

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
June 6th, 2023 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on June 6th, 2023 in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street.

Attendees: Co-Chair Jay Doherty, Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Members Zarron Simonis, Ron King, and Claude Gentilhomme.

Absent: Members Timothy Thompson and Margaret Tomas

Staff: Heather Shank, City Planner
Beth Fenstermacher, Assistant City Planner
Alicen Twardosky, Administrative Specialist
Tracey Hutton, Zoning Administrator

Call to Order

1. Co-Chair Doherty called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

2. A motion was made by Co-Chair Hengen, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to approve the minutes from the May 2nd, 2023 meeting. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Applications

3. Barlo Signs, on behalf of Morrill Mill Pond, LLC, requests ADR approval for a new 57.81 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 2 Whitney Rd located in the Industrial (IN) District.

Lauren Pasquarella (Barlo Signs) and Laurie Rauseo (Morrill Mill Pond, LLC) represented the application.

The Applicant is requesting a red halo lit sign on a new space. It will be a subtle lighting style. It faces a road and no major roads. This sign will help identify the entrance. The sign is currently centered over the door. The nearby tree will be trimmed for visibility if needed.

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

4. Burr Signs, on behalf of Interchange Development, LLC, requests ADR approval for a new 25 sf internally illuminated wall sign and replacement with a new 2 sf internally illuminated tenant panel at 4 Merchants Way located in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Laurie Rauseo (Interchange Development) and Chris Covert (TCD Construction, Inc.) represented the application.

The Applicants requested two signs at this Jersey Mikes location because of the proximity to the circle, one on the back and one on the front. The sign on the building is what directs the traffic from the circle into the parking lot. The front sign is double the allowable size. They are on the agenda for the Zoning Board meeting tomorrow evening.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the signs with the stipulation that the variance gets approved by Zoning. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

5. NEOPCA Signs, on behalf of Circle T Car Wash, requests ADR approval for replacement with a new 40 sf pylon sign and replacement with a new 24 sf non-illuminated wall sign at 109 Manchester Street located in the Highway Commercial (CH) District.

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This application was removed from the agenda.

6. Portsmouth Sign Company, on behalf of Brixmore Property Group requests ADR approval for a new 22.34 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 74 Storrs Street located in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District. Reference Zoning Board case #40-2023 for to allow 47 sf of signage where normally 23.5 is allowed.

Jake McManus represented the application.

This will be a standard building sign with black returns and white lettering. There will be one on the front and one on the back. They will be face-lit. Ms. Hutton voiced that the signs should be identical as approved by the ZBA. The Committee recommended the letters be no more than 40 nits in accordance with the Illumination Engineering Society (IES). Mr. King clarified that the letters need to be readable from the street.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the sign with the stipulation that the sign is the same size as the previously approved by the Zoning Board and the sign brightness be no more than 40 nits, in accordance with the Illumination Engineering Society (IES), the intent being that the sign is bright enough to read the lettering but not so bright as to illuminate the surroundings. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Expedite the Diehl, on behalf of T-Mobile, requests ADR approval for a new 25.6 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 72 Storrs Street located in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.

Tim Trujillo (Stratus) and Dave Ouellette (T-Mobile) represented the application.

Previously one application was approved and one application was denied. The client feels they need to maximize their signage because they are being blocked on either side by adjacent building bump outs. Currently there is 25.6 square feet allocated, which is proposed for the parking lot side. They are seeking a variance to get the same sized sign on the street side. The signs will be horizontally aligned with the signs of the adjacent businesses. The application labels for the west and east elevations do not match what the picture is showing in the application.

Co-Chair Hengen made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to approve the sign as submitted with the understanding that this sign is placed on the west elevation, or street side facade. They will return to ADR for the east side, or parking lot facade. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Sousa Signs, LLC, on behalf of Granite State Credit Union, requests ADR approval for a new 16 sf internally illuminated wall sign and a new 76.4 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 311 Sheep Davis Road located in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Jason Gagnon (Sousa Signs) represented the application.

