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing façade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. This approach would reduce the building footprint of the addition by 1,044 square feet and the gross floor area of the addition by 12,014 square feet. The FAR for the overall site would be reduced from 2.26¹ to 1.92.

The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape.

An estimate of the Mamaroneck High School building complex indicates over 500,000 square feet of gross floor area. The original main building, while only three-stories in height, reflects a monumental architectural treatment, with high floor to ceiling heights. The height of the high school building to the roof parapet is nearly 60', to the top of the center peaked roof approximately 75' and the top of the cupola approximately 85'. The High School is far larger than the proposed self-storage building addition which does not exceed 45', and as such, does not represent a fair comparison.

F-4 Comment:

I have relatively few to add. The first has to do with the size. I think this project is enormous. I think it looks enormous in its setting. I don't think – I think that the attempt in the DEIS to explain why this is consistent with the area and everything else, I think there was something, oh, it's not the biggest building in the village. Maybe not, but it's the largest in this area. It is the most solid in terms of the way the structure looks, and, therefore, I think the visual impact is enormous. I do not think that the DEIS really gave it enough consideration. (Chairwoman Kramer, Public Hearing, April 1, 2021)

F-4 Response:

This opinion is noted. The DEIS devoted an entire chapter to Visual Resources. In accordance with the Scoping Document adopted by the Lead Agency, six separate viewpoints were analyzed, and before and after dimensionally accurate photo-renderings provided for each viewpoint.

¹ Although the proposed FAR for the overall site had been presented as 2.43 in the DEIS, it has been updated here based on the existing self-storage building (40,492 square feet), the DEIS proposed addition (56,328 square feet), and the existing front building (Building B; 2,985 square feet) that had been proposed to remain under the DEIS Plan.

The new building extension would consist of 44,314 square feet of gross floor area, or a net increase of 25,725 square feet once the floor areas of the existing industrial buildings are deducted. Where the building addition presented in the DEIS Plan was somewhat monolithic, the building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing facade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. This approach reduces the building footprint of the addition by 1,044 square feet and the gross floor area of the addition by 12,014 square feet. The proposed FAR for the overall site is reduced from 2.26² to 1.92.

The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape. The streetscape is proposed to be further enhanced by replacing the Murphy Brothers office building located at the Waverly Avenue/Fenimore Road intersection, with a publicly accessible vest-pocket park containing decorative seasonal landscaping and benches arrayed around a circular walkway.

F-5 Comment:

Finally, we were concerned and this was also made reference to during one of your meetings was the lighting. Efforts that were to be taken to avoid on alley effect because with the increase in heights, again, if you were down on Railroad Way, and if indeed that plan comes to fruition, it would absolutely create a canyon effect and the additional lighting would alleviate, especially in the winter and fall months when the sun sets earlier, would provide more of a welcoming more environment, which we would certainly appreciate, and the applicant has taken that into consideration and we appreciate that.
(Andrew Spatz, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)

F-5 Response:

Comment noted. See the lighting plan included as Figure III.A-2, which includes lighting specified to illuminate Railroad Way. See also the proposed nighttime views in Figures III.F-1 and III.F-3.

F-6 Comment:

Then, it talks about the creation of an architecturally distinctive structure, I disagree. I do not think there's anything distinctive about the structure. I don't think it really looks particularly attractive. It is certainly much more attractive than some of the buildings that are no longer in good condition but I do not particularly think it is attractive and I don't think that the design of the building has been done in a way through offset the impact of the building on the surrounding community. It is an enormous building.
(Chairwoman Kramer, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)

F-6 Response:

This opinion is noted. The opinion expressed by the Applicant that the building addition would be “architecturally distinctive” was intended to distinguish its appearance when compared to the existing industrial buildings in the vicinity of the Site, and moreover to the customary design architecture of self-storage buildings generally.

² Although the proposed FAR for the overall site had been presented as 2.43 in the DEIS, it has been updated here based on the existing self-storage building (40,492 square feet), the DEIS proposed addition (56,328 square feet), and the existing front building (Building B; 2,985 square feet) that had been proposed to remain under the DEIS Plan.

Nevertheless, the building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing façade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. This approach reduces the building footprint of the addition by 1,044 square feet and the gross floor area of the addition by 12,014 square feet. The proposed FAR will be reduced from 2.26³ to 1.92.

The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape. The streetscape is proposed to be further enhanced by replacing the Murphy Brothers office building located at the Waverly Avenue/Fenimore Road intersection, with a publicly accessible vest-pocket park containing decorative seasonal landscaping and benches arrayed around a circular walkway.

F-7 Comment:

Then, it says the existing amount of self-storage building has established a perpetual visual character of the site. Sure, the building has established at the site should be enormous and overbuilt in a single building, but it has not established the character of the community, and I think that this building is absolutely inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood and they've done nothing to really explain how it is consistent with the neighborhood other than to talk about -- I'm not even 100 percent sure -- but they don't really do that.
(Chairwoman Kramer, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)

F-7 Response:

The building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing façade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape.

It is important to highlight the Board of Architectural Review's role in addressing the very issue raised in this comment. In accordance with the provisions of §6-7 A. of the Village Code, that Board's statutory obligation to render a decision is based primarily on a finding of excessive similarity or dissimilarity or inappropriateness of design, as defined as:

- 1) "Excessive similarity to any other building or structure existing or for which a permit has been issued or to any other building or structure included in the same permit application, within 250 feet of the proposed site, in respect to one or more of the following features of exterior design and appearance.
 - (a.) Apparently identical facade.

³ Although the proposed FAR for the overall site had been presented as 2.43 in the DEIS, it has been updated here based on the existing self-storage building (40,492 square feet), the DEIS proposed addition (56,328 square feet), and the existing front building (Building B; 2,985 square feet) that had been proposed to remain under the DEIS Plan.

- (b.) Substantially identical size and arrangement of either doors, windows, porticos or other openings or breaks in the facade facing the street, including reverse arrangement.
 - (c.) Other significant identical features, such as but not limited to material, roofline and height or other design elements, provided that a finding of excessive similarity shall state not only that such similarity exists, but, further, that it is of such a nature as to be expected to provide, beyond reasonable doubt, one or more of the harmful effects set forth in § 6-1.
- 2) Excessive dissimilarity in relation to any other building or structure existing or for which a permit has been issued or to any other building or structure included in the same permit application, within 250 feet of the proposed site, in respect to one or more of the following features:
 - (a.) Cubical contents.
 - (b.) Gross floor area.
 - (c.) Height of building or height of roof.
 - (d.) Other significant design features, such as material or quality of architectural design.
- 3) Inappropriateness of design in respect to one or more of the following features:
 - (a.) Quality of architectural design.
 - (b.) Nature of material to be used in construction.
 - (c.) Compatibility of design features of structure with terrain on which it is to be located.”

The Proposed Action must obtain the Board of Architectural Review’s approval prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

F-8 Comment:

*I also think that with regard to the alternatives, I would like to see more in the way of alternative assessments, alternatives that would be less height, less size, less impact, less visual impact. If they are mentioned, they mention a few of them, but we don't see them. We don't see a real picture of how they would look and how they will impact which leads me to the visual aspect which I think chair just touched on but this is completely out of scale to the neighborhood, a huge amount of variances, and I don't really see in the diagrams that I saw in the diagrams or the photo generations that were provided, it doesn't really show the impact. It shows a nice picture of it with the sky behind it and that's not impact. The impact is that you get to see it from different locations as it presently is and then how it will change, a photograph as opposed to an artist depiction. I think those are very important. There is going to be a huge change there. I think it's totally out of character. It's just not my thinking. It's because the code makes it completely out of consistency. And so, I think we have to see for visuals in the FEIS put in there to really assess that because I think the visuals are a real serious issue.
(Board Member Neufeld, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)*

F-8 Response:

The DEIS devoted an entire chapter to Visual Resources. In accordance with the Scoping Document adopted by the Lead Agency, six separate viewpoints were analyzed, and before and after dimensionally accurate photo-renderings provided for each viewpoint.

The FEIS Plan further reduces the mass, scale and height of the proposed building addition beyond that presented in the DEIS as recommended by the commentator and significantly opens up the site by eliminating the existing office building located on the corner of Waverly Avenue and Fenimore Road, replacing it with a vest-pocket park.

The FEIS Plan reduces the building footprint of the addition by 1,044 square feet and the gross floor area of the addition by 12,014 square feet. The FAR for the overall site is reduced from 2.26⁴ to 1.92.

⁴ Although the proposed FAR for the overall site had been presented as 2.43 in the DEIS, it has been updated here based on the existing self-storage building (40,492 square feet), the DEIS proposed addition (56,328 square feet),

In addition to the No-Action Alternative, four other Alternatives were evaluated in the DEIS. The Visual impacts of each alternative are addressed below:

- **Alternative B – Zoning Compliant Self-Storage Building** – Developing a zoning compliant addition to the existing self-storage facility is not possible, due primarily to the excessive off-street parking requirement that has been applied to this self-storage use. In order to establish zoning compliance for the *existing* self-storage building, all of the other existing buildings on the Site would have to be demolished and an off-street parking lot created covering the entire Site. This alternative would replace the visual impact of a new building addition, with the visual impact of a large 55 space off-street parking lot, that would remain primarily vacant and unused.
- **Smaller Square Footage Self-Storage Building** - Under this alternative, the square footage of the proposed self-storage building addition would be reduced to 41,304 square feet in gross floor area. This would be accomplished by reducing the length of the addition. Under this alternative, the northern edge of the building addition would be setback off Fenimore Road by 46.3 feet. Because the building footprint is reduced (resulting in fewer storage units which impacts the economic viability of the project), the building height would be maintained at 4 stories and 45 feet.

Under this alternative the Murphy Brothers Contracting office building on the corner of Waverly Avenue and Fenimore Road would be removed. This is not a viable option because it would leave Murphy brothers without an office to support their business. The parking lot reconfigured to accommodate 34 off-street parking spaces and 4 loading spaces. This alternative would result in a slightly reduced visual impact due to the reduced building footprint. Replacing the corner office building with parking represents a different, but not necessarily better visual appearance.

- **Proposed Addition with One Less Floor** - Under this alternative, the self-storage building addition would maintain the same footprint as the Proposed Action, but would only extend to a height of 3 stories or 35 feet instead of the 4 stories and 45 feet in the Proposed Action. This would result in a reduced visual impact.

This reduction in gross square footage would reduce the number of storage units by approximately 1/3, which, according to the Applicant and the economic analysis provided would make this alternative uneconomically viable.

- **Adaptative Reuse of the Existing Site Buildings as Self-Storage Buildings** - Under this alternative the 15,526 square feet contained within the 4 existing Site buildings would be repurposed to support self-storage units. This alternative would result in few changes to the existing visual characteristics of the Site.

and the existing front building (Building B; 2,985 square feet) that had been proposed to remain under the DEIS Plan.

This alternative is impractical as the existing buildings are old and wholly structurally unsuited to support modern self-storage units. The cost of the improvements and renovations necessary to convert these structures would be excessive and uneconomical.

F-9 Comment:

Probably the biggest thing is the visual. It's huge and it doesn't fit in there. I think a golf course could fit in there better, it's smaller, and I don't play golf.

(Board Member Neufeld, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)

F-9 Response:

Comment noted. By way of comparison, an average 18-hole golf course is 5,000 – 7,000 yards spread over 110 – 190 acres.⁵ The Project Site is 1.01 acres.

The building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing façade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape.

