

Montpelier Design Review Committee
March 21, 2006
Memorial Room, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Margot George, Chair; Soren Pfeffer, Guy Tapper; Vicki Lane; Dan Richardson
Staff: Kathleen Swigon

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. George.

I. Design Review for Sign Permit Application

Property Address: 4 State Street
Applicant: Robert Gaston
Zone: CB-I/DCD
o 18" x 24" wall sign

Mr. Gaston described the sign that was proposed to replace an existing sign. He said that the proposed sign was the same size and shape as the existing sign, but a slightly different bracket would be used to attach the sign. He said that the bracket would be visible and would have an attractive "wrought iron" look. Mr. Pfeffer said that the new style of brackets might make it difficult to make the attachment to the building at the mortar joints. He said that attachment at the joints is preferred to avoid damage to the bricks. Mr. Gaston said that he would try to make the attachment into the mortar joints. Ms. George questioned whether the proposed brackets were appropriate as the existing sign did not use them. Mr. Pfeffer said that he did not see an aesthetic problem, but wanted to be sure that the brackets could attach to the mortar joints. He said that it might be possible to adjust the brackets so that they would attach at the joints. Ms. George said that the brackets could be made an option. Mr. Richardson said that the Committee could recommend that the applicant have the option of using the proposed brackets if they fit into the mortar joints or to use the existing method of attachment if the brackets do not fit into the joints.

The Committee reviewed the evaluation criteria. The Committee voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the application with the option to use the proposed brackets if they fit into the mortar joints or to use the existing method of attachment if the brackets do not fit into the joints.

II. Continuation of Design Review

Property Address: 162 Main Street
Applicant: Franklin Square Homeowners Association
Zone: HDR/DCD
o Exterior foundation insulation to an existing building on two sides

Interested Parties: Christine Smith, Gail Barrows, Lucinda McCloud, Ann Moulton, Elizabeth Jesdale

Ms. George noted that this was the continuation of the review of an application that was before the DRC some time ago. She said that the Committee had made some suggestions during its last review. Ms. Smith said that the homeowners' association had been trying to do more of the property management on its own and had mistakenly had insulation installed on the exterior of the building without permits. She said that, after the last meeting, the association had looked into other options with three separate experts - Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Central Vermont Community Land Trust (CVCLT), and New England Foam and Coating, Inc. Ms. George asked why the fire proof coating was required by the foam company. Ms. Barrows said that current regulations would require it. She said that the company also advised that the foam insulation should be 4" thick

throughout the basement to be effective, but the unevenness of the foundation would now allow for that. She said that option was, therefore, not suitable.

Ms. Barrows showed the Committee the example of the flexible material that the association proposes to apply to the metal sheeting that was installed on the outside of the foundation. She said that the material would have a color that matches the building color as closely as possible. Ms. Barrows said that significant savings in heating costs had been realized since the insulation work was done. She said that the electric heater did not have to be used to keep the pipes from freezing this winter. Ms. George asked how many boilers were in the building. Ms. Smith said that there are five boilers. She said that the opening above the pipes was not large enough to allow for a heater other than the small electric heater that had been used. She added that one of the pipes that was freezing was actually near the boilers. Ms. Barrows said that she looked into the installation of fins on the boiler pipes, but was advised that the use of the fins alone would not prevent the freezing problem and would reduce the life of the boilers. She said that the association was advised that the air leaks had to be plugged. She said that the foundation is a mixture of stone and brick and was described as a "rubble" foundation by one contractor.

Mr. Pfeffer questioned whether the flexible material would actually adhere to the metal over the long term. Ms. Barrows said that she advised the installer of the gauge of metal that was installed and he said that the material would work. She said that it would cost \$2400 in materials and labor.

Ms. George said that other potential insulation materials were vinyl backed fiberglass and a bubble wrap material. Mr. Pfeffer said that it was called "ReflexTex". He said that the issue with those two products would be that it would be difficult to seal the foundation adequately to prevent air flow through it. Mr. Pfeffer said that he believed that 4" of spray foam was more than what would be needed. He said that only 1 ½ to 2 inches would be needed. He said that covering the foam would be difficult and that the company's suggestion for the covering would probably be the best option. Ms. Barrows said that the cost of removing the recently installed insulation system would have to be added in. Ms. Smith said that whatever was done at 162 Main Street would also have to be done at the Franklin Street building. Ms. George said that building is outside of the design review district. Ms. Smith said that the homeowners' association is committed to the same treatment for the two buildings. She said that removal of the existing material would cost \$12,000 and would use up all of the funds that the association was trying to keep available for other maintenance work on these historic buildings.

