

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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ZBA 2001-37
Town of Wellesley/School Department
Wellesley High School Fitness Center
50 Rice Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, June 14, 2001 at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room (Conference Room B) at the Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of TOWN OF WELLESLEY/SCHOOL DEPARTMENT requesting a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section XXIIA and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw to install an externally illuminated 27 square foot wall sign at a height of 10 feet 9 inches on the façade of the WELLESLEY HIGH SCHOOL FITNESS CENTER at 50 RICE STREET, in a Single Residence District to identify the existing gymnasium and proposed Fitness Center as the LARSSON GYM AND FITNESS CENTER. Said sign will exceed the height and area of signage allowed in a Single Residence District.

On May 7, 2001, the petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Public Hearing – June 14, 2001

Prior to any presentation, the Board stated that the sign does not comply with the Zoning Bylaw. However, public and private schools and religious institutions in Single Residence Districts have been allowed signage, which has exceeded the requirements of signage in a Single Residence District.

The Board expressed concern about the size of the sign and the nighttime illumination of the sign. The Board decided that any decision would include the condition that the lighting be turned off at a certain time.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the Public Hearing on the sign petition to July 12, 2001.

Due notice of the continuation of the Public Hearing was given by mailing and publication. The continued Public Hearing was held in the Great Hall at the Town Hall on Thursday, July 12, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.

Subsequent to the publication of the legal notice for the continued Public Hearing, the petitioner submitted a revised signage package showing the area of the sign reduced to 20 square feet and the height of the sign reduced to 10.5 feet.

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Public Hearing – July 12, 2001

The Board questioned if the Design Review Board had reviewed the sign. The Executive Secretary read into the record the letter from the Design Review Board dated June 1, 2001, in which the DRB declined comment on the sign, as the Zoning Bylaw prohibits approval of a sign in a residential district by special permit.

Presenting the case at the hearing was Ken DiNisco of DiNisco Design, who was accompanied by Laurie Whitley, Chairman of the School Committee; Matthew King, School Superintendent; and Bella Wong, Assistant School Superintendent.

Mr. DiNisco explained that the reason for the sign was to identify the gym, the fitness center and the new entrance, which will provide access to both facilities. The design intent was that the front of the building look like a brick garden wall. A trellis with climbing plants will match the copper of the building. The proposed sign blends in with the façade and is functional.

The sign will be composed of cast aluminum 10 inch letters, mounted flush to the building. The capital letters are 10 inches high, but the lower case letters are smaller. The color will match the lead coated copper flashing on the building. There will be no direct illumination of the sign.

Paul Horst, 21 Paine Street, said he was confused because the legal notice stated that the sign would be externally illuminated, but Mr. DiNisco had said that there would be no direct lighting on the sign.

The Board responded that it had not fully discussed the sign at the last hearing, but had made recommendations that the size of the sign be reduced and the lighting be changed. The revised submission indicates that these suggestions were followed.

Mr. Horst questioned the necessity of the sign, as once people have gone to the fitness center, they will know where the entrance is located.

Mr. King said that the sign is to identify both the location of the gym and fitness center, and the entrance. When visiting teams come to the high school, they don't know where to go. The motivation for the sign was to identify the gym and the entrance. The identification of the fitness center was almost incidental. This was an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the building façade, and to identify the location of the entrance, gym and fitness center.

Nesbitt Haygood, 71 Paine Street, questioned why the sign could not be smaller, and be just as effective.

Mark Schectman, 41 Rice Street, noted that the high school needs a nicer sign, and it should be combined with the fitness center to provide matching signs.

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Statement of Facts

The Wellesley High School Gym and Fitness Center is located at 50 Rice Street, attached to the Wellesley Senior High School, in a Single Residence District.

The petitioner is proposing a new indirectly illuminated wall sign to identify the Wellesley High School Gym and Fitness Center as the Larsson Gym and Fitness Center, and to identify the location of the entrance to both facilities. The proposed 20 square foot wall sign will be composed of individual letters with a height of 10 inches (capital letters) to proportionate lower case letters and will be installed on the garden wall building façade of the gym at a height of 10.5 feet. The color of the cast aluminum letters will match the lead coated copper flashing of the building and will be mounted flush to the brick wall.

The petitioner is requesting a Special Permit for the area of the sign to exceed one square foot and height of the sign to exceed 4 feet, which are allowed by right in a Single Residence.

Design Option 1-Proposed Trellis & Signage Detail; Proposed West Elevation & Façade Detail Rendered; and Sign Location; all dated May 3, 2001, prepared by DiNisco Design Partnership; and photographs were submitted.

The revised signage submission dated June 28, 2001, titled: Wellesley High School Fitness Center/Special Permit Sign Application included the Application and Justification; Floor Plan (3.41.); West Elevation (3.6.1) West Elevation Rendered (3.6.2); Partial West Elevation/Proposed Trellis & Signage Detail (3.6.3); and photographs. The submission was prepared by DiNisco Design Partnership.

On April 2nd and May 10, 2001, the Design Review Board reviewed the petition, and concluded that as this was a Special Permit application, the it would decline further comment on the sign, as the Zoning Bylaw prohibits approval of a sign in a residential district by special permit.

On June 5, 2001, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and supported the recommendation of the Design Review Board. The Planning Board objected to the request.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the Public Hearing on July 12, 2001. The petitioner is requesting a Special Permit for a wall sign to identify the Larsson Gym and Fitness Center at the Wellesley Senior High School, which exceeds the height and area allowed in a Single Residence District.

This Authority is of the opinion that the proposed wall sign is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Section XXIIA of the Zoning Bylaw. This Authority is of the further opinion that the proposed wall sign will not set a precedent, as Special Permits have been granted in the past for signage identifying religious institutions and both private and public schools, which are also located in Single Residence Districts, and have exceeded the allowed height and area required in a Single Residence District.

Wellesley High School Fitness Center
50 Rice Street

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Therefore, a Special Permit is granted, as voted unanimously by this Authority at the Public Hearing held on July 12, 2001, for the proposed sign in accordance with the revised signage package dated June 28, 2001 as heretofore described, and subject to the condition that said sign shall not be directly illuminated.

The Inspector of Buildings is hereby authorized to issue a permit for the sign upon his receipt and approval of an application. The sign cannot be installed until this procedure has been completed.

APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A,
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN
THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

Cc: Planning Board
Inspector of Buildings
Laurie Whitley, School Committee Chairman
edg



Kendall P. Bates, Chairman



Cynthia S. Hibbard



Richard L. Seegel