

PLANNING BOARD PROJECT NARRATIVE

Diana Place Multifamily Dwelling
249-259 Main Street | Nyack NY 10960

18 March 2020
S&Co. 1611

The *Diana Place* project proposes the demolition of two existing structures that originated as single-family homes and their replacement with a single multifamily building containing 26 dwelling units, including 5 alcove studios, 17 one-bedroom units and 4 two-bedroom units, and 30 parking spaces. The building is planned to be a combination of 3 and 4 stories high, but will not exceed the 40' allowable height limit at any point.

I. Comprehensive Plan

The project's overall design is driven by the recommendations for the Gateway area in the Village of Nyack's current Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations include the following:

- multifamily housing
- pedestrian-oriented aesthetic with parking to the rear
- sidewalk improvements
- better lighting

The only available vehicular entrance to *Diana Place* is from Main Street. Given the 24' wide opening for parking ingress/egress, parking will be concealed from the Main Street side to the extent possible and to the residential zone to the south by the prescribed 15' wide buffer zone. The streetfront will be as pedestrian-friendly as possible given the 24' wide access, and will include a wide sidewalk incorporating a curb cut, two (2) street trees and improved lighting.

II. Dimensional Standards

While Nyack Village Code §360/Table 4-1, Dimensional Standards allows 3 stories/40' as of right in the DMU-2 zone in which the building is located, we have sought and been granted a variance from the Nyack Zoning Board of Appeals to allow a fourth story for the most northerly 101' of the building; past this point, the building will be three stories. The building will stay within the 40' overall height limitation, excluding equipment, elevator/mechanical penthouses and parapets as allowed by code, and will be significantly shorter at its southern end. The reason for the variance request is twofold: we believe that it offers a superior building massing solution than pure as-of-right options (e.g., allowing four stories vs. three without exceeding the allowable height limit for the northern portion of the building will allow it to be significantly shorter along its north-south axis, thus keeping it further away than the required 15' buffer zone from the residential zone to the south. The arrangement of four stories at the north, or Main Street, side and three stories facing the residential zone at the south side will also link the building contextually with its far more substantial neighbor two lots to the west. The roof of the three-story volume at the south will be used for two small private roof terraces adjoining a larger common roof terrace for tenants' use, while the higher roof will be occupied by a solar energy collector array.

III. Vehicular Access & Parking

The vehicular entrance to *Diana Place* is from Main Street. Based on the sites' current uses and the code requirements for the proposed building type, a total of 25 parking spaces are required by Nyack Village Code §360/Table 4-2, Minimum Parking Requirements. The project proposes 30 grade-level parking spaces, and thus exceeds the Village's parking requirements by 20%. The 30 parking spaces do not include 3 tandem spaces for use by apartment dwellers with more than one vehicle.

III. Access, Parking & Maintenance (continued)

Maintenance and emergency vehicle access will also be via the Main Street entrance. The clearance at the parking garage will be 7'-6"; taller vehicles will be able to park in the driveway and will thus be completely off the street. From that point, there will be ample access for emergency services to the building's lobby, stairs and elevator via the double doors fronting onto Main Street. Periodic drainage system cleaning and maintenance vehicles will use a similar approach, backing in off Main Street into the driveway as far as is practicable. Mr. John Redman of TAM Enterprises Inc., a well-known concern dealing with water and wastewater management and maintenance, notes that their vehicles typically carry approximately 600' of jet cleaning hose and a similar amount of vacuuming duct, and that the access at *Diana Place* does not pose a particular problem. Snow removal will be accomplished via a combination of a pickup-mounted plow and a snowblower, both of whose heights will allow access to the entire site. Finally, the trash dumpsters will be rolled out of the trash room by hand into position for pickup from the driveway; Carlo Minuto Carting has advised they can utilize the driveway curb cut and that a second curb cut is not required.

IV. Density & Sustainability

The allowable density for the DMU zone in which the project is located is 50 dwelling units/acre according to the Nyack Village Code §360/Table 4-1, Dimensional Standards. Based on the property size of 16,701 square feet, 19 dwelling units are allowed as-of-right. *Diana Place* proposes to take advantage of three sustainability incentives described in the Nyack Village Code §360-4.14 E. in place at the time of the project's initial submission. Each of the three incentives offers a 10% increase in density for a 30% total density increase. Given the allowable density of 19 units, a 30% increase = $19 \times 30\% = 5$ additional dwelling units, for a subtotal of $19 + 5 = 24$ dwelling units. The proposed incentives are as follows, numbered as per Nyack Village Code §360-4.14 E.:

- (3) Exceeding the New York State Energy Code by 10%;
- (5) Provision of solar collection panels, and
- (8) Repurposing of materials.

The implementation of the above-listed items are discussed in greater detail in the *Sustainability Amenities Narrative*.

