

Downtown Revitalization - Design Issues (Bess site)

Many issues have been raised by the redevelopment plans for the former Bess site (including parking, traffic flow, architectural massing and viability for retail business). These issues may still affect the overall approval feasibility of the project. Yet FDG/JRH has remained consistent that several design issues should be addressed - regardless of what project or version is ultimately approved - to make this significant site more active, attractive and productive.

Streetscape “activation”

The nearby MidTown Square redevelopment demonstrates the current Village standards - and lessons that may be learned. The current “setback” from street is approx 15 ft for most of the building (L image), but seems wider because of adjacent parking). The West corner “bumpout” of 30’ for the Grind shop plaza (below R) shows how the larger sidewalk serves for pedestrian activity. This should be weighed in evaluating the site plan and any potential adjustments.



“Greening” / Landscaping

Glenview regulations currently allow removal of mature trees for new development. As shown for the redevelopment of the Downtown Bess hardware site, the current plans propose removal of the existing Parkway trees which matured from earlier public “streetscape” plantings (L image). The typical replacement would be smaller specimens as shown or recent Glenview Road “improvements.” (R image). While the site plan could still be adjusted, this could have economic consequences. But in any event new trees should be selected placed and planted to complement the height of the building.



Positive / Productive Impact

The current development proposal depends on locating retail and ground level parking in way which results in “blank wall” along the prominent west elevation (as viewed from station..). A mural or graphic treatment has been proposed to mitigate this effect, as shown top below.

While this approach has been used effectively in historic Main Street redevelopment areas (e.g. Bottom L) , this would be a significant change for Village appearance regulation - and a significant precedent for other existing areas and further development.

Other upscale communities and new retail developments prefer to use architectural structure and details to either allow flexibility for future use or create the effect of an active pedestrian area, e.g. the canopy and shallow display window-spaces (Below R)



Overall Perspective

Downtown revitalization is a primary goal for FDG, but Design details will make a difference in the success of the project for years to come. Now is the time that these aspects can be addressed as part of the broader discussion - and decisions. For further details...