

Montpelier Design Review Committee
September 14, 2010
Memorial Room, City Hall

Approved

Present: Stephen Everett, Chair; Eric Gilbertson, Kate Coffey, Jay White and Muffie Conlon.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Call to Order:

The September 14, 2010 meeting of the Montpelier Design Review Committee was called to order by Stephen Everett, Chair, at 5:30 P.M.

- I. 9 Main Street – CB-I/DCD**
Applicant: Capital Dry Cleaners
Owner: Montdry, LLC
Exterior paint
Interested Party: Marie Denoia

Hopefully from the photos in the packet it is clear what the color changes are going to be. It badly needs a paint job. She picked colors that were already in the downtown. There is a lot of white and she wanted to change it. She believes the three colors will give it a renewed look and also a different look.

Mr. Everett asked if the existing lettering would disappear with the proposed color for the band.

Ms. Denoia said the contractor said we wouldn't see the letters with the color #2. Go with the darker color and the gold will stand out. #2 and #3 colors are basically for trim. She matched the burgundy color to the existing brick.

Mr. White asked if the muntin bars be painted.

Ms. Denoia said they would stay white. They are actually inside the windows and will be white.

Mr. White asked if they could be removed from the inside or if they were between the glass.

Ms. Denoia replied it is just a grid that can be snapped out.

Mr. White suggested she paint those to match one of the two colors because otherwise it will stand out way too much.

Mr. Everett said if they pop out it makes it much easier to paint.

Ms. Denoia said she would add that to the painting.

Mr. Everett asked if Angelino's sign was mounted to the back of their building or is free standing.

Ms. Denoia said they rent them the parking lot in the back.

Mr. White said they would remove their sign, paint the wall and put their sign back up.

Ms. Denoia said the building hasn't been painted since they purchased it so it is way overdue. They leased the building for two years and then purchased it. They just finished painting the inside and put a new floor down.

Mr. White said he would like to include in the application that the applicant will paint the exterior face of the grid to be color number #2 which is the same color as the exterior sash around the window.

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

II. 153-155 Elm Street – CB-II/DCD

Owner/Applicant Win Turner and Laura Bozarth

Multiple exterior renovations

Interested Party: Flor Diaz Smith

Right now they are trying to bring the buildings up to code. There are minimum exterior things they are doing except they want to replace windows. They want to bring up to code the stairs in the front. Right now there is a big drop off of 10 inches. The ramp will stay as it is right now. As soon as the owners are able to rent the building they will start more renovations.

They submitted some Green Mountain windows to be able to replace the historic windows which exist in the house. It will be the same type of window, a wood window in both sides. In the back there is a full double hung window and take out the bottom sash because it is in the way of the stairs. The back building isn't historic.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they knew when the back building was built.

Mr. DeSmet said he believed in 1827. There were three buildings on the site. The garage is gone. All three structures were on the National Register.

Mr. Gilbertson asked what was in the addition.

Ms. Diaz Smith replied that there is a chiropractor downstairs and an apartment upstairs. They just left the downstairs open because it is rented and they aren't changing any uses. In the downstairs all they are doing is removing one wall. The purpose of the project is to bring the buildings up to code. All that affects the exterior at this point is just the windows. Right now that building doesn't have a lot of character.

Mr. White said he doesn't understand the problem with the window. The stairs come just below the window.

Ms. Diaz Smith said the stairs have completely rotted. The stairs are coming down. The new stairs will stay in the same place and they are changing the dimensions of the deck. They are going to rebuild the stairs in the same location they are now. It is the best location for a secondary exit. It also allows the apartment a secondary egress.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they planned on putting a roof over the stairs. They will be the primary access to the second floor apartment.

Ms. Diaz Smith showed where the primary access to the apartment is through the main building but they need a secondary exit.

Mr. White said Glenn Moore has accepted that the stairway doesn't need to be covered.

Ms. Diaz Smith said right now there is just a little roof over the door.

Mr. White said Glenn is responsible for the building code issues. Normally, the codes would require a covered stair and if it is a required means of egress he doesn't see why they think they only need to make the window a half a window. It will look better as a full window.

Ms. Diaz Smith said it interferes with the actual structure of the stairs.

Mr. White said it is an owner's choice on the back of the building. He can see it being more of a maintenance problem with the snow filling in that area.

Mr. Everett said they have a similar stairway on one of his buildings and they use steel grate or treads. They have done every single fire escape with a steel grate because rain and snow fall through it. He hasn't shoveled the steps in the last five years. That could be an option. They could make the initial platform out of wood and make the extension beyond the overhang with panels.

Mr. White said they could list both choices in the application.

Ms. Coffey asked where the stair goes by will they have to use tempered glass. It is divided light.

Ms. Diaz Smith said they are following the same patterns of 6 over 6. They are using the true divided light window.

Mr. Gilbertson asked how wide the muntins in the window were.

Ms. Diaz Smith replied they are very narrow.

Mr. Gilbertson said he didn't want the muntins to get a lot heavier than the original ones because that is what really characterizes those windows, the very light muntin. He asked what the dimensions were.

Mr. Everett replied it said 5/8 of an inch.

Mr. White said Green Mountain Window is the only company he knows that can make the really skinny muntins.

Ms. Diaz Smith said in the plans they were just going to replace the storm windows but they are trying to make the building more energy efficient. The insulation in the building is very poor so in order for them to afford to keep the building and rent it this makes more sense to invest here where they are losing the most energy.

Mr. Gilbertson inquired if they had an energy audit done.

Ms. Diaz Smith replied they had. They had Vermont Energy Consulting from West Berlin do an audit assessment. The only other thing they are doing with the exterior is the extension of the deck. They are replacing all of the windows with true divided light.

Mr. DeSmet said the previous owner neglected the building completely.

Mr. White asked if they were going to remove the asbestos siding on the back of the building.

Ms. Diaz Smith replied no. Glenn Moore didn't want them to touch the asbestos at all.

Ms. Conlon said she had read the garage was gone but the site is to be restored.

Ms. Diaz Smith said the site is to be restored in the near future. They need to get a permit for that. They are just leaving it as a footprint and leaving the foundation there. There will be gravel there and park three cars there.

Mr. Everett said there was some mention of the new standing seamed roof on the porch. Is there a standing seamed roof there now?

Ms. Diaz Smith said there is not, just asphalt. They would try to match what is there on the roof of the big house.

Mr. Everett inquired what color is the roof on the house now.

Ms. Diaz Smith replied it is green.

Ms. Conlon asked if she was increasing the size of the deck.

Ms. Diaz Smith said just to the edge of the building. It won't affect the steepness of the stairs.

Mr. White asked if Montpelier would grandfather the apartment on the upper floor without sprinklers.

Ms. Diaz Smith said yes because there is just one apartment.

Mr. Everett said he is making notes about the options they are giving them for the windows, that they could be either a true divided light or a simulated divided light with spacer bars using a 5/8 muntin. They made notes that the applicant advised that the standing seamed roof of the porch will be the same color as the standing seamed roof on the main dwelling. At their discretion the replacement windows may be either a true divided light with the 5/8 inch muntins and insulated glass or a simulated divided light with 5/8 inch muntins, insulated glass and spacer bars. At the applicant's discretion the treads for the secondary egress stairs at the rear of the building may be constructed of either wood material or black or galvanized steel grate with treads. There is zero maintenance.