V. Solar Energy Collectors

An array of solar energy collectors is planned for the 6,046 SF high roof of *Diana Place*. The collectors, which will be invisible from grade and concealed from most higher vantage points by the building's parapet, are expected to provide a substantial portion of the building's electrical power requirements and will be utilized as a sustainability incentive (see **IV. Density & Sustainability** above). Nyack Village Code §360.3-2 E.(10)(d)[1] states that solar energy collectors shall not exceed the lesser of 1,000 square feet in area or 33% of the area of the entire lot on which it is located. 33% of the 16,701 SF lot size = 5,511 SF; therefore, only 1,000 SF of solar energy collectors are permitted where 6,046 SF are available for same. We have sought and obtained a variance from the Nyack Zoning Board of Appeals to allow the additional solar energy collector square footage.

VI. Affordable Housing

As per Nyack Village Code §120-1 C.(1)(a)[1], 10% of *Diana Place*'s units ($24 \text{ units} \times 10\% = 2.4$, or 2 units) will be designated as affordable as defined by that Chapter, or a contribution made to the Village of Nyack's Affordable Housing Buyout Fund as per Nyack Village Code §120-1 C.(3), prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project. According to Nyack Village Code §120-1 C.(2)(b), when a multifamily development contains 10% or more affordable/workforce units, the Village Board, Planning Board and/or Zoning Board may consider increased zoning densities in multifamily zones up to but not to exceed 10% of otherwise allowable housing units. On that basis, we respectfully request that the Village grant an 8.33% increase in density for compliance with the provisions of this Chapter; granting this density increase will result in an increase of 2 units ($24 \text{ units} \times 8.33\%$), for a grand total of 26 dwelling units.

VII. Architecture

Approved unanimously by Nyack's Architectural Review Board at their December 2019 meeting, the inspiration for *Diana Place* is rooted in upper Main Street's history as a row of automobile showrooms and repair shops throughout much of the 20th century, as well as Nyack's history as a shoe manufacturing center in the late 19th century. The building is organized into three volumes: the four-story Main Street volume, the three-story southern volume and the four-story interstitial volume between the two. The variance allowing the building to house four stories within the 40 height limitation substantially reduces the building's footprint and keeps it nearly 400% further away (59'-3" minimum) from the residential zone to the south than the required 15' buffer zone. The higher roof will be occupied by a solar panel array, and the roof of the three-story southern volume will be utilized for a roof terrace. Both roofs will have a solid parapet at their perimeters. The east and west façades of the interstitial volume are recessed five feet from those façades at the north and south volumes to both reduce the building's massing and yield optimal interior layouts.

Dimensional standards in the DMU-2 zone require a 5' setback from the street property line, but also specifies that under no circumstances may the building be less than 10' from the curb line. In order to widen the sidewalk, enhancing walkability and increasing pedestrian safety from vehicular entries and exits, *Diana Place* will be set back 14'-2" from the curb line at both corners of the north façade. Because Main Street curves three feet towards the northwest along the site frontage, the building includes a vertical "crease", at which the western portion of the building is bent towards the north beginning at the eastern side of the vehicular access.

Diana Place will be clad with smooth-faced fiber-cement lap siding (i.e., clapboard) in three different colors. The lap siding will be contained at its ends in a continuous double-sided vertical metal channel flanking the windows and keeping the horizontal dimension of the lap siding less than 12'-0" so that there will be no vertical butt joints within the lap siding. The cladding's horizontal orientation will help decrease the perception of the building's height, and will tie it to nearby horizontally-oriented structures clad with brick and clapboard. The windows at *Diana Place* are identical double-hungs with a single horizontal muntin across the upper and lower sashes to reinforce the building's horizontality. They occur singly and in groups of two or three, depending on the interior spaces they serve.

Diana Place's pedestrian main entrance, located to the east of center of the Main Street façade, is entered at grade from the Main Street (north) side with interior steps up to the stair/elevator core and the HC entrance at its south side. It is surmounted by a canopy extending to the west side of the building; in addition to providing protection from the elements, the canopy will house recessed low-level downlighting to help illuminate the sidewalk.

In summary, we are pleased to present the revised version of this project to the Planning Board as the architects for Rockland County natives and current residents Joe Maraia and Ed Mistretta, who are the owner/developers of *Diana Place* as well as the owners of several other local properties. These include Nyack's historic St. George Hotel, whose exterior restoration as designed by S&Co. received a 2004 Historic Preservation Merit Award from the Historical Society of Rockland County, and 85 South Broadway, at whose roof they commissioned a 1,161 SF solar array in June 2018. This array is now generating clean, renewable electricity for 85 South Broadway and for the Orange & Rockland grid when the array's power production exceeds that required by the building.

As with all of our projects, we wish to assure the Village that extensive efforts have been and will continue to be made in the design of this project to ensure as comfortable a fit as possible between the work's purpose and its context. On the bases described herein, we respectfully request that the Village of Nyack Planning Board approve this application, including the sustainability bonuses and the affordable housing density increase. In closing, we thank the members of the Planning Board for their time spent reviewing this project, and we look forward to making *Diana Place* a reality.