



April 8, 2020

Mr. William Frasier, City Manager
City of Montpelier
39 Main Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602-2950

Re: Master Narrative of Revised Parking Garage Design pursuant to issues under Appeal

Mr. Frasier,

Please accept this report, prepared at the request of Attorneys Rugh and McLean. The purpose of this report is to summarize the changes made to the proposed State Street Parking Garage and related site plans. The adjacent Hampton Inn and Suites proposed by the Capitol Plaza is proposed to remain as designed and approved by the City and State. The final subdivision plan(s) prepared for the Hampton Inn project documents a series of easements and / or rights of way, some of which have been modified to accommodate cross boundary utilities, and access in, through, and between the sites.

Part One: Description of Changes

Size, Shape and Location:

The previously approved garage design had an overall length of 208.50 feet and an overall width of 114.80 feet. Allowing for the actual shape, this plan has a gross footprint of 23,695 square feet. The format of the garage was a switchback plan form, having level landings on each end, and the parking surfaces ramped between those landings. The Garage was approved with four and one half stories; the lowest level nominal floor elevation was 218.00 per the site datum. The high point of the approved garage at the elevator shaft near the garage's northwesterly corner is 48'-3" above finished grade.

The revised design of the proposed garage has an overall length of 181.00 feet and an overall width of 118.33 feet. Allowing for the actual shape, this revised plan has a gross footprint of 20,464.00 square feet. The format of the proposed garage has changed on its interior to a split level plan form, where level parking bays are connected by short ramps at each end. This format would allow for adaptive re-use of the structure should parking garages become obsolete in the future. The split level format presents four stories and 43'-6" of façade facing the Montpelier Recreation Path on the project's southerly boundary. The building steps up 5 feet along the centerline of the building, so that the garage's northerly wall presents five stories and 53'-6" of façade facing the rear of the Christ Episcopal Church

and the existing Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center. The highest point in the proposed Garage is the top of the elevator shaft is 59' -0" above average finished grade.

The revised design greatly reduces impacts on the lands now or formerly owned by the Heney Family Trusts. The total building coverage is reduced by 3,231 square feet. The overall length of the garage along its east-west axis is 27'-6" shorter than the previously approved design.

Materials and Treatment:

The palette of materials for the redesigned garage remains the same as those previously approved. The principal structure was approved and will remain pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete double "T" floor framing resting on precast, pre-stressed Concrete L beams supported by precast concrete or galvanized steel columns bearing on a cast in place concrete foundation bearing on rammed aggregate piles.

The concrete frame will be faced with a combination of standard modular face brick with cut stone or pre-cast concrete accent trim bands and details, dressed cut stone or autoclaved concrete masonry, or pre-fabricated coated welded wire trellis material. Powder Coated Galvanized Steel details are used to support the stair covers, provide visual detail, and as railings where required.

The treatment of the façade has been changed to reflect the new split level framing system and the relocation of the stairs and elevator. Special attention was paid to the eastern façade facing the so-called Heney Lot. New features include the provision of an A.D.A. compliant pathway, connecting State Street to the Montpelier Recreation Path to the south of the garage, as well as the addition of a bay with individual punched window openings and an accented colored brick to render this elevation more "building like" in appearance. The stair covers and elevator enclosure have been reconceived in steel and glass, rendering them as transparent as possible.

Site Features:

It has been noted that the proposed garage's footprint is 27'-6" shorter in an east-west direction and covers 3,231 fewer square feet. This allows several site improvements, particularly on the easterly end of the project. In the approved design, the proposed Garage came within 20 feet of the Overlake Park LLC's "Garage" building, and within 8 feet of the easterly property boundary line with the Overlake Park property at the nearest point. This raised concerns about physical access to the Overlake Park parking lot, as well as a concern regarding loss of the visual connection between State Street and the Winooski River.

The revised design places the eastern façade of the parking garage 47 feet from the nearest point on Overlake Park's "Garage" building and 35 feet away from the easterly property line at the nearest point. This re-opens the view corridor looking southerly from the intersection of Elm and State Streets and allows for truck access to the Overlake Park building's rear parking area.

A second important site change made possible by the reduced footprint is the addition of the continuous A.D.A. compliant pathway starting at the existing information booth on State Street near the entrance to the Heney Lot and extending southerly along the westerly side of the Heney Lot to the

Montpelier Recreation Path and its bridge over the North Branch of the Winooski. This pathway is only interrupted by the emergency-only secondary exit from the parking garage.

In changing the interior layout of the parking garage from a switchback plan form to a split level plan form, the redesign eliminates the need for a pit between the garage and the railroad tracks south of the property boundary. This in turn eliminates the need for a retaining wall and guardrails. This also allows for a more naturalized contour and landscaped area between the Montpelier Recreation Path, the proposed garage and the walkway to the Montpelier Recreation Path that runs between the proposed new hotel and parking garage. The first half story on the south side of the building is set just above existing finished grade and the adjacent recreation path. .

Part Two: Compliance with Zoning District Standards

Chapter 210. Base Zoning Districts & Neighborhoods Montpelier Unified Development Regulations, at p. 2-3, Adopted January 3, 2018

2101.E Architectural Standards. The following standards apply for major site plan applications (See Section 3201) under Section 3207:

(1) Buildings with 3 or more stories shall incorporate a base, middle and cap as described below:

- (a) The base shall include an entryway with transparent windows and a molding or reveal placed between the first and second story or over the second story, which shall be at least 2 inches deep and 4 inches high.

The base story provides large openings with steel security gates to create equivalent openings. The grade level is separated from the remaining stories above by a well articulated trim band featuring projecting sill courses that meet or exceed this requirement. This feature is interrupted at the green wall system to comply with sub-section 3 below, and to facilitate plant growth. (See sample cross sections as shown on sheets A-700 and A-701)

- (b) The middle may include windows and balconies.

Intermediate stories have two types of window openings. These are either individual window openings with contrasting masonry picture frame trim courses, or large multiple story openings protected from the elements with a semi-transparent fiberglass fabric scrim and exposed steel inverted K braces.

- (c) The cap shall include the area from the top floor to the roof of the building, and shall include a cornice or roof overhang.

A continuous trim band featuring projecting cornice trim caps the composition off as required. (See sample cross sections as shown on sheets A-700 and A-701)

(2) Floor levels, windowsills, moldings, and cornices shall align with those of adjacent buildings to the maximum extent feasible.



This view looking south from State Street shows how the floors of the garage coordinate with those of the adjacent hotel. Both structures feature a base, middle, and top with projecting sill courses and cornices.

(3) Building facades shall be composed of modules or bays that:

(a) Incorporate visible changes in the facade elevation through the use of wall plane projections or recesses, piers, columns, colonnades, arcades or similar architectural features that create a distinct facade elevation.

Alternate structural bays have one of three distinct façade treatments: Masonry wall with large openings, Masonry walls with small openings, or Green Screen trellis with live plantings. Masonry bays are detailed with two distinct brick colors to reinforce the variety.

(b) Feature a regular pattern of windows and entryways so that the length of solid or blank walls shall not exceed 20 feet.

The typical design bay has an opening or an entrance. One bay on the North Side of the garage at grid lines 5 and 6 has been left blank as a fire wall to facilitate a possible project on

the adjacent church property. This façade is obscured from State Street by the Church structures

- (c) Shall not exceed 48 feet in width and an average of 32 feet in width for a single, continuous facade.

Structural bays average 37 feet, and no bay exceeds 48 feet.

- (4) Building facades shall incorporate at least one principal entrance as follows:

- (a) Building facades exceeding 60 feet in width shall provide multiple ground-level entrances.

The principal garage entrance is on the north elevation facing State Street. There are additional entrances on the east side adjacent to the emergency only vehicle exit and the exit from the stair well. Gated entries will be provided on the south and west elevations in the security grilles

- (b) The distance between ground-level entrances along a single, continuous facade shall not exceed 80 feet.

This condition is not met. For most of the building perimeter, there are significantly large openings in each 37 foot structural bay to meet this requirement, but for security purposes, and given the function of the building as a parking garage, access is limited to the major entries indicated on the plans.

- (5) Pedestrian access shall be provided from the public sidewalk or street to the street facing principal entrance(s) as follows:

- (a) The street-facing principal entrance(s) and ground floor level shall align with the sidewalk elevation to the maximum extent feasible.

The principal entrance is at ground level and does align with the network of sidewalks proposed. ADA Compliant walks connect all four sides of the structure and provide access to major entries and the adjoining properties.

- (b) Within the Downtown Business Neighborhood, doors opening to the sidewalk shall be recessed into the face of the building creating an entryway with not less than 15 square feet of floor space or shall be covered by an awning, gallery, or arcade.

See note C below. Because to openings do not have doors, the need for a protected space in which to operate the door out of the elements does not apply to these openings. An occupant can access a space within the building that meets the dimensional standards without operating a door.

- (c) Within the Downtown Business Neighborhood, entry doors shall not open out into the sidewalk in a manner that would restrict the sidewalk width to less than 4 feet.

Openings at principal entrance / exits serving the garage are masonry openings only and do not have swinging or otherwise operable parts. This requirement does not apply.

- (d) Within the Downtown Business Neighborhood, each detached building shall have at least one street-facing principal entrance. For detached buildings exceeding 60 feet in width or attached buildings, there shall be not more than 60 feet between the street-facing principal entrances.

The garage is accessed by private streets and associated easements per the civil engineering plans. The primary building entrance meets these private streets at one corner of the building. The balance of the north façade faces an internal lot line / private property. This requirement applies to the street facing portion of the building, And the design as presented complies.

(6) The ground floor of building facades shall be designed to encourage and complement pedestrian-oriented activity as follows:

- (a) Building facades shall feature ground-level windows or doors arranged so that interior spaces are visible from and accessible to the street on at least 40% of the facade length.

For purposes of addressing this criterion, the North Elevation facing State Street, the East Elevation facing the Heney lot, and the South Elevation facing the Montpelier recreation path are public facing facades that meet or exceed this requirement.

The West Elevation faces an interior lot line and the percentage of allowable openings is limited by the International Building code as adopted by the City and State. This elevation of the Garage is obscured by the adjacent Hampton Inn when viewed from Taylor Street. The portion of that façade that is not facing the previously approved Hampton Inn does feature a variety of openings including the planted vertical trellis system.

Figure 2-01. Urban Center 1 Dimensional Standards

	Standard	Proposed
Parcel size:	3,000 sq. ft. min	24,393.60 sq. ft.
Frontage:	30 ft. min	see subdivision plan
Coverage:	100% max Floor	94% actual
Area Ratio: 4.0 max		(see note 1 below)
Front Setback:	0 ft. min	5 ft. proposed
Side Setback:	0 ft. min	5 ft. proposed
Rear Setback:	0 ft. min	varies due to geometry
Water Setback:	10 ft. min or per Note 2	20 ft. proposed
 Height:	The Montpelier zoning regulations measure building height from average finished grade to the highest point on the structure. The maximum height in this zoning district is 60 feet above that measurement. Height limits do not apply to:	
	(a) Belfries, spires, steeples, cupolas, domes or similar architectural features not used for human habitation;	
	(b) Skylights, parapet walls, cornices, chimneys, ventilators, or mechanical equipment usually located on the roof level	

	Previously Approved:	Now Proposed:	Change:
Average Finished Grade	521.75 ft.	523.00 ft.	+ 1.5 ft.
Maximum Allowable:	581.75 ft	583.00 ft.	-----
Highest Parking Surface (code)	558.00 ft	563.00 ft	+5 .0 ft.
 Top of Parapet (note b.)	562.00 ft.	571.50 ft	+9.5 ft.
Top of Elevator Enclosure (note b.)	572.40 ft.	581.50.ft	+9.1 ft.
Top of Stairwell(s) (note b.)	572.40 ft	578.40 ft.	+ 6.0 ft.

Note 1: Floor Area Ratio Calculation:

The district required a Floor Area Ratio of 4.0 a close read of the defined terms in the ordinance is important to understanding compliance with this requirement. The highest parking surface of the garage is open to the air and therefore not an **enclosed floor**.

PART 5. DEFINITIONS Chapter 510. Defined Terms

FLOOR AREA RATIO means the ratio of gross floor area to the total parcel area

GROSS FLOOR AREA means the sum of the total horizontal area of **all enclosed floors** of a building as measured from the exterior face of the exterior walls or the centerline of a common wall between attached buildings including any heated space in a basement, attic, or mezzanine **with a floor-to-ceiling height of 7 feet or more**. (Emphasis added)



The project as proposed has 4.5 floors that are required to meet the F.A.R.

$20,464 \times 4.5 = 92,088$ Gross Floor Area

$92,088 / 4.0 = 23,022$ minimum lot size to support building area versus a 24,393.60 sq. ft. actual lot area

Conclusions:

The design of the State Street Parking Garage has been revised so it has a smaller footprint, and is better suited to future adaptation to another use. The site plan increases the distance to adjacent structures, and improves pedestrian and bicycle access from State Street to the Montpelier Recreation Path and the future Confluence Park.

The re- designed garage is taller than before, but still within the limits set by the applicable zoning regulations. The distance to adjacent historic structures is improved in the new plan. In my professional opinion, the revised design mitigates concerns with the original design and enables better connections between the facility and the Downtown Business neighborhood where it is sited.

Gregory Rabideau AIA

Rabideau Architects

