

Montpelier Design Review Committee
August 11, 2009
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Stephen Everett, Chair; James Duggan, Vice Chair; Eric Gilbertson and Nancy Mears.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Call to Order:

Stephen Everett, Chair, called the meeting of August 11, 2009 to order at 5:30 P.M. Mr. Everett explained they are an advisory committee to the Development Review Board. They will hear each of the applications and vote on them with any adjustments, modifications or changes they might be interested in during the process and they will go before the Development Review Board meeting next Monday.

I. 39 Barre Street – CB-II/DCD

Applicant: Central Vermont Community Land Trust
Owner: Central Vermont Community Land Trust
Solar panels

Alison Friedkin, Project Manager of the Central Vermont Community Land Trust, and Will White from Alteris Renewables, Inc. appeared before the Design Review Committee. Ms. Friedkin said they want to install solar panels on the south side of the building on the middle section of the roof. This is for domestic hot water for the housing units.

Mr. Everett inquired where the piping would go down into the building to the storage tanks and other equipment.

Mr. White said he hasn't seen the inside of the building yet. He is going to be the project manager for installing the system. He said if there is attic space they will punch into the attic and come out the eave and run down the side of the building. It will be covered with a product called slim duct, which is a PVC jacketing and look like a down spout. It will be a cream color so it will match the trim. Each panel is approximately 4 x 8 and there are 7 panels. He has a cad drawing of the layout, also. The cad drawing gives the exact dimensions. The total will be about 6 or 7 inches off the roof. The frame of the panel is dark brown and there is glass. The absorber inside is a dark black color.

Ms. Mears inquired if it was a shingle roof or a standing seam roof.

Mr. White said the roof they are going on is an asphalt shingle roof. The front section of the building is a slate roof.

Mr. Gilbertson said his impression is that this isn't going to be very visible from the street.

Mr. White said you will be able to see it from the street. The building is set back 20 plus feet so it is fairly far back from the lot. Most people won't even notice it.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and found the application acceptable. The application was approved by the DRC on a vote of 4 to 0.

II. 126 Main Street – DB-I/DCD

Applicant: Paul Sykas
Owner: Patricia & Paul Sykas
Replace Windows.

Paul Sykas said there are 20 windows that are single paned and they want to replace them with the double thermal glass windows. They would be the upper windows on the face of the building. The lower ones are already

thermal windows. He would like to ask that within the two years the application is good for that he may perhaps pull out the older thermal panes and replace with new ones. The older ones were put in a long time ago. They are vinyl windows.

Mr. Everett said it shows on the specification Marvin quote sheet that it is an SDL, which is a simulated divided light, and no spacer bar. Being on the third floor it would be almost invisible to see it if it was in there. The specifications on all of them show them the SDL without the spacer bar.

Mr. Gilbertson said he just wanted to make sure the divider was on the outside.

Mr. DeSmet said right now he is asking for 20 out of the 27 with an option to do more.

Mr. Sykas said he wants the option to replace the older grandfathered thermal panes. There are either 27 or 28 windows and they are replacing the 20 that are just single paned glass with the option of doing the remainder at a later date.

Mr. Duggan asked if the original windows were one over ones or two over twos.

Mr. Sykas said there has been a mismatch over the years. Some are two over one, and some are one over one. He did a drawing to show what the face of the building would look like.

Mr. Duggan said personally he would prefer to see a two over two. Is there a reason why he is choosing a two over one?

Mr. Sykas said it is only because the lower level on the front of the building is two over ones.

Mr. Duggan said the windows he is proposing to put in are wooden windows with metal clad. Mr. Sykas said it is the best you can buy. Mr. Duggan said his preference on the primary façade would be to replace the vinyl windows now as part of the first phase. He would prefer to see the third floor wooden windows preserved but understanding he already has the vinyl windows already in place it would be nice to go back to at least the original aesthetic, which are two over twos. He would rather see the correct change made now to what is there because if he is going to replace these windows some of the criteria the DRC is going to want to see are that the opening remains the same size.

Mr. Everett inquired if the third floor windows were the original windows.

Mr. Sykas said some of them are original windows.

Mr. Duggan asked if they had considered restoring those and maybe getting a better storm unit. That might end up being cheaper than replacing those and putting new here. This is the only façade he is concerned about because it is on the street. He is fine with what he proposes for the side windows. Are the windows too far deteriorated?

Mr. Sykas said there are gaps in between.

Mr. Duggan said the thing about the old windows is you can fix them. They are meant to come apart and be fixed. That is one option that he could put a little money into restoring them and with the proper weather stripping and better storms would work.

Mr. Sykas added they are also single pane windows.

Mr. Duggan said something like an allied storm unit or a comparable one he would be essentially creating a similar thermal barrier. The problem with the replacement windows is that if the seal goes and that argon filled cavity is compromised then it doesn't matter how many panes of glass you have you would still have to replace

the window. There is still some value potentially left in the old windows. He could put perhaps less money by just upgrading to a better storm system and proper weather stripping.

Mr. Everett said the thermal efficiencies are about the same with the proper weather stripped windows and a good storm as with a double pane window.

Mr. Sykas said they are just deviating from the original design.

Mr. Duggan said these windows are part of the original fabric or historic fabric so he would be retaining that. He would be getting a far better thermal efficiency with an upgraded unit. That might be a place he could actually save money and he would have some savings here.

Mr. Sykas asked if they were operable storms.

Mr. Duggan replied yes. There are a number of companies and one of the better ones is Allied Storm Windows. They use them on preservation projects all over the place. For him it is just the street façade. If he has other wooden windows around the side that he would prefer to put in a replacement he would still prefer to see the windows repaired but would be more willing to allow that although not the primary façade.

Mr. Everett said he would be happy if he went with two over twos with the new windows rather than two over ones.

Mr. Sykas said that would be fine with him.

Mr. Gilbertson said two over two replicates what was originally there when the building was built. What color is the sash there now, white?

Mr. Sykas replied it was white. These would be stone white clad.

Mr. Everett inquired if there were offices or apartments upstairs.

Mr. Sykas replied there were two on the second and two on the third floor apartments.

Mr. Duggan said if these were still the wooden windows he would be far less willing to compromise on that position.

Mr. Everett said the problem with apartments is that on a nice day they open their storm windows and never close them.

Mr. Sykas said that is why it would be better to have the double panes.

Ms. Mears inquired if the new windows come with screens.

Mr. Sykas said they have full screens.

Mr. Everett said one thing the committee would add here is the recommendation that replacement of the existing two over two windows will be with the same two over two design.

Mr. Gilbertson said he would want the option to be able to do the second floor windows as well.

Mr. Everett said the optional change he might pursue at his discretion is the remaining seven windows on the second floor front of the building may be replaced at a future date with the same style windows as proposed for the third floor.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and decided that a two over two clad wood window replacement is acceptable on this building. They found the application acceptable and voted in favor of it on a vote of 4 to 0.

III. 5 Memorial Drive – GB/DCD

Applicant: David Simendinger

Owner: WESCO Realty, LLC

Reimage building and canopy.

David Simendinger appeared before the Committee and introduced his daughter Jamie and his son Jeffrey, who are college students. They have been working in the family business and have been involved with this project from the beginning.

Jamie Simendinger said they are talking about 5 Memorial Drive, the Champlain Farms Convenience Store. They have a new image they want to present to the committee. It consists of upgrading the vinyl siding, adding a brick siding and adding a few feet to the height of the building. The new building is much more attractive to the public. Right now the building is really outdated, has old Exxon colors and now they are Shell. The new building doesn't hide the capitol from the road. The few extra added feet only exceed the existing canopy at a couple of angles. The new building is very New England design with a large peaking roof and asphalt shingles. They also have their Champlain Farms sign which is going to be added to the building, which will replace the white letters that are there presently. The canopy also has a new look. They have discovered a new cement siding which is fire resistant and now they can design the canopy to match the building. It will replace the ugly metal painted surface that is there right now. She showed the committee some examples of stores they have refinished. One is in Burlington on Shelburne Road.

Ms. Mears inquired if they were doing anything with the windows.

Ms. Simendinger said the windows are staying the same except for the white border.

David Simendinger said since it is Champlain Farms they have been doing a barn look to tie in with their image a little more. It's a little more Vermont, but Burlington doesn't like that. Burlington wants them to put in triangles although their preference is the barn.

Jeffrey Simendinger said the nice thing with the cement board is they can order it with the color and don't have to paint it initially. That is a pre-colored product.

Mr. Everett inquired if the same material was going on the canopy.

Mr. Simendinger replied yes. Mr. DeSmet said they wouldn't be able to use wood because it would be a fire hazard.

Mr. Gilbertson said he had a concern with the appearance. Apparently, it is uneven so it looks like it is not very well installed. It has an uneven look to it.

Mr. Everett said there are two spots in there where there is additional shadowing.

Mr. Simendinger said this has to be attached to cement board underneath, not plywood, because there can't be any wood up there. The cement board is pretty rigid and doesn't bend like plywood does.

Mr. Duggan asked if they were using the existing structure for the canopy.

Mr. Simendinger replied yes.

Mr. Duggan said he doesn't know how he feels about the fake wood look. In his historic district they have shied away from materials that aren't substantive materials. He feels that the canopy is no place for clapboards because to him architecturally it doesn't make any sense. He thinks it looks awkward.

Mr. Simendinger said it was their attempt to tie it into the building.

Mr. Duggan said he understands that but they are two completely different things. This is a covering for protection and to take care of underneath the pumps and that is the store.

Mr. Simendinger said living in Vermont all of his life and driving around little towns he is very sensitive to the aesthetics. They could probably order a vendor type metal that could go up there.

Mr. Gilbertson said he thinks the clapboards look a little strange up there. He agrees with Jamie that using the embossed wood it is what it is. To him there is nothing wrong with the flat cement board. It will look like clapboard when they are finished.

Mr. Simendinger said he doesn't want to put wood back on the building if he doesn't have to. Insurance rates go up and there is constant maintenance. It has to be painted every three years because the new paint doesn't have lead.

Mr. Gilbertson said he is concerned about the roof addition because they are almost doubling the height of the building.

Mr. Simendinger said currently it is 11 feet and 5 feet. They are currently at 16 feet, so they are going from 16 feet to 21 feet. The peak is at a smaller area in the center; it's not the whole building. What is neat about the roof extending the way it does is that it covers all of the corners and when they are dealing with flat roofs they are constantly leaking every spring. They can't stop all of the ice and buildup there. With the new roof design not only can they rip out a lot of the old roofing and ventilate the building, but it cuts their utilities way down because it breathes better and they have protected with a much better pitch groove all of the corners of the walls of the building which is a great place for leaks to occur. This represents a lot less of the interior pitch roof than what is up there currently, maybe half.

Mr. Gilbertson said he is increasing the volume of the building because they are raising the roof 5 feet. Has he thought about pitching it so it comes to a ridge so there is no flat section?

Mr. Simendinger replied it really comes into the width of the building because the wider you go the higher you need to go. He really likes this particular angle. If he has a building 40 feet wide and is going to try to peak it. He can make it look the same at every angle. The more he drops the pitch the more width he needs to make it look right.

Mr. Duggan said he thinks what Eric Gilbertson is saying is that he would keep the pitch but just bring the height of the roof down.

Mr. Everett asked what color the shingles were.

Mr. Simendinger said they are a charcoal grey. This design gets hundreds of complements architecturally. He can't tell how many people come in and rave about the new design. This looks more like a real roof. He wants to do something that makes him look a little less commercial and a little more residential so he fits into all of the small towns, and people like what they are doing. He doesn't want to build a mansard. He doesn't want a metal building again.

Ms. Mears said she thought the proportions of the building look fine.

Mr. Everett said the lower they can get the roof the better. This is a flat roof building and it doesn't have that much of a presence.

Mr. Duggan asked if this would have lights as well.

Mr. Simendinger said the lights were installed at that time.

Mr. Everett said they are proposing two gooseneck lights. He knows they like the barn roof style, but he personally thinks that architecturally the triangle fits in with the roof and follows the pitch and the lines of the roof on the building.

Mr. Gilbertson said he thinks the clapboard should come off the canopy.

Mr. Duggan asked if that could be metal.

Mr. Simendinger said Shell is going to want their image.

Mr. Duggan said if they want to tie into the building he doesn't mind it being the color of the siding. The canopy must stay metal and be the same color.

Mr. Everett said a typical problem with a 1960's gas station design is that we are losing it. He would be happy to have him bring the roof down as low as he possibly can and use the smooth cement board with some type of metal facing on the canopy rather than using clapboard.

Mr. Duggan said his preference would be to see it white.

Mr. Everett said the canopy can either be white or color to match the building in metal. Starting with the building, there is a recommendation to attempt to lower the roof profile.

Mr. Duggan said the walls are at two angles at the moment and they are talking about putting a hip roof, which is square, over it.

Mr. Simendinger said they could obviously use different angles and different roof lines.

Mr. Gilbertson said that will really change how the roof is configured because there will be a different distance to get to the height.

Mr. Duggan said the eaves aren't going to be square but going up to a common point. He would like to see what that looked like before they approve it. He would really like to see what the roof is going to look at before he votes on the approval of it. He needs an accurate depiction. He would like to see a floor plan of the building and how the roof exists above that.

Mr. Simendinger said they will all run at the same slope.

Mr. Duggan replied they can't; that's physically impossible.

Mr. Gilbertson said the flat roof section really isn't a flat section on the top. It is actually a shed roof that goes inside so it really becomes a parapet.

Mr. Simendinger said the water comes down and they have an overhang and dump it about 6 inches inside of that overhang. It comes down the side of the building. The roof actually dumps right between the edge of the building and the overhang.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if part of this was going to be covered by one of the pitch roofs.

Mr. Simendinger replied yes. The only place you would see the hole is if you stood under the overhang and looked up. There wouldn't be any soffit there because the water is going to come down and dump right there.

Mr. Gilbertson moved that the DRC table the application and request that they have an accurate roof plan based on the footprint of the building. He would certainly be open to any reconfiguration he wants to do with the building.

Mr. Simendinger said they are trying to hide as much of the ugliness of the building as they can.

Mr. Everett said there is a motion to table the application and return with what he wants to do with the building, whether he wants to make any modifications to the footprint of the building itself, or at least if they leave the building the way it is a roof plan given what is there. Mr. Duggan seconded the motion. The motion to table the application was approved on a vote of 4 to 0.

Mr. Simendinger said he really needs to get the Exxon panels off the building. He needs to get rid of the Exxon image.

Approval of July 14, 2009 Minutes:

The minutes of the July 14, 2009 Design Review Committee were approved with minor changes.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Gilbertson and Mr. Duggan, the Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack