

Montpelier Development Review Board
July 6, 2010
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Philip Zalinger, Chair; Kevin O’Connell, Vice Chair; Jack Lindley, Roger Cranse, Daniel Richardson and Ali Sarafzadeh.
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Director of Planning and Development.

Call to Order:

The July 6, 2010 meeting of the Montpelier Development Review Board was called to order by Philip Zalinger, Chair at 7:00 P.M.

Review of Minutes of May 3rd, June 7th and June 21st:

June 21, 2010 – Members present at that meeting were Roger Cranse, Daniel Richardson and Ali Sarafzadeh. There were not enough members to approve the June 21st minutes.

June 7, 2010 – Members present were Philip Zalinger, Jack Lindley, Roger Cranse, and Daniel Richardson. Mr. Lindley moved the minutes for June 7th be accepted as printed. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion. The vote on the June 7th minutes was unanimous and the minutes were adopted.

May 3, 2010 – Members present were Kevin O’Connell, Daniel Richardson, Roger Cranse and Jack Lindley. Upon motion by Mr. O’Connell and Mr. Cranse the minutes of May 3, 2010 were adopted on a unanimous vote.

Comments from the Chair:

None.

I. 16 Terrace Street (CIV/DCD)

Design Review for construction of a retaining wall and rebuilding and enclosing the side porch.
Owner/Applicant: Ben Doyle.

Mr. Zalinger told Mr. Doyle he appeared before the Design Review Committee on June 29th and the Design Review Committee went over their criteria. He said the DRB tried to minimize the level of inquiry and scope of investigation of applications. The Design Review Committee approved his application with one optional change, which was that the applicant may install a wall mounted light fixture on the newly enclosed porch to match the existing wall mounted light. In all other aspects they approved the application. Mr. Doyle said he had no objection to the option from the DRC.

Mr. O’Connell moved to approve the application with the advisory comments which are optional, with Mr. Richardson seconding the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 6 to 0.

II. 34 Elm Street (CB-1/DCD)

Design Review for a ground sign.
Owner: John Russell
Applicant: Adrienne Allison

The applicant appeared before the Design Review Committee on June 15th and the DRC recommended approval as proposed. It appears that the Department of Public Works recommended that the sign be at least 2 feet from the sidewalk and that there be at least 4 feet of clearance between the ground and the bottom of the sign, and that no plantings be placed in the area under the sign that would obscure a driver's visibility.

Ms. Allison said with that recommendation that does change her proposal. Her posts were 6 feet tall so with the sign that would not leave 4 feet underneath.

Mr. Zalinger said she would have to increase the size of her posts. He asked if the applicant could achieve that.

Ms. Allison replied yes. The sign posts are wood and will be set in concrete.

Mr. Zalinger said that would have an impact on her design. If the DRB were to approve this with the recommendations it would require her to employ longer posts in order to achieve the 4 foot clearance.

Mr. O'Connell said the current use of the building is two apartments. Is that correct?

Ms. Allison replied no. Yes, you could say there are two apartments but they are located in the business district.

Mr. O'Connell said the proposal is for one apartment plus a new use which is the restaurant.

Mr. Lindley asked if she needed site plan review.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is a permitted use because it is in the business district.

Mr. Zalinger said he isn't sure that one follows the other. Just because there wasn't design review for this project doesn't mean you can do anything you want in the business district. It just means that at some point the administrative officer made a decision, and we don't have the full record before them nor is the administrative officer present.

Ms. Hallsmith said the building was empty before. The application is just for the sign.

Mr. Zalinger said what is before the DRB is that the DRC recommended the application be approved as submitted and the Department of Public Works has set three conditions, one that there be clearance of at least 4 feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign which would necessitate a slight modification to the size of the posts as designed in the original application. No plantings be placed in the area under the sign that would obscure drivers' visibility and that the applicant consult DPW before construction activities commence at the site. The applicant has conveyed her understanding that if those conditions are incorporated in approval that they would become conditions of the permit.

Mr. Cranse moved approval of the design review application at 34 Elm Street incorporating with the three recommendations from the Department of Public Works. Mr. Lindley seconded the motion. The application was approved on a vote of 6 to 0.

III. 25 Cliff Street 9 LDR/DCD)

Design review for windows, painting and chimney removal.

Owner/Applicant: Arthur Foelsche and Nicole Schaeffer

The permit application went to the Design Review Committee on June 29th. Mr. Foelsche said they had met previously and this was a second meeting with the committee. It appears that the Design Review Committee found the project to be unacceptable under several criteria and two members found the replacement proposal acceptable and three found it unacceptable. The DRC recommended repair and restoration of the original windows to be an acceptable proposal as opposed to wholesale window replacement. They did find the color scheme they had proposed to be acceptable and that the removal of the non-original chimney was also acceptable.

There isn't the same situation as they had in the previous two applications.

Mr. Zalinger administered the oath to Arthur Foelsche and Nicole Schaeffer.

Mr. Foelsche said their windows as they can see from the material they have in front of them are in significant disrepair. They are single pane. Most of the sashes are rotted out and the sills are rotted out as well. They currently have a triple track storm window in front of them. Their proposal has been to replace these with a fiberglass window which has the same divided light that the current 2 over 2 have. This allows them to take the storm windows off and return the exterior of the house to a more historical condition. The reason for them going strongly along this route that from a financial perspective it is a huge difference in price. There are several projects they want to accomplish this summer. Painting is one of them which the price difference will cover that alone. They are doing that themselves which is covering their cost to make it happen. That is the thrust of why this is the route they are taking. He is happy to clarify any additional information the Board needs.

Mr. Richardson asked if they had a cut sheet for any of the windows.

Mr. Foelsche said there should be a cut sheet in their application. These are fiberglass windows which they would pull out the interior existing window. The fiberglass inserts go in and they fit against the existing exterior trim so they fit flush, and there is very little revealed of the actual fiberglass frame itself. It's not like a vinyl window going in.

Ms. Hallsmith said the one thing she is not clear on in reading the application materials is they are replacing the existing 2 over 2 windows with 2 over 2 windows. The cut sheet shows a 2 over 1 window and the application also says that. Are they keeping all of the windows in their same form, the 2 over 2 when they are 2 over 2, and 2 over 1 when they are 2 over 1? The Historic Register talks about 2 over 2 windows.

Mr. Foelsche said initially they came to the committee with a proposal for a 2 over 1. After that discussion they came back with a 1 over 1 because the historical materials indicated that would be appropriate for the age of their house. They thought that the 2 over 2 style could be unaffordable to us, but it turns out that the glued on muntin was acceptable to the DRC and it was affordable for them. The compromise they felt they could make was to go to the original 2 over 2 window.

Ms. Schaeffer said she believes that was noted in the Design Review Committee notes, that was what they voted on the last time was the 2 over 2.

Ms. Hallsmith said it says it was modified but not just not clear in the notes.

Mr. Foelsche said it went through several iterations.

Mr. O'Connell asked if the current proposal was for 2 over 2's.

Mr. Foelsche replied correct, and the current windows on the house are 2 over 2's. They are all 2 over 2's with a few exceptions. There is a bay window in the front which has a narrower window. It's about the same size as the width of a single pane. Those are all 1 over 1's. Then, there are three smaller windows in the bathroom, kitchen and the other bathroom which are standard double hung. Those were probably done in the 70's but they would replace them with whatever material they are using moving forward.

Mr. Cranse said when the Design Review Committee voted 3 to 2 to deny, was that when he was proposing the 2 over 2 windows?

Mr. Foelsche replied that is correct.

Mr. Cranse said that wasn't why it was denied. It was something else.

Mr. Zalinger said they appeared before the DRC several times so the application was modified. It was the 2 over 2 windows that was denied 2 to 3. It was denied for the fiberglass and not the 2 over 2.

Mr. Foelsche said that seemed to be the sentiment.

Mr. O'Connell inquired about new wooden windows.

Mr. Foelsche said it is a possibility. The expense is greater to go with a window that has the longevity that the fiberglass does. The aluminum clad wood windows are wonderful but almost double the price for what they were looking at. They were looking at Marvin Integrity windows, and they are the next step up in the Marvin line.

Mr. Sarafzadeh asked how the prices compared to the current windows.

Mr. Foelsche said the quote they have from their contractor, and they are talking specifically about the 10 large windows, the refurbishment price is somewhere around \$5,500 to \$5,800. To do the new fiberglass windows the full quote is \$6,000 but these qualify for the federal tax credit which brings them down to \$4,000. The additional advantage of going with these is that they can actually tear out the existing window which decreases the labor time. For them it is a difference of more than \$1,500. Aluminum wood were between \$7,000 and \$8,000. Unfortunately, the tax credit is only good for \$7,000 so they start losing the effectiveness when they get that much further beyond. They would still get that chunk of money but it is less significant in relation to the full price.

Mr. Richardson asked how does the profile of the fiberglass windows compare to the existing wood windows. Do the muntins that are glued on, how much of a profile do they have?

Mr. Foelsche said from the literature he has read it said the shadow appears correctly so from the exterior of the house it does as good as a job as it can without being a true divided light. In that vein people seem to say this window is a good window for that fit. Right now as you can see from some of the pictures the storms really preclude you from seeing that feature of the window anyway.

Mr. Richardson said the muntins on the existing windows have a fair amount of depth to them. What he sees on the cut sheet doesn't really seem to explain this. Are these muntins just flat plain strips of wood?

Mr. Foelsche said no, they have a profile to them. They have a ridgeline that matches the surrounds. There is some kind of detail on it. From the conversation in the DRC it seemed to be that if one were to do those they would be acceptable. He talked to Kevin at Allen

Lumber and he indicated that was the best approximation of a true divided light 2 over 2 they would get.

Mr. Zalinger asked if the storm windows were going to go back up.

Mr. Foelsche said no. If they can put these new windows in which are much more energy efficient there will be no need for the storms.

Mr. O'Connell said he is having a hard time reading the notes at the bottom of the Design Review recommendation form.

Mr. Zalinger read the applicant has proposed a change to new window installation. Wood veneer 2 over 2 windows with simulated divided light to be installed for the 10 largest 2 over 2 windows.

Ms. Hallsmith said it looks like it is talking about the 1 over 1 windows or the four bay windows.

Mr. O'Connell said with the aluminum storms you basically don't have a historic context currently.

Mr. Daniel Richardson said storms are acceptable because they preserve the actual window itself. You have the original wood window and the committee's preference, at least as he has understood it, has been to prefer preservation and restoration of existing architectural features, especially the windows. If it means a storm window for energy efficiency that seems to be a compromise they come to in a lot of their recommendations because the original window is still there. The idea is succeeding projects once you take out an architectural feature it is difficult, if not impossible, to restore that architectural feature. In this case it seems they are talking about a fairly reasonable alternative to the wood windows, the fiberglass windows. His contractor sent in a letter stating basically that the fiberglass windows were as durable as wood, if not more so. He knows that is one concern they have had in the past.

Mr. O'Connell said they don't look like they are vinyl windows.

Mr. Richardson said vinyl windows look cheap and they last only 20 years or so.

Mr. Foelsche said they do intend to paint them to match the rest of the paint on the building.

Mr. Cranse said he agrees with Daniel's last statement that he thinks this application presents a reasonable alternative to wood. It seems to him that it meets the three evaluation criteria that are the most critical, which are the first three in the design review criterion.

Mr. Lindley said he agrees with that.

Mr. O'Connell said he tends to defer to the Design Review Committee in almost all circumstances, but in this one he notes that it is a very closely divided vote. He has some experience with replacing windows and knowing what works and what doesn't. The advantages of the new technology in windows is head and shoulders above anything they could possibly come close to with the original windows, particularly with the aluminum frame old style storms. You can argue what is the purpose of a historic district, but from the standpoint of visual integrity it is his view they will have a better visual situation with the replacement windows. He very strongly comes down on the side of replacement.

Mr. Richardson echoed Kevin's comments. The Board usually does defer to the DRC but they seem quite split on it themselves. It seems to be an issue of integrity of the historical features and the architectural

features. He notes that the Historic Register even cites to these particular windows as an architectural feature. When he talks about replacing the windows, will he be modifying the molded lentils above or below?

Mr. Foelsche said they will stay the same. With these windows they don't have to modify the exterior at all except to seal the window to the existing molding. Basically, they will pull everything from the inside out, put the new in and then the trim.

Mr. Richardson said the idea is to preserve the lentil and the façade.

Mr. Foelsche said they don't want to change anything on the exterior of the house with the exception of removing the storms.

Mr. Sarafzadeh said he assumes when they replace the window the new fiberglass windows have a thinner frame than the old wooden windows. Since they aren't changing the frame in order to just put one in he is assuming the glass surfaced area would be the same if not a little larger than the existing windows. He said from the literature he is assuming the glass surface area would probably be the same if not a little larger than the existing window.

Mr. Foelsche said he thinks from the literature because it is closer to the exterior he is right that it is about the same size or a little bit bigger. From the dimensions he has looked at it that shouldn't change the proportions at all.

Mr. Richardson moved for design review approval for 25 Cliff Street as proposed. Mr. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Mr. Zalinger said they need to be clear that as proposed is the final application that the DRC reviewed that included the 2 over 2 windows.

Mr. Lindley said what happens with the chimney.

Mr. Zalinger said the removal of the chimney was approved by the DRC as was the selection of the new paint.

Mr. Richardson said his motion would be for the complete proposal in its entirety.

Mr. Zalinger said the motion is to approve the 2 over 2 fiberglass windows as specified by the application, also to remove the chimney and repaint the house. The vote on the motion was unanimous 6 to 0.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Lindley and Mr. O'Connell the Development Review Board adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith,
Director of Planning and Development

Transcribed by: Joan Clack