

**Montpelier Design Review Committee**  
**September 19, 2006**  
**Memorial Room, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Stephen Everett, Vice Chair; Eric Gilbertson; Guy Tapper; and Daniel Richardson.  
Stephanie Smith, Staff

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Everett, Vice Chair at 5:30 p.m.

**Comments from the Chair:**

Mr. Everett, acting chair of the Committee, told participants the Design Review Committee is advisory to the Development Review Board. They review projects placed before them, and based on those decisions advise the DRB, who has the final decision on the applications. The first item on the agenda is a continuation of an application for 9-11 West Street by Willey Construction for the replacement of a retaining wall.

**I. Continuation of Design Review – HDR/DCD**

9-11 West Street

Applicant: Willey Construction, Inc.

- Replacement of retaining wall with pre-cast concrete block

Ms. Smith said the application is for the retaining wall which the DRC gave a preliminary review awhile back because it was collapsing. Also part of the application is the proposed removal of a berm of 2 to 3 feet high, which was part of the original permit, on the west side of the parking lot.

Mr. Willey said he brought in a photograph of the replacement wall so you could see how it looked completed. It is similar to stucco but more adherent with a little texture to it. Actually, there is another type of pre-cast block that was about three times more expensive than the block they ended up using.

Mr. Richardson said that previously the DRC had asked Mr. Willey to go to the neighbors to see if they had any preferences. Did they express any opinion? Mr. Willey said he submitted letters from adjoining property owners and they had no issues to the wall they put in place.

Mr. Everett said for the record the letters the committee has received are from Dan Clair, Beth and Russell Downing, and Steve Hingtgen. Russell Downing stated in regard to Willey Construction Company replacing granite stonewall, "I am one of the adjoining neighbors affected by this project. My address is 99-101 East State Street. I met with Willey and agreed to the pre-cast concrete block." Dan Clair said, "I am aware and support the use of wrapped concrete block as the replacement of the collapsing retaining wall at 9-11 West Street." Obviously, 2 of the 3 letters support the project. Steve Hintgen lives at 7 West Street.

Mr. Everett asked if members of the committee had any questions or concerns on that portion of the project. Members agreed that the end result of the retaining wall was acceptable.

Mr. Everett said the second portion of the application was the removal of the earth berm. He asked Mr. Willey to reiterate the reasons why he wanted to eliminate that. Mr. Willey said they did the basic site plan of the project in January. They had all of the dimensions to the property lines, and they used a metal detector to find property pins so they would have an accurate reading on the dimensions of the lot. In the spring of this year they found a different pin which placed a 2-3 foot berm in the center of the adjacent properties driveway. They use a portion of the 11 West Street property to access their lot.

Mr. Gilbertson said the reason the berm had been discussed in the first place was to address a concern the DRC had with transforming this residential area into a parking lot and destroying essentially what they saw as the

rear lawn of this property, which had been previously used as an informal driveway with grass. We didn't want to turn it into a single paved area, so that is why they had Mr. Willey add the trees at the corner as well as the berm isolating it rather than making it one single paved area. Mr. Willey said the biggest concern of the DRC was cars coming into the new parking area lining up and pointing their headlights into the living room of the adjoining property. The DRC thought adding a berm would buffer this a bit, but the people of the adjoining property said their living room is on the other side of the house and it isn't an issue for them at all. Mr. Richardson said he could see a modification that would reflect the driveway aspect of it, but as it stands now it is pretty much all paved. The DRC's concern of breaking up the parking is still valid. The driveway for safe access is 12 to 14 feet, and then this area, whether this area as it grows is a bigger berm towards the garage, the concerns are still there about keeping the greenspace still exists. Another thing debated back in February was what to put there. Mr. Willey said there was talk about a tree line or hedge line, and they didn't think that would work because of road salt. Then they discussed snow removal. Ms. Smith said the one problem she sees with grass is the control of maintaining the grass will be the burden of the West Street property owners, when those who use this area is the East State Street property.

Mr. Everett said he noticed the hedge that grows along the porch seems to be fairly healthy. That seems to have survived the plowing and salt pretty well. Perhaps you could plant something like that there. *Potentilla* is salt tolerant, along with *rose rugosa*. They are both hardy shrub species. Mr. Willey said they just need to address snow removal and something that is not going to break down in two or three years. People are willing to do whatever the DRC recommends. Both property owners would like to see the berm eliminated, particularly the Downing house because they want the extra parking space.

Mr. Richardson said a curb would make sense, too, because of concern with the Downing property parking vehicles in this area. He said a curb could be used and narrowing it to conform to the property line and while maintaining 12 to 14 feet for the driveway. Mr. Willey said the curb would only come as far as the new curb that is in place now and not any closer to the street. Mr. Richardson said he thought 2 or 3 feet of grass marked by two curbs would make a big difference, particularly if you planted it with shrubs instead of grass. It would clearly delineate the property and provide greenspace.

Ms. Smith said a second curb parallel to the existing curb with a 2 to 3 foot wide green area in between. The green area would be planted with grass or shrubs, something that is hardy and sustainable. Mr. Everett said bushes would look better, and it would make a big difference in how it would frame the driveway. Mr. Everett asked Mr. Willey if the conditions the DRC had suggested were amenable to him. Mr. Willey said he was sure it would be fine with Vermont Consultants. Mr. Everett said there should be a second curb along with grass or shrubbery. Ms. Smith said the green area will have to be maintained green. Mr. Everett said he would prefer shrubs but grass would be fine. The DRC can give them the option to do either.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. He said they would do the evaluation criteria for both the retaining wall and the addition of the curbing and greenspace.

### **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.* That would not be applicable.
- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district.* Greenspace to maintain the residential feel of the neighborhood as well as aesthetics.
- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district.* Not applicable.
- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district.* Acceptable.
- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials.* Acceptable. The greenspace will prevent uninterrupted paved area between the two lots.

- 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 recommends placing a second curb parallel to the existing curb at the same length and 2 to 3 feet in width, depending upon the width of the Downing driveway, with a greenspace between the curbs with the option of planting grass or hardy shrubs, such as *rosa rigosa* or *potentilla*. The retaining wall is approved as submitted.

The application was approved unanimously.

## **II. Continuation of Design Review – HDR/DCD**

4 Witt Place

Applicant: Jon Anderson

- Raise porch railing from 25” to 42”
- Installation of standing seam metal roof

Jon Anderson said his application is proposing to do two things. One is to put a standing seam metal roof on a house that they own at 4 Witt Place. He said he believed they discussed the last time that standing seam metal roofs particularly in Vermont are historically appropriate. The one question he understood the DRC asked was whether we wanted galvanized steel or some color metal, and his wife wants a colored metal. It is dark bronze.

Jon Anderson said his insurance company is requiring him to raise the height of the railing that is on the front of the porch. They want them to raise the railing to 42 inches. Mr. Anderson presented new drawings of the railing to the Design Review Committee. He believed the DRC wanted him to put a batten strip on top of the existing railing and to have simple spindles. The spindles will be chamfered and the railing will be milled and it will be a Victorian type. There will be a railing that goes up the stairs too, with the same spindles.

Mr. Richardson asked if the spindles on the new railing will go on above the existing ones, and Mr. Anderson said yes. Mr. Everett inquired what the spacing was on the existing spindles. Mr. Anderson said they are more than 6 inches, and they have to have spacing less than 6 inches. Mr. Everett said that is what the new code is for. Mr. Anderson said the insurance company wanted him to do 6 inches so that is what they applied for – no more than 5 ½ inches on center. They will be painted to match the existing tan ones on the house, which are the colors on the house when they bought it. They are going to use the same milled railing and straight spindles on the stairs. The railing going up the stairs now is not an old railing, so they are just going to replace that one.

The DRC reviewed the criteria for the railing and standing seam metal roof at 4 Witt Place.

### **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.* Acceptable. Wood railings and standing seam metal roofs are commonly used. Mr. Anderson said they are trying to be consistent with the Department of the Interior.
- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district.* Acceptable.
- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district.* None proposed.
- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials.* Acceptable. See above. Paint colors are to remain the same and a dark bronze roof is acceptable.
- 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 the State House.* Not applicable.

The Design Review Committee voted 4-0 in favor of the design review for the 4 Witt Place application.

### **III. Design Review – CB-II/DCD**

132 Main Street

Applicant: Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare, Inc.

- Remove existing porch and steps. Replace door with siding to enclose and paint to match existing colors.

Interested Party: Helen Riehle

Helen Riehle, Executive Director of Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare, Inc., said they want to remove the porch. It is a side porch and they do not use this doorway. They currently have two usable entrances and want to remove this one. The building is directly across from the Kellogg-Hubbard Library, and they have recently painted it. The entrance they use is where the downstairs suite is. They have an additional front door with three interior doors that open on to the foyer with an outside entrance in the front. There are two ways to exit the building. It appears that the porch is not original. It doesn't match anything and is rather ugly. They would like to tear down the porch and remove the door and fill that in with siding that matches the siding on either side. Ms. Smith inquired if they removed the door, would they also remove the light. Ms. Riehle said they could because it would no longer serve any purpose.

Mr. Everett asked what the door was like that was behind the screen door. Ms. Riehle said it was a standard wooden door but it doesn't match the other doors. Mr. Everett asked Ms. Riehle what her opinion was with filling that face with clapboards. Ms. Smith asked if the trim detail around the door would be retained. Mr. Gilbertson said he wouldn't approve anything that didn't retain all of the trim. It would have to be completed in such a way that somebody could put the door back if they wanted to. Mr. Everett asked Mr. Gilbertson if he would paint the infill the lighter color to match the rest of the trim, and Mr. Gilbertson said yes.

Mr. Richardson said he didn't have a problem with getting rid of the porch. But keep the door frame as well as the exterior frames of the transom, and then just filling that in with clapboards to match the rest of the building. Mr. Gilbertson inquired if they had looked to see what the foundation was like. Ms. Riehle said that they think it is granite block like the rest of the building.

Mr. Everett said what if the DRC made a condition of the permit that should the foundation not match what appears to be the granite foundation on either side that there be incorporated some type of plantings that would hide the foundation.

Mr. Richardson said they could put the door in the attic, and then if anybody wanted to use it later it would still be around for future use.

Ms. Smith said she had a question of clarification on the address. She said all of the previously issued permits were for 136 Main Street, and this application is 132 Main Street. Ms. Riehle said it used to be under one ownership and then made into condominiums. 136 Main Street is the address for the Medical Society, which is the carriage house behind them. 132 Main Street is the address for Mr. Ritvo's condominium on the second floor.

Ms. Smith said based on her research 132 Main Street is also the BankNorth on the corner and 134 is the Unitarian Church.

The Design Review Committee went through the conditions of the permit before reviewing the evaluation criteria.

- The removal of the light.
- To set the clapboards within the door frame setback so it is recessed a little bit.
- All of the trim should remain intact. When we talk about the trim, (the colors that are painted out different from the clapboard).

- The transom would be filled in with the clapboard as well. That would be painted cream to match the house.
- They should keep the door that is being removed.
- There should be some plantings.
- There is a threshold that needs to stay and be painted the same color as the trim.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the Evaluation Criteria for the application at 132 Main Street.

**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.* Acceptable. Filling in unused openings with clapboard is the traditional method of dealing with them.
- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district.* Acceptable. Maintain existing doorway profile and trim while closing the opening for functional use with appropriate materials is acceptable.
- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district.* Acceptable.
- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district.* Additional plantings will be installed to continue the existing landscaping plan.
- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials.* Acceptable.
- 6) *Location and appearance of all utilities.* Removal of non-historic light.
- 7) *Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway views of the city and State House.* Not applicable.
- 8) *Project is not historically or architecturally significant.* You could include the porch because they are talking about demolishing the porch. The porch doesn't appear to be original.
- 9) *No alternative to demolition is economically feasible.* Not applicable.

The Design Review Committee voted 4-0 in favor to approve the application to tear down the existing porch and 132 Main Street.

**IV. Continuation of Design Review – HDR/DCD**

160 & 162 Main Street

Applicant: Franklin Square Homeowners Association

- Exterior insulation of foundation

Interested Parties: Lucinda McCloud & Gail Barrows

Ms. Smith said this application refers to both 160 and 162 Main Street.

Ms. McCloud said she had only been living at 160 Main Street for about a year and a half. This is her third visit to the Design Review Committee. The insulation was put on in error. They didn't realize they needed a permit to do it. They came to the Design Review Committee and were asked to get some recommendations from energy experts to explore other treatments, which they did and paid for. The energy experts, specifically Efficiency Vermont, said this was the most cost efficient to insulate the building. The reason this was done initially was because the pipes were freezing and there were a lot of problems.

After the first meeting they went back and received information from the energy experts and came back with a plan for alternatives on how to cover up the ugly metal that is on the outside of the building. At the second meeting the Committee still didn't like the idea of us insulating on the outside. We came up with several alternatives. One is the old Cancer Society building and the Humanities Council. We had a drawing made of how we would apply this hopefully nondescript stucco kind of finish over the metal and put a trim around it to make it look better. Gail Barrows can tell you more about the history than she can.

This building was originally bought and renovated by the City of Montpelier in the 1970's, and they have run into a lot of problems with things not being done right. They have saved approximately \$2,000 in heating bills per year since the insulation was put in. They want it to look nice as well as historic, but they would like to be able to heat their buildings. All of the experts have told them the rubble foundation is the way to go, to insulate from the outside and not from the inside.

Ms. Barrows said she thought the first photograph they submitted shows the stucco flex material. The grey is the finish and the yellow is over galvanized sheet metal, which can be as thick or thin as you want. It can be troweled on to be rough or smooth or swirled. This photograph was taken on Richardson Road in Barre, which was done about the same time as theirs' was. The longevity of the product is good, but the product they have now is even better.

The trim is what is on the building currently, which was put on by the city, and they thought they could mirror that. It is a very simple mitered molding or trim, and it is white. The committee reviewed different photographs of examples of the kind of insulation the applicants were contemplating using.

Mr. Everett said you would have to trim the existing insulation you have. It looks like from the drawing that at least two-thirds of the trim board is into the existing styrofoam and metal. Basically, you are looking at it as a cutaway. They would have to maintain the existing metal and put a thinner material on the face of the metal, and then spray on the stucco material below that surface down to the ground. Then, there is the drip cap at the top, and they would have to take a saw and cut underneath so the drip cap would fit because the drip cap would be sitting on top of the existing metal.

Ms. Smith said Mr. Everett is saying you would have to trim the bottom of the corner post so that would be flushed, too. Mr. Richardson said maybe they should append Mr. Everett 's modified drawing to the application. Mr. Richardson said this treatment of exterior insulation is not something the committee would normally approve and they would want future applicants to pursue other options. It is important that the record notes this. Mr. Everett said that once it is done if they are worried about any damage from weed whackers plant shrubbery and mulch it so the machinery never gets close.

Mr. Richardson said they are not empowered to make economic determinations because everyone would say it is cheaper to just tear it down and not follow the historic style. There seems to be enough evidence, at least for his satisfaction, that this is the best way to go as a form of mitigation.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria for the application at 162 Main Street.

### **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.* This was done inappropriately ahead of time and this proposal is an improvement. This treatment will be used at both buildings. The existing foundation insulation treatment is unacceptable. The proposed modifications are acceptable to correct that existing addition and appearance.
- 2) *Harmony of exterior design with other properties in the district.* The application of a wood water drip cap and horizontal wood trim and the dove gray stucco finish to replicate the original foundation color. This is acceptable.
- 3) *Compatibility of proposed exterior materials with other properties in the district.* Wood and masonry materials common.
- 4) *Compatibility of the proposed landscaping with the district.* N/A. They can plant what they wish as an optional condition. The applicant can plant other landscaping around the project which is compatible with other landscaping.

- 5) *Prevention of the use of incompatible designs, buildings, color schemes, or exterior materials.*  
Acceptable because the proposed project mitigates the condition created by the applicants without a permit.
- 6) *Location and appearance of all utilities.* N/A.
- 7) *Recognition of and respect for view corridors and significant vistas including gateway view of the city and State House.* N/A.

Ms. Smith said she would provide the modified drawing to the applicant and to the Development Review Board so they would understand what the plan is. This will be a condition of the permit.

The Design Review Committee recommended the application for 162 Main Street receive approval 4-0.

**V. 1 Hopkins Street**

Replacement of windows

Applicant: Chris Hancock & Pat Song

Ms. Smith said they just bought the Castle Residence at 1 Hopkins Street. They are interested in installing storm windows. Mr. Hancock said there are two levels. The basement windows are probably the simpler issue. On the first level the old windows are very leaky and someone was recommending Marvin replacement windows that will look a lot like what is there now. Mr. Everett said he shouldn't worry about replacing the basement windows.

For the basement windows they would be switching to vinyl. It is a fieldstone foundation. Mr. Everett said the best thing he could use a dark brown or charcoal color that would match the foundation and if it is behind any plantings it will look a lot better than with a white sash. Mr. Hancock said what is there now is white wood. The DRC said he could replace the basement windows with an aluminum clad window too. It is more durable than vinyl. Ms. Smith said she wasn't sure she would be able to approve the basement windows for vinyl replacement. Because the original windows are wood, this committee is charged with preserving the historic significance of the building and replacing a wooden window with a vinyl one would change the character of the building. Regardless if it is in the basement, 1<sup>st</sup> level or 2<sup>nd</sup> level of the building, it has the same importance, so he would have to go through the approval process for the windows.

**Minutes:**

The Committee tabled the minutes until a later meeting when more members would be there to approve them.

**Adjournment:**

The Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Smith,  
Administrative Officer

Transcribed & Prepared by: Joan Clack, City Clerk's Office