

Montpelier Design Review Committee
February 21, 2005
Memorial Room, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Margot George, Chair; Stephen Everett, Vice Chair; Eric Gilbertson; Guy Tapper;
Vicki Lane, Daniel Richardson
Staff: Stephanie Smith

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gilbertson at 5:30 p.m.

I. Design Review

Property Address: Willey Construction
Applicant: RKG, LLC
Zone: HDR/DCD

- o Construction of a five space parking lot at the rear of Howland Hall for use by occupants of 9 and 11 West Street

Phil Willey explained that the area where the parking lot is proposed currently has a packed dirt and sparse grass surface because it has been used for informal parking since RKG had purchased the building. He said that the installation of a gravel parking lot for five cars is proposed. He said that no shrubbery will be removed and that no plantings are proposed because the limited area at the head of the parking spaces will be used for snow storage. He said that it was possible that the spaces could be temporarily marked out with paint so that people get used to the parking layout. Mr. Willey said that the existing slopes in the area of the parking lot will be flattened as much as possible. He said that the drainage presently flows in two directions - toward East State Street and between the two buildings.

Ms. George noted that the DRC reviewed a prior proposal for three parking spaces and was concerned about the fact that parking spaces be in front of the garages as they were historically used. Mr. Willey said that a preliminary plan had eight spaces, but the current plan proposes only five spaces. Ms. Smith said that she understood the issue to be that the three previously proposed parking spaces could not be used until a plan came before the Development Review Board; and that is why the applicant is here today. But that the proposal today is for five spaces and not the previously reviewed and conceptually approved three spaces. Ms. George said that the other spaces were in front of garages where it would be logical to have parking. Ms. Smith said that the TRC had concerns about potential conflicts with vehicle maneuvers if those locations were used for parking. She said that the same amount of pavement would be needed for backing out of those spaces as is proposed in the current plan.

Ms. George said that the college never used the area for parking in the past. Ms. Smith said that there may have been parking in the driveway. Ms. George asked why the 23 parking spaces that were previously proposed were not enough. Ms. Smith said that parking proposal included at least three spaces in the subject location, the other ten spaces shown on the site and the rest was off site and on-street parking. Mr. Gilbertson said that he was glad to see that the dumpster had been eliminated.

Ms. Lane asked about landscaping to screen the parking since there are residences in the area. Mr. Willey said that the adjacent neighbor has been using the parking on the site and would probably continue to do so after hours. Ms. George said that the building on the site were originally houses. She said that, up to now, some green space has been retained on the property, giving the appearance of a residential use, but the proposed parking would occupy the last vestige of lawn.

She said that screening is needed to maintain the character and some green space should be retained. She said that the changes to the site will not be worth the two additional spaces that would be gained. Mr. Richardson said that he was concerned that there were not provisions to ameliorate the impact of the parking. He said that he would like to see a landscaping plan showing a screen of trees. Mr. Willey said that he thought that the owner would be willing to add some trees. Ms. George said that the problem would then be where to put the snow. Mr. Gilbertson said that he would feel more strongly if the area had not already been a driveway. He suggested planting some trees in the area where the plan notes the 10' setback and along East State Street. Mr. Everett said that the photograph seemed to show the curb cut at a location different than the one shown on the plan. Mr. Willey said that the sidewalk actually slopes down to the street at the location shown on the plan, but snow covered it in the photo. Ms. Smith asked whether it would be necessary to widen the curb cut. Mr. Willey said that it would be widened to meet the proposed 22' curb cut. Ms. George suggested that it might help if the width of the driveway and opening was reduced. Ms. Smith said that she would have to check on the minimum allowable width for a two-way non-residential driveway. Mr. Willey said that there will be two way traffic. Mr. Gilbertson noted that there would not be a lot of traffic for only five spaces. He said that, if the driveway was narrowed, there would be more room for plantings. He said that it would also help if maple trees were planted along East State Street. Ms. Smith recommended that some other species be used since maple trees are not salt tolerant. Ms. George said that cages should be placed around the trees to protect them from snow plows. Ms. Lane said that a fence with climbing plants could be used in the narrow space between the proposed parking and the adjacent property. Ms. Smith noted that the neighbors' driveway is partly on the applicants' property, so the space is very limited.

Ms. Smith summarized the issues as follows:

- Concern about the removal of lawn area
- Reduction of the curb cut
- Additional landscaping

Ms. George added that she questioned the need for this parking at all since the original permit allowed for the use of off-site parking. Ms. Smith said that the original approval did not allow the use of the three parking spaces until a site plan was approved and this submission served as that plan.

Mr. Willey said that he needed to discuss the suggested changes with the owner, but he thought that they would want to do the plantings. Mr. Gilbertson said that he thought that three trees along East State Street and a couple in the setback area would soften the view. Ms. Smith said that she had a reference for salt tolerant trees. She said that she would also like for the locations of snow removal to be shown. Ms. George suggested using railroad ties instead of concrete a concrete curb. Other committee members said that change would not make a significant difference. Ms. Smith said that she would check with Tom McArdle on the curb cut question and would fax a list of salt tolerant tree species from her reference book to the applicant.

Ms. Smith said that the continuation of the application would be heard on March 7.

II. Design Review

Property Address: 27 State Street
Applicant: Stephen Everett.
Zone: CB-I/DCD

- Installation of windows on the first floor of the west elevation of the existing building.

Mr. Everett stepped down from the Committee during the review of his application.

Ms. George said that the DRC discussed different options for the addition of windows at its last meeting. She said that the committee looked at options with three windows, five windows and a picture window. Mr. Everett said that his tenant had a preference for operable windows for air circulation and to allow for cleaning. Ms. Lane asked about an option that would have a double set of windows, a single window and another double set. Mr. Everett said that a supporting post would

block that configuration. Mr. Gilbertson said that he did not think that the large picture windows worked unless they were at the corner of the building. He said that he thought that the paired windows might get in the way of the verticality of the building and might look too residential. He said that he preferred the option with single windows. Mr. Everett said that the tenant preferred the paired windows for more light. Ms. George said that she understood Mr. Gilbertson's concern, but thought that there was enough clapboard between the windows to address that. Other committee members said that they did not see a problem with the paired windows.

Mr. Everett said that the windows would have the same type of trim as the existing windows, but they would not have the arched trim at the top. He said that would allow them to be located close to the horizontal sign band. He said that he was trying to have the window sills at 30" (interior height) to match the table heights and to address safety concerns. He said that they would be aluminum clad, double-hung windows. He asked if he could have the option of using the single window design if he were able to convince the tenant.

The Committee considered the evaluation criteria. The voted 5-0 (Mr. Everett did not vote) to recommend approval of the application with the following optional change

- o Three single windows placed in-line with the existing windows can be substituted for the proposed paired and single windows.

Minutes

The minutes were not available.

Adjournment

The Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Smith
Administrative Officer

These minutes are subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which they are acted upon.