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

III. 16-18 State Street – CB-I/DCD

Applicant/Owner: Scott Fitzgerald

MacPherson Travel

Replace three windows

Mr. Fitzgerald said he is replacing three windows and has already done two of them. Work has taken place. He used Portland Glass who was able to put in a window for him that was the same color and same look as his other three windows. He has six windows in the front and is only replacing the top three windows. He is a new owner of the building. He had a third floor tenant who was a bit of a hoarder move out and ended up having to replace three windows in the front of the building. There are two in the back that are sturdy and fine. He has replaced the carpets, the bathroom and painted the walls and ceilings. The problems up there had problems for years. The previous tenant had to take a big sheet of Styrofoam and stick it in the far left window to keep the air from flying in. There is actually a radiator right

beside the window and it couldn't keep the small room warm. He had a friend of his who worked at Clark's Feed Store for a number of years who repaired windows on a daily basis and worked on them periodically and he finally just recommended replacing the windows because they were junk. He did the process of looking at replacements and Portland Glass was able to recommend a window that would fit the large size of the windows without having to use custom on it. They could do it in white since the other windows were white. These windows are much more energy efficient and have a tilt sash. They got rid of the aluminum storms on the outside. He talked to Glenn Moore about getting a building permit but did not have that.

Mr. Gilbertson said he is worried about the muntins on the windows and dividers.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he didn't have any problem with the heat on the second floor. The heat on the third floor was pretty bad.

Mr. Gilbertson said they really need to know about what the dividers are like, whether they are on the outside of the window or some that are sandwiched in between the two layers of glass.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he imagines they would be sandwiched between.

Mr. Gilbertson said they have asked people to get them so they are on the outside so there is a shadow line and not just a flat line in between the glass.

Mr. White said they would want the dividers on the outside of the window so the shadow line would be exposed. With the grills on the outside it gives the window a little bit more integrity and authenticity because it creates a shadow line. If it is sandwiched between the glass as a flat bar it looks fake. Certainly, on Main Street they don't want any of the windows to look fake. The other issue they have struggled with in other applications is the pure vinyl window versus a fiberglass window or wood window or clad window primarily because they don't last as long and don't have the authenticity of the others.

Mr. DeSmet asked if he still had the original windows.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied he did. He doesn't have the parts of the aluminum storms on the outside. He has a situation where there were screens and storms on the outside of the window and it looked like crap; they were bad. Removing those has got to be upgrading the outside of the building 120 percent.

Mr. White said he doesn't have any problem getting rid of the aluminum storm windows. He doesn't have a problem with replacing it with an energy efficient window. There are companies like Marvin Integrity that make a simulated divided light window which means you still have the full insulated glass, the same energy features here, but both the inside and outside muntin projects in front of the glass so it looks like a traditional window. That is

what the DRC has been recommending for replacement windows. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has done studies indicating that if you do a proper storm window in a true divided light original window you can get the same energy efficiency as you can with new windows.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he knows what these old windows look like and once you get that clad on the outside and the ability to clean it is hard.

Mr. Gilbertson said all of the windows they have approved have the exterior gliders so they show up like the original window. Until they see what those are like he isn't willing to vote on it. He would recommend they table the application until he gets from his supplier what they can do. There are windows in there now.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he hasn't replaced the worst of them.

Mr. Gilbertson said they need to know what he is doing.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he needs to do something fairly quick here.

Mr. Gilbertson said they meet again in two weeks.

Mr. Everett said he should have some cut sheets showing what the options are for the dividers, whether they are interior or exterior, and sizes. Find out if there are any other options for you, either combinations of wood/fiberglass for the sash and leaving the frame in place. They are going to have to replace the sash anyway.

Mr. Fitzgerald said this was the only window they had that fit the opening that they didn't have to custom make. It was the N'oreaster Window which is designed for our climate.

Mr. Everett asked what the committee's feelings were about the use of vinyl versus other materials.

Mr. Gilbertson said vinyl windows usually only last about 20 years.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the man from Clark's Feed Store said this particular type of window is easier to work on because it is removable.

Mr. Gilbertson said they really do like to see high quality windows.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he received one quote from Pella for a window that was wood clad and it was \$10,000 for three windows and with the vinyl he has three for about \$2,500. For a place he is renting for \$800 a month to put in \$10,000 is too much. The windows are 80 inches high and 55 1/2 inches across. They are big windows. He isn't going to have the money to

do this because the renovation is taking every cent he has. The next step is to talk to Portland Glass to find out what his options are.

Ms. Coffey suggested he might want to go to other places besides Portland Glass.

Scott Fitzgerald said that the situation of being in a historic district when property changes hands in the city of Montpelier and people are purchasing property that is going to be heavily restricted or more restrictions than a typical piece of property there should be some sort of hand out to give to people to explain about the process the Design Review Committee serves and warning people about that. Property in Montpelier doesn't change hands all that often.

Mr. Everett said on his last purchase and sale it was right on the purchase and sale document that it was in the Design Review District.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he received his property through an estate of his parents. He had a 150 year old home in Barre that he replaced 18 windows on and didn't have to do anything.

Mr. Gilbertson said he serves on the Historic Commission as well and they are doing a project to come up with a handout. It is something that the attorney should find in the title search as well.

Mr. Fitzgerald said it is just as easy that any time a property transfer tax goes through that a small leaflet could be sent to the people.

Mr. DeSmet said they also notify the abutting property owners.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he has looked at the windows downtown and some are ugly and deteriorating and there are some replacement windows that have been done that you can't tell if it is wood, fiberglass or vinyl.

Mr. Gilbertson moved to table the application and Mr. White seconded the motion. The motion to table the application at 16-18 State Street to replace three windows was tabled on a vote of 5 to 0. The next meeting is scheduled for September 28th.

Other Business:

55 Barre Street – CB-II/DCD

Discussion of Recreation Center restoration

Interested Party: Garth Genge, Planning Department

Mr. Genge told the DRC they are looking to renovate the Recreation Center at 55 Barre Street to increase the energy efficiency and accessibility. Right now it isn't accessible. It has issues as far as being able to be used for as a facility for the Senior Center in the future

because it is very limited. Since they are redoing the building across the street this is a perfect example of a place where they can optimize the use of a city building by having it open to more uses by seniors and people with disabilities.

They aren't sure if it makes a lot of sense to make the building completely accessible because in the front section the only section that has a 2nd or 3rd floor is the front. Whether it is worth it to put an elevator in to access that is questionable at this point. They are just looking to use the majority of the building which is the main floor with the gym and the main offices. The architect they are using is Gossens & Bachman who is also working on the Senior Center building. They have had Andy Shapiro do an energy evaluation of the building. The Rec building was originally an armory so they used it mainly for storage and used a lesser quality brick in the back of the building. The brick is deteriorating. The crack looks like a stabilization crack which occurred 20 or 25 years after it was built and hasn't changed. They are going to put in monitors to make sure the crack isn't spreading and getting worse.

If you also look at the pictures of the sides you can see the deterioration on top of the brick. That is because it is a steel framed roof and the big I-beams come through the brick at that point. The heat is going into the steel I-beams and out through the brick on the end of the walls. The damage to the inside he is more worried about than he is about the outside.

They think at this point it is a stable structure that can be stabilized, but the best way to insulate it on the rear section is to put the insulation on the outside and cap the whole thing from the outside. It stops the heat transfer from the steel out through the brick which will stop the deterioration. They can stabilize the brick that is there. The best solution is to put foam on the outside and put a siding on that would fit with the character of the building on both sides, leave the brick on the front so the façade of the building would look the same.

They are going to replace the windows and put in windows they assume were there before. They are going to take the plywood off and put appropriate windows back in. The back section of the building only encompasses the gym and the basement encompasses a firing range on one side and storage for the recreation district. The brick on the inside looks good.

Mr. Gilbertson asked if they planned on insulating the roof.

Mr. Genge replied yes.

Mr. Gilbertson said there are some real issues with putting the foam on the brick.

Mr. Genge said it is easier than doing it on the inside.

Mr. White asked Garth if he had attended the energy and preservation conference at Vermont Technical College during the summer. Andy Shapiro gave a presentation exactly about this type of thing. Most of the preservation community was shocked. He thinks it is

terrible historic preservation as a precedent. The issue here is that the stabilization has nothing to do with the brick. It actually is a structural failure from the weak soils on the foundation.

Mr. Genge said he doesn't think the big crack is the issue. It is more the deterioration of the softer brick in the rear.

Mr. White said his feeling is they should not insulate the brick. He has been working with Ann Cousins on the Richmond Town Hall and she said after the insulated the walls, because the back of the brick was staying warm because of the heat loss, as soon as they insulated the walls the brick started falling off and deteriorating rapidly because it freezes in the back. If you put foam insulation on the exterior it still is letting the cold get through to the back side of the inside face of the brick. He thinks it would destroy the building.

Mr. Genge said it is true but also limited in its application. You have to do an analysis of how much insulation it takes not to have that frost line occur in the brick. They are doing the same thing across the street. If you do a lot of things wrong with insulation you can actually cause more damage than not.

Mr. White said some of the other speakers at the conference besides Andy Shapiro were addressing the issue that in reality there is not a huge energy savings when the brick wall is only 3 wide thick because most of the energy goes out the roof. It makes more sense to insulate the roof and changing the plywood windows to real windows and letting some natural light in would go a long way. The windows are so large that it is not a good use of money to insulate the brick, and he thinks it is dangerous. It also gets into the treatment around the windows. What is the cost benefit analysis of doing that kind of work to the exterior walls versus the amount of payback it would have? It might be better to look at energy efficiency in another way besides foaming the brick building.

Mr. Gilbertson said it is going to be difficult physically to do it in a way that protects the brick just because of how many different planes there are. It doesn't look like the brick are deteriorated but the mortar is bad. Bad bricks can be replaced. The unknowns they get into with doing the insulation are pretty risky. The knowledge about insulation and how buildings perform with different insulation is a rapidly growing field and something could be done later. He wouldn't say he wouldn't approve it but he needs to know a lot more detail. If you use federal money on this they are going to have a hard time meeting the Secretary of Interior standards with this treatment.

Mr. Genge said whether they insulate or not part of the problem with the degradation of the building now is the heat transfer from the steel frame out through the brick, and that is more of an issue in the wall so that is where the frost line is happening all of the time. Unless they do something to block that it will be a continuing degradation on the interior of the wall which shows up on the exterior once the exterior point starts going. Part of the problem is offsetting what is a structural deficiency in the design.

Mr. White said if this building is tied into the new city's heating system the cost of heating it may not be much of an issue.

Mr. Genge said the other option which would work with federal funding is to re-clad the outside with brick again. It is a much more expensive option than siding.

Mr. Gilbertson said if he was reviewing this under the Secretary of Interior's standards, which he did for about 35 years, sheeting the outside does not meet the standards. You might only get 80 percent of the energy savings.

Mr. Everett asked what the heating system in the building was.

Mr. Genge said right now it is just blown in hot air in the gym.

Mr. White said this would be a prime candidate to put on the central system for the city.

Mr. Genge said it is but whether it will actually get down to Barre Street at this point is an unknown because they love it for 58 Barre Street and this building.

Mr. White said he would rather see the city invest in efficient systems and not the kind of money it would take to insulate the exterior of this building.

Mr. Gilbertson said this is a difficult problem. At this point he doesn't think it meets the Secretary of Interior's standards which they will have to do for federal money. He doesn't think it would meet the standards because they are destroying significant architectural features of the building. He would have to be convinced that technically it would work. The cracks are definitely an issue, but they could be mortared up. The other thing about putting something on the outside is they lose the ability to monitor what is going on underneath.

Mr. Genge said this is an informational meeting and they are asking the DRC to look at it and think about it.

Mr. Gilbertson said obviously the best way to insulate a masonry building from an energy efficiency point is to get the thermal mass behind the insulation. Dealing with insulation on an old building is compromise.

Review of August 10 and 24, 2010 Minutes:

Mr. Gilbertson moved approval of the August 10th minutes with Ms. Coffey seconding the motion. The August 10, 2010 DRC Minutes were approved on a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. White moved the DRC approved the August 24th Minutes with amendment, and Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. The DRC August 24, 2010 minutes were approved on a vote of 5 to 0.

Adjournment:

Mr. Gilbertson and Mr. White moved adjournment and the DRC adjourned on a vote of 5 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack