

Montpelier Design Review Committee
May 8, 2007
Memorial Room, City Hall

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Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the
meeting at which they are acted upon.*

Present: Margot George, Chair; Daniel Richardson, Vicki Lane, Eric Gilbertson, and Guy Tapper.
Kathy Swigon and Leslie Ratley-Beach, Staff.

Call to Order:

Margot George, Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. Design Review – CB-I/DCD

2 Cliff Street

Applicant: David Diamantis

Dormer addition on front of building, skylights on rear, new window and balcony/fire escape on gable end, replace asphalt roof with standing seam metal.

Margot George recused herself from discussion on this agenda item.

Ms. Lane said the Cliff Street application was on the agenda for the Montpelier Design Review Committee at the last meeting, but the Committee didn't have sufficient materials to make a decision. The applicant agreed to come back with some revised and additional materials necessary

Mr. Diamantis said the first two pages are the new plans. There have been a couple of revisions. He tried to clarify what some of the issues were from the last. The second page has an elevation of the side view of the proposed balcony showing the dimensions. Looking at the elevation of the building itself, they eliminated the skylight on the back of the building. The building is a little wider. He said it is really tight space inside so they tried to create a closet space toward the center of the building on the inside. That is why the second story door is now pushed to the right side of the balcony, so it makes better use of the interior space. It now swings open against a stair case, which is otherwise unusable space. Now there is an option for a closet in the hallway.

Mr. Diamantis said the plan now shows a better picture of what the actual doors will look like.

Mr. Richardson asked if he envisioned painting the wooden door. Mr. Diamantis said he would like the option for either. Presently, the front door on the front of the house is an orange color. A third door in wood would look nicely. Ms. Lane said if he painted the door he would need some color specification. The Committee could give him some options.

Mr. Diamantis said on the revised drawing it shows one replacement and one additional door.

Mr. Richardson said he didn't have a problem with giving the applicant the option of the submitted wood doors or fiberglass door that matched it to be painted. They could either be kept natural or painted in a complementary color to the existing house colors with the stipulation that both doors would be the same color. Ms. Lane said she would prefer to specify a color range or color scheme. Mr. Richardson said he feels keeping it as a fir colored door would be the committee's preference. Mr. Gilbertson said the door issue is resolved.

Mr. Diamantis said the windows are wood core vinyl clad with simulated divided lights. There are two 6 foot square awnings in the top of the dormer. There are five windows total, four are identical which are the awning window. There is one on the gable end, which are a casement window and the egress window. Mr. Gilbertson said he preferred a single pane window would be better for small windows in the dormer. It was the committee's consensus that divided lights were acceptable. The applicant could have the option for no divider. The committee was okay with the roof materials and paint colors.

The applicant showed a prototype of the balcony they were proposing. There won't be any scroll work on this balcony. Mr. Richardson said the new photographs satisfy his concerns with the look of the balcony. Mr. Diamantis said there would be square tubing balusters and painted a black semi-gloss.

Mr. Richardson said the applicant is proposing an onion shaped lantern with a dark bronze finish. The committee had no issues with the proposed lighting. They said they could give the applicant the option for placement of the lighting on either side of the doors for the light location.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and found them acceptable.

Mr. Richardson said he would note for the minutes that the revised building plans are the ones the committee is discussing and approving. The old ones would be withdrawn. Ms. Swigon said they would reference the "received date" instead of the revision date.

The DRC's recommendations to the Development Review Board will be lighting fixtures may be located to the left or right of the doors. The door may be either a fir door or fiberglass that is of the same style and appearance. A fir door is recommended to be left a natural wood color. A fiberglass or fir door may also be painted a complementary color to the existing house colors. Dormer windows have the option of being either a single pane instead of the four panes simulated divided light. It is noted that the original application for a skylight have now been removed from the proposal. The applicant said the recommendations and options were acceptable to him.

The applicant received approval on a vote of 4-0.

II. Design Review – MDR/DCD

7 Hubbard Street

Applicant: Jo-Ann Lowell

Replacing windows and adding vinyl siding.

Interested Party: Timothy Bashaw, Contractor

The applicant appeared today to change windows and siding. Mr. Bashaw said they were replacing the old double hung windows with Farley windows. They are single grill replacement windows, and all of the openings are the same. Ms. Lowell said the color of the siding is barn red and there is a mahogany trim around the windows. The size of the clapboards is going to be 4 inch revealed and a 4 inch corner. There is a vinyl outside corner.

Ms. George said she drove by the property today and noticed he had started the work. She inquired if the insulation was directly applied to the clapboards, and the siding is going over it. One of the members inquired about the rot. Mr. Bashaw said he wanted to strip all of the wood off, but it was a cost issue so the rot is being replaced as he does the job.

The committee discussed the potential water problem and the problem with the vinyl siding sealing so that vapor doesn't escape. Vinyl siding doesn't let a building breathe and actually promotes rot. Mr. Gilbertson stated that putting vinyl siding on a house in a historic district is something that he doesn't like, both from an appearance point of view and from a practical point of view. You are covering up some basic issues with the building by putting vinyl siding over it and the moisture is trapped.

Ms. George said this is a relatively small house so it isn't hard to paint. Sometimes people turn to siding when they want to deal with difficult areas to paint. Ms. Lane said they want to cover up the lead paint.

Mr. Richardson said for the buildings they have reviewed in the historic district they have not approved applications for vinyl siding because one of the committee's charges within the zoning ordinance is to preserve and disapprove permits that do not preserve the historic structure. From the evidence that has been presented in this application vinyl siding is not going to cure the rot or preserve the structure underneath. This may mask and worsen the situation which the committee simply can't approve. There is a very narrow area which they can consider vinyl siding in a historic district for a building.

Ms. Lowell said the neighbor who abuts her property has vinyl siding on it. The building is on 82 Barre Street. Mr. Richardson said that may be outside the historic district because there is a certain point on Barre Street that it ends. Ms. George said she believed the siding was installed before the zoning ordinance was passed for the historic district. The historic district is downtown.

The windows have been replaced. They are single grid windows. Ms. George told the applicant that they would review the windows prior to installation. The committee's opinion on windows is that they should be replaced with a like material.

Ms. George asked if he was leaving the lattice as is. Mr. Bashaw said it is a vinyl lattice, white in color. Ms. Lane inquired if there was an issue with the existing lattice so that it needs to be changed. Mr. Bashaw said he was going to do everything in vinyl because it is low maintenance. One of the members voiced concern that there wouldn't be any wood showing on the house. If the vinyl siding isn't approved, then it makes sense that a vinyl lattice wouldn't be approved either. Ms. Lane said she would have difficulty approving a vinyl lattice.

Ms. George said the Committee is reviewing vinyl siding, which is something that the Board will not act affirmative on, or the vinyl lattice. Anything covering existing wood won't be good. She said what the committee is trying to express that by covering over what could be a serious ventilation problem in the building is not the cure for the rot. There is water that tries to get out of the building and aluminum or vinyl siding is not acceptable material.

There are windows already installed with interior muntions. Mr. Gilbertson said he was willing to approve the windows since they have been installed. He prefers they not be vinyl windows because it is only a 20-year window. Vinyl breaks down. Mr. Richardson said he agreed with Mr. Gilbertson. Unlike other structures, this one in particular, the profile of the muntions on the windows isn't as important. They have rejected vinyl windows in other projects simply because the profile is an important architectural feature, though it isn't here. The committee's concern ultimately is the preservation of the building in its existing historic style. Without further evidence either vinyl or aluminum can't be sustained. He said he would only add to the record that the cityscape standards on pages 63 and 64 really delineate that standard for siding. It allows siding within a fairly narrow spectrum.

The committee reviewed the criteria noting the committee will be approving the windows with reservation. Vinyl siding is not a preservation treatment. Mr. Richardson said there are two options. We can vote on this and see where it goes. Mr. Bashaw hasn't looked into the moisture problem. Mr. Richardson suggested the applicant go back and look into the moisture problem and find out why the paint is peeling. Then, he can modify the proposal using the cityscape standards and come back to the committee with a revised application.

Ms. George said she wouldn't want the applicant to have hope that the vinyl siding would be approved. Mr. Gilbertson said there are two issues with the vinyl siding. One is the integrity of the structure of the building, and the other is the appearance issue of a completely modern material with a house encased in plastic in a historic district. Regarding the harmony of the exterior design with other properties in the district, vinyl siding's appearance and the treatment on the corners and underside do not duplicate original materials of wood or original construction. That would only be the design here.

Ms. George said with regard to the compatibility of the proposed exterior materials, the committee believes that vinyl siding or lattice is not compatible with a historic district.

With regard to the windows, they are not as significant an architectural feature in this particular building. Vinyl windows are discouraged.

Ms. George said there are a lot of unacceptables with the application and a description of why. There are recommendations to the Development Review Board and made reference to the cityscape regarding synthetic siding. The Committee recommended approval of the windows. They recognized the windows were installed, they were vinyl windows and they don't disrupt the exterior appearance and find them acceptable.

The committee approved the application with just the windows being acceptable 5-0. The applicant can choose to go on to the Development Review Board at this point. He can also choose to just stop and do some research and talk to

staff about how you want to proceed. Ms. George told the applicant the committee has concerns about the structure. They don't believe encasing it in plastic is going to do any good because there is a problem with the structure breathing. The guidelines say we should be looking at wood siding on wooden buildings. If there is rot and trouble with the house that is not going to go away with vinyl siding it. But, if you can figure out what is causing the rot, then you can resolve the rot, replace the clapboards, paint and preserve the building.

III. Design Review – HDR/DCD:

186 Main Street
Applicant: Laura Peer & James Torn
Replacing exterior door with window

The applicant said the color of the window is going to be white to match the other windows. The space left from the door will be filled in with wood clapboard and painted to match the existing building. They are vinyl windows. Ms. George said the committee would encourage him to get a window that has more of a structure than just vinyl. The committee strongly recommended using a wood core window.

He is replacing a door with clapboards to infill the spot.

As an optional change the applicant may pursue at his discretion replacing the vinyl windows with wood core windows.

The committee reviewed the criteria. They voted in favor of the application as submitted unanimously 5-0.

IV. Design Review – MDR/DCD

149 Main Street
Applicant: Charles Haynes
Replacing window sashes.
Interested Party: Brad Lawson

The committee told Brad Lawson they were sorry he couldn't salvage the windows. They tried to salvage the existing windows but they didn't operate and the employees couldn't open them.

Mr. Lawson said the application is calling for Green Mountain windows. The old sashes will be sent to Recycle North, and they are going to replace the liners and sashes. They can't afford to replace them all because of the costs. They are going to replace about 90 percent and continue at the end of the year. The storm windows will be gone. There will be the same number of lights used.

The committee reviewed the criteria. The application was approved unanimously 5-0.

Review of Minutes:

Minutes of the Design Review Committee for April 3 and 17, 2007 were approved 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Swigon,
Administrative Officer

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