

Montpelier Design Review Committee

June 10, 2008

Memorial Room, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Margot George, Chair; Stephen Everett, Vice Chair; Vicki Lane, Eric Gilbertson, Guy Tapper and James Duggan.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Montpelier Design Review Committee was called to order by Eric Gilbertson at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Gilbertson explained the advisory role of the Design Review Committee and its relationship to the Development Review Board. Chair, Margot George facilitated the meeting upon her arrival.

I. 137 Barre Street – CB-II/DCD

Applicant: Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District
Construction of a handicap ramp and landscaping
Interested Parties: Leesa Stewart, Administrative Manager
Malcolm Gray, Contractor

The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District appeared before the DRC a couple of weeks ago and realized the original application submitted had been changed. Now they are discussing the rear renovations of the property. Ms. George said it was good for her to visit the property and take a look at it.

One of the first elements of the application is a light fixture. Ms. Stewart said the picture is the existing fixture, and the next page is a fixture of a similar style. They realized if they replicated the existing fixture in the handicap access location it was actually hazardous for blind people. They could walk into it. The existing fixture is a wall fixture and the proposed lighting is an overhead fixture. Ms. Stewart said the lighting would be at the back of the ramp where the porch goes on.

Ms. George said they were going to remove the garage door and three windows are going to be installed where the garage door is. Ms. Stewart said the architect said the windows are the same windows that had been installed on the back of the upstairs. Ms. George said there are three windows across they will reference as being the exact same size as the windows on the first floor at the rear.

At the back of the building there is an existing window opening and a window is going to be inserted there which will match the windows up above. Ms. Stewart said one of the frames will have to be repaired because it is rotting out.

They are going to move the oil tank.

Mr. George said as they discussed at the last meeting the fire escape is being removed and the building is going to be sprinklered.

Ms. Stewart said they visited with the Tree Warden and discussed which trees should stay and which trees should go. He agreed to come back and mark the trees that could be removed, mark the trees that only branches should be removed. They also discussed at a future date planting other trees in the area. They discussed a crab apple tree and lilac bushes in the rear and a maple tree along the bank. He thought they would be they would be the kind of trees that screen but would drop braches, which was their primary concern. Ms. George said behind the trees is a stonewall. Ms. Stewart said they would not be able to remove all of the trunk and root.

Ms. George said with regarding to the handicapped ramp they were going to come up to the front of the building, return back and go along the porch. Mr. Gray said originally it was going to be a wraparound but if they elevate it a little bit they will be able to do it in a single straight shot, which will look a little nicer. It will all be original flooring and replicating the side skirting.

Ms. Lane inquired about the trim. In the pictures the trim goes all the way around the porch. She doesn't see the trim present in the drawing. Mr. Gray said it may not be present, but they won't be taking it off because they don't need to touch the outside rail. Everything is happening on the inside of the trim. The only thing taken off is the entry piece and that will be just from the railing down. The outside stays the same.

Ms. George asked if they believed the new design is less obtrusive than the previous one. Mr. Gray replied yes.

Mr. Gilbertson inquired if there was any handicapped parking next to the ramp. Mr. Gray replied no, but there is curbside which is good for getting somebody out from the curb. Ms. George said she didn't know if they would be meeting their handicapped parking requirement if you were not able to save that space. Mr. DeSmet said they need an accessible space available. Ms. Lane said as a general rule there are no handicapped parking spaces on the street in town. Ms. George said it would be the reserve of a parking space just like the Library has the reserved space. Mr. Gray said there is a driveway for people to unload.

Ms. George said the reason they are sensitive to these posts is because about four years ago they did renovations to upstairs. Because they made it into apartments they had to put in posts that were the legal 42 inches, and it was clear in the application that they were not supposed to throw out any of the old posts. Mr. Gray said this simply going to be a post that caps above the rail height.

Ms. George said the front end of the building, as you come up to it, as some wrought iron present. Mr. Gray said they were going to reset that stair and put wood rails on the side.

Ms. George said she would like to address the adjustment to the scope of the proposal, that the ceiling light fixture be a simple porch light. An optional change would be replacing the wrought iron front step rail with wood. Mr. Gray said they might be able to make the height of the old balusters work here so they could reuse them in the front. The windows in the garage door will be in a recessed area of 2 to 4 inches. That is to show the original garage door opening. The windows are inserted into pre-existing openings. Mr. Gray said if there are new openings they will match the trim to the existing trim.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria. The application as submitted and amended was approved on a vote of 5-0.

II. 7 West Street – HDR/DCD

Applicant: Steve Hingtgen and Michelle Childs
Repaint building

David Schutz, Curator of state Buildings, did some scrapings with the applicant and found two base colors he thought were useful. They used a green and cranberry red.

Ms. George said the primary color is Canyon Gold and the shingles Brownstone. Warren Tavern is the color of the window sashes, porch skirt or lattice, and the front door. Pumpkin is the color of the front columns, the balustrade and frame of the frieze above the second floors. Merrett Apple is the color of the trim, which is all of the elements around the windows and the doors which are mostly painted white right now. Porch ceilings is painted Longfellow. Mr. Hingtgen said the first two colors are the primary colors you will see.

Mr. Hingtgen said the reason they went with these colors is that the next door neighbor has a dark brown stained cottage look and they wanted to coordinate with that. There are two buildings in the state collection around State Street that David Schutz drew on for his inspiration. One is the Buildings and Grounds building on Governor Aiken Avenue. He said that is from the same time period. The other was the Arts Council building.

Ms. George said the only unusual element Mr. Hingtgen has is the columns. Mr. Hingtgen said the building is going towards Colonial Revival a little bit. It's a Queen Anne/Colonial Revival mix.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria. The application as submitted was approved on a 5-0 vote.

III. 23-25 School Street – CB-II/DCD

Applicant: Strategic Signage Sourcing

Owner: Fairpoint Communications

Sign.

Interested Party: Robert Keyser

Mr. Keyser said the existing Verizon sign is located to the left at the entrance to the building. They are proposing that sign be removed and the Fair Point Communications sign be placed over the brick area to the right of the building and that the glass entrance doors have a vinyl decal placed on the front for safety purposes. Those are the only two changes they are proposing for this exterior signage package.

Ms. George asked if there was any reason for the public to come and go from this building. Mr. Keyser answered no.

Mr. Gilbertson suggested they place the sign between the porch and the first vent. Mr. Keyser said the sign area for the new sign itself is 3 foot and the band across that entrance is a little narrower than 3 foot so it wouldn't fit there. Ms. George asked if they could move the sign just to the right of the porch because that is the entrance. Mr. Gilbertson said it would be centered on the building that way.

Mr. Keyser said the sign materials are basically what is described with the exception that this is a vinyl applied lettering to the face of the sign. In the initial survey they did of the Montpelier area they noticed that a lot of the signs have raised aluminum or some type of material that gives a dimension to it. What they are doing in the case of Fair Point is they will all have raised letters 1/8th of an inch thick. They will be raised off of the panel rather than just a vinyl application. The letters themselves will be painted, but the color of the individual letters is the colors of the letters shown on the cut sheet and application. The letters will be made out of aluminum. There is no lighting involved. The sign will be attached from the top and bottom.

Mr. Duggan said the sign is too large.

Mr. Keyser asked what the code was.

Mr. DeSmet said it is 10 square feet maximum.

Mr. Keyser said the sign is to identify the facility. They have vehicles that go in and out of the back in the parking lot area, and it is more for a fire safety type of thing so that somebody can identify the location of the building. The reason they elected to go with a slightly larger sign is because if you look at the design of the Fair Point Communications logo in respect to Verizon if they kept it at the same size the text and the Communications, which is their brand identity, becomes so small that they couldn't build the sign using the design they have, which is the 1/8th inch cut letters.

Mr. Gilbertson said he would like to say they approve the application contingent upon not increasing the size more than 10 square feet as called for in the code. The Fire Department and Police Department are going to know where this building is. It might also be a good idea to put the street number on the door.

Mr. Keyser said they have an address of 25 School Street. They will add the number 25 over the glass entrance area.

Stephen Everett joined the meeting.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the sign criteria. An optional change may be the letters will be flat vinyl because of reducing the size of the sign. The application is compatible with the industrial design of the building. The sign is to be on the front of the building next to the doors.

The sign application for Fair Point Communications sign was approved on a 5-0 vote.

IV. 64 Main Street – CB-I/DCD

Applicant: Leslie Rabins/One More Time

Owner: Stephen Lewinstein

Installation of two windows in existing openings at rear of building

Applicant didn't show up for review of the application.

V. Stone Cutter's Way – RIV/DCD

Applicant: Nina Thompson/City of Montpelier & Bob White, Landscape Architect

Owner: Agency of Transportation

Creation of a public park at the historic turntable site on Stone Cutter's Way.

Bob White said the major point they came away with an informal discussion of members of the Design Review Committee was to essentially piece the Turntable Project together with the Pyralisk so there is an attachment of the two projects that will make a coherent ensemble of the two. There are some basic functional things about Streetscape, on-street parking, the continuation of a sidewalk along the street frontage identified by city staff, and the million dollar question of whether they can use the park as a way to tell the footprint story of what the rail relationship was to the city. The big question that came out of the meeting was whether they could do something with the round house. Actually, they found out there wasn't a round house. They went through a variety of old maps and old photographs. There were locomotive sheds that had sidings and landings, so basically they have the footprint of the salt shed building on the Pyralisk property which was a huge locomotive shed that had a series of tracks going into it. The degree to which they could they took the map, scaled it and used it as a template to interpret it as this fan like arrangement.

Mr. White said they were still keeping the turntable orientation the way it was. There is nothing for it to slide on because of the gear assembly in the pit, which is pretty decrepit at this point. From a concept standpoint, they have the routing of the old tracks. That forms the template for the performing space, which is basically a metal decked over area. They are going to be looking at a perforated metal decking surface that will be industrial and they are hoping with the banding they can do some contrasting of colors or textures on the material, as well as the decking of the bridge piece that goes over the top of the huge structural beams and a lattice work infill. It is essentially a truss like structure that is the turntable itself. They connect out to the street and the path coming along the Pyralisk goes on the river and comes in and engages the edges.

Mr. White said they are treating the inside of the turntable itself. The track and machinery is all there. It will all be removed and cleaned. They are including in the plans to have the complete resetting of it with the ties. Because it is deep, there are some railing issues around it so people won't be falling into the bottom.

Mr. White said there is a thriving habitat in the base of the turntable right now. That will all be removed with the remediation. Their hope is to use a heavy membrane geo-textile material and cover the bottom with something like river ballast, which is a heavy coarse stone so it won't make it look like too nice a place to go.

Mr. Everett asked if they were going to do the super structure that once held the wires.

Mr. White said they would like to stabilize that, and there is an overhead light they would like to restore.

Mr. White said they basically deck over the bridge itself, stabilize and rehabilitate the armature at the top and create the performing area next to it. The ring of concrete which is the edge of the foundation will be preserved. They will be taking the concrete of the walk all the way around and matching it. Then, there are the connecting walks out to the sidewalk.

From a landscape standpoint it is really a simple palate. They are looking at grass. The wall around the edge could be used as a bench for seating. The existing grade is elevation 530. The proposed grade in the bottom is 528.5, so it is an 18-inch drop. The pit itself is about 6 feet deep. Under the grill they are going to spread weed barrier and put stone over it.

There will be 8 new trees planted. The original plan they worked out with city staff years ago was using honey locust for the trees. That was partially determined because the Tree Board had some trees in their nursery they were willing to donate. Those have long been planted. They still think the honey locust is a good idea, and would be his preference. They would like to have something with a lacier texture. The Pyralisk has honey locust as well. They also propose to plant a mix of daylilies for a splash of color. They are easy to maintain, rugged and won't be in the way of the snowplow in the winter and last for years and years.

They need the deck to be ADA compliant. They decided on a dimpled material that will drain but have a little texture so it isn't slippery. They can use galvanized or straight steel and let it rust. Core 10 steel is significantly more expensive to buy.

They have shown what they are thinking about in terms of the rail systems. They are looking at a metal rail system, and where they have a safety component is the infill strips to meet code is on a 4-inch grid called cable rail. It is a tensioned cabling with a clear vinyl coating on it. That would also be put on the curb. There aren't any actual handicapped accessible ramps. It will probably be galvanized steel.

Ms. George asked because it was a straight fencing what they were doing on the curb.

Mr. White replied they would go around the perimeter. Nina included a package of some examples of lighting and trash containers used on Stone Cutter's right now, including the same bench. The lighting is the same that the Pyralisk has chosen, which the same as Hunger Mountain Coop. Basically, they agreed some overhead illumination on the corners would be appropriate just to illuminate the space.

Ms. Lane inquired if there would be little plaques with history about the turntable. Ms. George said part of the requirement is they have an interpretive plaque. Mr. White said they have located that by the diagonal walk where they would come in, and it is the same design as the rest of the plaques along Stone Cutter's Way.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. All criteria are addressed and the creative design is met. The design and adaptation of an existing historic structure are met. Right now the benches are the same design as on Stone Cutter's Way. An option would be to use railroad wheels on the ends of the benches.

The application was approved on a 6-0 vote.

VI. 575 Stone Cutter's Way-RIV/DCD

Applicant: Pyralisk Arts Center

Creation of an Art and Community Park

Interested Parties: Ward Joyce

Nicholas Hecht

Katherine Fanelli

Ms. George said for the record the last meeting they had was not a regular meeting so we need a brief overview of the project.

Ward Joyce said the park they are proposing is on the site of the salt shed which has been condemned and needs to come down. While at one point the Pyralisk was for quite a long time was going to build a performing arts center with the Central Vermont Community Land Trust bailing out a month ago, they have decided to propose an arts park. The performance space is very simply a sloped lawn with a back drop wall and is surrounded by wood chips which will be a sculpture garden. Obviously, this whole project is to dovetail with the city's effort for the Turntable Park. The paving from the Turntable Park continues in a river eddy. This is a broad walk with a stone wall along it, with a shingled wall which forms the backdrop for the sloped wall. There is an open pergola for shade with no roof over it. There are sidewalks, continuation of parking, three handicapped parking spots, bike racks and 6 or 7 street lights. They have chosen trees that match some of the trees that the city is proposing for Turntable Park. There are picnic benches and a couple of barbecues. The stonewalls are 2 feet wide and about 24 inches high. The wall is 12 feet high, which is the backdrop for the performance space. They are proposing to use natural cedar shingles for the wall.

Mr. Everett said because of the lack of public toilets, why they dropped the port-o-lets.

Mr. Ward said they were encouraged to drop them at the Technical Review Committee by the police, Public Works and the city. There were a lot of mixed views about having port-o-lets. As a public park they didn't need them, and if they ever do a folks musician with 40 or 50 people they have to apply for a city permit because of noise decibels, and at that point the city will say they need a port-o-let. At that point they will present appropriate pot-o-let resolutions.

Mr. Ward said the city is proposing to maintain the park. There is a partnership between the city and the applicant where the city will help them build the park and they will maintain it. Ms. Fanelli said it will be more public friendly when there are big events, but not on a day to day basis.

Mr. Ward said they couldn't build the covered performing center and some other things now because they don't have enough time during this phase to get the HUD grant. They have to tear the building down and spend the HUD grant by September, so they can't afford the processes of variances with any of the structures. They can't build a one-story building, even in a park. If you build in a park, you shouldn't be required to build a two-story building because two-story buildings aren't park like. That is the challenge they will take on later this year.

The materials for the project include concrete paving for the sidewalk. The pergola is all built out of wood with steel elements to hold it together. The stone wall is currently out of manufactured stone. They would like to raise money this fall for the project to upgrade it to a bona fide stonewall, but presently they are using a really nice quality manufactured stone.

Mr. Everett asked if the city had any maintenance issues with an open wood structure.

Mr. Ward replied no. The pergola is large timber. A structure like this is not a 40-year structure, but more likely to last about 15 years.

Ms. George asked if there was any signage proposed.

Mr. Ward said no.

Ms. George asked what the landscaping consisted of.

Mr. Ward said grass, chips and trees. They are using honey locust trees.

The DRC reviewed the criteria. Under options they suggested that the manufactured stone may have a natural stone substitution. This is all compatible with the city's project for Turntable Park.

Ms. George said the DRC has a demolition issue with the project.

Mr. DeSmet said the salt shed is out of the historic district. The Montpelier Historic District stops at the turntable. The shed is not within the historic district. Everything on Stone Cutter's Way is in the Riverfront District.

Ms. Lane said she would like to see a plaque giving some mention of the use of the building and the community use of the salt shed. Ms. Fanelli said down the road that would be a nice thing to do.

Ms. George said it brings to mind whether or not they need to deal with the demolition of the salt shed. Ms. Fanelli said for another purpose they did go through the demolition criteria and it has been condemned.

Ms. George said the criterion reads that the project is not historically or architecturally significant. It is a non-contributing structure. It is not an original railroad or granite manufacturing structure. Mr. Everett said it was put there by the railroad because that is the way the salt came in. Ms. George said it further reads that no alternative to demolition is economically feasible. Glenn Moore has actually said the building needs to come down.

Mr. Ward said the Salt Shed has been determined not to be structurally sound by the city.

Ms. Lane asked if the contamination issue had been resolved.

Mr. Everett said the applicant has cleanup money for it.

Mr. DeSmet said all the ordinance requires for demolition is that you have a plan for what you are going to do when you demolish it, and the plan is to build a park. It's a non-contributing structure, and the plan is to build a park.

The application as submitted was approved unanimously on a 6-0 vote.

Approval of May 27, 2008 Minutes:

The Minutes of the May 27, 2008 DRC were approved on a 3-0 vote.

Adjournment:

The Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning & Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack