

Montpelier Design Review Committee
June 9, 2009
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Stephen Everett, Chair; James Duggan, Vice Chair; Nancy Mears, Guy Tapper and Jay White.
Staff: Audra Brown, Planning and Zoning Assistant.

Call to Order:

Stephen Everett, Chair, called the June 9, 2009 meeting of the Design Review Committee to order at 5:30 P.M.

I. 13 Main Street – CB-I/DCD

Applicant: Sign Design – John Miller (Verizon)

Owner: Jeffrey Jacobs

Sign.

Mr. Miller explained it is a white sign that covers the sign band at the location of 13 Main Street. It will lay flush on the building and be baked enamel finish on a matte aluminum sign. He is going to put vinyl graphics on the sign with three gooseneck lamps.

Ms. Mears said when you look at his sign you can see that the other signs pull in a little bit. Would it be possible to pull it in to make it look more in line with the other existing signs?

Mr. Miller said he believed it looked better that way. It's strong and clean. He thinks it will make the other two signs a little more mainstream by filling the space that way with a nice smooth, clean white band.

Mr. Duggan inquired if there were lights there now, and were these going to be new.

Mr. Miller replied there weren't lights presently there. They are going to mount the lights on the sign band itself so they can drill through the wooden transom area and do nothing in the brick. This lighting will be just a nice soft glow. It is going to give three very distinct oval washes when it is on. They are going to use the reverse gooseneck lights.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the sign criteria and found the application met the requirements. The DRC found that the sign was going to be placed within an existing sign band and would be acceptable under the criteria. The sign is acceptable because it is not internally lit. It is a sign within an existing sign band. The application was approved on a vote of 5 to 0.

II. 660 Elm Street – MDR/DCD

Applicant: CCV

Owner: Vermont State Colleges d.b.a. CCV

Sign.

Interested Party: Barbara Martin

Community College of Vermont are requesting to replace the current ground sign from the previous owner, Woodbury College, with a very similar sign in appearance to signify that CCV are the current owners of the property. It's a plywood sign. It is going to be attached to rough cedar posts. The sign they use with the rest of their existing signs throughout the state is a green with a red maple leaf in the middle and then white lettering. They have used the services of Great Big Graphics before and been very happy with their work and expect to be happy with this sign as well.

Mr. Duggan said these colors don't match very well. How about the posts and frame?

Ms. Martin said the posts will be natural cedar. The little top cap on the top of the cedar post will be the same color as the sign.

Mr. Everett said he noticed there is a wall sign under the porch and they want to remove that. Is that going to be replaced?

Ms. Martin said they are not going to replace that sign.

Mr. Everett asked if CCV would occupy the entire building. Ms. Martin replied yes.

The Design Review reviewed the sign criteria and found the application acceptable on a vote of 5 to 0.

III. 176 Main Street – HDR/DCD

Applicant: Steven Burkholder

Owner: Same

Entry roof and privacy walls on existing slab at west entrance.

Mr. Burkholder said he wants to install a roof over an entry to a back apartment and some privacy wall to protect the entrant from a visual from the Main Street. It is going to be strictly a shed type roof with no porch. He is going to attempt to match existing posts that are in the front of the building, if possible. The building is quite old. The roofing material will be the same. He will be using a green asphalt shingle.

Mr. Everett asked if it had enough pitch for a shingle roof.

Mr. Burkholder said he had other shallow pitched roofs on the building and the building needs to be re-roofed at some point in the near future, but for now they are going to go with shingles because that is something he can do.

Mr. White said if it is less than 3.12 pitch he will probably want to put ice and water shield underneath the shingles otherwise they won't keep the water out.

Mr. Burkholder said they have yellow vinyl siding on the building with white trim, and they will continue with that.

Mr. Everett asked if the pitch of the entry roof would match the pitch on the existing so it will just be an extension. Mr. Burkholder replied yes. Mr. Everett asked if it was 6 feet from the outer edge.

Mr. Burkholder said he wants the roof to cover both of the entrances. There is about a foot of overhang. From that area out there would be approximately 4 to 5 feet worth of roof, and the long distance would be 6 feet. It is an addition that is set on an angle. Originally, there was no apartment. That was a garage and then they built the second floor on top of it overhanging at an angle to the original building.

Mr. Everett asked him how far out his property line was.

Mr. Burkholder said the property line is the middle of the driveway.

Mr. Everett said there would be no issues with setbacks.

Mr. Burkholder said the school actually owns the property that adjoins him on that particular border. There is already an existing slab. There was an overhang roof over the entry door to the back apartment. The first door you see is the downstairs basement entry, and the second one is the actual apartment entry. That is the one he is most focused on trying to get some weather protection and some privacy. The cellar is just for his personal entry and exit.

Mr. White asked if he was replacing the little flat roof over the basement entrance as well.

Mr. Burkholder said eventually he was because that is a shingled roof as well.

Mr. White said it might make sense to do it as one roof instead of two so he could put the new roof on top of the existing roof and have a little more headroom. He wouldn't have to worry about getting two roofs to match in the future. It would be better to make it one roof now, and the total costs would be less.

Mr. Burkholder said he wasn't opposed to that at all.

Mr. Everett said at that point he could either use shingles or put a half lap, or membrane.

Mr. Burkholder said he has had some temporary lattice work with morning glories planted so they could have some privacy eventually while the project is under way.

Mr. White said he believes the roof will improve the appearance of the entrance.

Mr. Burkholder said the color scheme is going to be the same. They bought 24 North Street and are in the process of renovating that right now. They are trying to make the whole thing look uniform as much as possible. That is going to be a private residence.

Mr. Everett asked what material he was using for the screening.

Mr. Burkholder said he had more siding. He would prefer a wood, but he isn't opposed to keeping it siding to match the house.

Mr. Everett said he would make a note that his option material used for horizontal screening may be either bead board or clapboard.

Mr. White said his feeling is that it should not be clapboards. A painted white bead board material would be much better than a horizontal clapboard.

Mr. Burkholder said he agreed and thinks it is a great idea.

Mr. Everett said as an option the material for the horizontal screening may be a painted bead board.

Mr. White said he thinks they should agree that the roof would all go on top of the existing roof and go clear to the wall so it is all one material. That will give the extra head height because otherwise you feel like it is in his psychological space and duck under it.

Mr. Everett said there could be an adjustment that the second floor rear of the building currently has a wooden frame double hung window.

Mr. Everett said the options are the material used for the horizontal screening may be a painted wooden bead board. The roof of the proposed canopy may be constructed on top of the existing shed roof over the basement entrance to simplify design and either a membrane or rolled roofing material may be applied. Then, the adjustment for the window is the second floor rear of the building has one wood frame one over one double hung window which may be replaced with one or two insulated wood frame one over one double hung windows of slightly larger size to meet code requirements.

Mr. Burkholder said he would prefer to do two windows. He is only required to replace one window.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and found the application acceptable. It received a favorable vote of 5 to 0. The applicant has the option of installing turn posts to closely match the columns on the front porch.

IV. 66 Main Street – CB-I/DCD

Applicant: Jennifer Rollins

Owner: Jeffrey Jacobs (Charlie-O's)

Outdoor seating.

Interested Party: Jessie Jacobs

Jessie Jacobs appeared to represent the project and Jennifer Rollins who wasn't able to be present. They have on a few occasions tried to develop this vacant lot and unfortunately have not been successful. They have come with this newest plan to bring some green space to downtown Montpelier to clean that lot up and to also expand Charlie-O's as a business. The hope is they will be able to do something that will be really great for both the business and the town.

Ms. Mears said she has a question about whether or not this is opened to the public. Could she come down and have her lunch, or is it only if she is at Charlie-O's.

Mr. Jacobs replied that wasn't something they had discussed yet, but presently the idea is it would be open for Charlie-O's with the option of possibly opening it up to the city to rent out as a venue. They have talked to the Farmer's Market about the possibility of using it on the weekends as additional space. It is really for Charlie-O's.

Mr. Duggan asked how that area would be served by their staff.

Mr. Jacobs said they would serve out the rear of 70 Main Street. There is an alley that is common.

Mr. Duggan asked if there were going to be trays of drinks brought up and down the sidewalk.

Mr. Jacobs said unless the Liquor Control Board decides that is how they would prefer liquor to travel, which seems very unlikely, then no.

Mr. Everett said they usually don't like you walking with trays of alcohol down a public sidewalk.

Mr. Jacobs said the tables are on the left side and they will be under the umbrellas.

Mr. Everett said there will be five tables with umbrellas over them in the space. Mr. Jacobs replied yes. There will be ten tables in all, five without umbrellas and five with the umbrellas.

Mr. White asked if this was like an outdoor bar space.

Mr. Jacobs said it is outdoor seating with cocktail tables.

Mr. Everett asked if there were actually going to be seats with cushions on them.

Mr. Jacobs said where the couches are. The rest of the seating is going to be aluminum seating.

Mr. Duggan said it looks like the gooseneck lamps go along the fencing. Mr. Jacobs said the lights would be almost 8 ½ feet high. There is a possibility they will actually have to change the fencing from a 6 foot to an 8 foot fence. Glenn Moore was to get back to him but hasn't.

Mr. Duggan asked what was the need for the gooseneck lights along the back. There is no seating over there.

Mr. Jacobs said people could be standing around. They could put up to 140 people outside and meet the fire codes.

Mr. Duggan said it seems a little awkward having goosenecks on top of the posts. He wonders if there is another option. It all depends upon how tall that post ends up being.

Mr. White asked if the fence was an open fence they could see through.

Mr. Jacobs said this part had to be amended. Originally, the alley side fence and the fence along the sidewalk were going to be open fencing. This has been amended slightly because of Tom McArdle's concern that people will congregate in the alley and be able to talk over the fence. They had to raise the height of the alley side fence to the full height of 8 feet so there won't be any congregating within the alley.

Ms. Mears asked if there were going to be any plants there.

Mr. Jacobs replied they were going to plant ivy on the inside of the fence and hope to plant it on the outside as well.

Mr. White inquired if it was still an open fence.

Mr. Jacobs responded by saying it would be lattice at the top. It would be closed on the bottom because he doesn't want anybody to see through the fence or speak through the fence because he is afraid people will congregate in the alley and talk across the fence.

Mr. White said he thinks the fence should be open. A wood wall is a huge problem visually and aesthetically. It is much better to have it open. It also helps with the economic vitality of the city because people should see this is happening there.

Mr. Jacobs said they are in agreement about that, and that is why he designed it to be open.

Mr. Everett asked what he was proposing along the street.

Mr. Jacobs replied that along the street would be the open fence. It is 42 inches with the flower boxes on top, so the fence is 36 inches.

Mr. White asked if Mr. Jacobs would prefer to do an open fence on the side where the alley is.

Mr. Jacobs replied yes, that is his preference.

Mr. White said there may not be a problem with congregating. It seems like a solution could be to do the open fence. He believes it would look better. If there is a future problem, the city can come back and say there is problem and they want a solution to mitigate.

Audra Brown said she isn't sure he can do that once it has been to the Technical Review Committee and they have said no to the fence. His proposal would have to change.

Mr. Everett said he didn't know the DRC could change the Technical Review Committee's findings.

Ms. Brown said that is the Department of Public Works, the Building Inspector and the Police Department.

Mr. White said the committee is not the key person here.

Mr. Jacobs said he believes if it were an open fence the ivy would grow better and create that visual appearance.

Mr. White said he believes a solid fence would be a problem with maintenance. It's not going to hold up well in the snow. Most of the wooden walls you see in snowy areas are only straight the first summer they are there.

Ms. Mears said it might be nice if it were an enclosed brick garden because there was a brick building there prior to this.

Mr. Everett said if they say a closed bottom with a lattice top, how low can that closed bottom be?

Mr. Jacobs said from what he understands from Mr. McArdle is that as long as it is a deterrent in terms of people peeking over they could lattice the top 2 or 3 feet, or maybe more. The hope is that people will be able to from a distance see in and see life in there. That is why they opened it originally. If there is anything that is going on someone from the city or police station could easily survey the lot from a distance. Because of the traffic going through the alley he has a problem with it.

Mr. Everett asked if a closed bottom would be just a board or a solid material.

Mr. White said if it is a closed bottom it needs to be brick or masonry up to a certain height.

Mr. Jacobs said the reason they chose wood rather than a cast iron or brick is because if it is damaged by a snow plow they can replace a wooden fence immediately whereas something that was cast iron or brick would take some time.

Mr. White said there is a company called Easy Rail that makes a preassembled pre-painted black metal railing system. They could attach a metal panel to the side of the rail post so they would have the visual affect of the rail post from the outside. They could have a 4 foot panel right at speaking height that prevents people from speaking, but still have the air underneath and above it. A wooden fence would be a constant maintenance issue.

Mr. Everett said he assumes if they are doing something similar to the railing system they originally showed that they have posts every 6 to 8 feet.

Mr. Jacobs replied every 6 feet. He said in terms of the transparency there was concern about drivers coming through the alley being distracted by what may be going on in the lounge.

Mr. White said this is a one-way alley.

Mr. Jacobs said it would make it more difficult.

Mr. White said it would be less safe and also feel like a tight easement if it is all closed in.

Mr. Jacobs said there was a building previously.

Mr. White said his recommendation is to make it as open as possible subject to Technical Review Committee requirements.

Mr. Jacobs said he would absolutely agree with that.

Mr. White said maybe they could ask the Technical Review Committee to review the project again based on the DRC comments.

Ms. Brown said the Technical Review Committee is about health and safety and roads.

Ms. Mears said she agreed with the openness if it can be done and it is a great thing to do something for the city. She would love it to be open to the public.

Mr. White said his only concern about having it open to the public is he would want to make sure it is maintained well all of the time and clean. If that could be the burden of Charlie-O's, then it's great. He would not be in agreement with it being just open to everybody and then therefore no one feels the responsibility to take care of it. It helps the economy of Charlie-O's. If you have to in there and buy something in order to use the space they are paying for, that is what should happen. That's the American way.

Ms. Brown asked if there was any lighting proposed on the alley side.

Mr. Jacobs replied there was none. The gooseneck lights are coming off the top of the post.

Mr. White asked if there would be any signage saying this is part of Charlie-O's.

Mr. Jacobs replied there isn't any signage proposed yet. They are going to have Charlie-O's staff stationed at the front and the rear of the space which has been designated by Liquor Control as a necessity.

Mr. Duggan said people tend to congregate out front on the benches a lot. Will they try to keep the sidewalk clear, or will Charlie-O's spill out on to the sidewalk?

Mr. Jacobs said in terms of people being outside congregating right now it has a lot to do with the fact that they are able to smoke outside, but in the outside area they would also be able to smoke so it might cut down on the number of people congregating out front considerably.

Ms. Brown asked if they could enter the space from the sidewalk.

Mr. Jacobs said they could. There are two egresses and entrances. There is an entry from the sidewalk and an entrance from the rear. They do not have to go into Charlie-O's to get to the outside lounge, but they would still have to show their ID to Charlie-O's staff.

Mr. White said he thinks it is a good solution for that little vacant lot. Ms. Mears agreed.

Mr. Jacobs said it sounds like they are all in agreement about this. He can talk to Tom McArdle again and see what he says in terms of opening it up as much as they possibly can because he would like for it to be more open and less claustrophobic than what he is proposing.

Mr. White said if he talks to Tom about having it where people would stand and talk, from 2 feet up to 6 feet, would do that, and that way the bottom would be open.

Mr. Duggan asked if the ground would be just dirt.

Mr. Jacobs said it is going to be crushed gravel. They would compact it down and hope that someone in a wheelchair would still be able to maneuver around.

Mr. Everett said their notation is that the Design Review Committee recommends fencing be as open as possible subject to the requirement of the Technical Review Committee. Any lattice materials would be vertical/horizontal style as opposed to a diagonal lattice style. Closed bottom of the fencing material may be either boards or solid panel design.

Mr. Jacobs replied they would prefer to open it.

Mr. Everett said the closed bottom fencing material may be boards or solid panel design or open design subject to Technical Review Committee. The gooseneck lighting will be attached to the top of the fence posts. They are green in color.

Mr. Tapper asked what the umbrellas looked like.

Mr. Jacobs replied they have no logos but just burgundy umbrellas. This would match the color of the current awning they have. The concrete barriers there now will be removed entirely.

The Design Review Committee reviewed the criteria and found it acceptable. The exterior design is compatible with other outdoor installations in the district. The proposed shrubbery between the sidewalk and the fence will be a hearty evergreen species. The lighting on either side of the gates will be lantern style lighting.

Mr. White said they are going to allow smoking on this site so there should be a requirement to have ashtrays so people won't just throw their butts on the grave. Mr. Jacobs said they will provide ashtrays for all of the tables

and two standing ashtrays near each of the entrances. They are going to be doing consistent maintenance on the space.

The proposal for 66 Main Street, Charlie-O's, passed on a vote of 3 to 0 as proposed. Ms. Mears was not available for the vote but was present for the discussion of the application.

Approval of May 26, 2009 Minutes:

Upon motion by Mr. White and Mr. Duggan the minutes of May 26, 2009 of the Design Review Committee were approved with minor changes. The vote to approve the minutes was 3 to 0.

Other Business:

Mr. White said the new painting of the No Parking sign at M & M Beverage is a disaster along with the striped lines for the parking there. It doesn't lay out well. It is basically free-handed with spray can paint on the asphalt and it looks real tacky as a main pedestrian area as you walk to Shaw's. They should be asked to remove it, and if they want to put no parking it should be stenciled and properly done.

Adjournment:

Design Review Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Audra Brown
Planning and Zoning Assistant