

Montpelier Design Review Committee
September 5, 2006
Memorial Room, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

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

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Margot George at 5:30 p.m.

I. Design Review for Sign Permit Application – CB-II/DCD

147 State Street

Applicant: Century 21 – Jack Associates

- 24” x 36” ground sign

Interested Party: Lori Pinard

Ms. George said the colors of the sign are the standard black, white and gold of the Century 21 organizations. Lori Pinard said the sign that is presently there is being completely removed. Ms. George inquired if there was going to be any exterior lighting. Ms. Pinard said Dick Thurston had told her lighting was allowed in her zone. The material for the construction is aluminum with reflective vinyl. Ms. Pinard said she requested that their sign be refreshed and the owners of the company are giving her a new sign. Ms. George inquired what material the posts were going to be. Ms. Pinard said factory coated black aluminum. Ms. George said the DRC could give her the option for either aluminum or wooden posts. The posts are 4” x 4” maximum size posts. The posts are a flat black and the reflective vinyl will be a shiny black.

Mr. Everett said he is concerned they are replacing a wooden sign with a shiny black vinyl sign. All of the signs on the street are of wooden materials. Ms. George told the applicant that members of the DRC had some concerns with regard to the application. The concerns have to do with the materials as well as the glossiness of the sign itself. The glossiness could be reduced to a flat black material. The other element to be changed would be to have a wooden post rather than metal. She said it wasn't actually listed on the application whether there would be wooden posts, so one of the options could be that they would be wooden posts, or the metal posts could be just a flat black finish. The sign itself could remain black with white letters and gold trim and the posts could be white.

Ms. George asked Lori if there would be a problem with having white posts. Mr. Gilbertson said he thought white wooden posts would help. The old sign had more detail that fit the building.

Mr. Gilbertson said the proposed sign looks rather flat. It is very commercial in a residential neighborhood. The sign doesn't have to scream at you. Ms. Lane said if you look at the old sign with the house, you'll notice that the top of the sign replicates the windows, and it all fits together. She said that is a significant architectural detail for that particular house which is on a visible corner.

Ms. Lane said when she sees a Century 21 sign she automatically assumes the house is for sale versus seeing the sign and understanding it is the business office. Ms. George agreed that was an interesting point, but the applicant is entitled to have a new sign.

Ms. Smith said the illustration shows the height of the sign. She asked if this accurately reflects the proposed 40" height relative to the sign that sits behind it. Ms. Pinard said she didn't know and hadn't measured.

Ms. George said there were a couple of options. If Ms. Pinard was able to decide on changes to the sign they could agree on some alterations that might work. If she doesn't think so, then they can table the application and she can come back to the DRC again. Ms. Pinard said the owners won't want an ugly sign on the corner of the building, either. She said the sign that is there is perfectly fine. It just needs a new insert, which is almost identical to the old sign but rectangular. It just needs a face lift. Ms. George inquired if she thought the present structure could be used with a new insert. Ms. Pinard said she thought it would work. Perhaps the post might need to be replaced because it is rotted at the base. Ms. Smith said if they repaired that sign they wouldn't need a permit.

Ms. George said that basically the existing sign is square and doesn't have the little peak. She said the DRC could deal with just having her square off the sign itself, attach it to the existing sign stand, and we could approve your application. That way would be the least amount of change. Ms. Pinard said it would be the same identical sign that is there. Ms. Smith said she wouldn't need a permit.

Ms. George said the Design Review Committee would vote on just taking the sign portion and voting on whether the paint is shiny or flat. She said they were voting on it without changing the posts or the sign structure. Mr. Gilbertson said he would like to vote on is replacing the insert with the new insert and reflective lettering, and if it is done that way we don't have to worry about the peak. He doesn't care if it is shiny or not because it is surrounded by the white wood. It will look more like a permanent sign that way. Mr. Tapper said he would suggest that reflective lettering on a flat surface might work better than reflective on a shiny surface. The black should remain a flat black. Ms. George said to be perfectly clear there is no lighting. Mr. Tapper asked if the lighting was included as an option if that might be something they might consider. Ms. George said they could resurrect the gooseneck light then. Ms. Smith said the lighting would illuminate it during business hours. The sign should be rectangular with no peak. There will only be light on one side.

Ms. George asked Ms. Pinard if she was interested in incorporating the changes they had suggested and voting on the application as amended. She said yes.

The optional changes are that the gooseneck lighting may be restored with no greater than a 40 watt white light. Adjustments to the scope are a rectangular panel flat black with the reflective elements. The light fixture, if you decide to replace it, could be black or bronze colored chrome. Replacing the wooden posts would be just repairing the sign. Ms. George said all they are voting on today is the insert with black reflective lettering.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria.

Evaluation Criteria in § 811:

1) Design Review standards in § 505.F:

- a. Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style if the proposed project is in the historic district or involves and historic structure. **Not applicable.**
- b. Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district; **Flat background with small reflective lettering, similar to gold leaf.**
- c. Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district; **Wood and metal are prevalent.**
- d. Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district; **Not applicable.**
- e. Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials; **3 color is excellent.**
- f. Location and appearance of all utilities; **Pre-existing.**

- g. Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House; **Appropriate sign for a residential building.**
- 2) Conformance with *Cityscape* placement and design recommendations; **Existing ground sign is being repaired.**
- 3) Compatibility with subject property and adjacent properties; **Not applicable.**
- 4) Shall not obscure significant architectural details; **Not applicable.**
- 5) Consistency and uniformity of multiple signs in CB-II and OP districts; **Pre-existing.**
- 6) Illumination; internally lit plastic signs are prohibited; **Not applicable.**
- 7) Pennants and banners are prohibited, except as public announcement in § 811.B(e); **Not applicable.**
- 8) Individual letters affixed, painted or engraved directly on the building or structure are encouraged. **Not applicable.**

The Design Review Committee voted in favor of the application with the option for reinstalling the gooseneck lighting and adjustment of scope to a rectangular. The vote was 5-0 in favor of the application.

Ms. Lane said she wanted it perfectly clear that the sign structure remains as it is presently. It says elements to be applied to the existing sign structure. Ms. Lane said she wanted the DRB to be absolutely clear that Vicki Lane objects to any change to the structure of the sign.

II. Design Review – CB-II/DCD

127 Elm Street

Applicant: Benjamin & Yvonne Wall

- Addition of dormer

The applicant is replacing a small dormer with a larger one at 127 Elm Street.

Mr. Wall said the building is a story and three quarters, so there really isn't much room upstairs to do much. They are putting the dormer on to make use of a full bathroom instead of a partial bathroom upstairs. On the back of the house it will work fine for them. He is matching everything he has already done to the building. It is the same siding, a clear cedar. The windows are weather shield to match the existing ones. The roof will be the same as the existing roof. Ms. George asked if he was painting the siding. Mr. Wall said that it is clear and it will naturally turn dark. It will weather to a dark brown within a year.

Ms. George asked if there were any concerns from members of the Design Review Committee. The DRC reviewed the Evaluation Criteria.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 1) Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style if the proposed project is in the historic district or involves an historic structure; **Not applicable.**
- 2) Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district; **Shed dormers on the rear of houses are acceptable.**
- 3) Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district; **Wood materials.**
- 4) Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district; **Not applicable.**
- 5) Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials; **Matches existing.**
- 6) Location and appearance of all utilities; **Not applicable.**
- 7) Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House; **Riverview is not impaired.**

The application for 127 Elm Street to add a dormer was approved unanimously by the DRC.

Ms. Smith explained to Benjamin & Yvonne Wall that the City Council had adopted the zoning regulations so there would be no need to move forward to get a variance.

III. Design Review – OP/DCD

1 National Life Drive

Applicant: KJK Wireless for Clearwire LLC

- Addition of three panel antennas, 2 microwave antennas, one equipment cabinet and associated equipment

Interested Parties: Ed Flannagan, National Life
Bob Gashlin, Clearwire, LLC

Ed Flannagan appeared on behalf of National Life with Bob Gashlin who is representing Clearwire. Clearwire is a wireless internet company that wants to put some equipment on the roof of National Life on the north building. Presently, that building is used for Nextel Communications, Verizon, Sprint, Montpelier Net. This is the north building which is the main building. This is just adding antennas to each corner of the building.

What is up on the roof presently are some antennas for Nextel and Sprint, and this is just adding another antenna. This will be on a new post, which is about 7 feet tall. Mr. Gilbertson said it says here that no equipment will extend above the highest elevation of the existing building. Mr. Flannagan said the penthouse is up here, and it is actually higher than everything in the existing area. It is the elevator penthouse.

Ms. Smith said as a point of clarification it is the elevator tower that none of the equipment will be taller than. Mr. Flannagan said they would be the same height as the existing ones. The existing ones up there presently are about 6 ½ feet. The antenna itself is about 3” wide and 3 feet tall, and that is flushed to the post.

Ms. Lane said she recalled the last time they did antennas on the National Life building there was some discussion pertaining to how many more we may see. Ms. Smith said in 2001 when they received the variance there was nothing in the decision that references if there was going to be a limit on the number of antennas to be placed on top of the building. Mr. Flannagan said there is additional proposals coming forth. The State wants to put some additional antennas up there. The City of Montpelier has equipment up there. This is the most appropriate location for antennas in the city. Mr. Richardson said National Life has security cameras up there. There are all kinds of things on top of that building.

Mr. Flannagan said under FCC rules the federal government dictates what can and cannot go up there, and this doesn't come close to those.

Ms. Lane said she would like them to start thinking of ways, if these are going to continue to multiply.

Bob Gashlin of Clearwire said he spoke with Stephanie on the phone last week and we discussed that the DRC might think it would be a good recommendation to state the antenna be painted a matte finish so it wouldn't be a shiny beacon on top of the building. Ms. Smith said she came to the conclusion that the finish wasn't shiny, anyway.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 1) Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style if the proposed project is in the historic district or involves an historic structure; **Not applicable.**
- 2) Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district; **All antennas are on tall building roofs.**

- 3) Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district; **Antennas are similar to existing on roof – metal.**
- 4) Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district; **Not applicable.**
- 5) Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials; **Antennas will be a non-shiny surface, non-reflecting.**
- 6) Location and appearance of all utilities; **Placed with others on a tall building.**
- 7) Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House. **Not applicable.**

The Design Review Committee approved the application for Clearwire, LLC to place three more antennas on the roof of National Life unanimously.

IV. Design Review – CB-II/DCD

104-108 Elm Street

Applicant: City of Montpelier

- Installation of a 5' high black vinyl coated chain link fence.

Interested Party: Ginny Mackey

Ms. Smith said this is an application from the City of Montpelier for a black vinyl coated chain link fence located near the landslide dump. They want a permit for the chain link fence that is already up. Ms. Smith said it is a safety issue. It is going to be in two sections, along the toe of the ledge at the back of the public sidewalk.

The DRC reviewed the Evaluation Criteria.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 1) Preservation or reconstruction of the appropriate historic style if the proposed project is in the historic district or involves an historic structure. **Not applicable.**
- 2) Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district. **Engineered fence for safety and accident prevention.**
- 3) Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district. **Black vinyl coated fence.**
- 4) Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district. **Not applicable.**
- 5) Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials. **Not applicable.**
- 6) Location and appearance of all utilities. **Not applicable.**
- 7) Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House. **Not applicable.**

The DRC approved the City of Montpelier's application to install a 5 foot high black vinyl coated chain link fence on 104-108 Elm Street by the landslide area. The vote was 6-0 in favor of the application.

The DRC tabled both the Jon Anderson and Phil Willey applications for a future meeting.

One of the DRC members inquired what they had put up in front of the Post Office. They were put there to stop a car from plowing into the Post Office. Someone inquired if they had come through the Design Review Committee. Ms. George said no that they were a gift. She said the committee had spent a lot of time redoing the front of the building and landscaping. It would be better to just have granite blocks that people could sit on than the barriers. Someone said someone should really talk to Stephanie about the Post Office. It will be in the minutes. The DRC is really serious about the Post Office and think it should come before Design Review.

Ms. George said that Vince Illuzzi had hired Sandy Vitzhum and a drafts person to come up with a new plan. That may be on the agenda in two weeks and she won't be here. She said she was counting on the committee to look closely at the application and make the appropriate vote.

Minutes:

After just having read the minutes for August 8th, Vicki Lane, Margot George and Guy Tapper find they are in acceptance of the minutes except for the change on the 138 Main Street evaluation criteria #3, "Margot George said the history of the building is that Mr. Brock built the building right after the 1875 fires and that **he built with as many nonflammable materials as possible.** The minutes were approved with that one change.

Adjournment

The Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Smith
Administrative Officer

Prepared by Joan Clack
City Clerk & Treasurer's Office