



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Armacost and Members of the Village Board of Trustees
Chairwoman Alligood and Members of the Planning Board

From: Patrick Cleary, AICP, CEP, PP, LEED AP

Date: November 14, 2023

Re: Electric Owl Studios – Supplemental Submission Documentation Review

Electric Owl Studios has submitted a detailed response to the technical review comments provided by Village staff and consultants, the comments raised by the Village Board and Planning Board during the public hearing, and the general public.

The following comments are offered in response to the Electric Owl submission.

1. Do the Gateway Cluster Overlay setbacks apply?

The applicant contends that the Gateway Cluster Overlay provisions do not apply to a commercial/institutional subdivision, rather only to a residential cluster subdivision.

The Applicant has addressed this comment.

2. Is the parcel a corner lot with two front yards?

Under the yard definitions of §295-4 of the Village Code, the site would be classified as a “corner lot” fronting on both South Broadway and Dudley Street, requiring two front yard setbacks – in this case 150’ for each yard.

The zoning petition proposes a 50’ side yard setback (instead of the 150’ for the second front yard), with an exception for the existing Matthews Cottage building that is setback 30.’

The applicant has not offered any rationale or argument justifying the 50’ setback along Dudley Street

The applicant must provide a justifiable basis for the 50’ setback along Dudley Street.

3. New York State Historic Preservation Office Sign-Off

The Applicant has submitted documentation from SHPO indicating that they find the proposed development acceptable, provided that a “Letter of Resolution” (LOR) be adopted that memorializes a series of historic preservation measures, including notably the preservation of the Beaux-Arts Administration Building.

Evidence of the execution of the LOR has not been received.

Since the initial review of the project by SHPO, the location and configuration of the parking garage has been revised. The Applicant has indicated that SHPO found this modification acceptable, however, no confirmation of this from SHPO has been received.

Written confirmation from SHPO is required.

Additionally, the Taconic Region of NYSOPRHP raised concerns about the projects impact in the Aqueduct, primarily related to stormwater runoff and visual impacts.

While the Applicant has indicated that they have addressed these issues, no formal confirmation has been received.

4. Can the parking deck be reduced in size?

The applicant has reduced the size of the parking garage by one parking bay (approximately 20 feet). The applicant has defined a better parking demand for the school, and proposes to use valet parking during periods of peak demand. These modifications will allow for the reduction in the size of the garage, and minimize the amount of required site disturbance, grading and excavation.

In accordance with the proposed zoning amendment, 351 off-street parking spaces are required for the studio (361 are proposed) and 212 spaces are required for the school (212 are proposed).

80 of the studio spaces in the garage are proposed to be valet spaces, as permitted pursuant to the proposed zoning amendment.

The Applicant has been responsive to the request to reduce the size of the parking garage.

5. Can the school's surface parking lot be reduced in size?

The Applicant has clarified that the surface parking lot in front of the school cannot be reduced in size because it must accommodate bus and vehicle queuing and circulation.

The Applicant has clarified their response to this comment.

6. The Applicant was asked to provide grading information to better illustrate the height of the studio building walls.

Three new cross section drawing have been submitted (L.3.0, 3.1 & 3.2) depicting views of 5 different cross sections through the site. While these cross sections are illustrative, they do not include grades and elevations are requested.

The cross-section drawings require revision to include proposed grades.

7. Document truck routes and volumes.

The Kimley-Horn response memo to the Sam Schwartz review clarifies that between 4 – 5 trucks will arrive at the site in a typical day (mail, FedEx and UPS). Trash collection will occur twice a week, and landscapers will arrive once per week. 60% of the truck trips will travel to the site from Executive Boulevard. 40% would travel through the Village.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

8. Document the adequacy of the Broadway driveway sight distances.

The Kimley-Horn response memo to the Sam Schwartz review confirmed that the sight distances at both driveways meet or exceed the ASSHTO standards (the uniformly accepted sight distance guidance standard).

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

9. Is a left turn lane proposed on Broadway?

The Applicant is willing to install a left turn lane, subject to NYSDOT approval.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

10. Can a post-development traffic monitoring program be established?

The Applicant is willing to provide a post development traffic impact monitoring program to determine whether the traffic impact projections were accurate, and to establish if any additional mitigation measures are required.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

11. Depict the location of all proposed sidewalks.

The site plans have been revised to include internal sidewalks and walkways on both the studio parcel and the Graham School parcel. Two new connections out onto Broadway are proposed – along the south side of the Graham School driveway and south of the Electric Owl driveway, running in front of the Matthews Cottage. Short stretches of sidewalk are indicated along Broadway at each sidewalk intersection.

No sidewalks are currently present on either side of Broadway from the site to the north, which is a clear pedestrian circulation deficiency. It should be noted that a new sidewalk does exist starting at Dudley Street, running south along the entire frontage of the Lenoir Preserve. It is logical to continue this sidewalk as far north as possible, at a minimum to the point where Route 9 splits. Such an extension would support pedestrian connectivity from Boyce Thompson and Executive Boulevard in the south, to Electric Owl, The Graham School, Andrus the Congregation Mita Church and the numerous Bee-Line bus stops along Broadway.

The new internal sidewalk circulation routes are well planned, however, the Applicant should consider expanding the public sidewalk network infrastructure along Broadway.

12. Are green roofs proposed?

55,020 square feet of green roofs are proposed on the Mill and Wardrobe buildings. These green roofs will support 3” of growing media, and will support Sedum and Orostachys (succulent biennial herbs), Phemeranthus calycinus (a herbaceous perennial known as rock pink flamethrower), Allium schoenoprasum (chives), Asclepias tuberosa (butterfly weed), Dianthus carthusianorum (a herbaceous perennial known as Carthusian pink).

These plants were selected to attract pollinators. It is noted that several species are not native varieties. Ideally, all native species should be used.

The green roofs also assist in stormwater management, and would manage 71,455 gallons of stormwater (the equivalent of a 2" rainfall over the roof area)

The Applicant has addressed this comment. Clarify why green roofs are not proposed for the three larger studio buildings.

13. How will stormwater be managed, particularly as it impacts the neighbors to the south?

A stormwater management plan has been developed that complies with the NYSDEC stormwater guidelines and the local MS4 requirements, which address water quality and quantity. Runoff flowrate reductions will occur for the 1, 10, 25 and 100-year storm events.

Stormwater traveling south would be reduced by 30%.

Subject to further field investigations, the use of pervious pavers in select areas would be utilized.

The Applicant has addressed this comment, which is subject to further review by Hahn Engineering.

14. Are vegetated swales proposed?

Vegetated swales are proposed in the rear of the site.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

15. Clarify proposed site grading.

Grading and Steep Slope Disturbance plans have been submitted.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

16. Clarify tree removal and proposed landscaping.

A Tree Removal Plan has been submitted. 271 existing trees are proposed to be removed. The Applicant's arborist has determined that 186 of those trees (68.6%) are dead or in poor or critical condition, 172 of which are also considered to be invasive species.

The Overall Landscape Plan indicates that 417 tree are proposed to be planted to mitigate the loss of existing trees. This plan should be revised to include the size and species of all proposed landscaping. Additionally, the total dbh of all trees to be removed is requested, and should be compared to the total dbh of the proposed landscaping, to determine the adequacy of the mitigation planting.

The Applicant has partially addressed this comment. Specific landscaping details are required.

17. Clarify the Wastewater Treatment Plan that will service the site.

The Applicant has clarified that the reference to the Glenwood Water Treatment Center in the EAF was incorrect. Wastewater generated by the project will be treated at the County Fernbrook Street Plant in Yonkers.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

18. Yonkers utilizes a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. Will this project discharge wastewater into the Hudson River?

The proposed project utilizes separate storm and sanitary sewer systems.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

19. How will water be provided to the site?

The Applicant has clarified that currently the City of Yonkers provides water service to the Graham School. The Applicant has also submitted a request for water service to Veolia Water in July, and the applicant is awaiting a reply from Veolia.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

20. Is blasting proposed?

Pursuant to the findings of a geotechnical investigation, the Applicant does not anticipate any blasting. Rock removal will be accomplished through mechanical means. Additionally, the reduction in the size of the parking garage has reduced the amount of excavation from 104,000 cubic yards to 81,000 cubic yards. It is projected that the rock removal phase of the project will take 40 to 60 days.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

21. How will construction noise be mitigated?

The Applicant has clarified that they will comply with all applicable Village noise regulations, and will submit a Construction Management Plan to document all noise impact mitigation measures. The sound stages and mill building will incorporate “substantial acoustical insulation” to minimize noise impacts.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

22. How will refuse disposal be addressed?

The Applicant has clarified that that solid waste removal and recycling will be handled through the use of a private waste removal company. Food waste will be processed by food dehydrators and used on-site as mulch. All refuse will be securely enclosed. A recycling program will be implemented in accordance with Westchester County requirements.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment. Details of refuse enclosures and storage areas will be addressed during the site plan review phase.

23. What is the anticipated phasing for the project?

The applicant has indicated that a Construction Management Plan, prepared by Griffco Design Build has been submitted. That document was not included in the current submission.

Subject to the receipt and review of the Construction Management Plan, this comment has been addressed.

24. Will honey be produced on-site?

The Applicant has indicated that honey can be raised on-site, and will collaborate with partners to host hives on the property.

The Applicant has responded to this comment. Specific details of hive locations and operations would need to be addressed during the site plan review phase.

25. Will the Electric Owl site just rent empty studio buildings, with no support services?

The applicant has clarified that the Electric Owl facility will include green rooms and dressing rooms, which will minimize the use of “star trailers” – although some trailer use is anticipated, but would be more limited than at other studios. Ares will be designated for trailer locations on the site plan, and they will not be permitted to park off-site.

On-site catering facilities will be provided from two full kitchens in the administration building. Restroom facilities will be located within the buildings, eliminating the need for porta-johns. Finally, Electric Owl will maintain lighting and grip equipment on-site for rental by productions, minimizing the need for equipment deliveries.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment. Details to be addressed during the site plan review phase.

26. A traffic signal warrant analysis should be performed.

The Applicant conducted this analysis, and submitted the results to the NYSDOT, who concluded that a traffic signal would not be required. This work was done under the supervision of Sam Schwartz.

The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

27. The project will worsen the situation of vehicles exiting Dudley Street at Broadway.

The Applicants traffic study indicated that the post development operating conditions at the Dudley Street/Broadway intersection would could continue to operate acceptably.

Sam Schwartz has confirmed this finding. The Applicant has satisfactorily addressed this comment.

28. Hahn Engineering Comments

The Applicant has submitted a response to the Hahn Engineering review memo, prepared by Kimley Horn, dated November 7, 2023.

Response from Hahn Engineering is required to establish if all site engineering issues have been satisfactorily addressed.