

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
May 4, 2021 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on May 4, 2021 via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

Attendees: Co-Chairs Jay Doherty and Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Members Claude Gentilhomme, Margaret Tomas, and Zarron Simonis

Absent: Ron King and Planning Board Chairman Richard Woodfin

Staff: Sam Durfee, Senior Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist
Bob Nadeau, Code Inspector

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.

Ms. Hengen welcomed new member Zarron Simonis to the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Tomas moved to approve the minutes of April 6, 2021, as written. Mr. Doherty seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

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Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

Sign Applications

1. A & M Signs, on behalf of Rupert Dance, LLC, requests ADR approval for the relocation and replacement of an internally-illuminated freestanding sign at 105 Manchester Street in the Highway Commercial (CH) District.

Jeff Huberty, owner of Empire Pools represented the application.

Mr. Huberty explained that their request was to replace the existing faces in kind; nothing else changed. He stated that it will be a hardship to change the signs now as he has already spent so much on the signs. He stated that this is a design that has been used for 28 years and he does not feel that the signs are wrong or are ugly in anyway. He stated that he is having issues with changing colors and fonts of the signs and does not feel it is fair to have to make any more changes and spend more to redo the signs. He also noted that not one business on Manchester Street has the same size sign with matching fonts and there are no standard styles or colors. He stated that he feels that they are being singled out.

Bob Nadeau, of Code, explained that zoning only allows one free standing sign at this location. The Empire Pools sign and the new reader board affectively constitute as two signs. There is not enough road frontage to keep what they have; this exceed the limits. He explained that the applicant can bring the reader sign up or the top sign down, which would then calculate as one sign. He stated that the sign was originally installed in 1995; zoning changed in 2001. Once the structure of a sign is changed or removed it cannot be installed again without being brought into compliance. Mr. Nadeau explained that the height has not changed. The structure can be reused as it has not changed. He stated that the applicant can apply for a variance for the Empire Pools and Hot Tubs signs and the reader board for the current location. Without a variance, they are restricted to one sign. Another option would be to move the signs together, which would be, from a code perspective, a sign with two different planes and two different aspects.

Mr. Gentilhomme explained that the duties of the Committee are to make sure that signs read properly and the business gets the best recognition possible for sign designs. Mr. Doherty commented that a sign needs to get the point out to the public of what the business is.

A discussion was held about redundancy in the wording Mr. Gentilhomme stated that the signs appear to note two different companies due to their being two signs and different fonts. Mr. Huberty stated that his sign points out that they have pools, and hot tubs, and service both. He stated that other signs on Manchester Street are billboards that almost touch the road and now he is being told to change the colors, move either up or down and this is causing a hardship. He stated that it is unclear as to what he needs to do and he would prefer to not make any changes.

Ms. Doherty asked about the process of obtaining a variance. Mr. Nadeau stated that the applicant would need to prove a hardship, which could be difficult. He noted that there are other options and he explained that the applicant can keep the reader board with no signage on it with a plain background. The reader board status has not changed.

Ms. Tomas suggested moving the top sign down, which would make the sign easier to read.

Mr. Huberty stated that he has submitted an application for a variance along with the sign permits. He stated that he is very frustrated with the process but realizes that he should have

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obtained the applicable permits before installing the sign. He stated that they only changed the face of the signs and he did not realize that this change would require permits. Ms. Hengen stated that the Committee's job is to administer the permitting process and provide design review comments.

Mr. Gentilhomme recapped the issues of the signs noting aesthetics due to two different signs, the glow of the larger white sign, the blue in the lower sign, and any compliance issues.

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

1. A film be applied to the interior of the large sign; the letters alone can glow when the sign is illuminated;
2. The large white sign be lowered to be more cohesive with the two lower signs;
3. There are signs that are redundant. These signs should be integrated into one sign and all signs should be brought compliant; it is aesthetically pleasing to have signs at all one level and this would tie better with the two lower elements.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

2. Barlo Signs, on behalf of Northway Bank requests ADR approval for the installation of two halo-lit wall signs and the installation of a new non-illuminated wall sign at 190 North Main Street in the Urban Commercial (CU) District.

Brandon Currier of Barlo Signs represented the application.

Mr. Currier stated that the application was continued from last month specifically to address items B and E. The Planning Board returned the application for items B and E back to the Committee.

Mr. Currier stated that the client will now remove the mission statement sign, item E, from the scope of work based on the Committee's comments. The railing will be rebuilt to eliminate the sign.

Mr. Currier addressed item B, explaining that they are trying to work with the architecture of the building. The prior renderings proposed item B as channel letters. Based on the comments received, the signs for item B have been reduced in size and are now halo lit channel letters, which are on other Northway Branches.

Mr. Doherty asked for an update as to the monument sign. Mr. Currier stated that the monument sign requires a variance. Mr. Nadeau stated that the revised variance application has been received, and, if approved, the monument sign would require review from this Committee.

Ms. Tomas stated that the modifications are an improvement. The fit is better; however, she does not feel that the signs on the side of the building are necessary as they will not be visible unless you are looking straight on. Mr. Doherty agreed and noted that there is a tree that is blocking the view. Mr. Currier replied that he is not sure as to what the option would be for the tree. Mr. Gentilhomme commented that if the tree were removed, the porch roof of the abutting building will still block visibility of the sign on the south side of the building. He suggested that the sign

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be moved to the north side as it is facing the parking lot and is visible up North Main Street to vehicles driving south.

The general consensus of the Committee was that the revised renderings are an improvement overall. All members supported a monument sign and agreed it would be more affective and more visible than the building signs. Members felt that the signs on the building are not necessary and the tree will limit visibility of any signage.

Additional discussion was held regarding the monument sign. Mr. Nadeau explained that the monument sign is a legal, non-conforming sign and any replacement of the monument sign would require a variance. Ms. Hengen asked if there is a precedence set for a monument sign. Mr. Nadeau stated that the new monument sign is in the same location; however, is a different shape and look. Ms. Hengen asked about the square footage limitations of signs for this application. Mr. Nadeau explained that the monument and building signs are two separate calculations.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tomas, to recommend approval of the building sign on the north side of the building as opposed to the south side for better visibility of vehicles driving north, and to encourage the applicant to pursue the monument sign.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

3. Neokraft Signs, on behalf of Bangor Savings Bank, requests ADR approval for the installation of a new externally-illuminated projecting sign at 82 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Britni Landry represented the application.

Ms. Landry stated that they are looking to add signage to the second floor. Due to the location of the existing glass awning on the first floor they are limited to availability of alternative sign locations. She stated that the sign is 11 sq. ft., and is navy blue with orange.

Ms. Tomas commented that the location is appropriate and the sign is an attractive sign. Ms. Hengen commented that the sign is functionally necessary.

Mr. Nadeau stated that a variance was obtained for the proposed location.

Mr. Tomas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to approve the sign as submitted.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

4. Paquette Signs, on behalf of Ameriprise Financial, requests ADR approval for the replacement of a non-illuminated freestanding sign at 210 Rumford Street in the Urban Transitional (UT) District.

Jennifer Rodrigues represented the application.

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Ms. Rodrigues gave an overview of the project. She explained that Ameriprise Financial just purchased this building. The existing signage out front will be removed and replaced. The colors are navy blue and white, the companies brand colors.

Ms. Tomas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to approve the sign as submitted.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor

Ms. Hengen – in favor

Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor

Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor

Mr. Simonis – in favor

5. Cole Glaude requests ADR approval for the installation of a non-illuminated wall sign at 138 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Cole Glaude represented the application.

Mr. Glaude stated that the proposal is for a non-illuminated sign and awning for Sundays.

Ms. Hengen referenced the graphic on the white band along the sign band and asked if the proposal is only to add Sundays. Mr. Glaude stated that the white band is existing and they wish to work with what is already there as it is less expensive. He added the white board is installed; it was wood and due to not being treated was rotted and has been replaced with a metal sheath.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that the white background is stark. He suggested the applicant consider a graphic or change to black and white, which would also tie into the black stripes of the awning and make the name stand out more.

Ms. Hengen suggested that Sundays be painted white on a black background; it would work better and be more visible.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tomas, to approve the sign with the recommendation that the background of the sign be painted black and Sundays be painted white.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor

Ms. Hengen – in favor

Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor

Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor

Mr. Simonis – in favor

Building Permit Applications in Performance Districts

1. Cole Glaude requests ADR approval for the installation of a new awning at 138 North main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Cole Glaude represented the application.

Mr. Glaude stated that the awning is a carbonized gray fabric. It is 196” wide with a 36” projection trim. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that it appears to be similar to the neighboring awnings.

Mr. Glaude stated that they will paint underneath the sign to match the white in the sign and the trim around entrance. Ms. Hengen suggested to leave the gray around the bottom as it is important to architecturally tie into the area and with the existing iron posts, which are black. Mr.

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Doherty commented that the black and white awning is appropriate and elegant for the area and proposed business.

Mr. Doherty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to approve the awning, as submitted.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

2. Tasoula Lillios requests ADR approval for the construction of a new deck at 46 Centre Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

No one was present to represent the application.

Mr. Durfee explained that the application is for the replacement of a deck, which triggers a building permit due to the fact that it is within a Performance District. He reviewed the materials proposed, which will be pressure treated wood. Examples were noted in the application packet. It was stated that the deck cannot be seen from the road.

Mr. Doherty made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hengen, to approve the construction of the new deck, as submitted.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor
Ms. Hengen – in favor
Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor
Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor
Mr. Simonis – in favor

Major Site Plans

1. TF Moran, on behalf of ZJBV Properties, LLC, returning to ADR at the Committee's request for further review of Phase 1 of a 2-phase development consisting of three (3) residential apartment buildings totaling 236 units, with associated parking and site improvements, and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow construction of fewer parking spaces than are required at 70 Pembroke Road in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.

Rob Martel of Berard Martel Architecture represented the application along with Gregg Mikolaities.

Mr. Durfee stated that the applicant received Planning Board approval and are returning per the Committee's request.

Mr. Martel gave an overview of the changes made to the building aesthetics per discussions with the Planning Board and this Committee. He provided revised elevations and noted that the Committee had commented that a more contemporary look was desired as opposed to a colonial design. Colors were changed to allow for more contrasts, shutters were removed, the height of the roof parapet was increased to allow for screening of mechanical equipment.

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Mr. Martel stated that there was a comment from the Committee requesting the entrances be dressed up more. He explained that the entrances of the buildings now have overhead transoms and lighted glass. The windows were also changed per prior discussions.

Mr. Doherty stated that the updates are definitely improvements to what was previously presented. Mr. Gentilhomme agreed and noted that as they move forward, they should be careful with how they design and screen the mechanical systems. Members appreciated the contrast of the color schemes.

Ms. Tomas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Doherty, to approve the architectural designs, as submitted.

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor

Ms. Hengen – in favor

Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor

Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor

Mr. Simonis – in favor

2. Nobis Group, on behalf of Brixmor Capitol, requests Major Site Plan approval for development of new restaurant, retail, and coffee shop uses with a drive-through facility at 80 Storrs Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.

Reuben Twersky and Frank Campione of Brixmor represented the application along with Chris Nadeau of Nobis Group.

Mr. Twersky stated that they feel that they have met all of the Committee's comments given at the last meeting.

Mr. Campione presented revised elevations. He noted that the Committee previously felt that the design was stark with much CMU and EIFS. The palette has now been changed to include brick on the Storrs Street side, the glazing was raised to give the building a two-story feel, granite looking tile has been incorporated along with outdoor seating. Signage was centered and has been moved to the corners to give a more symmetrical look. With regard to the alley, screening has been added. Horizontal siding has been added to the coffee QSR.

Mr. Campione described the east facing facade. He explained that this is similar to Storrs Street with the hope to have two more restaurant tenants. This design is specific to the type of the tenant, either retail or restaurant, using horizontal cladding. This could change based on the tenant. When facing Grill 110, this has been treated with four-sided architecture. More brick with horizontal glazing, unless the tenant changes. The proposed coffee shop, when facing Storrs Street was a white brick and EIFS with weathered gray wood. Changes made include glazing, green awnings and metal roof with brick pillars. More lighting will be added to all four sides. Some EIFS will be used as accents; however, with warmer tones to break up the horizontal siding. The exterior ladder is still being addressed.

Mr. Campione reported that Grill 110 will not revise the interior; however, additional glazing has been added to the façade. Ms. Hengen asked if the 110 Grill and middle building would not have an entrance from Storrs Street. Mr. Campione replied that they had hope too; however, it may not be the best function for the tenants. He explained that there will be glazed walls with access from the patio and parking lot. The middle building tenants are unknown at this time.

Mr. Twersky stated that this is a phased development for the middle tenants. The tenants for the two end units have been determined.

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Mr. Doherty stated that he appreciates the effort relative to the two middle buildings. He asked if there is a wall and a door between the 110 Grill and middle building. Mr. Campione replied yes. There is no connection unless you go through building down Storrs Street or enter through the coffee shop and middle building. With the 110 Grill, access is from the north side of the 110 Grill. The alley between 110 Grill and the next building is closed off.

Mr. Doherty stated that it is a shame that this is such a prominent area in Concord and only one level is being used on 1½ story buildings. He felt that this is a major disservice to this corridor. He added that this element is important to the proposal. Mr. Gentilhomme agreed. Mr. Twersky explained that it is not doable; it is not economically feasible.

Mr. Gentilhomme asked if there could be an opportunity to add clear story glazing in the buildings. Mr. Campione stated they have lowered the roof and added glazing. Clear glazing has been done as high as possible before hitting the roof. It cannot be done with the current tenants and is not typical to what the tenants do. Mr. Gentilhomme commented that he expects the roof top elements of the 110 Grill to be sizeable and will need to be screened.

Ms. Tomas stated that the proposal is hard to look at and comment on without knowing the tenants. Mr. Doherty asked if the site is built out and tenants move in or if it is built per each tenant. Mr. Twersky stated that the design is used to attract tenants and they plan to lease to tenants.

Mr. Doherty stated that Main Street and the downtown area need to be different than building a strip mall or shopping center. He added that the buildings really need to be designed at a pedestrian level; this design feels that perhaps this is a miss as the design is relying on signage to give the structures a second story feel and character. Mr. Campione commented they are bringing the materials up and over as opposed to a strip or sign band in the center. They felt this was a pedestrian scale.

Mr. Campione stated that they realize that this project is not on a main street but it is a vehicle accessed shopping area. They have worked hard with Brixmor to get a layering effect. He reviewed the grading changes proposed noting the addition of steps and various types of pavers. He stated that the building is 24 ft tall; however, is 18 inches lower to the street, which brings down the scale to the pedestrian level.

Mr. Doherty stated that the main point is that this location is not Main Street. The City's goal is to move down to this area and set up this site to become a second Main Street. This is the time to set a precedent for people to walk and be on the street and not just be seen by the vehicles or bypassed. The Committee needs to make sure that the site is developed in the manner it was intended for.

Ms. Tomas commented that the scale is really high at the roof level and too high for a canopy. She added that horizontal wood cladding does not belong on a brick building and these two elements should not be mixed together; pictures show brick and granite. Members agreed. Additional discussion was held relative to the scale of the surrounding buildings.

Ms. Hengen stated that the signage still feels like this is a strip mall or shopping center. She noted that there will be very few viewpoints from Main Street by pedestrians or vehicles and suggested that any redesign of the signs should address views from the street level for a better pedestrian experience. Mr. Twersky replied that it is difficult; however, he will discuss signage with the Committee as well as the tenants once they are determined. He added that he felt that there was a good blend for the entrance to Storrs Street and they will continue to work on this.

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Ms. Hengen referenced the proposed dumpster location and asked about the landscaping. Mr. Twersky stated that there is a better landscaping plan.

Mr. Campione stated that the south building is brick or stone, designed to match the neighboring building. The materials proposed were due to prior discussions for warm intonations, which worked for this tenant. He noted that multiple options were shown to Brixmor.

Ms. Tomas stated that she does not see too many issues with this building. She understands putting a modern twist to it. She suggested more detailing like wall cap, more classical elements added to the modern look and more stone so that it is not just a brick box. Mr. Doherty agreed and added that he is not opposed to this proposal; however, it does have a drive-through feel and he does not feel that this is what the downtown area is looking for. Ms. Hengen commented that the building is in a very prominent location.

Addition discussion was held regarding the door and egress ladder on the east elevation of the coffee QSR. Mr. Campione explained that there could be a historical twist or reference with this building, if necessary, by adding a ladder. He also suggested adding goosenecks onto the wall to draw attention to proposed graphics on the walls as opposed to the sconces shown.

Mr. Simonis spoke to the proposed lighting. He mentioned that some of the proposed lighting may appear very blue and not fit in. He explained that with the close proximity of the existing lighting some colors may not match and contrast. He added that there may be possible trespass with the bollards. With regard to the bike rack, the lighting in this area should be increased for safety and security. Mr. Simonis added that additional lighting should be added to the dumpster area for clean-up and general security. Mr. Campione stated that they hope to create a nice evening vibe and appreciated the comments.

Ms. Tomas expressed concern with the drop off and loading area off the main entry way as it will be a very busy area with pedestrians, the cross walk, any drop offs, bike rack, and also the loading area. Mr. Durfee replied that the crosswalk could be moved further to the east should the loading and drop off area remain to avoid any conflicts. It was noted that the loading area could be used in the off hours to reduce conflicts with drop-offs.

Mr. Doherty asked about the island that divides the traffic. Mr. Nadeau reviewed the traffic pattern and explained that the current quick slip lanes from the parking lot onto Storrs St. will be eliminated. Regarding the trees in the islands, Mr. Nadeau stated that there is a separate landscape plan. Mr. Durfee stated that the applicant will need to resubmit the parking plan relative to the fire lane and added that there are some discrepancies with the landscape plan, which will also need to be updated.

Ms. Tomas stated that she would like to see the plans again. Ms. Hengen agreed and added that there were suggestions and comments regarding signage, pedestrian access from Storrs Street, and the use of wood siding in particular the front elevations. Mr. Twersky stated that they are hoping to get to the Planning Board again.

Mr. Doherty made a motion, second by Ms. Tomas, for the applicant to revise and resubmit plans referencing the following items:

- Proposed materials;
- Pedestrian scale;
- Building relationship to the street and parking lot;
- Lighting;
- Landscaping;
- Pedestrian drop off area;

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- Dumpster enclosures and screening;
- Signage scale; and
- Investigate pedestrian access from Pleasant Street to Storrs Street

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

Mr. Doherty – in favor

Ms. Hengen – in favor

Ms. Ms. Tomas – in favor

Mr. Gentilhomme – in favor

Mr. Simonis – in favor

Members thanked the applicants for their revisions and responsiveness to the Committee's comments.

Adjournment

Ms. Tomas made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist