

**Montpelier Design Review Committee**

**June 24, 2008**

**Memorial Room, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Margot George, Chair; Stephen Everett, Vice Chair; Vicki Lane, Eric Gilbertson, Soren Pfeffer, Guy Tapper, and James Duggan.  
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Margot George, Chair, at 5:30 P.M. Ms. George explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee to the Development Review Board to applicants.

**I. 139 State Street – CIV/DCD**

Applicant: Union Mutual of Vermont

Replace existing metal exhaust stack with masonry

Interested Parties: Gary Ouellette, Union Mutual of Vermont

Greg Lord, EF Wall & Associates

Ms. George said the application says Union Mutual wants to repair the existing external boiler exhaust stack, which is metal, with masonry stack. She did a site visit. At this point the stack is metal painted black, rusting through and they want to replace it. They think it will look better if they do it in masonry.

Mr. Ouellette said it would look better, but it will also be more durable because it has been an ongoing maintenance issue through corrosion, etc. Masonry would provide certainly a better long term solution. They believe they could upgrade it by putting masonry that is black in the same dimension. They are going a step further in wanting to treat it with the same kind of stone finish that is currently the main finish on the tower outside of the glass. The backdrop of the tower for the protrusion of the stack with the stone would blend in better.

Ms. George asked if they were able to match the stone to whatever quarry these came out. Mr. Ouellette said they were.

Ms. George said it is the same height and same shape. Is it going to have the cap on it any longer? Mr. Ouellette replied yes. He said it would look just like it does now.

If you had taken a site visit you would have noticed that the chimney right now painted black that its backdrop is the black windows and not the stone. The original international style of this building was a flat cantilevered building that was one story. When the firm wanted to expand they hired an architect who did an addition on the back that was quite dissimilar. To take a one-story modern building of international style and put a six-story tower on the back obviously had to be done architecturally but it is its own statement of an addition that wasn't a part of the first building. The metal stack is just a little appurtenance that is mechanical. We have them all of the time. They are usually on the backs of buildings, but we have many of them on the top, and we don't make them be architecturally significant. She truly believes to clad this in the attractive stone that was on the back of the building not only will highlight is as some sort of special architectural feature but will stand out on the top of the one story building. She doesn't have any problem with replacing the stack with masonry, but her recommendation is that it will be masonry painted black.

Mr. Ouellette said it is closer to that building and the backdrop against the glass blends in as it is now. If the backdrop is against stone it would blend in better with stone. He tried to illuminate that in the photos he provided. The vegetation that surrounds the property provides a fairly good break visually. It is certainly an aesthetic thing that everyone has their opinion on. It would cost Union Mutual less money to not do it that way.

Mr. Duggan said he missed the introduction about why it is being replaced. Is this skirting around the top going to remain the same? Mr. Ouellette replied it was. It is currently metal, and it is degraded. It is a constant

maintenance issue in terms of leaking roofs and replacing of that element. It is time to replace it again, so it is a durability factor. It was an aesthetic choice to essentially do what they thought was an upgrade, which was to provide a masonry that included the stone veneer consistent with the stone veneer on the tower.

Mr. Duggan said presumably masonry will be more durable. He would prefer to see it a darker color than the fieldstone look. Is there cladding on the original building? Is it marble or granite?

Mr. Ouellette said it was a granite veneer. Mr. Duggan said that could be an option, too. Mr. Ouellette said he didn't think that would be a good option because it would simply have granite against black or granite against stone and would provide more of a contrast.

Ms. Lane asked if they would have an objection to having it is a black masonry. Greg Lord said ideally they had hoped to go with the stone material. Their biggest issue is they need to replace it. They have repaired it about every year and a half because it leaks into the building. They are trying to keep the maintenance to a minimum because it is above ground level. It is a rubber membrane roof so he is trying to limit the traffic as much as possible. They would like to build something permanent and leave it be.

