

Montpelier Design Review Committee
August 8, 2006
Memorial Room, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Margot George, Chair; Vicki Lane; Soren Pfeffer;
and Guy Tapper (arrived after Item I).
Staff: Kathy Swigon

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Margot George.

Comments from the Chair:

Margot George explained the role of the Design Review Committee, which is advisory to the Development Review Board.

I. Continuation of Design Review – HDR/DCD

1-3 Cliff Street

Applicant: Peter Hack

- Applicant will present paint chips to DRC

Kathy Swigon said at the last DRC meeting Peter Hack presented to the committee on exterior and interior renovations at 1-3 Cliff Street. There are some changes, and these require Design Review. Items the committee identified that needed design review were replacing some steel posts at the porch with 4 x 4's, adding the half round windows at the peak, new entry doors, which are going to be fiberglass insulated doors, and saving the front door. There is one original door that is going to be salvaged. At that point, there were questions about the color scheme. It was agreed that the application would be continued to get the information on the color scheme and details on the deck rail.

Margot said what they are talking about today are colors and railing. Because the committee didn't vote on everything at the last meeting, they will have to vote on the whole application this time.

Peter Hack described the proposed work. He said he will use a Brosco turned post that is square up to 42 inches. The posts that came off are rotted at the top and bottom, so he is buying new ones. Mr. Hack showed the DRC some photographs that the listers used back in 1971, which showed the old railings. He proposed using 1 3/4" square spindles with 4" spacing per code. Soren Pfeffer suggested he use a horizontal 2 1/2" trim piece to simulate the old historic railing. Margot George said that unfortunately over the years they have seen a lot of deterioration in the historic details. This is a perfect opportunity to bring it back to what it looked like.

The Committee reviewed the paint colors. Mr. Hack said earth tones are the historic color of the times. He said he liked the gold-based tones with some dark brown trim or olive green trim. He showed a picture of a building on Baldwin Street, which he used as a comparison with his building. He showed different colors he planned on using for painting the building and trim. Ms. George inquired what colors the railings and posts were. Mr. Hack said it was a Norwich brown, but it looks like an olive green. There is a VanBuren brown for the soffit vertical elements. The cedar shakes are a Mayflower Red. The body is a Bryant gold, or the same color as a house on Baldwin Street. The doors are also Norwich brown.

Ms. Swigon reviewed the color scheme: the soffit is VanBuren brown; the cedar shakes are Mayflower Red; the main body is Bryant Gold, or the color on the Baldwin Street building; the trim and rails are Norwich brown; and the doors and louver are Norwich brown. The balusters and posts are going to be Norwich brown, too. Ms. George suggested the DRC could list as an option that he could do the door a different color. Vicki said if he used the Mayflower red it would balance out the color and bring it down into the body of the house.

The Design Review Committee voted to approve Peter Hack's application unanimously with options.

Guy Tapper joined the meeting at this time.

II. Design Review – CB-I/DCD

8-12 State Street

Applicant: Glen Marold

- Paint exterior wood trim and panels

The DRC reviewed the painting of the exterior of the building at 8-12 State Street. The committee noted that only the wood elements of the building would be painted and the brick would not be painted. They recommended approval of the application as submitted.

III. Design Review for Sign Permit Application – CB-I/DCD

8 State Street

Applicant: Glen Marold

- 90" x 20" wall sign

Glen Marold appeared before the DRC as the shop owner. He explained the sign colors use a white background and red and green on the signs. He said that the sign for Uncle Mike's Deli is sheet metal with vinyl lettering. He said he could make the sign background the Monroe Bisque to match the building trim. Ms. George said if he was in agreement, he could change his application so the background wouldn't be white but Monroe Bisque.

The committee reviewed the sign evaluation criteria.

An adjustment should be noted on the application that the background color of the sign will be changed from white to Monroe Bisque.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application with the adjustment that the background color will be Monroe Bisque.

IV. Design Review – CB-II/DCD

138 Main Street

Applicant: Vincent Illuzzi (Joe Illuzzi appeared for the applicant)

- Construction of airlock entry

Joe Illuzzi said they were proposing to install a glass airlock to the main entrance. It is designed with an aluminum structure with as much glass as possible. There is a 3' x 6'8" door, and the side panels are all glass. Black aluminum will be used with insulated glass. That should help a little bit with the heat because that is a pretty good sized door to open up in the winter.

Members remarked on how beautiful the existing entry way and door are. Ms. George asked whether there were alternatives to this application to enclose the door. Mr. Illuzzi said that there were none. He said that the glass would allow people to see the wooden doors.

Margot said the description says that the wood frame will be used because an aluminum frame will oxidize in the winter if salt or chloride is used. She asked whether the application is being changed to use wood. Joe Illuzzi said they were sticking with aluminum.

Margot said the committee could review the criteria to see how the application fits with each of the criteria, and then they can vote accordingly.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 1) *Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style if the proposed project is in the historic district or involves an historic structure;* Not applicable.
- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district:* Ms. George said that she did not know of any other historic homes that have aluminum or even wood front enclosures on them. She noted that the Library doesn't have any airlock doors. One committee member said that there are a couple of enclosures where they are the wooden type which they take off in the summertime. Ms. George said she didn't believe there was any aluminum. She said that she did not see any harmony of exterior design to fit this criterion.

- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district;* The committee agreed that there is not compatibility with other properties in the district. This is something new and different for this type of building. The history of the building is that Mr. Brock built the building right after the 1875 fires. Everybody who built then build with as many nonflammable materials as possible. This building plus the Dennis, Ricker & Brown building were brick with cast details and a slate roof, which actually are the architectural details that are significant to why it is important. There is a description of 138 Main Street in the National Register. Montpelier has just finished redoing the National Register for the Historic District, so the full description of that property is in there. Ms. George said certainly the exterior elements that are on the building are the most important features of the building.
- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district;* Not applicable.
- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials:* Mr. Pfeffer said he could certainly understand what they are trying to do, but the design doesn't fit in any way. He said the idea would be to make it as plain as possible so it is not that noticeable. Unfortunately, the biggest criteria to meet is the one that doesn't block any architectural details. That whole doorway is so special. Ms. Lane said she thought a temporary structure might be acceptable. Ms. George said that for it to be at all compatible with the building, it could not be aluminum and plexi-glass. Guy Tapper said he understood, too, the reason they wanted to do this, but based on the criteria the DRC reviews, this would permanently detract an outstanding architectural feature he would have a problem with it. Ms. George said that this doorway, in particular, is noted as being one of the most beautiful in the whole city. She said she believed the DRC would have a hard time recommending approval of any application that would allow anything that would completely cover the door. She suggested putting an airlock inside the hallway. Mr. Illuzzi said that there was not enough room since the door opens in. Ms. Lane said this is a view corridor. Mr. Pfeffer said he would be more comfortable with a temporary structure. Ms. Lane said that many people in Montpelier consider the doorway to be one of the most important doorways in the City. Joe Illuzzi inquired if a temporary structure would be something that Design Review would deal with, and Ms. George said that was possible. Ms. George said that the description from the National Register should be attached to the Committee's decision so the Development Review Board can understand how the DRC came to the conclusion that they did. She said that the enclosure covering the permanent doorway which covers the significant architectural detail of the house is not appropriate. The plexi glass and aluminum are not appropriate. The design and materials have no relevance to the structure.

The committee voted unanimously 4-0 to recommend denial of the application.

V. Design Review for Sign Permit Application – HDR/DCD

56 College Street

Applicant: New England Culinary Institute

- 14.3 square foot wall sign

Interested Party: Eric Seidel

Ms. George said the body of the sign is vellum, and the green is the trim color. Mr. Seidel said the lighting was already approved. Ms. Swigon confirmed that it was shown on the previously approved plans. The committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and voted to recommend approval of the application as submitted.

The NECI sign application was approved unanimously 4-0.

VI. Design and Site Plan Review – HDR/DCD

56 College Street

Applicant: New England Culinary Institute

- Installation of fence

Interested Party: Eric Seidel

Mr. Seidel passed out photographs of the design they propose for the fence. Mr. Seidel said the property line is very close to the foundation. Cars tend to pull in until their bumpers touch the foundation. They are proposing a cedar split rail fence because it will have minimal visual impact. There will be two posts and two rails 36" high. It will turn grey and will be relatively unobtrusive. It is a light weight frame so when they plow snow can push through. If cars hit it, and they will, it's relatively easy in the spring to straighten it up and put back together

Mr. Pfeffer said it is a pretty fence but doesn't go with the building style. If it started behind the front of the house, it would not be noticeable. Mr. Seidel said he would be happy to start at the corner of the house. Mr. Seidel said his sense is that when people go by the building they really like the looks of the building when they see what has been accomplished. He thinks there will be very few people who will notice there is a fence there, especially after it greys out and matches the granite foundation color. If there wasn't a parking issue, he wouldn't be doing a fence at all.

The Committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the fence with the adjustment that it extend no further into the front yard than the corner of the porch.

VII. Design and Site Plan Review – CB-I/DCD

3 Pitkin Court

Applicant: Duane Wells Construction

- Installation of block retaining wall

Duane Wells brought in a sample of a block he plans on using for the retaining wall to show to the Design Review Committee. Mr. Wells described his proposal to excavate and install a retaining wall that will be 22 feet high at the highest point. He said that the application is the same as the last time he appeared before the DRC, but the block material was different as a textured face was now proposed for the block.

Mr. Wells said he wants to put in a parking lot back there. The City of Montpelier wants to see how this works first and how it looks, so he is going to do it in stages. The committee discussed the color of the block. They adjourned the meeting to visit the site. Upon returning it was noted that the committee agreed that the reddish tinted block would be most appropriate.

The Design Review Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application to install the block retaining wall using the “rose red” tinted block with a textured face.

Other Business

The Design Review Committee tabled action on the July 5 and 18, 2006 minutes until the next meeting.

Adjournment

The DRC adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Swigon
Administrative Officer

Prepared by Joan Clack
City Clerk & Treasurer's Office