

**City of Concord, New Hampshire**  
**Architectural Design Review Committee**  
**September 6, 2022 Minutes**

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on September 6, 2022 in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street.

Attendees: Members Timothy Thompson (acting chair), Zarron Simonis, Claude Gentilhomme and Ron King. Margaret Tomas arrived at 8:36 a.m.

Absent: Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Co-Chair Jay Doherty,

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner  
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist  
Tracy Hutton, Code Administrator  
Bob Nadeau, Code Inspector

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Thompson at 8:32 a.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Gentilhomme moved to approve the minutes of August 2, 2022, as submitted. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Sign Applications**

1. Sousa Signs, on behalf of US Cellular, requests ADR approval for the replacement of an internally-illuminated freestanding sign panel and an internally-illuminated wall sign at 240 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Heather Dudco of Sousa Signs, represented the application.

Ms. Dudco stated that US Cellular is proposing to reface their signs. The panel in the cabinet will be replaced with a new acrylic panel and the wall sign is being replaced with a channel letter on a raceway, which is being reduced.

Mr. Gentilhomme recommended that the background of the signs be an opaque background as opposed to all white backgrounds.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the signs as submitted, with the recommendation that the background be an opaque background.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Spirit Halloween requests ADR approval for three (3) new wall signs at 271 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance District.

No one was present to represent the application.

Mr. King asked if these are the exact same signs that the Spirit Halloween has proposed in prior years. Mr. Nadeau replied yes.

Ms. Tomas asked if the sizes proposed are correct and meet the requirements. Mr. Nadeau replied yes.

Mr. King made a motion, seconded by Mr. Simonis, to recommend approval of the signs as submitted.

The motion passed unanimously.

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**Building Permits in Performance Districts**

5. Claude Gentilhomme, on behalf of Berat H LLC, requests ADR approval for façade changes to 58 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District (2022-60).

Mr. Gentilhomme recused himself as he is the representative for this application.

Mr. Gentilhomme explained the proposal is to upgrade the store front. They propose to use all aluminum panels surrounded by an aluminum frame. The two existing signs, wall and projecting signs, are for the Post and will be replaced after the façade work is completed. He noted that they may be relocated on the façade. He hopes that the work will add detail to break up the massing and define the three entities that could be there. Materials will be man-made materials. He is trying to avoid using wood. He is proposing to use aluminum or synthetic materials. The colors of the panels are proposed to be off white and the remainder of the sign and any detailing and cornice will be a medium gray, similar to the sides of the elevation shown.

Mr. King spoke to the alignment as it appeared to not be centered. Mr. Gentilhomme explained that the alignment is to the columns and he preferred to not carry the lines upward as that would end up with a wider and plainer look.

Ms. Tomas noted that the windows are higher. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that there is no detail to recover behind them; he will paint the aluminum.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that he would provide color samples to Staff prior to the Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Nadeau stated that permits will be required if any existing signs are to be relocated.

Mr. Gentilhomme will share colors with the Planning Board.

Ms. Tomas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Simonis, to recommend approval, as submitted.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Site Plans**

6. Nick Golon, on behalf of Big Step LLC, requests Preliminary Design Review for a hospitality use, consisting of a gaming hall, restaurant/bar, hotel, and 3-story parking structure for property off Break O' Day Drive in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District (2022-59).

Nick Golon of TF Moran was present along with Jeremiah Goulet of Banwell Architects.

Mr. Golon gave an overview of the project, which is a proposal for a phased development for a hospitality venue, to include a sit-down restaurant and lounge, charitable gaming hall, brew pub, hotel, conference center and events area. Phase 1 includes the charitable gaming hall, restaurant, lounge and bar, and allocated parking areas, access, and stormwater management.

Mr. Golon described the topography to be wooded vegetation encompassing the northern, southern, and western portions of the property. He noted an existing wetland in the eastern portion of the lot, which is fed by two drainage pipes conveying runoff from the NHDOT limited access-right-of-way associated with I393. He noted there is a large elevation change, approximately 86-feet of grade change. The highpoint of the site sits approximately 50-feet above the adjacent elevation of I393. He added that the slope and the landscaping currently obscure views and they are working to reshape the slope to provide better balance and enhance the site lines. He stated that they are also working with NHDOT with hopes to remove some of the existing vegetation, which will also open the site lines.

Mr. Goulet stated that the phased project will begin with the hotel on the west side, the casino expansion, and meeting hall on the east side. Currently, the owners would like to pursue a historic

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mill style building to tie into the aesthetics of the City and local area. The focus of the design is on the front façade and main entrance, with less detail on the side of the building where an addition is planned in phase 2. The front façade will have a flat roof, a brick entry way that is similar to a mill-style building with arch windows, dark cornice, with timber and steel elements. The sides will be metal paneling that will be a color to match the front brick façade. The rear of the building will consist of offices and will also be metal paneling. The brick tower is a sign element and will aide in screening of the loading dock area from I393.

Mr. Golon noted that views of the facility from I393 are very important to the applicant, and that some clearing is desired to allow greater views.

Discussion ensued regarding the façade. Mr. Gentilhomme commented that the building should not look like an old mill building or reproduce the building as if it has been repurposed. Instead, reflect the character with styles of windows and materials. He noted that any materials used should be incorporated throughout the entire building, not just on the façade. Mr. Goulet agreed but noted that it is a cost and phasing issue.

Ms. Tomas noted that this is not a mill building; it is a single-story building with metal paneling, as viewed from the highway. Instead of clearing to allow more views of the building, she recommended more screening for what is a very plain building with few architectural features from that angle. Otherwise, she recommended incorporating more “mill characteristics” into the sides and other focal points of the building, especially if they intend to use it for advertising.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that it is more important that the sign be visible from I393.

Mr. Thompson commented that the speeds through this section of the highway are high, and there is an off-ramp. The small break in vegetation they are showing from I393 will not provide direction as well as a sign that is well done. He also stated that he appreciates the landscaping and internal parking area, but noted they need to be cognizant of conflicts between landscaping and lighting, and to use winter tolerant vegetation.

Ms. Shank noted that the entire paved area is required to have a vegetative buffer, and that a variance would be needed to allow clearing from the highway.

Mr. King noted that the site needs the plantings that are proposed and possibly more. The area should be made as natural as possible.

Ms. Tomas stated that driving west will give a better view of the sign. Mr. Golon commented that the regrading of the slope will assist with views. He added that currently there is a break in trees that allows a passerby to see the other business. Ms. Shank stated that travelers will be able to view the property heading west but can access the site only from the east off the highway. Overall, visibility will be difficult from I393. Mr. Golon stated that they will improve the graphics.

Ms. Tomas stated that she appreciated the front façade. Mr. Goulet stated that the façade is owner driven.

Mr. Thompson stated that he hopes to see the same type of detail given to rest of the phased development and overall site.

Mr. Golon stated that they are submitting for Phase 1 now; however, will show the future expansions. Mr. Thompson stated that the Committee is not looking for Phase 2 at this time. Provide detail for Phase 1 and a concept plan for Phase 2.

Mr. King asked if there would be a way to introduce more nature, to provide better views for the people in the hotel. He stated that there is nothing to look at an no place to go outside. Mr. Golon

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stated that the design is very linear. Mr. Goulet stated that the location of the corner is crucial as they intend to add a terrace in the second phase. Ms. Tomas suggested a courtyard design.

Mr. King asked if all of the parking shown is required and will be utilized. Mr. Golon stated that the proposed parking totals about 1,000 spaces; it is all required for this use and will be utilized over the two development phases. He added that they are utilizing every square inch of the site. He noted that there are underutilized parking areas in the vicinity that could also be used to shuttle people from if needed.

Mr. Golon stated that groundbreaking is planned for 2024.

Mr. Nadeau mentioned that the City does have height requirements for the sign tower. He noted that there may be variances required due to building and sign standards. Mr. Goulet stated that they are proposing 32 feet in height for the building and sign tower.

Mr. Golon thanked the Committee for the feedback. He summarized for clarity that the Committee would like to see the front façade of the building be more modernized; make sure that there is site lighting not obscured by landscaping, that additional detail be provided in graphics of the easterly side regrading; and that visibility from I393 focus on signage rather than the building. With regard to colors, Mr. Thompson requested physical samples be provided when the formal application is submitted. Earth colors was an overall suggestion.

**Adjournment**

Mr. King made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 a.m. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Fellows-Weaver  
Administrative Specialist