

Montpelier Design Review Committee
July 12, 2011
Memorial Room, Montpelier City Hall

Approved

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

Call to Order:

Mr. Everett, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. Mr. Everett explained the Design Review Committee is advisory to the Development Review Board. They will look at the applications as presented, vote on this and then they will move forward to the Development Review Board.

I. 21 Main Street – CB-I/DCD

Owner/Applicant: The American Legion Post #3
Design Review for a Sign.

Dick Harlow appeared on behalf of the American Legion. They have an American Legion sign that is about 4' x 4' they want to put on the face of the building. He showed pictures of the sign to the committee.

Mr. White asked if he would be replacing the existing sign.

Mr. Harlow replied that the sign that is there will stay. They just want to add a new sign.

Mr. Everett asked if there was any thought of moving the other one to the other side so they would be on either side of the doorway.

Mr. Harlow replied there had been no thought about that.

Mr. White asked why they wanted to have two signs.

Mr. Harlow said this sign is a beautiful sign and they would like to have it outside. It shows off that they are Legionnaires a little better.

Mr. White asked if the criteria allowed two signs for the same business.

Mr. DeSmet replied yes. The new sign will not be lighted.

Mr. Duggan asked if it was based off any type of Legion symbol.

Mr. Harlow replied it is.

Mr. Duggan asked if the sign was painted.

Mr. Harlow replied it is painted with three coats of urethane. It has been around the post for a long time. They recoated it with urethane and the sign is in really good shape.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the sign criteria and found the application acceptable on a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Everett made a clarification that the sign will be centered on the space adjacent to the window on the left side of the entrance door.

II. 152 Main Street – CB-II/DCD

Owner/Applicant: Cassandra Lansky
Design Review for construction of an ADA Ramp, change siding,
reconstruct front steps and replace side door and basement windows.

Ms. Lansky said she brought some details for the ADA ramps. She brought a photo of the neighbor who did his a couple of years ago and it matches well with his building. His building is at 154 Main.

Mr. Everett said he liked the flood resistant material.

Ms. Lansky remarked they are in the floodplain and the river gets pretty high.

Mr. White asked if the ramp was visible from the street.

Ms. Lansky replied no it is not.

Mr. Everett said the only visibility would be just beyond the edge of the building. It would be minimally visible and you would have to look hard to see it.

Ms. Lansky said they would replace the door and make it wider and match the other doors put in.

Mr. Everett said the questions last time had to do with the appearance and the design of the ramp and railings.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and found the application acceptable on a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Gilbertson abstained since he wasn't present for the whole presentation.

III. 1 Terrace Street – MDR/DCD

Owner/Applicant: John Kords and Allison Parrish
Design Review for a Fence

Mr. Gilbertson explained he is an abutting property owner.

Mr. Kords said they want to put up a privacy fence between themselves and their neighbor one house down on Terrace Street. It will be an 8 foot fence with three panels 24 feet long. They are doing some landscaping in the backyard and putting in a stone patio. They have a patio adjacent to theirs and they want to put a fence in between the two.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they were good with that.

Mr. Kords said he talked with them a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they had a well-established boundary.

Mr. Kords said Karen had planted some arboretum along the property line which they are going to remove.

Mr. Duggan asked if the trees were the approximate property line and what the fence will be in line with.

Mr. Kords said it is right outside their dining room which is where the patio will be. There is a steep hill that comes down to the house and then flattens out. They are going to have it fenced in. He showed pictures of the house and area where the fence will be located to the committee.

Mr. Everett asked if the additional landscaping is just the stone patio in the back.

Mr. Kords replied yes along with a retaining stone wall and stone steps.

Mr. White asked what side of the property the fence face will be.

Mr. Kords explained they are both the same.

Mr. Everett asked if he would like to include lighting as part of their patio construction. He could add either a light post or some ground lighting on the back of the house that would illuminate the patio.

Mr. Kords replied all right. Perhaps some ground lighting around the patio might be nice.

Mr. Everett said it would be an optional change. The Design Review Committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and found the application as presented acceptable on a vote of 5 to 0.