Mr. Tapper asked about the detail on the existing material. Ms. Barrows said that molding strip could be installed. Mr. Pfeffer said that the ledger should be sloped so that water did not puddle on the ledge. Mr. Tapper said that he did not think that the proposed material would look bad and that he was sympathetic to the applicants' situation. Mr. Richardson said that he was also sympathetic to the situation. He said that the existing material is unacceptable as currently surfaced. He said that he would be reluctant to create the faux exterior on the parts of the building that is visible to the public. He said that he could see a compromise where the flashing was removed on some sections, but also did not want to negate the function of the insulation. He encouraged the installation of landscaping along the foundation. Ms. Lane said that she would not mind the proposed material if the color matched the building and there was landscaping to break up the visual impact.

Ms. George said that the problem was that the existing material extends beyond the profile of the wall. She said that metal is not an acceptable material and is not found elsewhere in the historic district. She said that she believed that all of the insulation work should occur on the inside of the foundation. She said that she was willing to work with the association to see if there is some other material that would work and offered to visit the basement to see the situation. Ms. Smith offered to show the basement to the committee.

Mr. Pfeffer said that there is a material called "wet spray cellulose" that sticks almost like foam and

has some fire resistance. He said that he agreed that the existing condition was not the best treatment for the building. He said that he thought that a sloping ledger would look better. Mr. Tapper said that he would like to see what ledger material would be used. Mr. Pfeffer suggested that it be painted to match the building trim. Mr. Richardson said that he would like to see an example of the proposed coating material on a building. Ms. George said that she would like to see a photograph of a use in central Vermont. Ms. Lane said that she would like better pictures of the existing building. Mr. Richardson said that close-up photos were needed.

Mr. Pfeffer said that he was concerned that the experts gave the association recommendations that took into consideration the fact that the insulation had already been installed. Ms. George said that their analysis did not compare the alternatives as though the project was starting from the beginning. She said that she would also like to see an alternative of installing the foam in only some locations. Ms. Barrows said that the foam installer recommended that the foam would only be effective if the entire foundation was treated. Ms. George said that she would be glad to meet the foam installer if the association had him come back to look at these alternatives.

Ms. George suggested that the application be tabled to the next meeting. Mr. Pfeffer advised the applicants that the DRC is only advisory to the DRB and that the applicant could go on to the Development Review Board if it wished.

The committee agreed to table the application to the next meeting to allow the applicant to provide additional information.

III. Continuation of Design Review

Property Address: 169 Barre Street
Applicant: Michael McCarty
Zone: CB-II/DCD

- Construction of a new roof
- Installation of vinyl siding on rear and sides of building

Mr. McCarty said that he was unable to get roofers to give him a quote because they said that some structural work was needed before the roofing material could be installed. He said that he did get a quote from Schumachers for removal of the recently added roof structure, repair of the structural integrity of the original roof and installation of a membrane roof. He said that the quoted cost of \$50,000 was not feasible.

Mr. Pfeffer said described a possible alternative that involved cutting the roof back to restore the look of the mansard roof. He said that would involve creating a high point for drainage but that would not located backe from the building edge and would not be visible from the ground level. Ms. Lane noted that the fire inspector may still not allow the second roof structure over the original roof structure. She recommended discussing the situation with the fire inspector.

Mr. McCarty described another alternative. He said that the siding on the mansard was originally cedar shingles. He said that he would replace the cedar shake look around the roof, but keep the new roof structure. Ms. Lane said that would not preserve the mansard. Mr. McCarty said that was correct. He said that the \$50,000 cost of restoring the mansard was not feasible. Ms. George said that the historical quality of this building is relatively intact and the defining feature of the structure is the mansard roof. She said that the DRC is looking for a solution that maintains the mansard.

Mr. McCarty said that he could look into Mr. Pfeffer's suggestion. Ms. George said that she thought that the committee would be agreeable to that. Mr. McCarty said that he needed to develop a proposal for the DRC before going to the fire department. The committee members said that , if Mr. McCarty wanted to maintain the second roof, he should consult with the fire inspector to see if that

was even allowable. Ms. George said that the committee would table the application to allow Mr. McCarty to develop a proposal. Ms. Swigon said that the existing situation represented an outstanding violation. She said that the Administrative Officer was concerned that the situation be resolved without further delay. She asked Mr. McCarty to commit to a date for the submission of the new proposal. Mr. McCarty said that he was leaving for service in the middle east for at least two months. He said that he was supposed to return by June 1. Ms. George asked whether he could have the proposal by the middle of July. He said that should be possible. Ms. George said that the application should be tabled to the DRC meeting in mid-July. The committee agreed.

Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes of the March 7, 2006 meeting. The committee voted 5-0 to approve the minutes as prepared.

Adjournment

The Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Swigon

These minutes are subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which they are acted upon.