

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
April 4th, 2023 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on April 4th, 2023 in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street.

Attendees: Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Members Margaret Tomas, Zarron Simonis, Timothy Thompson, Ron King, and Claude Gentilhomme

Absent: Co-Chair Jay Doherty

Staff: Alec Bass, Senior Planner
Heather Shank, City Planner
Alicen Twardosky, Administrative Specialist

Call to Order

1. Co-Chair Hengen called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

2. On a recommendation by Co-Chair Hengen, Mr. Thompson moved, seconded by Mr. King, to approve the minutes from the of February 28th, 2023 meeting with the amendment to Item 6 to read “no signage on the west (front) side,” amendment to Item 14 to read “Heritage Commission” rather than “Historic Commission,” and one of Co-Chair Hengen’s comments to read “noted the cornice of the new building and the glazed lobby is overly contemporary and boxy and suggested it better recall (but not replicate) the historic cornices along the street.” All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Applications

3. Classic Signs Inc, on behalf of Service Credit Union, requests ADR approval for a new 40 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 6 Merchants Way in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Ben Devall (Classic Signs) represented the application.

The sign is 40 square feet with channel letters. The layout and colors are corporate logo specifications.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the signs as submitted. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Sousa Signs, LLC, on behalf of GNC, requests ADR approval for replacement with a 21.3 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 40 Fort Eddy Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Jason Gagnon (Sousa Signs) represented the application.

The current GNC sign is not faring well with wind storms. The applicant is proposing to replace the channel letter set with new corporate font and no “white pill” image. The square footage is smaller than what is currently there.

Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the signs as submitted. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Serrato Signs, on behalf of Starbucks Coffee #68776, requests ADR approval for a new 19.63 sf internally illuminated wall sign, a new 32.76 sf internally illuminated wall sign and a new 34.09 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 68 Storrs Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District. Refer to ZBA Case 0024-2023 for variance to allow 86.48 sf of combined sign area.

Mr. Bass updated the Committee that there was a ZBA variance to allow for 86.48 of combined sign area.

Andy Serrato (Serrato Signs) represented the application.

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The Committee is only reviewing the three signs on the building because the rest are directional or incidental signs that don't require a permit. Co-Chair Hengen asked to review the signs one by one. Sign one is the south elevation sign, the part of the building that faces the parking lot and drive thru. It is only the logo and is internally illuminated. Sign two is the west elevation sign that faces the main street and is considered the front entrance. It has the Starbucks siren image and drive thru sign below. The Committee feels that because the drive thru is visible, the drive thru signs are unnecessary and redundant. The last sign is on the east which is facing internally into the parking lot. Rather than using the graphic, it says "Starbucks" and has the drive thru sign next to it. Mr. Gentilhomme noted the arrows point in the wrong direction. Ms. Hengen asked why the logo wasn't used on the back elevation, east. The applicant stated that the Starbucks name is typically over the door. Ms. Tomas feels that this is visually appealing. All directional signs are illuminated.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tomas, to recommend approval of the signs with the stipulation that the drive thru signs on the east and west elevations of the building be removed. The motion passed 5 to 1. Mr. Thompson opposes, with the viewpoint that these should be recommendations, not stipulations because they were a part of the variance.

6. KC Signs, on behalf of NHT 2022 LLC Co-Owner, requests ADR approval for replacement with a 100 sf non-illuminated wall sign and replacement with a 25 sf non-illuminated wall sign at 81 Hall Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District. Refer to ZBA Case #16-2010 for variance to allow up to 125 sf sign at height in excess of 25' and above sills of the first set of windows above first floor and ZBA Case #20-2021 for variance to allow up to additional 25 sf sign at height in excess of 25' and above sills of first set of windows above first floor.

Robyn Casey (KC Signs) represented the application.

The Applicant has temporary banners placed where previous signage existed. Ms. Casey clarified that the coloring of the temporary banners varies slightly than what is being proposed for the permanent signage.

Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Simonis, to recommend approval of the signs as presented. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Site Plan & Subdivision Applications

7. Andy Sanborn, on behalf of Big Step, LLC, requests ADR approval as part of a Major Site Plan approval to construct a charitable gaming hall, restaurant, and microbrewery, along with a Conditional Use Permit approval for disturbance of wetland buffers at 7 Break O' Day Drive in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District. (2022-59)

Nick Golon (TFMoran) and Ingrid Nichols (Banwell Architects) represented the application.

Staff requested for the Applicant to return due to the significance of the modification requests. Ms. Nichols displayed a presentation reflecting the windows being enlarged to match in width on top and bottom. The presentation reflected cast stone sills on the front and rear of the building. There will be external muntins on the windows. The east elevation, facing the street, showed a square to reflect the scale of the mural that will be added. A graphic designer has not been hired yet. Mr. Golon assured the Committee that the designer of the mural will appear before the Committee with the design. The backside shows an improvement of the windows (viewed from 393, traveling west) to be scaled to the offices and consistent with the look of the building on the front. The muntin size has also been increased.

Ms. Shank clarified that her request for them to return before attending another Planning Board meeting was due to significant elements anticipated to change regarding style, modernization, and character of the building. The Committee felt that the design being presented did not speak to any of

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the concerns regarding contemporary approach in design. Mr. Golon clarified that this was not in the ADR comments, simply discussion. Co-Chair Hengen voiced her desire for a more contemporary, abstract mural, versus the overly-used Concord Coach previously suggested by the Applicant--in other words, to forgo the historical image ideas as they seem gratuitous.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to recommend approval of the application with the amended design of the building and recognize that the applicant will come back to present design for the mural along with the sign package. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

8. NH Land Consultants, PLLC, on behalf of Richmond Penacook, LLC, requests ADR approval as part of a Major Site Plan application for construction of a 68-unit townhome development at 150 Fisherville Road in the General Commercial (CG) District. (2023-83)

Mr. Thompson recused himself from this discussion and vote.

Jake McManus (Compass Development) represented the application.

The Applicant acquired the land January 1, 2023. They have been working with NH Land Consultants. This design is similar to their plan on "Abbott One." The first phase includes buildings A, B, and D; the second phase includes buildings C, E, G, H, and the pool house; buildings F, I, and J are the final phase. There are garage units underneath. Kitchen, living, and dining areas are on first floor. Two bedrooms are on the third floor. These are market rate condos.

One of the items of concern that came up in a prior meeting was the Fisherville Road elevation. In addition to lowering the berm, the Committee wanted to see less of the appearance of a "back side" of the house along Fisherville Road. The Applicant modified the elevations and the courtyard was made more welcoming with pathways. Presently there are no trees proposed for the courtyard. Ms. Shank and Mr. King suggested trees be added to provide shade and privacy. Mr. King suggested moguls, trees, and/or boulders in the open space. He encouraged the Applicant to be artistic in their design. Mr. Gentilhomme suggested placing the trees closer to the buildings and leaving a small open space for kids to play. Landscape makes it enjoyable to be outside. Additional trees should be provided along the corridors. Mr. Gentilhomme suggested designing various style dwelling areas for outdoor entertainment in the corners of the perimeter of the property.

Ms. Shank reviewed the Staff recommendations to include a walking path around the exterior, design the entire perimeter buildings to appear as fronts, including providing a connection / relationship between the street and the front of the buildings. The Committee would like to see shade areas with benches and possibly gardens, a play area, etc. Ms. Tomas suggested more variety in the dormers and exterior look. Ms. Shank suggested Rosemary's Way as an example of breaking up the uniformity of the buildings with color variations. Co-Chair Hengen feels it would be wise for the Applicant to come back next month with modifications made regarding the suggestions from the Committee, such as a perimeter walk way, playgrounds and play areas in the greenspaces, differentiation from unit to unit, etc.

Mr. Simonis asked the Applicant to make the lighting design more residential as opposed to commercial, for instance bringing them down to pedestrian light post size.

Ms. Hengen asked if a motion should be made or whether the applicant could come back. Ms. Shank noted that the applicant could return the following month since the Board would not be making a motion to approve the project in April. Ms. Hengen felt that there were enough issues of significance that it would be helpful to have a follow up prior to making a motion.

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Other Business

9. Discussion on the 3 installed signs proposed at the July 5, 2022 ADR meeting at the 110 Grill located at 80 Storrs Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.

Mr. Bass determined through Code that the sign was approved to have no moving parts. The sign that was placed has the appearance of movement which is prohibited. These signs have since been removed and they will be installing the sign that has been approved, a simple bronze colored background. Mr. Nadeau stated that the City had no misunderstanding and that the sign company acknowledged that it wasn't supposed to be like that and was an error on the manufacturer's part.

10. Concord Hotel

Ms. Shank brought up the Concord Hotel. They will come back in the coming months in accordance with the previous Planning Board ADR approval to review the cornice lighting. They had a six-month review period that is expired. There were certain brightness levels that were supposed to be incorporated during the review time. The Committee feels that the lighting is still too bright. Ms. Shank will ask them to change the illumination on certain dates / weeks to afford the PB, as well as ADR, an opportunity to view intensity levels. Mr. Simonis stated that the intensity may not correct the problem since it is up against a black sky. The style and location are what impacts the intensity, and blue is particularly the brightest.

The original approval allowed a single color, which cannot change within a 24-hour period. They returned to ADR and received Planning Board approval for two colors, with a condition to have a six-month review period to include evaluating the specifications and brightness. Co-Chair Hengen stated that if Main Street is to be enlivened through light, it would be better achieved at the street level. Ms. Tomas stated that the cornice lighting isn't bad, it's nice to see from the highway, but guidelines need to be in place better limiting brightness. Mr. Simonis cautions against going too low with the dimmer to prevent flickering.

Ms. Shank will reach out to Concord Hotel and inform them of the Committee's desire for them to come before the ADR Committee in June with selected dates from now until then to display various lumens and colors.

No vote taken.

Adjournment

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. Simonis, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicen Twardosky
Administrative Specialist

The next meeting will be held on May 2nd, 2023