

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
July 7, 2020 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on July 7, 2020 via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

Attendees: Co-Chairs Jay Doherty and Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Members Claude Gentilhomme, Ron King, Margaret Tomas, and Doug Shilo; Richard Woodfin Planning Board Chairman

Staff: Sam Durfee, Senior Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist
Craig Walker, Code Administrator

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Doherty at 8:30 a.m.

Mr. Durfee read the following into the record:

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/754076629>, or by dialing the following phone # 1-929-205-6099 and entering the password 754076629. For those calling in who want to provide public testimony, dial *9 to alert the host that you want to speak. The host will unmute you during the public hearing portion of the meeting.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;

We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the City of Concord's website at: <http://concordnh.gov/273/Planning-Board>

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access;

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-225-8515 or email at: planning@concordnh.gov.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting; we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. King moved to approve the minutes of June 2, 2020, as written. Ms. Hengen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Applications

1. Concord Direct requests ADR approval for the installation of five a new, internally illuminated, freestanding directional signs at 92 Old Turnpike Road in the Industrial (IN) District.

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Josh Messenger of Advantage Sign and Peter Cook of Concord Direct represented the application.

Mr. Messenger stated that the proposal is for the installation of five directory signs throughout the property. He stated that this is a large building and there has been some confusion in the past relative to directions for the customers and deliveries. The sign designs are a very clean design and they feel that the signs will eliminate some of the confusion. He noted that they have been granted a variance for the signs.

Mr. Cook stated that the building was formerly all one company. They have reduced their operations and have redeveloped the building to include three other tenants.

Mr. Walker shared an aerial photo of the site to assist with the property layout.

Mr. Doherty noted that all of the signs are internally illuminated. He asked if the white letters will be the only glow and if the rest of the sign is proposed to be blackened out. Mr. Messenger replied yes. Mr. Gentilhomme commented the sign package is very nice.

Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the building sign as submitted. Mr. Shilo seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Ms. Hengen – in favor

Mr. Doherty – in favor

Mr. King – in favor

Ms. Tomas – in favor

Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor

Mr. Shilo – in favor

3. Capital St. Associates, on behalf of NH Trust, requests ADR approval for the installation of a new, non-illuminated wall sign at 97 North Main Street, in the Central Businesses Performance (CBP) District.

Ms. Hengen stated that she will be recusing herself from the vote as she is a partner in the building ownership.

Tom Cimikoski of NH Trust Financial Advisors represented the application.

Mr. Cimikoski stated that the application consists of two options. The first choice is preferred, which shows a gray and teal contemporary sign that looks well with the character of the building. Option two mimics the existing sign that was approved a few years ago and uses gold leaf and black. The same frame above the door will be used again for either option and the placement remains the same, above the door and arched outward.

Mr. Gentilhomme commented that it appears that the entrance is not utilized. Mr. Cimikoski replied that the entrance will be used and this entrance will continue to be the main entrance. The bank will not be allowing people to access through the bank any more.

Ms. Hengen commented that she prefers the second option with the gold leaf design. She stated that it is easier to read and breaks the sign up so it does not appear to be one name. She added that the building is a very distinctive building and merits the gold leaf, which complements the building. She added that she appreciated the bowed arch as it also reflects the arch in the doorway.

Mr. Shilo stated that he agrees with Ms. Hengen and noted that the exiting gold leaf sign matches nicely with the doors. He stated that with distinctive buildings you typically advise to not match; however, this sign option highlights the building and matches the doors. He prefers option two.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that he agrees that option two is better.

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Ms. Tomas stated that she too preferred sign option two. She stated that the proposal is very clean and symmetrical. She commented that it appears that the logo is a bit heavy on the left side however. She suggested simplifying and streamlining the logo. Ms. Hengen agreed and commented that the logo seems large in comparison to the rest of the lettering. Mr. Doherty agreed and added that the sign and logo are a contemporary design and it is successful; however, it could read more asymmetrical if it was reduced and the letters were increased. He added that it may make it more symmetrical.

Mr. King mentioned that the “financial advisor” lettering seemed to be pushed back. Mr. Shilo asked if it is all single letters. Mr. Cimokoski replied that the “financial advisor” lettering is a black background with raised white letters.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shilo, to recommend approval of the sign, as submitted, with the following recommendations:

1. Recommend the second choice with the gold leaf as it is more appropriate to the classical and formal architecture of the building;
2. The tip of the triangle be in alignment with the top of the “NH” and “T” in the sign; and
3. Staff to review the revised design prior to it being presented to the planning board.

The motion passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Mr. King – in favor
Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Shilo – in favor
Ms. Hengen – abstained

Ms. Tomas left the meeting at 9 a.m.

