

**Montpelier Design Review Committee**  
**August 7, 2007**  
**Memorial Room, City Hall**

*Approved*

**Present:** Margot George, Chair; Vicki Lane, Eric Gilbertson, Soren Pfeffer, Guy Tapper, and Daniel Richardson.  
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator.

**Call to Order:**  
Margot George, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

- I. Design Review – CB-II/DCD**  
148 Main Street  
Applicant: Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems  
Owner: Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems  
Replace exterior siding on rear of building.  
Interested Party: Carole Mielke

Ms. George welcomed the applicant back. The Design Review Committee previously tabled her application for the discussion of replacing the door with wooden clapboards. The applicant shared a picture of the door which is on the rear of the back porch. They removed a back staircase. She came to the DRC to receive guidance on how to fill in where the back staircase and door had been.

Ms. George said under normal circumstances the committee would like for her to leave the frame of the door in place. Mr. Gilbertson said she could just leave the door frame and fill it in with an insulated panel, which is probably the easiest and cheapest thing to do. There was probably a window there at one time. Just fill it with clapboards so she isn't trying to clapboard out to the edge of the door. The applicant said they would paint the clapboard the same color as the house.

The DRC reviewed the criteria and found the application met requirements of the criteria. Ms. George said she didn't believe she needed to do optional changes or adjustments to the application.

Mr. Gilbertson said to summarize the DRC is doing three things. The applicant is filling in the bottom with similar moulding and replacing with clapboard of the same colors, removing the door, and filling in the remaining door frame with clapboards to match the house. An optional change is that the light may be removed.

The application as submitted was voted favorably 6-0.

- II. Design Review – CB-I/DCD**  
10 – 12 State Street  
Applicant: Chuck Nichols  
Owner: Moot Realty Trust  
Replace 32 windows.  
**Soren Pfeffer recused himself from discussion on the application at 10-12 State Street.**

The DRC broke briefly to obtain the original notes from the last meeting. During this time Chair Margot George distributed samples of possible retrofits for existing windows, one being a jamb liner system out of New Hampshire. Their quote is \$195 per window for a standard window, but it might be different in this application. The other one is a retrofit system on an existing window where you can actually route it and put in the second thermo pane window, plus tighten up the whole window. That is on a case by case basis.

The Design Review Committee is back to opening from tabling at the last meeting the application for changing windows on both the front and back at 10-12 State Street. There are the same materials from the last meeting, as well as some photographs of the windows the owner purchased. There is a clarification that the muntin is an

interior muntin between the two panes of glass. The windows are a shape that is a two-third over a one-third configuration.

Mr. Nichols said they wanted to revise the application to reflect the back of the building.

Ms. George said the DRC is dealing with the back of the building and the applicant is not going forward with the front. There are 18 windows on the back of the building. The back windows at one point may have been a curved top but they have over the years been replaced with 2 over 2's with a straight top and wood infill. The replacement windows are going to be white and the trim will remain a cream color to match the existing trim.

Mr. Richardson said his impression is that the critical façade on this building is the front that faces State Street. That is the one in which there are the original curved windows as well as the neighboring buildings that have the uniform profile of the raised muntins. The back side looks over on a parking lot and isn't exactly visible. Ms. George and Ms. Lane said it is visible from Main Street because of the missing building. Mr. Gilbertson said he sees this as a back side and is more inclined to vote for alterations to that design because it is a less important façade than the front. It is something the committee can give the applicant some flexibility with using the proposed windows.

Mr. Gilbertson said if the windows were divided in two sections like the originals rather than three sections like the one that exists he wouldn't have a problem with it, but the proposed windows are for a new building. He said he has a problem with the kind of precedent this sets for replacing windows.

Ms. Lane said she thinks the back of the building is almost as important as the front as far as the view corridor. She has difficulty with the fact that the window is so much different and there are no other windows in the area like this. It is going to take away from the historic view, because even though there isn't as much detail on the back side and without the building and the fact there is now a parking lot there so that space will always be open. She said she would have a hard time supporting the change to the back side of this building that drastically.

Mr. Gilbertson said he didn't think the committee could make this decision based on the idea that the parking lot is going to cover it up because that is pure speculation at this point.

Ms. George said she believed the Master Plan shows that whole area as a dressed up parking lot. The plan shows what they are trying to do over the next decade is to slowly make that be like Barre where the backs and fronts of the buildings have equal importance so people can enter from both sides and an improved area in the back of the buildings because they are next to the river.

Mr. Gilbertson said when the State Street Market was located there they used the back door.

Mr. Richardson said there is activity in the back parking area. He said what they are looking at is balancing the historical significance with the idea that these windows which have already been purchased can be installed without sacrificing a lesser important façade.

Mr. Tapper said he agreed with Vicki Lane and have the same concerns that Vicki and Eric have because the windows are so different in their style, and the precedent it sets for other window replacements could create a problem.

Mr. Pfeffer said he had been talking to the applicants about the possibility of replacing windows. Ms. George said the committee is required to ask the applicant if they have a reason why Soren should recuse himself. Mr. Nichols said all they had talked about was options.

Ms. George said if the application had come in without any windows being purchased the committee would have required a 2 over 2 windows with a simulated divided light. A simulated divided light is where the muntins are applied to the outside of the glass and not on the inside. There are multitudes of people in Montpelier in the last five years who have done just that, because it is the right thing to do. The precedence is not so much what might come in the future, but it is a slap in the face for all of the people who have spent good money doing the right

thing. They are major landowners in this city. For the DRC to suddenly say it is okay to do something like this wouldn't be so. It's unfortunate they bought the windows. She doesn't know where the lack of communication went where you have to go through this process before they purchase materials. If they had come in, whether or not they owned the windows, the committee would have worked hard to getting a 2 over 2 window that would match the existing windows as much as possible. This just isn't going to match the criteria the committee votes for. We need to ask how it fits with cityscape and the master plan.

Ms. Lane said the windows are not in any way preserving the historic vision of the building.

Mr. Gilbertson said they all understand the need to make compromises on the windows because Tim Heney has bought windows, and the committee worked with him to get the best windows possible. The committee understands the need for new windows. This is a particularly difficult building because of the curved glass on the top, which is a significant feature. He agrees with Margot if they could come to a 2 over 2 window that would basically mimic the windows in the building he wouldn't have a problem with it. This is going to entirely change the rear of the building.

Ms. George said the committee could explore alterations the applicant would be willing to make now to the applications so they can vote on something and go forward.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. The application is just for the rear of the building. The original windows exist on the rear and the curved element of the sash mimics the brick detail but has been in filled with wood. Cityscape standards for windows strongly states:

*Window openings should not be enlarged, reduced, blocked-up, closed-off, or otherwise altered in form.*

Mr. Gilbertson said this is a dramatic visual change in the appearance and configuration of the window.

Ms. George said this configuration of windows does not reflect any historic windows in the area. This is a significant structure at a dominant intersection of town. The introduction of new between the glass muntin windows is inconsistent with windows in the area and abutting buildings. The DRC recognizes the dilemma for the applicants already having purchased windows but cannot approve the present application in good faith through historic standards and design consistent with this portion of the district.

Mr. Gilbertson added the committee needs to mention that this façade is visible from Main Street. Ms. Lane added that due to the openness of the area now this is what you will see when you drive down Main Street towards the center of town.

Mr. Gilbertson said this application brings up the topic of somebody purchasing windows ahead of time before coming to the Design Review Committee and brings up the whole notice. The applicant has owned the building since 1980 and she should realize she is in the Design Review District.

Ms. Moot said it had never occurred to her. She is an educated person and works in the legislative process and should have known. It never occurred to her that changing the windows would have required a permit because she thought it was maintenance. Mr. Gilbertson said it is a real dilemma for him when that happens to people, but the committee has to fulfill their responsibility. He expressed sympathy to the applicant for having this happen. There needs to be some notification process and defining what routine maintenance is. There could be a handout to property owners, particularly in the downtown.

Ms. George said a few years ago the city decided to write a general letter to everybody reminding them they were in the district and come for a permit.

Ms. Moot said the decision stings even more because they don't pay for the heat in this building. They were replacing the windows exclusively for their tenants. This is not a cost they will recoup should they sell the building to Jeff Jacobs.

The DRC rejected the application 5-0 with Soren Pfeffer recusing himself.

Mr. Richardson said he wanted to say the attitude of the committee is nothing but sympathetic to the applicant's situation. They don't want to leave them with a group of windows that they can't return or use. That is not the committee's goal, either. Some of the rhetoric expressed by the committee is just simply trying to say we want to help them but the standards don't allow it. It is nothing personal and nothing directed at the applicant's motivations. The applicants just got caught in a bad place.

Mr. Nichols said neither he nor Ms. Moot thought that replacing windows would be this involved. They made a mistake. They will decide whether they want to go to the DRB or not.

**III. Design Review – HDR/DCD**

60 Ridge Street

Applicant: Susan Walter

Owner: Susan Walter

Replace asphalt shingles with metal.

This application proposes to replace an asphalt shingled roof with a gavalume metal roof.

Mr. Richardson moved that the DRC table the application and have the applicant come back to address the DRC's concerns about her proposed roof replacement. The specific question is whether or not it is a standing seam or another type of metal roof. The DRC voted to table the application until the next meeting.

**Approval of July 17 and July 31, 2007 Minutes:**

Mr. Richardson moved approval of minutes of the July 17 and July 31, 2007 Design Review Committee as amended in discussion. Ms. Lane seconded the motion. The July 17<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup> minutes were approved unanimously.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Richardson moved adjournment, with Ms. Lane seconding the motion. The DRC was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet  
Planning and Zoning Administrator

*Transcribed and Prepared by:  
Joan Clack, City Clerk & Treasurer's Office*