Mr. Everett said if you lift up the two large photos, if you are on the sidewalk on the side of the building you don't see it anyway. If you are driving along you don't have enough time to see it. Another angle you see a black dot against a stone. If you get a narrow view between the trees, especially when they are leafed out, you may see the stone against the lower portion of windows, so it is a tradeoff whether you paint it black or do it in stone. He has no problem with it being in stone. If he owned the building he would want stone himself. He would rather see it match the rest of the stone work behind it and just leave it natural. That's a low no maintenance item.

Mr. Gilbertson said he understands what Margo is saying and appreciates her looking at it closely. He agrees with her from these pictures. It is in the foreground so it is obviously a part of the original structure and not a part of the outer structure. He would tend to go with the black paint.

Mr. Ouellette said he appreciates that viewpoint. It is a functional element and not an aesthetic element. He believes any architect would say they would rather not have anything like that showing.

Mr. Duggan said he tends to see it as an element of the original structure. This is a new change, too. Maybe it could be a dark stone masonry and something that doesn't match the tower behind it but becomes more durable and isn't trying to blend in. That building is completely different in style than the original.

Mr. Lord said they have put quite a bit of steel on it over the past 8 or 9 years. It is constant patching and repair. Mr. Ouellette said the primary reason for doing something is to alleviate the maintenance headache and the fact it is constantly leaking. That is why the durability of masonry is what they are proposing.

Ms. Lane asked if there was a masonry stone they could use that is darker. Mr. Ouellette said that could happen. It was just trying to make it blend with something. Ms. Lane said it depends upon where you are standing in relation to looking at the top. The darkness of it does mirror the dark horizontal and vertical elements of the original building.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if it would change in dimension at all. Mr. Ouellette said no.

Ms. George said you didn't notice it in the past because it is a mechanical item and our eyes dismiss mechanicals. You don't see the phone poles either, but they are all over town. That's the very issue she has. To her it should be a dismissed item in her brain. It shouldn't become suddenly an architectural feature of the building. It is just what it is – a chimney!

Mr. Lord said their current masonry chimney has been there since the mid 1950's, which has held up tremendously well so far. That was their basis along with the engineer's recommendation. That metal stack sits on a masonry chimney.

Mr. Everett asked if there was a liner in the existing chimney, or does it have a stainless steel liner?

Mr. Lord replied it was masonry lined. He is sure it is a tile liner.

Mr. Everett said to an extent it is just an extension of the masonry chimney. Is there a liner in that? Does it extend up through, or is it just a metal box? Mr. Lord said it was a metal box that sits on top.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if the corrosion came from the outside or inside of the chimney.

Mr. Lord said he believes it originates from the inside. When the metal starts to break down on the outside they have tried a multi-layered approach, and they are starting to see the outside break down, too.

Mr. Gilbertson said he would suggest replacing it with a stainless steel face on the inside.

Ms. George said they have heard around the room that it should be metal and black. Have the applicants changed their opinion?

Mr. Ouellette said he liked Jamie's idea of a darker stone.

Mr. Everett said he liked Eric's idea of stainless steel make a lot of sense.

Ms. George said she wanted dark. She told the applicant to figure out what they could do with dark; she wants it to be black.

Mr. Duggan said he would prefer to see a metal chimney replace that just because that is what is there now. If it is going to be masonry as an option he would prefer it to be something that reflects what is there currently so it blends in.

Ms. Lane said if it is going to be a different color she wants it to match the elements. If she looks at it as a design element of the original building, then it has to match. If it is simply a functional chimney it could be something different, but she prefers darker.

Ms. George said the applicant could have the DRC vote on their application as submitted. The DRC will then include their arguments and they can go to the Development Review Board. Or, they could decide today that they would be interested in pursuing on some of the options the Committee has discussed, and then they would vote on the amended application.

Mr. Lord said they should go with what they brought to the table.

The DRC reviewed the criteria.

1. Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style in the district. This would be unacceptable because the original material and style was probably metal painted black. We are not preserving or reconstructing the chimney.
2. Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district. Non/applicable. Mr. Duggan said it is the only international style building in the downtown.
3. Compatibility with the proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district. Unacceptable as up above. Ms. Lane said in the district there are stone and masonry chimneys.
4. Compatibility with proposed landscaping. Non/applicable.
5. The prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes or exterior materials. Unacceptable because the DRC believes the utilitarian structure originally matched or blended with the metal and steel. Decorative stone on this mechanical element is inappropriate to the original building. Color of elements should be not noticeable or invisible rather than accentuated as an architectural element. This is an element that should be black.
6. Location and appearance of all utilities. Chimney is not a utility but a structure.

7. Recognition and respect for view corridors and significant vistas, including gateway views of the State House. Non/applicable.
8. Demolition. Non/applicable.

Mr. Gilbertson said if they simply replaced this in-kind they wouldn't have to come before the DRC.

Mr. DeSmet said repair or replacement of architectural features would not require a permit. The applicants know that because he met with them. Mr. Lord said absolutely, they wanted something else.

Ms. George said this isn't meant to be a place to make a statement.

Mr. Ouellette said they would like to make a point or clarification. Black is key for the DRC. What is key to the applicant is the durability. If it was a black masonry, that would be okay. That would be basically a maintenance issue and there would be no jurisdiction.

Ms. George said no, because it is changing the material.

Mr. DeSmet said he believes they would have a more favorable vote if it was black masonry.

The DRC voted on the application as submitted with no adjustments to the scope of the proposal. Ms. Lane said she would vote yes because she doesn't think it is as horrible as it is submitted. She would prefer grey or black. 2 voted yes and 3 voted no.

## **II. 64 Main Street-CB-I/DCD**

Applicant: Leslie Rabins/One More Time

Owner: Stephen Lewinstein

Installation of two windows in existing openings at rear of building.

Soren Pfeffer recused himself from participating in the application.

Ms. George said they are installing two new Marvin windows with simulated divided light, 2 over 2 windows in the existing openings at the rear where the shed has recently been removed, which has been approved by the DRC. They are going to replace the rear solid door, which currently has a note of not being historic, in the rear of the north building with a fiberglass and glass door.

The DRC had approved in the past that the shed was going to be removed, the windows were going to stay blocked up and they were going to clean the brick with a non-abrasive method. That is what was permitted.

Mr. Duggan asked who put in the windows in the side alley. Mr. Pfeffer said he did that, and those were approved before he came on board. Ms. Lane asked if the sills got reused. Mr. Pfeffer said the sills came from the basement. The one on the right the only thing that was cut through was mortar. All they did was fill in the bricks; there was no overlap at all. The one on the left there were a few bricks they had pieced in to make it stronger.

The DRC addressed the windows as they are looking at them now. They are the same as the windows that were put in on the other side and were already approved by the DRC. Mr. Pfeffer said they are all wood windows painted white. The owner needs to paint all of the building.

There was proposed a solid metal door and now they are replacing that with a fiberglass door with a large opening of glass. She assumes it is safety glass. Is the reason for that style to get more light into that particular end of the building?

Mr. Pfeffer said it is a backdoor entry.

Mr. DeSmet said this was going to be restored to brick and these were going to be painted to match.

Ms. George asked if they could make an adjustment to the scope to deal with the door. Ms. Lane said if she remembers the last application right there were no plans to open any of that. Once the shed came off it was going to stay closed. Ms. George said they should work on the door to make it look nicer.

Mr. Pfeffer said if the owner ends up cleaning the brick then the door should be painted brick color and the door will look like it is actually more within a brick opening. Right now the door is natural wood on the outside. The DRC said they thought it should be painted to match the existing brick. After removing the metal cladding, the door will be painted with a natural finish for protection.

For the left hand door they have a fiberglass door with the large window. There is one step up to the door. Mr. Pfeffer said there should be some sort of light to illuminate the step. A black gooseneck light would work.

Leslie Rabins said they would like to paint the shed a different color. Mr. Pfeffer said they were thinking about painting the shed a blue color. A member of the DRC said he felt a darker color will make it disappear better. Ms. Rabins said she doesn't want it to disappear because she wants to attract people into the store. Ms. George said if there is signage that will get them into the door.

Ms. Lane said she thinks the dark red was put there so it would blend in with the brick and disappear, and it should stay that way because it is a shed. Ms. Rabins said it is an entrance to the store. Ms. Lane said the primary entrance is at the front. Ms. George said maybe the trim around the door could be more extensive to make it look more formal. Ms. George said she has no problems with the fact that our buildings should be just like our neighbor Barre where you come and go from both the front and back. It's an asset to have that parking lot, and if we want people to use that parking lot there should be an attractive entrance to the store.

Ms. Rabins said the shop is a consignment shop so all of the consigners will bring their stuff to the back of the store.

Ms. George said if the door starts looking like a real door that is not utilitarian and does invite people, and if you have a sign and some decent trim, that might do what Leslie is trying to do, which is to make the entrance look noticeable. Ms. Lane said the sign could clearly reflect those colors and would like nice against the red.

Mr. DeSmet said they wouldn't need a permit to repaint the same color.

Mr. Pfeffer said there could be wider trim around the door to help define it as an entrance. The trim could be a dusty rose or apple green or chartreuse.

There would be three optional changes – the lighting, existing door and trim.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. The application as submitted and amendments for the lighting, doorway alterations, and wider trim was voted favorably 5-0.

### **III. 2 Mather Terrace – MDR/DCD**

Applicant: Carolyn & Dan Desch  
Replace 30 windows.

Applicants didn't show up for the meeting.

**IV. 170 Main Street – HDR/DCD**

Applicant: City of Montpelier

Demolish house at 3 Scribner Avenue and improve grounds and entryways at Main Street Middle School.

Interested Parties: Don Lorinovich, Montpelier Schools

Cynthia Knauf, Landscape Design, Inc.

Ryan Ewell, Gossens Bachman Architects

Mr. Ewell said the bulk of the work is playground design.

Cynthia Knauf briefed the DRC on the three intentions behind the whole master planning process for the Montpelier Schools. One intention was to give a public street a facelift to the building and have it be more beautiful, enticing and have it connect better to the streetscape. The other intention they were looking at is creating a variety of outdoor environments for the students that are inspirational, restful, and educational. The third overall intention they were striving for is to provide a well connected network of outdoor spaces and paths that are safe, clear and accessible, and also clearly more separates vehicles from pedestrians.

She started with the front of the building. They are proposing to create a whole new main entry to the building, to create an entry plaza replacing the 10 foot wide crumbled asphalt walkway going to the main entry with a 35 foot wide plaza flanked with granite benches on either side, planters and crabapple trees on either side. That is connected to the gym entry plaza, which is also a whole new plaza, 15 feet wide. Currently there is no plaza. Here they are separating vehicular from pedestrians and creating a 15 foot wide plaza. They are proposing two types of materials for the surface. The red would be a more decorative surface. They are proposing a pervious interlocking concrete paver because it is decorative but also functional and will probably lower the winter maintenance cost for the school. With pervious concrete pavers instead of a lot of the storm water flowing across the surface it will flow through the pavers so in the wintertime when the sun hits the snow the snow melts a lot quicker and water doesn't stay on the surface so there is less ice. They are hoping for less plowing and less use of salt in this area.

Going over to the gymnasium entry, the parking lot and plaza are flush with one another so that handicapped accessible people can easily get out of their cars onto the plaza and then right into the building.

The parking spaces will be resurfaced and redefined to have a nicer shape and will fit the same number of vehicles that are currently there. A small planter will separate the main parking area from a more defined access back to the dumpster area.

Coming around to the east side of the building, right now it is just a huge asphalt area also crumbled. They want to make that a beautiful play space and a beautiful place for students to congregate. They created an interesting play area by varying the surfaces and adding color. They envision the whole area to be paved. The basketball court and square areas would be painted asphalt, and then around the perimeter for students to hang out would be a wood chip area with some log seating or log benches, and then a lawn area to the very east. Then, that whole perimeter is flanked by new shades to give a nice backdrop to the space.

The dumpster area will now be enclosed, and they are proposing on the east side of that closure to plant vines to give it more protection.

Coming around to the central playground area, they tried to create a beautiful interesting space by varying the surface materials and adding lots of color, and also to have it be more accessible. This paved area would spill over to the central feature of the playground which would be a painted compass within the asphalt pavement. This space would serve as an outdoor classroom space, outdoor performance space, and also just another place for children to hang out. Granite benches flank the compass. There is a concrete seating wall.

The main play area would be the lighter grey area with pea gravel, under ASTM requirements for a playground surface material. From the paved area you can get onto a boardwalk, which would all be flush, which would then

meet up with a concrete walkway bringing you to the cafeteria entry which would be the main egress for the students getting out to the playground area. There needs to be a ramp down to the cafeteria area.

Mr. Duggan asked if they could explain the painted asphalt. Is the color impregnated as the asphalt is laid, or is it a superficial color on top?

Ms. Knauf said it is on top similar to what they do with tennis courts. It's a very long lasting color system.

Mr. Lorinovich said the design was a year long process. They met with every class in the school a year ago to come up with the basic design.

Ms. Knauf said there is a grade change drop so they are proposing another wall here similar to what is around the compass. This will be just another place to sit and hang out. There was a desire for experimental student gardens, so they are proposing this location because it is the sunniest and driest. The whole grassy area would be designated for sports like soccer and kickball. That was the common desire of the students.

Ms. George inquired if there were bike racks.

Ms. Knauf said there are currently bike racks by the swing. They are keeping that there and adding another one close to the gymnasium entry because they are trying to make that a main entry.

Mr. Everett asked how the school folks felt about the maintenance on this space.

Mr. Lorinovich said there is pea gravel there now. They are going to have to redesign some plowing.

Mr. Lane inquired about the maintenance of the planters.

Ms. Knauf said there would be new planters on either side of the plaza. Actually as part of that they propose to take out some of the overgrown deteriorating vegetation along the building. These are really beds, but she is calling them planters because they will have a flush edge so it is easy to mow around them and plow over them. Because the new plaza is going to be so large it is going to be very easy to plow. Plus they would space the benches far enough apart so you could plow between the benches and right into the garden beds.

Ms. George said when she looks at the photo that she provided of the front of the building. How much wider is it going to be? Is the flagpole still going to be there?

Mr. Ewell said the flagpole will be relocated. It's currently not in the budget, but there is a very high probability that a fund that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is going to be allocated to relocating or getting a new flagpole.

Ms. George said when looking at the front of the building there are pedestals with 2 lights. Flanking the doors along the archways there are pilasters on either sides with the lights coming up into them.

Ms. Knauf said it is 10 feet wide now and going to be increased to 35 feet.

Ms. George asked if this was the primary entrance to the building. Mr. Lorinovich said it was. Ms. George asked what the reason for widening it to 35 feet was.

Ms. Knauf said aesthetically to give it a more grandiose feel. It tends to be a congregating area and it really destroys the grass. It is seriously impact the roots of the maple trees, so they are trying to give people a low maintenance place to hang out.

Ms. George said she is wondering whether or not the 35 foot wide entryway is really as appropriate to the building architecturally. It certainly is changing the nature of the look of the building.

Ms. Knauf said they were trying to break up this large space with different materials and benches.

Ms. George asked what the standard road width in Montpelier was. Mr. Gilbertson said 36 feet is a wide street.

Ms. George asked how many bikes they had planned for. Ms. Knauf said 20. There are 18 bikes out there every day now. If both bike racks are used, they will fit 25 bikes. Ms. George said in light of the fact they are encouraging students to ride bikes she would like to see the ability to have one more bike rack in the proposal installed.

Mr. Ewell said there are very few places where kids are allowed to ride their bikes. It doesn't make too much sense to put the bike rack away.

Ms. Lane said after school hours if the kids want to have a pick-up basketball game and the teachers aren't around, why they can't park their bikes near the basketball court. If there is going to be all of this nicely designed area it should be available for the kids to use after school hours and during the summer. Mr. Ewell said if they are going to have three bike racks, all three of those should be used by the kids when they go to school.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if the demolition of the house already been approved.

Mr. Lorinovich replied yes.

Ms. George said not by the DRC. They will be reviewing that. It seems like everybody thinks it is done deal. Mr. Everett said he thought City Council voted for that option, but it wasn't actually approved. Ms. George said the Council knows they have to go through the same process that the public does.

Mr. Ewell said there is a new canopy proposed for the gymnasium. Right now there isn't even a sign to say that is a gymnasium. This will give people a sheltered space to spill out. That is the place where children in wheelchairs are dropped off and picked up, so this provides them a sheltered space to wait for the bus.

Moving around the corner to the dumpster enclosure, a lot of this is rather park like. They are going to have a little cut in the pavement there and grow some vines to give it a trellis aesthetic. It's a dumpster wall so they don't want to spend too much money on it. It's simple nice wood that looks like a trellis to grow some vines on. It is sturdy enough with a footing so if it does get bumped into it will be all right. They are proposing to put a boulder in front of it so the plow won't hurt the fence. It is just nice wood with pressure treated posts. He is thinking nice pressure treated posts and a cedar slat which they wouldn't paint. The cedar would turn to a whitish grey.

Mr. Everett said he is more concerned about the ladder effect and somebody might climb it.

Mr. Ewell said they would be spaced tight enough and it would go up only about 4 feet.

Mr. Ewell said the pedestrian entrance would have an archway to mark the entry, which would be adjacent to the chain link gates that would be typically closed and used for vehicular or emergency access.

Ms. George said there seems to be a structure above the slats on the dumpster. Mr. Ewell said it is the trellis design as opposed to just being a wall. They didn't want this to be completely independent of anything else in the project.

Ms. George asked if they were including the sign in this application. Mr. Ewell replied yes. Ms. George asked if they were using raised letters and applied individually. Mr. Ewell included a cut sheet of the letters for the sign. They are formed plastic, but once painted they will look just like wood. They are all upper case letters.

Mr. Everett said he thinks that is the wrong place to put a sign. If someone is looking for Main Street School they are not going to be looking up in the corner, and it interferes with the architectural features of the building to have a sign across there where there never was one. Ms. Lane inquired where the original sign was. Ms. George said that goes back to the historical photographs the DRC needs to look at. This originally was the high school.

Ms. George said they need to look at what surrounds the building. There is a duplex with a side porch, and this project is going to come right up to the edge of it. Is the pole staying?

Ms. Knauf said all of the poles are staying.

Ms. George asked if they were developing all of Scribner Place.

Mr. Ewell replied yes.

Mr. Gilbertson inquired if this plan was dependent upon demolishing the Scribner Place house. Ms. George said yes, because the house is right there.

Ms. George said when she was growing up Scribner Place was a real street and it went to two houses. One of the houses was a really nice Greek Revival center pitched columned house that was on the site when they built the school, so they pushed it sideways. The other one is the building still standing. Now we have this other building.

Mr. Gilbertson said there is no information in this packet about meeting the demolition criteria, so he doesn't think they can consider it tonight. He has a problem with presenting a plan that is very attractive that depends upon that demolition issue without dealing with the demolition first.

Mr. Lorinovich said the reason there wasn't a lot of demolition material in the packet because Clancy probably has a package of demolition material.

Ms. Lane said they can't consider something they haven't seen.

Mr. Gilbertson said sometimes he gets a little cranky in design review in not having complete information and material. All of this material is great. That is the reason he asked the question about the project being dependent upon the removal of the house. He doesn't want to take any action on this until the house goes through the process. He doesn't see how the Committee can consider that tonight.

Mr. Ewell said his understanding of the situation was that the Main Street Middle School and the demolition were the same discussion and we had the materials that were necessary for the discussion tonight.

Ms. George said they have to look at the building. They need to tell the DRC all about the building that is going to be ripped down and whether it was historically important or not.

Ms. Lane said she had been following this with the City Council, and none of that has come before the Design Review Committee. This is in the Design Review District and it is a historical building. Before it is demolished it has to come before the Design Review Committee. Mr. Ewell said they thought that was what they were doing tonight, but he now understands they don't have adequate materials.

Ms. George said they also don't know how this project relates to all of its neighbors, and she has to understand that.

Mr. Lorinovich said regarding the house he has sat with the Planning Department and gone through the folder a number of times. His assumption was that all of the material was available and there is no sense going back and duplicating all of the effort.

Ms. George replied it may have been the City thought it was a done deal and the DRC would just say to rip it down. It's nice for them to think that, but unfortunately our job is to review it. Mr. Everett said he thinks it is really incumbent upon the city to follow its own procedures, even if the DRC's approval is advisory.

Mr. Lorinovich said that building being torn down has been investigated on three different levels. Pictures have been taken. There is a picture of the whole building. There is a picture of the one-third of the building that is left now. He assumed that would follow the information.

Ms. Lane said the Committee actually made a site visit to the last building.

Mr. Ewell asked what their alternatives were besides having another Design Review meeting again.

Mr. Gilbertson said they wouldn't have to have the whole meeting again. They would table that portion of the project and they would have that discussion. When the material comes in, the Committee can make a site visit. Ms. Lane said she wanted to make a site visit.

Mr. DeSmet said they could also choose just to go to the Development Review Board regardless of what happens here.

Ms. George said not if they table the item. They can't override a table.

Mr. DeSmet said they could appeal to the DRB regardless, which is what they will probably do.

Ms. George said if the group was willing she would opt for a site visit tonight so they can make an informed decision.

Mr. Ewell asked if there was an option other than delaying the process. Ms. George said no, not really.

Mr. Gilbertson said he had not seen the information that was prepared for demolition. A lot of that involves square foot costs. When they went to Court Street they needed to understand what the real cost for renovation was and why it wouldn't work.

Mr. Lorinovich said George Seiffert has been through the house; Clancy has been through it; Gwen and he have understood and gone through the whole folder and looked at all of that information.

Ms. Lane said the City can't expect them to rubber stamp that; they need to see that.

Mr. DeSmet said it is the Development Review Board that makes the determination. That's what the ordinance says.

Mr. Ewell said before they all give up what is the rest of their evening, is the DRC going to be able to make a decision based on a visit?

Mr. DeSmet said he didn't see it in the design review criteria.

Ms. Lane asked why the Committee was here. Mr. DeSmet said for the rest of the project.

Ms. George asked how they reviewed every demolition permit that has ever happened in the last 20 years.

Mr. DeSmet said he is reading what is in the ordinance now.

Mr. Gilbertson said they reviewed the Court Street demolition. The DRC got reversed on it.

Ms. Lane said they got to go through the process and made sure somebody understood their feelings about it.

Mr. DeSmet said it isn't under design review. Demolition says the Development Review Board will make the determination.

Mr. Duggan asked if anybody had ever considered not demolishing the house.

Ms. George said it was a given before that all changes in the Design Control District get to be reviewed by the Design Review Committee. They then make their recommendation to the Development Review Board. Changes

would include not only putting in new windows, but ripping out and destroying old windows. It is something that happens in the district.

Ms. Lane said it is spelled out in the form.

Mr. DeSmet said the form is not in the ordinance.

Mr. Gilbertson said their form is the same form the Development Review Board uses.

Mr. DeSmet replied yes, they use it.

Ms. George said the bigger problem is that it is on the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey. It is on the National Register.

Mr. Lorinovich asked if it was the little piece of the house that is there, or is the other two-thirds of the house that has disappeared.

Mr. DeSmet said the picture in the National Register is a full house. Now it's not the same house.

Mr. Tapper asked what the timeline for the project was.

Ms. Knauf replied they hoped to start this summer.

The DRC recessed the meeting to take a site visit at the Main Street Middle School.

The DRC reconvened after the site visit.

Ms. George said the Design Review Committee took a site visit to the Main Street School property to review the building to be demolished and other boundaries and features of the project. She said Ms. Knauf had mentioned changing the existing landscaping.

Ms. Knauf said the evergreens that were planted too close to the building that are overgrown, and also blocking windows out of the school, they are proposing to take those out and the windows would be unblocked. What would replace them would be groundcover close to the building so they can easily mow and then plant some really nice big trees. There would be two other trees to mimic the grand scale of the maples, so they are proposing two red oak trees because they are urban tolerant shade trees. There are actually a lot more plants being proposed for the project.

Ms. Knauf said the walkway that is there now is 15 feet wide.

Ms. George said it is the 36 feet they are having trouble with. She doesn't think any of the members disagree that it shouldn't be wider.

Ms. Knauf said basically the asphalt there now is a little bit wider than the red brick. Right now they are showing 5 feet extra on either side to the benches. That is the line you are going to see. Then, there is an extra 2 feet behind each bench giving people space to walk around the benches.

Mr. Gilbertson said he has some suggestions before he acts on the application. He wants the change in the ordinance in writing and referenced so it is part of the DRC's record and it is clear to him that this in fact is exempt from the Design Review Committee's review, and if it isn't he wants the information to do the review. The other thing he thinks they are missing here is an historic photograph of that school when it was a high school so they have some reference for the signs and sidewalks. There may be an opportunity here to restore some of the original significant elements rather than embarking on a new design. The opportunity to have that historic reference may work well with something and we could put it back. This is clearly a historic building and it is on the National

Register and that reference is important to any design elements. If somebody is doing some significant work to a historic building that historic reference should be a part of it.

Mr. Ewell asked what is that affecting besides the signage.

Ms. George said the whole landscape design. If they could restore the historic landscaping as part of this and make it work with the project that would be a really good thing to do.

Mr. Ewell said he knows it had immensely huge old trees. He said their next step will certainly be to find a historical photograph to make sure that their signage and plantings are cooperating.

Ms. George told Mr. Ewell that their schedule isn't the DRC's schedule. The Committee has to do the application right. She thinks Eric is suggesting, and she is asking the group if they agree, if they can table the application. They can see the DRC in two weeks and deal with the sidewalks and signage.

Ms. Lane said just because it is the city's school property she doesn't think the DRC needs to make exceptions they would not make for someone else.

Ms. George said they could approve everything except for the front changes. They could work on the back of the building.

Mr. Gilbertson said he would be willing to have a special meeting before they meet with the Development Review Board. Mr. Ewell said if they could get a meeting in before the 7<sup>th</sup> of July that would be good.

Ms. Lane said she would like to see a plan for what is going to happen in the process of demolition of that building, and she wants it in writing.

Mr. Everett said it is in the ordinance and not the DRC's vote.

Mr. Ewell said if they meet in a week they won't have the ability to update computer drawings. He will have the historic photographs.

Ms. George said the next special meeting is Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 P.M. The DRC needs to look at the signage issue, the smaller walk out front, the larger walk on the other side, dumpster fence, the whole concept of the parking lot in front of the gym and how they might make it more attractive, and issues about the gym canopy.

Ms. George said the DRC is tabling the application until Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 P.M.

The Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet  
Planning and Zoning Administrator