2. Landmark Sign, on behalf of Genesis, requests ADR approval for the replacement of four monument signs at 227 Pleasant Street in the Institutional (IS) District.

Jason Moorehead from Landmark Design represented the application.

Mr. Moorehead apologized for not obtaining permits prior to the placement of signs. He explained that the project is for approval of two signs on Pleasant Street and also directional signs. He stated that the Pleasant Street signs are changing from green to red.

Mr. Walker stated that the property is two separate addresses and they can have separate free standing signs. He also read the definition of a directional sign in the ordinance. Ms. Hengen asked if the owner is the same for both lots. Mr. Moorehead replied, yes. Discussion ensued regarding the directional signs specifically as to why there is an address on the directional signs. Mr. Moorehead stated that the street address is part of the company branding. He added that there are separate signs to keep the two areas separated.

Members commented that this is a lot to read on a directional sign and it is difficult to process two signs in close proximity. It appears that the signs are more for advertising purposes than directions. The signs advertise the building based on the size of the logo as compared to the address. Members felt that two signs this close is redundant and are not as organized as they could be. Mr. Walker noted that other businesses in the City have added the street address to the sign post.

Mr. Durfee noted that the proposal is for replacement signs. They are re-facing the four signs. Mr. Doherty asked if there is any grandfathering for these signs. Mr. Walker replied there is nothing

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special about the signs; however, he noted that these are two separate properties so they are entitled to have one free-standing sign for each property.

Ms. Hengen stated that the current entrance signs are difficult to read and discern the real entrance. She added that Pleasant Street has a lot of traffic. If someone were looking for this business, they would need to drive slowly to decipher the sign. Mr. Doherty agreed and added that typically a red sign that does not have raised letters bleeds into the white letters.

Mr. Moorehead stated that he could redesign the sign with the company name smaller and make the address larger so it is easier to read. He suggested placing the street number in a corner of the sign. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that what is presented is not readable.

Further discussion was held regarding placement of the signs. It was suggested for offsite signage. Mr. Walker referenced the ordinances, which do not permit offsite signs for shared driveways and an entrance to a driveway has to be 50 feet from another lot. This property is not greater than 50 feet so the applicant is not be eligible to have any offsite signage without obtaining a variance. Mr. Walker added that Genesis is the parent company and is not necessarily the identity of the business. The sign seems to advertise the corporation.

Ms. Hengen made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to not recommend approval of the street signs, based on the reasons outlined:

1. Understanding two signs are permitted, and each sign emphasizes Pleasant View followed by Center or Retirement on each sign;
2. Reduce the size of Genesis and the street address and add a number at the top or the bottom of the sign to make the business more identifiable, legible, and accessible to the person looking for it; and
3. Applicant to return to the Committee in August for review.

Ms. Hengen made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to not recommend approval of the directional signs, based on the reasons outline:

1. Per the ordinance, directional signs should be limited to the business name and maybe an arrow for direction as an address or corporate name are not permitted in the ordinance.
2. Applicant to return to the Committee in August for review.

The motion passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Mr. King – in favor
Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Shilo – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor

Building Permits in Performance Districts

4. Phenix Livery LLC, on behalf of Concord Craft, requests ADR approval for the construction of an outdoor patio at 117 Storrs Street in the Central Performance Business (CBD) District.

Anthony Mento of SMP Architecture represented the application.

Mr. Mento explained that Concord Craft would like to add an area for outdoor seating. This will require the removal of the existing concrete, stairs, railings, retaining wall, and apron. They will then construct a new retraining wall and stairs, and add an ADA accessible entrance. They will also be removing the non-original windows and replacing with glass overhead, garage style, doors. No new signage is proposed; however, the one free-standing sign will be relocated a few feet north.

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Mr. Mento described the layout of the property and the retaining wall and stated that they are proposing to use similar materials used by a neighboring business. The retaining wall will be two feet high and will be around the patio area. They plan to add pavers. Stone drainage and planters will be placed along the edge of the patio; however, they have not specified any plant species. He noted that they are aware that there is a water line below grade. Lighting will be string lights mounted to the building and poles for a ceiling element and light for evening use.

Mr. Doherty commented that the concept is great especially the use in this area. The lighting, walkway and railing make sense. He expressed concern with the overhead doors with proposing to use glass. He also asked about the lenti and if the same lenti is being used for the salon. Discussion ensued regarding the store fronts. Ms. Hengen noted that the building was formerly a warehouse. She noted that the use is a good use of the front and is a great approach for the space. Mr. Gentilhomme agreed.

Mr. Shilo mentioned the retaining wall elevation and walkway. He asked if a guardrail would be required. Mr. Mento stated that he will look into this to see if it is necessary. Discussion ensued regarding the wall. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that if the slope at the walkway was increased, a guardrail would not be necessary. Mr. Shilo commented that the area would look better if the ground were sloped. Mr. Gentilhomme suggested to slope the grade upwards from the sidewalk to the edge of the ramp and then the wall would not be necessary. Mr. Mento stated that they are trying to maintain a green space and the existing tree and would prefer to not adjust the grade.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the plan, as submitted, with the following recommendations:

1. Eliminate the wall on the east side of the ramp;
2. Install a low retaining wall around the trunk of the tree at an appropriate distance for protection, if deemed necessary; and
3. Slope the grade up to the edge of the ramp from the sidewalk.

The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Mr. King – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Shilo – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor

Major Site Plan/Subdivision Applications

5. The State of New Hampshire, on behalf of NHDES, requests ADR consideration for the construction of two buildings at 70 Silk Farm Road in the Residential Open Space (RO) District.

Keith Hemmingway from the State of NH Division of Public Works Department, along with Don Blajda Architect, and Jim Gallagher of NH Dam Bureau represented the application.

Mr. Durfee stated that the application was approved by the Planning Board at the June 17 meeting. The applicants are present to provide an overview of the project as a courtesy.

Mr. Blajda reviewed the proposal and the purpose of the two new buildings for repairs and maintenance as well as storage of NHDES boats and other equipment. There is one area for a small office. The watershed building was described to be one-story and will support the Watershed Bureau. Pictures were reviewed and he explained the color scheme and materials proposed, which are metal panels, larger brick; all natural tones for a muted scheme.

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Mr. Shilo asked about the bollards for the overhead doors and if they are yellow. Mr. Blajda replied that there are many overhead doors for the large trucks. A bollard will be placed at each door and they could be painted to help blend in with the building.

Ms. Hengen asked about a buffer screening along the bike path. Mr. Durfee concern was expressed at the Planning Board meeting and a suggestion was to add trees to help as a buffer. She stated that it is a straight forward use of the property. She appreciated the muted colors and horizontal lines and the fact that the buildings recede into the background. Members concurred. Members thanked the participants for coming and presenting the project.

6. The Dubai Group Inc., on behalf of Strategic Contracting Company LLC, requesting an amendment to a conditionally approved Major Site Plan approval for construction of a 13-unit condominium development and associated site improvements, Phase 2 of the Glen Ellen housing project off of Hoit Road in the Residential Open Space (RO) District.

Jessica McNeill of the Dubai Group and Rob Starace of Strategic Contracting represented the application.

Mr. Durfee stated that this was an approved major site plan and subdivision on Hoit Road, conditionally approved last year. The applicant is proposing an amendment to housing type and layout.

Ms. McNeill of the Dubai Group explained that this was a previously approved subdivision for 13 condo units. They are proposing an amendment updating and revising the design of the houses. She noted that this was previously before the ADR Committee but the Committee requested additional information on housing types, colors and materials. She provided an overview of the project noting that there will be two house styles proposed. Elevations, floor plans, and details of roofing shingles, house designs, and siding were provided for review.

Mr. Starace of Strategic Contracting described the proposed construction materials. He stated that the homeowner chooses their lot, style of home, and color choices. He added that he feels the colors all work well together. Ms. McNeil stated that although the project is a condo development, it feels more like separate homes.

Ms. Hengen noted that unit 9 should be looked at due to the locating of the garage on the southern exposure. Additional discussion was held regarding the entrance features for this lot in terms of circulation and how guests would locate the entrance. Ms. McNeil explained that there could be a side entrance doorway beside the garage. She added that with regard to the southern exposure, the house could be rotated clockwise and may be a more beneficial approach. Mr. Starace stated that they would not be opposed to changing the angle of unit 9.

A Committee member recommended that the applicant consider shared driveways. Ms. McNeil stated that they can look into it, but the driveways may need to be separate due to difference in grades. Mr. Starace stated that the intent is for each condo to have a separate driveway and a common area. He stated that they typically do not propose shared driveways.

Mr. Doherty left the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Ms. Hengen now chaired the meeting.

Mr. Shilo commented on the proposed colors and was not sure all of the colors worked well together. He questioned whether the Committee was approving the colors as presented, or could they narrow down the choices. A discussion was held regarding the Committee approving pallets of colors. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that with a residential development, the Committee does not typically approve colors as it is all individual residences and is up to the developers. The colors are presented for information purposes. This would be setting a precedent if the Committee recommended specific color pallets.

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Mr. Shilo made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed development redesign, as submitted, with the recommendation that the orientation of unit 9 be reconsidered. Mr. King seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Ms. Hengen – in favor
Mr. Doherty – in favor
Mr. King – in favor
Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Shilo – in favor

Adjournment

Mr. King made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist