



something more natural than porcelain tile would work better and is the one area that is not up to par with the rest of the design and materials.

**THE APPLICATION IS RECOMMENDED FOR A CONDITIONAL APPROVAL WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE APPLICANT WILL RETURN WITH A NATURAL MATERIAL TO REPLACE THE PORCELAIN TILE.**  
(Unanimous)

4. 14 Sunny Lane, YMCA, preliminary review.

**Appeared:** Kevin Smith & Dennis Sagiev of Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Mr. Smith said the project being presented is as far as it has gone in addressing the concerns about what is needed for the Y. He described the site and building.

The YMCA facility is being kept north of Poplar Plains Brook and along the Merritt Parkway, separating it from Camp Mahackano. The building is built into a hillside facing south to minimize its footprint and impact on its surroundings. A new bridge over the brook allows the closing of the Rice's Lane entrance to the camp to all but emergency vehicles. Sunny Lane will be widened slightly for better access. Parking numbers are still being worked out but they plan to allow for as much as the building will ever need.

The building, which meets wetlands setbacks, is two stories with the child care and main entrances on the upper level at the brow of the hill. He described the interior layout with central access and an open plan that allows visibility into many of the activity areas. The gym, child care rooms and outdoor play area, a divisible multi purpose room, lounge and offices are on the top level. The lower level has locker rooms, pools, squash and racket ball courts, gymnastics and wellness center. There are views all through the building to activities inside and out. There is another main entrance on the lower level to allow it to be connected to the camp for its use. The building is all but invisible from Rice's Lane and River Lane, and pretty invisible from Lee's Pond. A good sized hill makes it invisible from the camp. Mr. Smith said there are models of the building that he would bring at a later date.

Materials on the north elevation are native stone pillars, wood siding and trim and a standing seam metal roof, in the style tradition of a "camp". The south elevation has a stone center mass, wood siding and trim and stone supports.

Philip Weiner asked if there are any provisions for geothermal heating or solar panels. Mr. Smith said they were looking into it but it is a challenge to get permits. The building is oriented to the south for natural light and a substantial portion of the perimeter is under ground. They are looking for less than normal energy costs. Mr. Weiner asked if it would have oil heat. Mr. Smith said they were looking at oil and gas options. Mr. Weiner asked about the septic system and where the leaching fields would be. Mr. Smith said they had spent a lot of time engineering the system. The fields are south of the brook west of the camp. Mr. Weiner asked where the C/A equipment would go. Mr. Smith said on the roof behind the parapet on the south elevation. Mr. Weiner asked about what happens where

Sunny Lane meets the Merritt. Mr. Smith said Sunny Lane would be widened on both sides and there would be turn access onto the Merritt ramp.

Vesna Herman asked what part of the entrance areas they perceived would have the most drop offs. Mr. Smith explained the traffic pattern and exterior access walkways. Ms. Herman asked about the width of the drive way. Mr. Smith said it is 30 ft wide but a belt and block verge makes it look thinner. They are working with a national landscape architecture firm that designs many national parks and site lines will be clear. Ms. Herman asked if the main entrance is obvious. Mr. Smith said there is a pergola over it so it is pretty obvious. Ms. Herman said that the curve in the drive near the entrances is not economical for drop offs as the curve makes cars take up more space and it could be very busy there. As far as the main entrance goes, she was not entirely clear about what is happening there. Mr. Smith said the rendering probably doesn't make it as obvious as it will be. Ms. Herman asked if the pools have views outside. Mr. Smith said the big pool doesn't as competitive pools don't want the reflection from a lot of glass, so the windows are high. The family pool looks outside.

Ward French asked for measurements to get a sense of the scale. Mr. Smith said the current Y is 86,000 s.f., the proposed building is 100,012. The old building is dimensionally challenged. The new building will have all of the components of the old in more usable space. Mr. Ward asked about the height. Mr. Smith said it is 35 ft to the midpoint of the roof and meets residential requirements. Mr. French asked if the 2 houses to the lower left on the site plan are part of the camp. Mr. Smith said no although they do have access across camp land. Mr. French said the bridge over the brook looks like a walking surface. Mr. Smith said it is architecturally designed to carry fire trucks. Mr. French asked if the view from the Merritt would be down on the building. Mr. Smith said the roof is slightly visible between the trees.

Charlie McMillan asked if the site plan shows the intent of the landscaping. Mr. Smith said yes, it is the intended planting plan. Planting requirements are being followed and exceeded, keeping as much of the woods as possible and planting open spaces. The landscapers are even looking at ways to reclaim the natural woods and make them sustainable.

George Masumian asked if the rooftop equipment behind the rear center mass parapet would be visible from the camp. Mr. Sagiev said no, the roof is flat with a well in it. Mr. Masumian asked about the material for the trusses in the pool and was told the whole building is framed with steel. Mr. Masumian asked if the siding will be horizontal planking in the camp style. Mr. Smith said yes, they are looking at Hardie board for maintenance reasons, but there will be real timber brackets and eaves. Mr. Masumian asked if the septic system has out buildings. Mr. Smith said one very small building and an under ground facility, not visible from the camp. Mr. Masumian asked what thought had been given to screening for the neighbors. Mr. Smith said they are challenged by having to show as many parking spaces as possible but trees will be kept and maintained, and planted. They are screening as best as they can on the Y's property. Mr. Masumian asked about walk way materials. Mr. Smith said anything that is driven on will be asphalt, some paths are stone dust, frequently used walks and those into the camp will be concrete.

George Masumian invited members of the public to speak.

Amy Ansell, 330 Wilton Road: Ms. Ansell said that the site plan doesn't show that there are more houses on Twin Falls Lane and Sunny Lane. Mr. Smith said it is a heavily wooded area. Ms. Ansell asked about the houses on Rice's Lane. Mr. Smith said there is no possible way to see the Y from any of those areas because of the topography and trees. Ms. Ansell asked about lighting. Mr. Smith said the camp is will be maintained in an unlit condition, there is no night lighting. The Y parking lot has 12 ft light standards designed to give off as little extraneous light as possible. There will be minimal lighting on the building. Ms. Ansell said the site plan shows pavilions for the camp. Mr. Sagiev said they are there now and slated for long term improvement. Ms. Ansell asked about how much parking there will be. Attorney Larry Weisman answered 388 parking spaces, but they would rather not pave for all of them and hope overflow can be accommodated with grass parking areas. Ms. Ansell asked if the ARB is aware that this area is AAA zoning. The Board was aware.

Elizabeth Flint, 38 River Lane: Ms Flint said that what the site plan shows as Lee's Pond is really the Saugatuck River. The site is very close to the river and its vegetation. The site plan misrepresents its location. Mr. Smith disagreed and there was discussion about where the river ends and the pond begins. Ms. Flint said a boardwalk along the water is a bad idea. Attorney Weisman said that it is not part of the plan. Ms. Flint said the building will produce a lot of waste and asked if the pipes to the leaching fields go over or under the brook. Attorney Weisman said the pipes run under the bridge so there is minimal disturbance to the landscape. They are going through the permit process at the moment but the system is fully designed.

John Kane, 33 Rice's Lane: Mr. Kane asked what is being built south of the brook. Rosemary Halstead of the Y said the Rotary Pavilion used for arts and crafts at the camp is being taken down and replaced. Mr. Kane asked how the road to Rice's Lane could be removed but still be drivable. Mr. Smith said it is grass and light plantings that fire trucks can drive over.

Helen Garten, 4 River Lane. Ms. Garten said the building is now 4000 s.f. larger than at the first presentation and asked where the additional space is. Mr. Smith said it is in the underground squash and racket courts. The foot print hasn't changed as it is dug out of the hill. Ms. Garten asked for the location of the leaching fields. Mr. Smith indicated a long thin grass area on his site plan. He said they are underground in grassy areas so trees won't have to be removed or eventually come down. Nothing is visible.

Amy Ansell asked if there are any meeting/conference rooms in the floor plan. Mr. Smith said yes, there is a 1600 s.f., dividable multipurpose room on the upper level and other areas that could be dual purpose. Ms. Ansell said last year's plan showed a snack bar. Rosemary Halstead said yes, there is one, it is very small like the one in the library.

Vesna Herman asked if there are provisions for leaching field failure. Attorney Weisman said the whole system is designed with redundancies.

## ARB Comments:

Philip Weiner said that it was a good presentation and an attractive building. Aside from the fact that he would love to see the building somewhere in Westport, he is still not totally convinced that this site can handle it. He regrets losing the facility in the center of town and fears that it will become just more retail space. He's concerned that the building lacks an up-to-date energy system but commends its south facing siting. He is also concerned about the traffic on Sunny Lane and there doesn't appear to be an impact study. The building is exceptional compared to some others the town has built recently. It's good quality and a good job minimizing impact, but is still a big building for this site.

Vesna Herman said it was interesting architecture and use of massing, scale and the site. She said she would not talk about the location. She was not sure the drop-off area is ok, a curve like that is not successful as rainy days can have more traffic than is planned for. She is not sure how well the design marks the main entrance. The south elevation tower entrance is so well defined but the architecture is harder to see in the front elevation. She appreciated that great care has been taken not to expose the building to the neighbors. She was not sure how much the design is using the river view. Mr. Smith said the family pool and roof terrace see it best. Altogether, Ms. Herman thought it was a lovely building.

Ward French said that, frankly, he was predisposed to think that nothing could work on this site. It's obvious that great restraint has been employed and burying it in the hill was smart. Based on what can be seen of the architecture, it could be successful here. Other sites, like the Glendenning building, have blended into their residential surroundings. It is a quality project.

Charlie McMillan said he could mirror the same comments. It is a challenge to get so much into such a low profile. He also appreciated what had been done with the site. The building is outstanding, good work

George Masumian said he echoed all the Board member's comments, but the ARB is here to look at the architecture, and the planning aspect is for others to decide. Everyone has already spoken about the quality of the design of the building, its low profile and minimum impact on the neighbors and campers. He would ask for strong evidence that something can't be done about state-of-the art energy conservation. As well, he would ask that they be sure that rooftop equipment will not be seen, especially by campers. He is comfortable that the project is progressing in a thoughtful direction and is hopeful it will continue.

**THE CONSENSUS OF THE BOARD IS THAT THE PROJECT IS MOVING IN A WORTHY DIRECTION FOR A BUILDING OF THIS SIZE ON THIS SITE.**

Sally Palmer  
Recording Secretary

**EXHIBIT 6**