F-10 Comment:

I also – everybody has been talking about how massive it is. I do think it's a massive, massive and I know that we have other warehouses but they're not as large. When you have one that's this large, you have no breaks in the building to see the sky or to see the buildings behind it; so, to me, it's not a village feel, it's an urban feel. It's what you expect when you go to a manufacturing, industrial area that's actually in a large city rather than in our village feel. And just as Robin and Abby were speaking about that's definitely the maker zone initiative was to make sure that even though we have some industrial uses, and we have landscapers, and different car repairs that we're keeping it a village feel by making sure that we have a mix of uses that bring pedestrian traffic.

(Board Member Yergin, Public Hearing, May 6, 2021)

F-10 Response:

In response to this and other similar comments, the Applicant has significantly modified the proposed building addition. The new building extension would consist of 44,314 square feet of gross floor area, or a net increase of 25,725 square feet once the floor areas of the existing industrial buildings are deducted. Where the building addition presented in DEIS Plan was somewhat monolithic, the building proposed in the FEIS Plan has been completely redesigned and is now broken into 5 separate segments, each of which are distinctly articulated and clad in differing façade materials to resemble independent buildings. This treatment significantly reduces the mass of the building. This approach reduces the building footprint of the addition by 1,044 square feet and the gross floor area of the addition by 12,014 square feet. The FAR for the overall site would be reduced from 2.26⁶ to 1.92.

⁵ Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

⁶ Although the proposed FAR for the overall site had been presented as 2.43 in the DEIS, it has been updated here based on the existing self-storage building (40,492 square feet), the DEIS proposed addition (56,328 square feet),

The height of portions of the building addition has also been reduced. The southernmost section of the building addition will be integrated with the existing self-storage building, and as such will correspond to the height of the existing building. However, moving north, the building will step down to three stories and then two stories where a terrace, broad landscaped rain garden and lawn gradually integrates the Site into the Fenimore Road streetscape. The streetscape is proposed to be further enhanced by replacing the Murphy Brothers office building located at the Waverly Avenue/Fenimore Road intersection, with a publicly accessible vest-pocket park containing decorative seasonal landscaping and benches arrayed around a circular walkway.

F-11 Comment:

Visual impacts – Nothing in the vicinity is shown. Enormous concern, raised by people all the time. Buildings are being demolished. The Applicant has not responded.
(Chairman Neufeld, November 16, 2021 Work Session)

F-11 Response:

In accordance with the adopted Scoping Document, Chapter IV.F. of the DEIS thoroughly evaluated the visual impacts of the Proposed Action using architectural plans, elevations, photography, 3-D renderings and photo-simulations. Visual impact analyses which compared the existing condition with the proposed condition (with the new building superimposed on the image) from 6 separate and distinct viewpoints was provided. In addition to these 6 viewpoints which clearly depict all intervening buildings and topography, a separate Neighboring Context Massing Plan was provided (Figure IV.F.-11) which accurately depicts every building in the extended area around the Site, essentially corresponding to the area of the Village known as “The Flats.”

This analysis has been supplemented with additional viewpoints from the train tracks and I-95 (see Response F-10 and Figures III.F-2 through III.F-5).

Aside from the existing self-storage building, all of the industrial buildings on-site are in visibly poor condition and are proposed to be demolished.

Please refer to response F-5 which explains how the design of the Proposed Action has evolved over time. Because the self-storage building addition will be visible, does not in and of itself, result in a significant adverse visual impact. The Applicant has continually responded to the Zoning Board’s concerns about the visual impact of the building, culminating in the FEIS Plan presented herein.

F-12 Comment:

Submit visual renderings of what the site will look like during the day and at night from the train tracks, and I-95.
(Chairman Neufeld, November 16, 2021 Work Session)

F-12 Response:

Refer to Figures III.F-1 – III.F-5

and the existing front building (Building B; 2,985 square feet) that had been proposed to remain under the DEIS Plan.