IV. 112 Main Street – CB-I/DCD

Owner: Ray Alvarez

Applicant: Lee Youngman for the Knitting Studio

Design Review for a Sign

The applicant didn't show for the meeting.

V. 5 State Street – CB-I/DCD

Owner: Jeff Jacobs

Applicant: Cindra Conison

Design Review for a Sign

The applicant didn't show for the meeting.

VI. 660 Elm Street

Owner/Applicant: Vermont State Colleges

Design Review for a Classroom Addition

Interested Parties: Robie Stoner, Northern Architects

Barbara Martin, Dean of Administration for CCV

Joyce Judy, President, CCV

Mr. Stoner did a presentation of the application to the Committee. This project consists of a two-story 12,000 square foot classroom addition to the existing facility which used to be Woodbury College and has

been CCV now for two years. That addition is located at the end of an existing building which is an L-shaped. It also consists of site redevelopment to expand the parking for the staff and students. The location of the addition at the east end, which is the end closest to Elm Street, is consistent with the filed Master Plan in Montpelier and it also allows for the academic classroom activities to transition into some of the support spaces in the building that was done in 1999. Some of the support spaces are academic advisors and the Learning Center but also its organization allows for a separation from the academic services from the administrative activities which are located in a three-story building.

The building and the site plan were designed to strengthen these exterior spaces that form the entrance to the building by allowing the space and edge to be stronger and help define it a little more. The landscaping has been changed and addressed at the same time to create a little more inviting spaces. The landscaping is designed to use native plants and trees and they aren't expecting to do any irrigation on the site.

The parking has been expanded from 100 to 159 spaces, or to accommodate the students which they eventually arrive on site to the classrooms as well as the staff and faculty. The way it was done was to break the lots down into separate spaces using the islands that will be picking up the storm water from the parking areas and the adjacent areas in the parking. They will be treating the storm water in the bio swales. They are designed with Red Maples, Irises, brushes, etc. that are really good at cleaning up water. The third little lot in the back on the uphill side is for assigned staff that is administrative.

There is a wetland which separates that lot from the rest of the lot. The wetlands have been classified as Class 3 Wetlands. There is nothing special planned on happening there other than to leave it and retain it as a natural area and collect storm water. It will not be disturbed during the redevelopment.

Mr. Gilbertson said the parking lot is just asphalt now, right?

Mr. Stoner explained the new lot will be asphalt, too, but it is being redeveloped. It has to be reconfigured. The base underneath it has to be changed so it is frost free. There is an existing site plan that shows there is a green space, and that green space is going to be changed. It will be an island but it won't be the green spot that was on the site line. The trees on the site that are existing part of the landscaping design is to take the trees and transplant them around the perimeter of the site. They don't necessarily lose what they have but just use them in a different way.

The building is designed to have a real strong relationship to the existing forms of scale that is there now on site as well as what is along Elm Street. Elm Street has a lot of residential buildings with lots of steep roofs, gable forms and clapboard siding. Although it is making it a strong relationship to the existing building it is designed to look well in the neighborhood. These forms are gable forms very much like the buildings that are there right now. This front form which forms a couple of classrooms has a 12 foot pitch and the main room has a 10 and 12 pitch. The siding that is being proposed is fiber cement clapboard siding and fiber cement panels. The existing building built in 1999 is also fiber cement clapboards and fiber cement panels so they are being consistent with the same materials. The reveal on the clapboards they are doing is about 7 inches. He believes on the 1999 building they are about 6 inches.

Mr. Duggan asked if it was embossed or smooth.

Mr. Stoner replied it is smooth, both the panels and the clapboard. The roofing being proposed is asphalt shingles. Right now the existing buildings have asphalt shingles on them. The windows are being proposed as aluminum clad windows that are triple glazed. They will be fixed windows and will be operable windows.

The asphalt shingle roofing they are proposing that the color and materials and textures are working off the existing buildings, and the existing buildings are done with a lot of earth tones. There are tans and a green and a deep red on the 1999 addition. There are some red asphalt shingles and some brown mottled shingles as well. Their proposal is to stay within those earth tones and work with a brownish type shingle on the addition to match the 1999 building. If the color is something they are interested in seeing they would like to be able to present the color idea as being the earth tones and show some of what they are thinking about. If it changes in the final details they would like to be able to come back and check to see if it is okay but not go out of the earth tone colors but just a matter how they are used. For instance, the window frames color might change depending on which manufacturer they use.

The original building right now has a tan color. It is a very natural gray but on the warm side and the 1999 addition has a very deep red color as well as a panel that is a gray that is neutral. They wanted to borrow from those colors but not use the reds. He showed sample colors they propose to use for the clapboards on the new addition. It is called scroll beige. Right now all of the windows now are done in dark bronze. They are either painted dark bronze or metal or fiberglass. They would like to step away from that on the addition and propose something a little bit brighter. They are thinking they would use one of two colors, or both, because they work really well with the existing windows. The cladding is called dessert beige and the other one is called pebble gray. They are Marvin windows. That is the basic color scheme they are talking about. It always feels a little bit early to make final decisions but it is a color idea that will work very well with the addition and they will be able to make it work with whatever window manufacturer they end up with.

Mr. Duggan asked if the addition was similar in width to what exists now.

Mr. Stoner said it is similar but it's not the same. The classroom building is a little bit wider than the existing building. They took a look at the relationship to the two and have pushed the new classroom back as far as they can so the new addition is not protruding out into the entry spaces as much. That way they also allow the original design of the 1999 addition which had a conference room on the corner and they are allowing that to still feature itself in the corner and enter along the side of it. The drawings are to help understand how the complex all works together.

Mr. White said he had one question about the lighting which is the color temperature of the lights. He notices they have LED. The LED makes a very cool white really bright light and they also make one that is closer to the 3,500 temperature which is a warmer more incandescent tone color. The poles and fixtures are black. It is shown as 4,300 k. That may be fine, especially when you get into the very modern look. He wouldn't object to that. He thinks they have chosen good cutoff fixtures and it is a good design.

Mr. Stoner said the LED fixtures were selected because of their energy efficiency. Right now the State College has been using this one on a number of campuses around the state. It works very well and the light distribution is good and it has been trouble free.

Mr. Everett said he just made a notation that Mr. White's recommendation was that the proposed LED lighting be as warm as possible. The 4,300 k as proposed is acceptable. The other thing he included

because they don't have any specific color samples is a clarification of proposed building colors using the earth tone colors and listed the proposed colors. If they need a drastic change in terms of coloration they can come back but it is approved with the proposed colors.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the evaluation criteria and found the application acceptable on a vote of 5 to 0. The clarifications they put down were that the proposed building colors using a family of earth tone colors, the clapboards a scroll beige and the panels around the building a whetstone or gray/green color; the aluminum clad windows were dessert gray to a pebble gray. The recommendation regarding the lighting was that the LED is as warm as possible and the 4,300 k was acceptable as proposed.

Other Business:

Todd Law, Director of Public Works, said he and Tom McArdle wanted to discuss a couple of things they are planning behind the Blanchard Block. There are proposals that Montpelier Alive put together for the Blanchard Block and the rear of the Blanchard Block. They are being pushed right now for ADA accessibility to the back of Tim Heney's buildings as well as to the back side of the entire block. Public Works, along with Tim Heney and his contractor, would like to approve ADA accessibility by providing sidewalks behind the building and to improve the accessibility through moving the handicapped spaces around the loading zone to provide van accessible parking spaces there. Right now there are three accessible spaces and none of them meet the ADA requirements. They are in a bad situation and want to turn it into a better situation. Currently there is no accessible way into what they propose as Capital Stationers so Mr. Heney has a vested interest in this also and the city does as well to improve this. The parking spaces behind the building are the city's and the loading zone in the area on the building side of the parking spaces are Mr. Heney's so it is kind of a joint venture. They are leading the charge as ADA. This will actually improve some of the accessibility into the Fire Department also from those spaces. As part of the proposal they are going to take out the step that is currently in front of the Fire Department and lower it to make it into an accessible ramp. It will definitely improve what they have behind Blanchard from the alley over to the walkway. The plan is to make a sidewalk adjacent to the elevator tower so they would bring the curb out approximately 6 feet from the face of the elevator shaft which would give them at least 5 feet with the meters there for accessibility. Originally when they brought this to Montpelier Alive they wanted something temporary. They at some point would like to have pavers from the base of the building all the way out to a point where the main parking lot begins so they have asked for something temporary. Originally they wanted asphalt curb and asphalt sidewalk. They found that granite curb is a few dollars more but it is a lot more durable and can be reused. If they put asphalt in there and it is temporary they do get some funding to do the streetscape they want to do behind there to improve the aesthetics of that building. They can reuse the granite curb. Their standard in the downtown is granite curb, concrete sidewalk; everything behind there is asphalt right now. The question to the DRC is, should we stick with the asphalt or would you rather go with the concrete which is a few thousand dollars more?

Mr. Duggan asked if that would still be temporary.

Mr. Law said they are moving forward without Montpelier Alive.

Mr. DeSmet said they have a larger scheme for what they want and they have a goal of making it accessible.

Mr. Duggan said his vote would be for concrete.

Mr. Everett said concrete so long as they go deep enough so it doesn't heave like all of State Street.

Mr. White said it has to have a drainage space underneath it. A lot of concrete people think they can put it right on sand and it doesn't work. You need to have drainage. A lot of concrete suppliers put concrete on sand. If you have any water underneath it, it doesn't work because it has to have enough space to expand and to freeze. The worst thing the city could do is to have standards for everybody else except for the city. The city needs to come up to the plate to set the example and do it better. That is why he would not look at a temporary thing but coordinate it with Montpelier Alive and get the whole plan together and build as much as can be afforded in a permanent way because we aren't doing a temporary thing. Temporary things often don't end up being temporary.

Mr. Duggan said he would suggest that Montpelier Alive could go from the granite curb out. This is real essential and there is a need for it. The more accessible we can make those buildings the better. Therefore, he feels a stronger design that can be done now, and even if it is a few thousand dollars more, the likelihood it will stay there is probably good.

Mr. White said he would like to see the backs of all of the windows that have been blocked with and covered with meters and gas lines needs to be redone. The whole façade needs to be redone to look like the front of the building again. Before they do anything on the street level for handicapped access it just needs to be part of an overall Master Plan for the rear of the building.

Mr. Heney has actually said he wants to dress up the building and one of the things they talked about is all of the conduits along the buildings. His comment was, where is the money coming from? Montpelier Alive has all of these grand schemes but until the money is here things are at a standstill. He owns everything behind the curb right now. What they use as access for the rear of the building he maintains them and he is on board with the city. They look at this as a win/win. They improve access to the back.

Mr. Duggan asked if this would go the entire length of the building to the alleyway.

Mr. Law said the plan right now is to maintain a sidewalk section. A 5 foot sidewalk would still be the asphalt that Mr. Heney maintains, but all the way up to the planters on the far side would be concrete sidewalk which is up to the alleyway by the Coffee Corner. The meters and signs would be moved beyond the sidewalk so they could maintain the access through there.

Mr. Law said he thinks this gives them a basis to go forward and have a discussion with Mr. Heney. Their original plan was to go with the granite and concrete until Montpelier Alive stepped in. There is a standard out there and this is what is being done in the downtown. Right now there is a flower garden almost adjacent to the Downstairs Video where the alleyway is they would like to box that in with a granite curb also. It will dress up that area and keep people out of the flower garden and keep the garden in good shape.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they had made a formal application.

Mr. Law said he wasn't sure they have to if they go with the standard for granite and concrete. That is the proposal.

Review of June 28, 2011 DRC Minutes:

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duggan and Mr. Gilbertson the minutes of June 28th were approved on a vote of 5 to 0.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duggan and Mr. Brock, the Design Review Committee adjourned on a vote of 5 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack