

Montpelier Design Review Committee
June 29, 2010
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved

Present: Stephen Everett, Chair; James Duggan, Vice Chair; Jay White, Eric Gilbertson, and Kate Coffey.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Call to Order:

The Montpelier Design Review Committee of June 29, 2010 was called to order by Chair, Stephen Everett.

I. 16 Terrace Street – CIV/DCD

Applicant/Owner: Ben Doyle and Angela Shea

Construct retaining wall, rebuild and enclose side porch.

Ben Doyle said there are two different parts of their project. One is they want to put in a retaining wall to stabilize the bank between their house and their neighbor's house, Heather Moz. They have lived there for 3 ½ years and even during that time they have seen the bank deteriorate continuously. They are getting all the water off of Heather's roof so it is eroding the bank. The giant tree stump you see was a tree that had died because the roots had been eroded and fallen on the house, though not when they owned it which was a significant expense for the previous owner. When they had the property surveyed they use quite a bit of their usable land given the bank has moved so if they were able to put in the retaining wall it would stabilize the bank, stop the runoff from coming into their house and ultimately help Heather because it will stabilize the bank so she won't have to worry about her foundation, and it's going to give them a lot more usable space for their yard.

There is the existing porch on the house which is a real eyesore and going to fall off. They are trying to combine the two projects. While they are doing the concrete work and excavation they are going to put cross walls under the porch and restore it. When they bought the house the side porch was in pretty rough shape but it had some wainscoting on the back half of it. That has fallen off. They want to enclose the side porch and turn it into a mudroom so they can enter the kitchen. They keep stuff on the porch now and it's an eyesore.

In terms of the windows and the doors, there is an existing door into the kitchen which is a really nice wooden door. They would take that out and put it facing the street and it matches their front door. The windows are the old school windows with a double sash, and they would just move them to the outside wall. The windows and doors would be the exact same ones but just be moved out to the mudroom.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they would put the door on the side that faces the street.

Mr. Doyle replied yes. The window would move straight out.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if the wall run down the property line.

Mr. Doyle replied it does. He has talked about this with Heather. His idea with the wall was to have it run right on the property line. They are going to have to excavate some of her property to get the proper drainage.

Mr. Gilbertson said he would get some kind of written agreement with her because technically it might require an easement to have the retaining wall on her property. He would recommend getting some type of an easement just to avoid any problem so when she goes to sell her house or they sell theirs. Having that in writing is probably a good idea.

Mr. Doyle asked if that was as simple as typing something up.

Mr. DeSmet said it's not relevant to this project.

Mr. Everett said their jurisdiction is only relating to the design and how it fits with the historic building. It has nothing to do with property rights or easements. He should check that out to protect both property owners.

Mr. Gilbertson asked what he would close this in with.

Mr. Doyle replied clapboards.

Ms. Coffey asked if all of the rot was from his roof.

Mr. Doyle said he is getting all of the water from her roof and the bank. When they excavate and put in the wall they are going to put in proper drainage along the foundation so hopefully it will help that problem. This isn't a vanity kind of project. He has to have it because he feels like his house is being damaged as a result.

Mr. Gilbertson said when the excavator is in he would take the grade down some so he is exposing 8 or 10 inches of foundation because all of that dirt has come up against the foundation. He wouldn't be surprised if they found the sill was rotten.

Mr. Doyle said he is nervous about that part of the house.

Mr. Duggan said he mentioned installing drainage. Will that go along the foundation of his house or would that be somehow associated with the retaining wall?

Mr. Doyle said he believed both. They are going to put in the crushed stone, a perforated pipe on the back of the wall, and they are planning on putting seep holes in on the wall. This wall runs the length of their house so that drainage will come out past the wall and into their backyard.

Mr. Gilbertson said it is hard to get too much drainage.

Mr. Doyle said what isn't going in his basement is going out that way, anyway.

Mr. Gilbertson inquired if his foundation was stone.

Mr. Doyle replied it was. That wall is the only full stone wall. The other ones have been faced up. They talked about extending the lilac hedge coming from Jesse and Alan's place. They don't want to put up a fence there. They could either have hanging plants or things at the base of wall for vegetative screening.

Mr. DeSmet said the most relevant portion is the enclosure of the porch.

Mr. Gilbertson said he lives in that neighborhood and unless you are looking for it you don't see the porch. It's way in the back of the house.

Mr. Doyle said he wants the porch to look like it is supposed to be there so he is going to try to match all of the trim and have the same exposure on the siding.

Mr. White said it looks good.

Mr. Everett said the evaluation criteria have to do with seven items how the project meets the criteria for the district. He just said the clarification by the applicant that the details on the rebuilt side of the porch will match the remainder of the dwelling regarding corner porch trim, clapboard, etc.

The DRC reviewed the evaluation criteria.

Mr. Everett asked if he wanted to add a light on the outside of the porch door. The DRC can add that as an optional change that a wall mounted exterior light may be installed on the exterior of the reconstructed side porch.

The application as proposed passed favorably on a vote of 5 o 0.

II. 25 Cliff Street – LDR/DCD

Applicant/Owner: Arthur Foelsche

Repair exterior, replace windows, repair trim and chimney.

Mr. Everett asked if Mr. Foelsche would like to explain any changes he has made or further research they have done.

Mr. Foelsche said the one change they are asking for is 1 over 1's instead of the 2 over 2 windows. They are still going to use the Marvin Integrity. They have done additional research into pricing and options, and that is the clear winner for them.

Mr. Everett said there had been a recommendation to see if he could offer any details or estimates.

Mr. Foelsche said they received an estimate on replacing the single pane windows, redoing the sashes and sills, putting in a gasket around the full window which amounts to about \$5,500. Looking at the cost of the Marvin Integrity installed and with the tax rebate it is \$4,000. There is a price difference of \$1,500. If you look over the math over 30 years with painting, calking and other maintenance on the single pane windows they are looking at a huge sum of money if that was invested into an IRA this year so it makes it untenable for them.

Mr. Gilbertson asked who did the estimate on rebuilding the windows.

Mr. Foelsche replied Walter Hurd from Montpelier Construction.

Mr. White asked why they decided to go with the 1 over 1's instead of the 2 over 2's.

Mr. Foelsche said from the discussion they gleaned the wood grills would be unacceptable and Marvin Integritys are not offered in an SDL or in a true divided light so 1 over 1's seemed to be a compromise.

The literature indicates that a house from this era that a 1 over 1 is an appropriate window for a house that is being refurbished.

Mr. White said Marvin Integrity does make an SDL window.

Mr. Foelsche said he was told by Allen Lumber that they don't.

Ms. Coffey said the wood trex series does come in an SDL.

Mr. Foelsche said he was told that was a product they didn't have. The price on the interior wood with the aluminum clad was well over \$200 plus for the difference in the fiberglass and the wood. Is SDL something that would be approved?

Mr. White said it is a simulated divided light. It gives you the full glass lighting value so that is better than individual insulated glass. The simulated divided light does give the exposure and the shadow of the muntin on the glass and it keeps the proportions comparable to what he has now. That is probably the least expensive way to get acceptable replacement windows.

Mr. Gilbertson asked how much per window was his estimate for rebuilding was.

Mr. Foelsche said it is \$550.

Mr. White said he did not get a price for the SDL because he thought they didn't have it.

Mr. Foelsche said he received a price on the aluminum clad wood which was \$640 per window. The true divided light was \$760 per window.

Mr. Gilbertson said they should be clear about the simulated divided light. It's not just a divider in between the glass but something that is usually glued on the outside. He asked how many windows they were talking about.

Mr. Foelsche said there are 10 of the 31 x 62's and there are 4 verticals that would be just replacing. They are 16 x 62's, and there are three horizontals.

Mr. White said they are only talking about 2 over 2's on the main windows and not the taller skinny windows at all.

Mr. Gilbertson said the price of rebuilding the windows and the new windows is about the same.

Mr. Foelsche said they are looking at somewhere between \$5,400 and \$6,000 to do the new windows. The price on refurbishing the existing single panes is \$5,500 but with no tax rebate, so the price break is significant.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if he had asked anybody else about rebuilding the windows.

Mr. Foelsche replied no, he will be the one who will be doing the work.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if he regularly rebuilds windows.

Mr. Foelsche said he is really an esteemed professional carpenter in the area. He is familiar with reconstructing historical materials.

Mr. Everett said he thinks everyone on the committee is pretty much in consensus regarding the remainder of the proposed changes. He asked Jay what his final comment on the windows was.

Mr. White said he would agree to support replacement windows if they are the 2 over 2's and SDL type. The 10 windows would be 2 over 2.

Mr. DeSmet said there are 7 other windows that would be the 1 over 1's, which are that way anyway.

Mr. Everett asked where the horizontal windows are.

Mr. Foelsche said on the kitchen and bath. They are double hung. They are replacement windows that would have been replaced in the 70's or so and they aren't original.

Mr. Duggan said he appreciates the extra research. Looking at the numbers he does feel like repairing the windows seems to be within range of the newer windows and his preference would be to retain the existing wooden windows as part of the description within the National Register nomination.

Mr. White said he would like to add one comment. He doesn't disagree with that approach, but what he can see as an advantage of the replacement windows is the insulating value you get without adding storm windows. Given the nature of how the existing windows are so far towards the outside of the building he doesn't really think they can add storm windows on the exterior without protruding beyond the casings, which causes its own problems. Interior storm windows don't protect quite as well as exterior windows do for historic windows. That is why he is proposing that in this case there could be a compromise to do the replacement windows with the 2 over 2.

Mr. Everett said he would concur with Jay's opinion. He also agrees that when the house was built back in the 1800's there were no storm windows on it. If you want to achieve the true look of the original house as built a window that replicates the original window as closely as possible without the storm is closer to the original look than is having storm windows.

Mr. White said if the storm windows do not recess fully behind the face of the casing which themselves can trap water and can cause further deterioration and more maintenance issues which he is trying to avoid with new windows.

Mr. Gilbertson said a rebuilt window with a storm can be just as efficient as new windows as far as energy is concerned. He is leaning towards fixing the existing windows.

Ms. Coffey said this is a tough issue and she is empathetic and has a house of the same age. She is lucky that the windows are not as in bad shape. She is this year going to be putting on some wood exterior storms and taking off the triple track aluminums and keeping her existing windows in place. Her house is not in the Design Review District. She is disappointed they didn't get additional numbers from the applicant for pricing of the repair of the wood windows because she doesn't think Walter's business has to do with working on wood windows and keeping them in shape. She is inclined to say she doesn't think they should get rid of the wooden windows.

Mr. Foelsche asked why this committee is willing to accept storm windows. Aluminum storm windows which protrude from the exterior of the building and not a window which matches the character of the

building, right now with those storm windows you can't even tell they are 2 over 2's. Why is it that a storm window is acceptable?

Ms. Coffey said they still have the original windows in there.

Ms. Schaeffer said she teaches history. She loves local history and art history and she would love to adhere to the highest possible standards for historic preservation. The reason why they live in this house is because it is an old house. They love its historic character, but it is also a humble house. They at this point in time don't have the most means and they are doing the best they can within the framework of resources. She is sorry they were not able to find an estimate that would work within our budget and sorry they can't afford the fancier windows. She is sorry that the tax money isn't going to refurbishing historic homes but rather to buy new windows. She regrets that all of these things are a reality because she could do more but the fact is they cannot do more. The committee has so generously given so much of your time to discussing this issue. She honestly doesn't know what more they can do as working people to accommodate these standards. They love their house and want it to look beautiful. Just please consider the time investment and their financial resources in their decision.

Mr. White said he thinks their cost comparison between repairing the old windows and the new windows did not include the cost of adding new storm windows because you don't like the aluminum ones, which makes it even more expensive to get a comparable energy efficient window. The other side of that is that Peter Welch has introduced legislation to change the tax credit to allow for the same credit for storm windows on repaired windows. If the tax credit was the only issue, would they be inclined to wait until that is resolved and then do it with restored windows, or go ahead with the proposal which he is supporting which is to change the windows so they can get the work done now?

Ms. Schaeffer said another thing is the limitation of time. Being she is a teacher and has the summer off and the availability and the fact that their windows are in such disrepair they don't want to go through another winter with them.

Mr. White said looking at the photographs here these are some of the worst windows he has seen. There is some major rebuilding. You can't just add epoxy to exterior windows because that itself traps water and will cause further damage down the road. There is a point when government should not impose too expensive things to do and when there is an alternative to recycled windows he doesn't see where they couldn't approve for this.

Mr. Everett said essentially some of the windows are in such bad shape that you would literally have to remill the entire entire sash.

Mr. Duggan said he disagreed with that. He thinks these windows are well within repair.

Mr. Foelsche said if you look at the price break between the two costs, you dump that money into an IRA it is a huge amount of money over the next 30 years. For them that is a big deal. They want to keep the historical character of the house and they didn't come with a proposal for vinyl windows. They recognize that doesn't work, but they don't want to do something that protects their house investment over the long term that maintains the character of the neighborhood and that does fill a balance of history, energy efficiency and protection for the parts of their wall which are actually starting to rot. Mr. White said this option would also give them some more money to do other repairs that also might be necessary that they would not be able to do if the City of Montpelier forced them to spend more money than they felt they could do.

Mr. Foelsche said part of their proposal is to paint the house and to do it right costs money, and that is part of what their budget was for the whole project which was banking on the fact that they weren't going to be spending upwards of \$6,000 for windows.

Mr. Gilbertson asked him to give the numbers again and what the differences are.

Mr. Foelsche said the estimate on repairing the current existing single pane is \$5,500 and the 1 over 1 Marvin windows was \$4,000, which was about \$5,600 to \$6,000 installed. Now with the wood grills it is \$20 additional per window, or adding \$200 to that figure.

Mr. Gilbertson said there is about \$1,500 for installation and there are about 15 windows, so that is about \$100 per window.

Mr. Foelsche said the only numbers they have brought to you are specifically for the larger ones. He had assumed, and perhaps incorrectly, that the smaller ones are okay to replace with whatever the same material that goes on to the larger windows.

Mr. Gilbertson said it is basically \$50 per hour for labor. The labor for repairing the windows is about 10 hours.

Mr. Foelsche said that includes routing the window, putting in a gasket, taking out the existing sills, putting in an aluminum pan in where the sills are.

Mr. Gilbertson said they would have to do that anyway.

Mr. Foelsche said no because of the way the window goes in it covers up the existing sill.

Mr. Duggan said if the sill is rotted it will need to be replaced anyway. You still are going to have labor into the frame.

Mr. Gilbertson said by his calculations there are about two hours of labor calculated to install the new windows. Nobody is going to be able to put in a window and fit it in two hours.

Mr. Foelsche said the going rate of \$50 per hour is what they were quoted as being charged per hour.

Mr. Everett said an experienced installer of the inserts can do it in an hour. His average is actually less than an hour for installation, foaming and trim, and then there is probably another hour's worth of painting to repaint everything on the interior. He averages two hours per window complete, installed, insulated, calked and painted.

Mr. White said he doesn't think they are going to get a unanimous vote one way or another.

Mr. Everett said the DRC is advisory. They can vote on it and not approve and he can still go to the Development Review Board with his application.

Mr. White said him spending time with the DRC is not going to be productive and will be delaying a decision on what he wants to do.

Mr. DeSmet said he would already be there. If the DRC votes against the application the DRB will review the same criteria.

Mr. Gilbertson said if he doesn't agree with what the DRC says he has the option to state that to the DRB and make his case to them.

Mr. Everett said he is writing down the change in the proposal for the new window installation to the wood ultrex 2 over 2 windows with simulated divided light.

The DRC reviewed the criteria and the application failed on a vote of 2 to 3.

III. 112 State Street – CIV/DCD

Applicant: John Kerin Signs

Owner: Peoples United Bank

Signage

Chittenden Bank throughout the stated was purchased by Peoples United Bank and this is pretty much just a name change on the existing signage that is there. Clancy brought up one issue yesterday about the directional signs. The logo looks more like an advertising sign than a directional sign. The bank said they would drop the logo. He said directional signs are 1 square foot only. When did directional signs become 1 square foot only?

Mr. DeSmet said it has been that way for the three years he has been on that job.

Mr. Kerin said that property is not that old.

Mr. DeSmet said any proposal has to come into conformity with the sign ordinance.

Mr. Kerin said the universal standard across the country for parking signs and directional signs is a 12' x 18' sign. A 1 square foot sign is small.

Mr. DeSmet said he is sympathetic but he has to go by the ordinance. The parking lot does require a directional sign. The DRC doesn't have the authority to deviate from the ordinance. If you read the ordinance the definition for informational sign is when you put the advertising on it and it is larger than the 1 square foot. If it is larger than 1 square foot it counts towards your total square footage of signage. If it is only 1 square foot, then it doesn't count on the total allowable sign area which is 75 square feet.

Mr. Gilbertson said he has a problem with the shiny aluminum on the signs. It is reflective. When you are replacing a Chittenden Bank sign where the color really blends in with the existing building, it becomes a shiny aluminum. His guess is that it is a corporate logo issue. He couldn't vote for this with that shiny reflective sign.

Mr. Kerin said it isn't reflective. Why it looks shiny is maybe for visual impact on a printed paper. It is a silver background. On the wall of the face of the building there is shiny gold leaf because he put it there.

Mr. Gilbertson said the background of it blends into the building.

Mr. Duggan said he has a concern about how the sign panel will be attached.

Mr. Kerin said it will be pin mounted with adhesive right into the concrete.

Mr. Gilbertson said he doesn't know what Chittenden's corporate colors were at the time the building was built but they do fit in nicely with the other buildings on the street and don't stand out.

Mr. Kerin said it is a silver background on an aluminum panel.

Mr. White said it might be in the applicant's interest to bring a sample of it to the Development Board meeting.

Mr. Gilbertson said without a sample he has a hard time with approval. Would he entertain tabling the application until they get a sample?

Mr. Kerin said time wise he really can't. The bank's plan is to have all of their changeovers complete in the next two months.

Mr. White asked if he could work on the other banks and work on this application at the end of the two months.

Mr. Kerin said he doesn't want to stop the process now.

Mr. DeSmet said the next meeting would be July 13th. The Development Review Board would meet on July 19th.

Mr. White said he thinks it would be in their best interest because otherwise the DRB would request a sample which would delay the application even further.

Mr. Gilbertson said he routinely requests this for applications that he doesn't feel are complete information because they can need to make their judgment on complete information. Everybody else brings in paint color chips.

Mr. Kerin said they could stall it and bring in a chip. He might be able to get a sample of the silver but there is no bank sign he can bring in. The bank is not going to change. That is their color and their logo.

Mr. White said the whole precedent of Design Review Districts around the world where they have rejected a corporate company's logo or color scheme, and almost always the corporation bends the rules to make it fit. He happens to like what is proposed here and thinks it would be fine with a brushed aluminum background. He thinks it makes sense to get a consensus by having a sample and tabling it now. This is one of the most dominant visible spots in Montpelier and right across the State House.

Mr. Gilbertson said it certainly clashes with the signs the state uses for its buildings which are black with a white lettering on them.

Mr. DeSmet said the state actually has specific restrictions for their signs in the Capitol District. This doesn't fit in with the rest of the signage. This is a little bit separated from the downtown. There is sort of a line on Taylor Street between what are government buildings and this building was specifically designed to be compatible with the Agriculture building right next door. It is a little different than the regular storefronts downtown.

Mr. White asked if he could just make a motion to table this until they have the complete information about what the materials are.

Mr. Gilbertson said it would be to their advantage. He isn't sure he will change his mind.

Mr. White said he wouldn't vote for it without seeing a sample.

Mr. Everett said the applicant's choice would be with what information he has for the DRC to vote on it...

Mr. Kerin said no one is going to vote on it like it is right now so they might just as well table it until they come up with the sample of the silver background.

Mr. Everett said his chances for approval would be a lot better if they could actually see it.

Mr. White moved to table the application, with Mr. Gilbertson seconding the motion, which was voted unanimously on a vote of 5 to 0. The next meeting will be July 13th.

New Business:

Mr. White reported that Alan Lumber had the huge billboard type signs facing the river on River Street which advertises their showroom. It's well over 35 square feet; it's like a billboard.

Mr. DeSmet said it is in the Design Control District and is a nonconforming sign that preexisted. They repaint it periodically.

Mr. White said the Econo Lodge was to put concrete stucco over their Styrofoam forms in order to make their flower vases and gardens. They simply painted the Styrofoam so when they take a picture for the corporate people it looks like it was done properly. It has been damaged and broken. It's a mess. It should be started over.

Mr. DeSmet said they still have to get a certificate of compliance from him. They have already been shut down by the city. He can't issue a violation until the project is finished so he is waiting until Glenn is done with the building codes.

Mr. White said the free standing sign is crooked. What frustrates him is the concept of painting the Styrofoam orange so they could photo it so it looks like it is done for their corporate people.

Adjournment:

Upon motion of Eric Gilbertson and James Duggan the Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning and Zoning Administrator