

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
April 5, 2022 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on April 5, 2022 in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street.

Attendees: Co-Chair Jay Doherty, Members Margaret Tomas, Ron King, Claude Gentilhomme and Timothy Thompson.

Absent: Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, and Zarron Simonis

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.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Thompson moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2022, as submitted. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Applications

1. Maheer Abbas, on behalf of Wow Billiard & Bar, requests ADR approval for this installation of a new, non-illuminated wall sign at 2 N. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Saif Khudair represented the application.

Mr. Doherty commented that he liked the whimsicalness of the proposed sign. He suggested a solid dark green for the background. A black or white border to be placed around the sign was also suggested. Ms. Tomas expressed concern with the red of the sign text clashing with the red on the building.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the sign, as submitted, with the recommendation that a solid green background be used, similar to a green on a billiard table, a 2 inch border black or white border be added to the sign, and to take caution with reds being used to avoid any clashing with the wall that the sign is being mounted to.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. David Libby, on behalf of Jillian Libby, requests ADR approval for the installation of a new, non-illuminated wall sign at 316 Village Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Jillian Libby represented the application.

Ms. Libby explained that the business is for homemade body care and aromatherapy products, as well as other homemade items.

Mr. Doherty stated that the proposed shape is nice along with the bold color. He suggested that any holes in the supporting boards be filled in and painted.

Mr. King suggested the supporting boards be reshaped to match the sign shape.

Mr. King made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the sign, as submitted, with the recommendation that the supporting boards be shorter or shaped to follow the sign's shape; if not possible, the holes in the supporting boards be filled and painted all white.

The motion passed unanimously.

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3. Sign-A-Rama, on behalf of Cristy Bergeron, requests ADR approval for the installation of a new, non-illuminated projecting sign at 21 Warren Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Cristy Bergeron represented the application.

Mr. Doherty stated that he appreciated the whimsicalness of the proposed sign, noting that the bubbles stand out.

A discussion was held about mirroring images so that the sign would read the same way from the west and east side of the sign. Ms. Bergeron replied that she believed they would be mirrored.

Mr. King stated that the smaller text on the sign is difficult to read. Ms. Bergeron stated that she would not be opposed to removing the text, which would then allow for the logo and name to be larger.

Ms. Tomas asked about the lighting. They plan to mimic the other businesses along Warren Street with lighting; all the other businesses have spot lights off the front of the building.

Ms. Tomas made a motion, second by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the sign, as submitted, with the recommendation that the wording at the bottom of the sign be removed.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. First Sign, on behalf of Double Midnight Comics, requests ADR approval for the replacement of an internally-illuminated monument sign at 341 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Scott Aubertin of First Sign represented the application.

Mr. Aubertin stated that the sign's graphics were installed without a permit. He stated that the graphic is the same logo as approved for the building signage. He added that he is not able to get the materials to make the background opaque. He commented that this sign is "one and done". In addition, he added that the color is not able to be changed out.

Mr. Doherty remarked that the sign appears to blend with the sign beneath it and he suggested that a separating line be added as well. Mr. Aubertin responded that he does not have the authority to make additions to the sign that would affect the signage of other tenants.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the sign, as submitted.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Committee addressed the following two applications simultaneously.

5. First Sign, on behalf of Walden Mutual Bank, requests ADR approval for the installation of a new, non-illuminated wall sign and a new non-illuminated projecting sign at 66 N. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Building Permits in Performance Districts

1. Walden Mutual Bank requests ADR approval for a façade change at 66 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Scott Aubertin of First Sign represented the application along with Kristen Cummings.

A new rendering of the sign was provided and Ms. Cummings explained that the new proposal was a request from the landlord who preferred a more contrasting look.

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Members commented to their own preference. Mr. Gentilhomme preferred the original proposal of all black as it was a clean look and very sophisticated. Mr. Thompson stated that he would prefer the black sign with white background; however, the new proposal is still tastefully done. Ms. Tomas liked the new white and black proposal and noted that the entire building is white. Ms. Cummings stated that there is a creaminess to the white; it is called “White Dove”.

Mr. Aubertin stated that the letters are individual black, powder-coated letters, 3/8” thick. The logo is a raised, wood-block cut.

Mr. Thompson asked about lighting. Ms. Cummings stated that the sign will not be backed lit. They are looking into the lighting. Mr. Doherty stated that he would be interested to see how the lightbar would look. Mr. Aubertin replied that it would be painted black and not be visible.

With regards to the building, Ms. Cummings stated that the façade will all be one dark monochromatic color. Mr. Doherty expressed concern with shadowing.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the revised sign, as submitted.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the façade changes, as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Stone River Architects, on behalf of 107 Storrs Street LLC, requests ADR approval for the installation for two new windows on the second floor of the south-facing façade, at 107 Storrs Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

No one was present to represent the application.

Mr. Durfee stated that the proposal is to install two new windows into the wall. He explained that there should not be any visual issues as it will be impossible to see the new windows from pedestrian vantage points. He added that he spoke with the applicant who has asked for guidance about the casings and if they should match the existing, which are bronze.

Mr. Doherty noted that the proportions seem to be different.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval for two new windows, as presented, with the condition that the casing match the existing windows.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Capital Commons requests ADR approval for an amendment to the previously approved architectural up-lighting at 11 S. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Jamie Simchik represented the application along with Daniel Hebert, lighting programmer and electrician.

Mr. Simchik thanked the Committee for coming to the hotel the evening before to view the up-lighting. He stated that Hotel Concord currently has an approval for up-lighting for one, static color, over the course of an evening. The request is to have an approval to allow for additional colors; still static.

Mr. Durfee provide an overview of the site visit in which members were able to watch different lighting combinations with various colors, saturation and brightness levels. He stated that the lighting around 15% shows to be true to the color and is complimentary. Discussion ensued

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regarding intensity of different colors. Mr. Hebert explained that all of the colors are able to be adjusted, which will affect the light array. Mr. Gentilhomme mentioned that some color choices and intensities may affect the ambient lighting in the City. Mr. Doherty commented that a solid color at 10% seemed to be a solid flow and complimented the features of the building.

Mr. King expressed concern with setting a precedent. He suggested setting a percentage for the lighting as the saturation and colors may affect the architectural feel of the city. He also noted that there should be a list of colors and meanings made available.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that the Committee will need to look at up-lighting on a case by case basis like we do for the architecture of a building. Applicants can show a representation of what they are proposing using renderings and that will be what the Committee will discuss and decide on and hold them to. He stated that he does not want light to be a feature; lighting is a part of architecture. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that it is his understanding the lighting changes default to weather.

Mr. Simchik explained that there is a software upgrade available that he may purchase, which will allow for more control. He was thankful to be able to do the test and added that he hopes to have flexibility for other lighting options for holidays as currently only one color, static, is allowed.

Mr. Doherty commented that this is the building we are addressing at this time. The solid colors are very elegant and are an asset to the building. He stated that with half of the lights on and half off, it appears to be broken and is not as elegant.

Mr. King agreed and added that he would prefer more simple lighting and would support one color.

Ms. Tomas stated that she agreed the half off/half on appeared broken, especially when looking at the lighting from the highway. She agreed that one color is best; however, felt that having different lighting for holidays or a special event would nice. She noted that if the lighting is more constant and static, the changes will be noticed more. She added that colors within the same pallet compliment the architecture.

Additional discussion was held regarding patterns and timeframe. Mr. Simchik stated that he does not have any intention to flash with other colors; patters will change but it is at a narrow spectrum of four different scenes, except for holidays. He explained that the lighting is based on the John Hancock building in Boston. Ms. Tomas replied that it would be great to allow Concord to have their own liberty's and not copy from Boston.

Mr. Simchik stated that he would like the ability to tastefully change out the lighting to different scenes and offered to do a trial and return to the Committee.

In an effort to enhance the architecture of the building, Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tomas, to recommend approval of up-lighting on the building, conforming to the following conditions:

1. Lighting brightness shall not exceed 20 %, with darker colors being shown at the lower end of the range and pastels closer to 20%;
2. The default up-lighting scene will be colors relative to weather conditions; colors can be superseded by special events;
3. Multiple colors displayed at one time are permitted during the 6-month trial period; and

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4. Additional review can be triggered by the Architectural Design Review Committee and/or the Planning Board within the 6-month trial period.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. Simchik for providing the Committee an opportunity to observe and comment on a lighting test.

4. Crown Castle, on behalf of T-Mobil, requests ADR approval for the installation of three new antennas atop 1 Eagle Square and 100 N. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

No one was present to represent this application.

Mr. Durfee explained the request is to expand cellular capabilities atop the building; it is a telecommunications CUP.

A brief discussion was held regarding the height and the possibility of any interference with line of sight. Mr. Durfee stated that the existing equipment is centrally located on the roof. Mr. Thompson stated that with the new legal changes it is innocuous.

Mr. Thompson made a motion, second by Mr. Gentilhomme, to recommend approval of the application as submitted.

The motion passed unanimously.

Major Site Plan & Subdivision Applications

1. Wilcox & Barton, on behalf of 125 NSS, LLC, requests ADR approval for the construction of a 3-story office building at 125 North State Street in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

Erin Lambert of Wilcox & Barton represented the application along with Matt Miller from 125 NSS, LLC.

Ms. Lambert gave an overview of the proposal for a three-story office building addition with an elevator for ADA access, a two car garage with an open deck above. She also reviewed the 2019 plan. Elevations were reviewed and discussed. Ms. Lambert noted that the façade will remain the same, the garage will be recessed. Five new trees are proposed as well as new plantings.

A discussion was held regarding the entrances. Ms. Tomas suggested changing the main entrance to allow those needing an accessible entrance to enter through the same door as others. Ms. Lambert replied that the existing entrance is currently the main entrance, there is a lift proposed that will allow a person access into the building; it will still look like the main entrance. Ms. Lambert explained the elevations of the building and the existing slopes. Discussion ensued regarding the grading. Ms. Lambert explained that changes would require a need to raise the parking area as well as add a retaining wall to the Rollins Park area, in order to make the new entrance accessible. Mr. Doherty asked about the double entrance doors shown on the plan. Ms. Lambert stated that there will be only one door and she will correct the plan.

Ms. Lambert indicated that the dumpsters will be kept in the garage and will be wheeled out for pickup.

As far as exterior color, Ms. Lambert stated that the color will match what is existing.

A discussion was held regarding the bands of glass proposed for the building. Members felt that the large panes of glass on the building are out of place and make the building appear as a commercial store front. The building's architecture and details should complement the residential neighborhood. Also discussed was the amount of glass for the tower. Members suggested to add

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mullions in smaller patterns or replace the proposed large window panes with windows matching the existing building. Members preferred using glass in a different style for the tower.

A window was noted to be grayed out on the plan and the details did not match. The intent of the window was not clear or if it exists or is proposed. Ms. Lambert will check on this and added that the window would be detailed as all others.

Mr. Durfee noted that the landscaping requirements have been met as part of the 2019 site plan.

Mr. Doherty commented he appreciated the change in the footprint and being more compact and tying the colors together; overall, it will be a better fit for the site.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the application as submitted, with the following conditions:

1. Return to the Committee for the reconsideration of the “apparent store front windows” on the addition and redesign windows keeping within the character of the original building and surrounding neighborhood; and
2. Combine the main and ADA entrances to be the same entrance.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ron King left the meeting.

2. The John Flatley Company, on behalf of the City of Concord, requests ADR approval to demolish an existing structure and construct a new multifamily residential building consisting of 64 units, and associated site improvements at 32-34 South Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CPB) District.

Attorney Raymond D’Amante of D’Amante Counsel represented the application along with Doug Richards from the John Flatley Company, Lono Hunter from Dennis Mires, The Architects, and Matthew Walsh, Director of Redevelopment/Downtown Services and Special Projects.

Revised elevations were provided for review. Mr. Hunter noted changes suggested by the Committee back in February. The suggestions resulted in changes to the landscaping and planters around the front patio area, now terraced. They plan to work with Kimball Jenkins and will have a display area for art now in the lobby area towards Main Street. A rendering of the pool area and deck showing relationship to the building, landscaping, and fencing. A rendering of the pergola was provided which showed screening toward the rear parking area, canopy, and other various elements of the area, including a 4 foot and 6 foot fence.

Mr. Doherty commented that the patio area is a nice change. He appreciated the large space of the pool area and the functionality of the separate seating area.

Samples of the exterior were provided for review. The panels on the building have been recolored and realigned to work with the building and dimensions. Mr. Hunter stated that they are proposing a water-struck brick, which he described as a material that holds up well. He noted that this brick will be applied up to the residential level; it anchors the building. The windows are fiberglass with either a black or a graphite gray exterior trim. The bulk of the building will be fiber cement panels with three ranges of grays. At the top of the building will be a cornice brick, darker in color, adding a contemporary look.

Mr. Hunter noted that a mechanical engineer is now involved with the design for the ventilation and mechanical systems.

Mr. Doherty appreciated that they took the comments of the Committee and applied them well to the design.

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Ms. Shank stated that the proposal is a very nice implementation of the suggested changes from the Committee.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, second by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the application as submitted.

The motion passed; 3/1. Ms. Tomas was opposed.

Adjournment

Mr. Thompson made a motion to adjourn at 10:29 a.m. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist