

Montpelier Design Review Committee
September 18, 2007
Manager's Conference Room, City Hall

Approved 10/1/07

Present: Margot George, Chair; Stephen Everett, Vice Chair; Vicki Lane, Eric Gilbertson, Soren Pfeffer, and Guy Tapper.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Gwen Hallsmith, Dir. Planning & Community Development.

Call to Order:
Soren Pfeffer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the absence of the Chair, Margot George, who was recused in this matter. Eric Gilbertson showed up late.

- I. Design Review – CB-I/DCD**
5 State Street
Applicant: Kevin Casey
Owner: Jeffrey Jacobs
Painting Exterior
Interested Parties Present: Kevin Casey and Jesse Jacobs

Mr. Pfeffer explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee to the Development Review Board.

Mr. Casey said the building on 5 State which has been renovated and they plan on painting the exterior. The base color remains the same. They wanted to change it from the green to a lighter trim color following the same color scheme, which is a Sherman Williams Roycroft Copper Red. Because it receives full sun it has faded dramatically. The only change will be on the trim, which is a Roycroft Vellum. It currently is a dark forest green, which makes the building dark. It will be identical to 54 Main Street where Capitol Video is. There are stone lentils, which you can't see currently. This will just highlight some of the details of the building with the lighter color. They are also going to refurbish some of the shutters because some of them are in pretty rough shape. They plan on painting the shutters the cream color, or vellum.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and found the application acceptable. The application was accepted favorably on a 4-0 vote.

- II. Design Review – CB-I/DCD**
70 Main Street
Applicant: Mark Smith
Owner: Bill Shouldice
Removal of second story shed and continuation of existing roofing and siding.

Mr. Pfeffer explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee to the Development Review Board.

Mr. Smith said he was trying to address an eyesore visible from City Hall, which is on Bill Shouldice's property. This is actually at 68 Main Street. It is listed as 70 Main Street because the structure they are talking about is over the top of 70 Main Street, which is Charlie-O's Bar owned by Jeff Jacobs. They are proposing to clean up the area and demolish the shed to carry out the roof line out over the rear and the existing overhang. They want to continue the siding to make it a finished product. The Shouldice family owns approximately 5 foot over the top of Charlie-O's on the second level. Therefore, Bill Shouldice owns the shed that needs cleaning up. They are basically proposing to clean up the site and finish the siding. The vinyl siding goes right around Charlie-O's. They want to clean up the site using the existing colors.

Ms. George said they remember clearly two years ago that the vinyl siding was supposed to be temporary. The permit clearly said it was a two-year period. She asked Mr. Smith what color the vinyl siding was going to be. Mr. Smith said it was going to be grey.

Ms. George said it is a straight forward application with a sloping roof and the removal of a structure. There obviously isn't any attempt to put windows back in the section because it wasn't a windowed wall but an interior wall. She said the DRC has to continue as if nothing was proposed for the site.

Mr. Tapper said the site should be returned to something more appropriate for the district this would be the time to do that, especially since other work is going to be done. Wood siding would be the way to go and not to approve an extension or a continuation of vinyl. Mr. Pfeffer their two-year time frame is up, so he agrees with Mr. Tapper. Mr. Everett said he agrees with Guy and Soren. If it is going to be permanent they should go back to wood.

Ms. Lane said she was in agreement but is wondering if they are talking about removing the existing vinyl siding and replacing it with the more district appropriate clapboards. Ms. George said the time has come that the vinyl should be removed and replaced with wood, which is the material that was in place before the fire. She is also in agreement. The DRC saw the vinyl siding as a temporary move. It is obvious they are going to change the roof line, clean up the site and looking for something more permanent. She believes the district deserves to have something that doesn't look as temporary. The application for the parking lot is going to dress up the site somewhat.

Ms. George told Mr. Smith he now had the option of having the DRC vote on the application as he submitted it, or if he is in agreement that it should be wood siding makes the change. Mr. Smith said he is agreement that it should be wood siding. Ms. George asked if he had the authority to act on behalf of the Shouldice's to make that change. Mr. Smith said that was correct, and the wood would be the same color as the vinyl.

Ms. Lane said the committee is talking about removing the vinyl and replacing it with wood. Mr. Smith said the vinyl is easy to take off. He sees no problem changing the vinyl to wood siding. They would be willing to paint it whatever color the committee wants. If they want it to match the front of the building, they are in agreement with that. The trim is red and the body of the building is cream. Mr. Gilbertson said the other option is to paint it a darker color. The back of the existing building should be the color of the front.

The committee inquired about removing the gas tanks. Mr. Smith said he believed the Fire Marshall moved them to that location because they couldn't be near the windows and doors. The Fire Marshall has stated that is where they have to belong. Ms. George said normally there would be an enclosure around them. Ms. Lane said they have to provide access to the gas tanks so they would have to have a door. Ms. George said there are many propane tanks which are enclosed in Montpelier. Mr. Smith said they could install some lattice work around them. Ms. George and Ms. Lane agreed that a clapboard enclosure would blend in with the building.

Ms. George said what they have discussed, and Mr. Smith is in agreement with, is alteration to the application to change the siding to wood siding with a trim that matches the front of the building and wider corner boards along with the fascia piece beyond the roof since there is no over hang. The same trim will be applied to the skirt board. It will be painted the same color as the front only in reverse. The adjustment to the scope is that the gas tanks are also going to be enclosed in a wooden enclosure on two sides (not stockade).

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria. The change to the application is that it will be wood siding with trim elements matching the front of the building, the fascia, corner board, skirt board and it will be painted the same color as the front with the dark color on the clapboard. The adjustment is that the gas tanks will be enclosed in a wooden enclosure on two sides and not to be stockade.

The application with the recommended changes was approved by the Design Review Committee 5-0.

III. Design Review – HDR/DCD

7 West Street

Applicant: Dan Clar

Owner: Michelle Childs and Steve Hintgen

Expand porch stairs on southwest side of building.

Interested Party: Steve Hintgen

Ms. George explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee to the Development Review Board.

Mr. Hintgen said Dillingham Hall on the Green at Vermont College they purchased three years ago. It was last used as a residence in 1948 when it was sold to the junior college. From 1948 to 2003 it was institutional, whether it was a dorm or office buildings. There were 22 or 24 women living at one time. There is a significant amount of deferred maintenance. There were some modifications made for commercial type codes in the early 90's. It is now a single family home again in which they live. Their goal is to do an excellent job of restoring it to its 1897 grandeur. They have done a lot inside, but now they are doing the deferred maintenance on the outside, and they think they are doing a first class job. They have one railing up on the back porch. That has been removed and completely rebuilt. All of the decorative millwork has been dip stripped, including the columns, the lattice work on the top and the balusters and rails. It has been reassembled with new decking and a new structure under the porch. The decorative skirts, which are balusters, are matching on all three porches. They are having them all remade from scratch because they were rotted enough. All three porches have received approval for this rebuild.

Mr. Hingten's application is for steps because they left them out on two of the three porches, which they want to modify. There are some temporary steps put up behind the porch. Those are in approximately the position but a little bit wider than the steps which they inherited. The railings seem to line up. They want to modify this by doing an L-wraparound on that corner instead. They will be wrapped around 4 feet on each side of the corner. Then, there will be a single railing going down diagonally off the corner. Actually, that railing and those steps will be to current building codes. They are asking the committee to look at this from a design perspective. There is only one neighbor that is in any proximity to this at all, which is 5 West Street which is the home that Rich Hansen used to own.

Mr. Gilbertson asked how they arrived at this configuration. Mr. Hintgen said this is not a historic recreation. This is something they wanted to do for the flow into the backyard. Basically, these steps take you off this very usable porch directly back along the garage and out of the flow of the lawn. They want more of a spilling out onto the lawn for the purposes of using the lawn rather than pushing you towards the back the house.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if the height was up to code. Mr. Hintgen said they received a dispensation. They received a variance based on historic reasons because they saw they were doing this historically. The step railing and balusters will be code as well as the actual steps. The code only requires a single rail on steps. It doesn't require rails on both sides. They had a great deal of trouble with getting a historic variance, and then once they laid out all of the reasons they felt they were doing the best possible job it was accepted with stipulations that it would damage the historic character if they put up cables for compliance. The problem with the code was the railing on the porch; it wasn't high enough.

Mr. Hintgen then handed out a photo of the front of the building showing what is presently on there. He also handed out the 1940's Vermont Junior College year books. What is on there now was put up in 1991. This porch has been entirely removed as of today. The steps are not being replaced as is because they want to restore the steps to what they were originally, which is not current building code. The columns come down to pedestals which are shingled. They are original. There used to be steps with shingled boxes with a platform on top of each one in line with the porch deck at a level you could sit on. It is a very social thing. Remember, 1948 is the year the college bought it. He showed them the Junior College Year Book from 1948. He showed them the Dillingham Residence Hall page, and they called themselves "The Dillies." Three sophomore graduation photos were all taken sitting on those steps they want to restore. It is a beautiful place to take a photo and a beautiful architectural feature.

Ms. George said the columns will remain on the existing porch. Mr. Hintgen said just the steps would change.

Ms. George inquired if there was any landscaping proposed. Mr. Hintgen said there is a 3 1/2 foot wide concrete skirt around the foundation. It is cracked and in bad condition. They would like to remove it.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. Ms. George said as an optional change they can remove their concrete skirt around the outside of the building. They are demolishing the railing and replacing it with an authentic railing. The application as submitted was approved unanimously 5-0.

IV. Design Review – CIV/DCD

7 Baldwin Street

Applicant: Randall Contracting

Owner: Ralph and Sharon Gerlach

Exterior renovations including windows, doors, siding and 2nd story porch.

Interested Parties: Ken Randall and Ralph Gerlach

Ms. George said these are renovations to the building on Baldwin Street.

Mr. Randall said right after Ralph Gerlach purchased the building he hired Randall Contracting to come in and do an assessment of what he was trying to do with the building, which was offices. First, they had Glenn Moore come in and realized they needed to sprinkle the building. They wanted to do some modifications on the inside to accommodate office space. They wanted to renovate the third floor so it could be used. The rear stairs were not compatible to have people use the space so they installed a spiral staircase. Glenn has been to the building on numerous inspections. They have received a permit from Glenn to do with the work. The structural frame of the staircase is steel with wooden treads. They will need a wooden railing.

Why they held off on coming to the DRC with the exterior renovation is because there is a budget with private funds. Putting \$60,000 into a sprinkler system used up a lot of the budget. Mr. Gerlach said he was putting more money into the restoration than what he spent on the purchase of the building.

Mr. Gilbertson inquired if Mr. Gerlach had looked into the investment tax credits. Mr. Gerlach said he hadn't spoken with his accountant about that yet. Ms. George said if you are spending more on the renovations than what he paid for the property he is eligible. Mr. Gilbertson said he should talk to Chris Cochran at the Preservation Office because there is a 20 percent discount on the construction costs for the owner. Basically, all wiring and renovations count. Sprinklers would count.

Mr. Randall said when they started the project they knew it was a maintenance issue. They took the dormers on top of the building and sent the material out and had them restored. Any trim on the exterior of the house, because it was a maintenance issue they realized they had to restore it exactly. That has been completed. The shingles on the roof needed to be replaced. They have come to areas where they wanted to do some small exterior changes. They want to replace the windows, remove the aluminum siding and restore the clapboard siding underneath. There are areas on the back porch that need to be replaced where the soffit was all rotten.

Mr. Randall said in order to make it handicapped accessible there is a pair of 2 foot doors which swing in to the main entrance, which can't be that way. The DRC talked about how to use the existing doors and still allow them to be handicapped accessible. Mr. Randall said there is an office space on the left and they installed a handicapped bathroom in the same area, so the area is accessible all the way around where the old porch was in the back. There were 6 bathrooms in the building at one time that leaked everywhere.

In the upper part of the garage they want to put in a conference room with two skylights in the roof, which is facing the Capitol. On the other side, 9 Baldwin Street, they are proposing the same thing, to change the aluminum siding to wood siding.

They aren't changing the garage doors. They are the old carriage house doors, and they are going to leave them and attach them close because it is going to be a heated place.

Mr. Randall said in the back on the third floor they want to install a deck. They want to change the window to a door. They don't need to do anything to the upper part of the trim on the area at all. This is a flat roof in the back. You'll come out onto a deck that is hidden. The only place it can be seen is from 9 Baldwin Street. The third floor is going to be the owner's space for an office.

Mr. Gilbertson said the only question he had was about the skylights. He inquired if there was a possibility of putting them on the other side so they wouldn't be visible from the Capitol. Mr. Randall said no, because the roof ties into it at a height above.

Mr. Everett asked about the windows. Mr. Randall said they were replacing with exactly the same as is there now. The skylights are a velux material.

Ms. George said the application was very well presented and understandable.

The DRC reviewed the criteria.

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;*

It needs to be mentioned the aluminum siding is coming off.

- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district;*

The design elements would include the skylights and some new windows. there are no significant design changes. The skylights are not perfect, but they are located on the secondary part of the building. There is no other way to get light into that area.

- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district;*

Acceptable.

- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district;*

The applicant will come back before the Design Review Committee for this.

- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials;*

Everything is staying white. The applicant will come back to the committee if they decide to use a different color.

- 6) *Location and appearance of all utilities;*

Acceptable.

- 7) *Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House.*

Not applicable.

The optional change is that the handicapped railing can be wood or metal pipe railing. The application for 7 Baldwin Street was voted favorably 5-0.

Owner: Vincent Illuzzi
Airlock Entry
Interested Party: Joe Illuzzi

The 138 Main Street application is dealing with the Environmental Court case. The request is that the Design Review Committee meet and review the application as it relates to the criteria and write a decision to present to the City of Montpelier that can be included in the hearing scheduled for October 4, 2007. The DRC has conducted site visits in the past.

Ms. George told Joe Illuzzi that the DRC met with Sandy Vitzhum at the property and she described the project thoroughly. Ms. Vitzhum described to the DRC the method of attachment.

Mr. Illuzzi said the airlock entry is going to be an aluminum frame and a little more glass than originally planned a year ago. It will be removable so they can take it down in April and put it up in October.

Ms. George said when the DRC made a site visit there were concerns about attachment through the granite slab. The committee has some concerns about the application. Today they need to work through the concerns and submit a final report to the Environmental Court. After they discuss their concerns, the DRC can review the criteria.

Ms. George said one of the things they noticed when they did a site visit it that it is clear there used to be some storm or screen, or combination doors. The hinges are still there. Mr. Illuzzi said he believed they were screen doors. Ms. George inquired if Mr. Illuzzi had researched installing some wooden storm doors. Mr. Illuzzi said he didn't think it would work because it wouldn't give an airlock.

Ms. George said the DRC's job today is to express their concerns relating to the criteria. Then, the committee can work on a report to give to the City of Montpelier for the hearing on October 4th. The DRC used the criteria based on what was proposed.

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;*

Unacceptable based on the fact this would not be a reconstruction of what probably was an airlock or storm doors. This is not similar to any previous storm door or enclosure system of the past.

- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district;*

Consideration in the past is that this is unacceptable. The design is primarily rectangular and more horizontal and vertical as opposed to the entrance way which is much more curved. Mr. Illuzzi said the church across the street has the same design. The Committee disagreed with the Applicant.

- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district;*

Glass is compatible, but aluminum frame is not. There are no other airlocks like that in the district.

- 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;*

This is incompatible design and exterior materials. Even though the door is removable, there will be remaining posts and brackets. The enclosure would obscure the important doorway from view for much of the year. It is unclear as to the number of holes that will have to be drilled into the granite slab and bricks.

- 6) *Location and appearance of all utilities;*

Not applicable.

- 7) *Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House.*

This isn't a view corridor or vista but just the building itself. The structure is one of the most important buildings in Montpelier's architectural collection. The doorway should not be obscured. The doorway and arches are a very important element of the streetscape.

Under normal circumstances the DRC would discuss what alternatives might be possible. Within the report under criteria #5 the committee has expressed they wanted to explore any and all other ways that the applicant can deal with their energy needs without having to install the enclosure.

Mr. Illuzzi said that is what the enclosure is all about. They had a \$23,000 fuel bill last year.

Ms. Lane said the committee had talked about other ways of entrance and exit for the cold months instead of using that door primarily. Mr. Illuzzi said it won't happen.

Ms. George said she talked with Sandy Vitzhum to check about some other form of wooden closure. She said they had looked into that type of design but she was concerned how high up above the floor they were going to go, and they had also to deal with the lantern hanging from the ceiling. Mr. Illuzzi said he hadn't talked with Sandy in quite awhile. They were worried that when the door opened in that it would hit the light, but they could raise the light.

Mr. Everett said that instead of using a steel structure that needed to stay in place, for that amount of money they could pay a carpenter to come in and build something which could be taken apart and not be permanently attached. It could be completely removable which would solve the committee's biggest issue. Mr. Gilbertson said it could be made out of wood to match the design of the doors. You see older houses with these kinds of doors, but they are nicely fabricated out of wood. There could be windows in the front and just have it all come apart in panels and pieces. Ms. Lane said she would be concerned with anything that is up there more than three months of the year. December, January and February should be enough. Ms. George said the heavy heating season is the middle of December to April 1st. Ms. Lane said she would still prefer the three coldest months of the year. That would be from the standpoint of when visitors traditionally come to Montpelier.

Ms. George said they don't have a design they think is appropriate at all. The committee is working with the applicant to work out a solution. From this report they are to provide their information to the City Attorney.

Mr. DeSmet said the DRC should vote and then he will draft a report to circulate among the DRC members. The report is based on what was proposed by the applicant. The Applicant said that there is no point in doing detailed drawings if the whole concept isn't going to work.

The DRC voted 5-0 to deny the application as proposed.

Mr. DeSmet said according to the zoning ordinance anything proposed at this point would constitute a new application.

Mr. Gilbertson said he thought it would be in the DRC's and applicant's interests if they could come up with a new solution that would work and incorporate the information from Energy Vermont and try to look at a new design for the project. The Environmental Court often requests that parties go to mediation and try to solve the problem outside of the courtroom.

Ms. George said Joe Illuzzi is expecting the committee to give him a report. It would be up to the applicant, the one who would be appealing the decision, to stop the case on October 4th. It isn't the city's responsibility. If the applicant doesn't stop it, the city will show up.

Mr. Illuzzi said to leave the decision of the DRC as it is. He will check with Sandy Vitzhum to see why she picked the door instead of wood.

Ms. George said Sandy Vitzhum said that her frame design would still need to remain after the door was taken down. She would still need some sort of permanent frame to hitch it into. She was worried that the lantern hangs down really low, and it is an important element of the building. She couldn't figure out a way to easily do something that could be taken down or put up.

Mr. Everett said he didn't think the light fixture was 6 feet. There could be a 6 foot door that opened underneath the light fixture, or just take the light fixture up a link in the chain.

Ms. George told Mr. Illuzzi the Design Review Committee would hand in their report. The applicant might want to get in touch with their attorney and let them know the committee is willing to wait until after Energy Vermont's visit.

Approval of September 4, 2007 Minutes:

Due to the length of the meeting the DRC postponed approval of the September 4, 2007 minutes until a later date.

Adjournment:

DRC adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet,
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Transcribed and prepared by:
Joan Clack, City Clerk's Office