The Applicants are looking to add two signs: One sign will be as you enter the drive thru area. The second sign will be as you exit. They will be new, internally lit wall cabinet signs. The lighting is matching all of the Credit Union's existing lighting. Co-Chair Doherty would like to see the name changed to a block out version of lighting / font but felt the logo is fine. Mr. Gagnon was fine with that.

Co-Chair Hengen made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend approval of the signs with the stipulation that the background be opaque. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Sousa Signs, LLC, on behalf of Bank of New Hampshire, requests ADR approval for replacement with a new 10.4 sf non-illuminated wall sign and replacement with a new 24 sf non-illuminated wall sign at 3 Eagle Square located in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

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Jason Gagnon (Sousa Signs) represented the application.

These are logo change sign applications. This location is a specialty given their overall banking system. The Applicant is looking to replace both signs. Burgundy is no longer part of the color scheme. Blacks, whites, and some blue will be the new image. The signs will remain non-illuminated, only the words and logos will shift. The lower sign panel is a little more intricate with pen board around.

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

10. Sousa Signs, LLC, on behalf of Bank of New Hampshire, requests ADR approval for replacement with a new, double sided 40 sf internally illuminated tenant panel on a free-standing sign and replacement with a new 30 sf internally illuminated wall sign at 9-11 Triangle Park Drive located in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Jason Gagnon (Sousa Signs) represented the application.

This location has simple face replacements of the signs. Co-Chair Doherty appreciated the black out on these renderings. One sign, remaining burgundy for the time being, is receiving its own project, to be addressed down the road.

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

11. Sousa Signs, LLC, on behalf of Bank of New Hampshire requests ADR approval for replacement with a new 12.5 sf sign cabinet, replacement with two new 7.1 sf wall signs on the building tower and replacement with a new 9.1 sf wall sign over the building entrance at 167 North Main Street located in the Civic Performance (CVP) District.

Jason Gagnon (Sousa Signs) represented the application.

There are not a lot of face panel changes in this application. The logo didn't work on some of the sign faces. The current sign is going to get pulled down and replaced entirely. The burgundy on brick was hard to see. Each tower will have a replacement sign. The main branch entrance will have a dimensional letter sign with external downlighting. They are simply pulling down the old sign, putting up the new one. The monument sign will be removed sign cabinet included, a double sided non-illuminated will replace it. Co-Chair Hengen questioned whether the tower logo needed to go before the Zoning Board, whether it qualifies as a new sign being above the second story. Ms. Hutton verified that the Applicants need a Conditional Use Permit, not a variance.

Co-Chair Hengen motioned to recommend approval of the signs P0, P2, P3 with respect that P1 will require a new CUP from Planning Board and for this sign not be approved because it is too high up in the chimney stack. Co-Chair Hengen would like it lowered equal to the slope of the roof. Ron King seconded.

Mr. Simonis stated his disagreement, and voiced being fine with the P1 sign as submitted.

Co-Chair Hengen revised her original motion to approve only the P0, P2, and P3 signs. All in favor. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Hengen motioned, seconded by Mr. King that if a CUP from the Planning Board is approved, that the logo be moved down to the base of the chimney element so as to retain the architectural integrity of the chimneys. Of the five members present, three were in favor. Motion passed.

Site Plan & Subdivision Applications

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12. Northpoint Engineering, on behalf of ZV Investments, requests ADR approval as part of a Major Site Plan approval for construction to add six residential units to an existing 3-unit lot and expansion of parking areas at 5 Thomas Street located in the High Density Residential (RH) District. (2023-103)

Jeff Lewis, Aaron Thibault (Northpoint Engineering) and Dan Martin (Applicant) represented the application.

This property sits on the corner of Hazen Drive and Loudon Road. It is a three-unit house with a detached garage. The original intention was to renovate the current building and increase the number of living units. They went to Zoning for variances regarding setbacks and to allow backing into the roadway. The Applicant is proposing a three-phase development. Nine units total are proposed, with an additional parking lot and site improvements. Their plan is to remove and reconstruct the existing garage, adding two units above, and construct the parking lot as the first phase. The second phase will include increasing the current residential structure to five units. The last phase will be an addition on the north side of the existing structure for two additional units. Mr. Martin voiced strong attention to aesthetics in the design of the property.

Ms. Shank shared the Staff review regarding the layout of the parking lot, sidewalks, and garages. Staff had two recommendations. Flip the layout of the new structure so that the garage entrances are from the parking lot area and remove the wide driveway curb cut from the street side. If the garage has to enter on the street side, remove the center space of the driveway and incorporate a landscape bump out in its place for a pedestrian refuge. Mr. Lewis noted that the existing garage structure is being torn down and rebuilt to comply with structural safety requirements and improve setback nonconformities. Mr. Lewis notes that staff had not made this recommendation previously and the owner would like to proceed with the current proposal. He also notes that he does not feel there will be people parking in the street accessed driveway area. The garages are leased and may not belong to the tenants renting out the units above. Mr. King asked whether or not off-site people can lease the parking garages. Ms. Shank stated that this is not permitted use. Mr. Lewis clarified that there will not be paved area beyond the garage units (currently shown that way in the renderings), and the driveway will come out at an angle to avoid the light pole, not perpendicular to the road as shown in the drawings.

Shutters will be on all sides of the building except the north end unit of the garage side. Mr. King mentioned that the plans and application renderings need to be revised to match each other. Co-Chair Hengen asked if the driveway could be to the north side of the site and the newer building closer to the existing units in order to reduce the amount of pavement and allow more greenspace in the vicinity of the buildings. She also suggested reducing the parking. The street could accommodate overflow. Mr. Lewis stated that they are seeking two parking spots per unit and do not desire to reduce this. Ms. Shank noted that there are 25 spaces where only 18 are needed to meet two spaces per unit.

Ms. Hutton advised the Committee that the layout in their proposed design reduces the non-conformity regulations, whereas the Committees suggestion would increase it. The Applicant secured the variances needed with Zoning's support. They will look into adding greenspace. There will be no dumpsters on site. It is curb side pickup. There are several lighting fixtures in each parking area. The lighting poles will be moved to accommodate City property if needed. There is an existing light on Hazen Drive that also lights up the area. Co-Chair Doherty would like to see matching renderings, colors and material samples, and measurements.

Co-Chair Doherty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to revise the application to show a concrete sidewalk in front of the property, such that it can be seen and defined; confirm the light fixture closest to the City line is not on City property; colors and materials, window styles, shutters, need to be reviewed by the Committee and need to match in the application and renderings; that the Applicant return with this information before approval. Of the five members present, three were in favor. Motion passed.

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(Ms. Hengen dismissed herself from the meeting.)

13. Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, requests an amendment to ADR approval for exterior elevation changes on a residential structure at 120-122 Pleasant Street in the Institutional (IS) District. (2022-33)

Ms. Shank shared that she visited the site to review the proposed change. Ms. Shank felt the porch being removed qualified them to come back before ADR.

Greg Lessard (CCEH) and Jonathan Halle (Warren Street) represented the application.

Their development ran into cost issues. Rather than renovating the porch, they are removing it to make the façade look like a colonial. There will be a walkway to enter the front house.

Mr. King made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to recommend approval of the application as presented. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

14. NH Land Consultants, PLLC, on behalf of Penacook Realty Partners LLC, request ADR review as a condition of Major Site Plan and Subdivision approval for a 68-unit townhome development at 150 Fisherville Road in the General Commercial (CG) District. (2023-83)

Jake McManus represented the application.

This application received conditional approval from the Planning Board last month. They were asked to return to the ADR Committee to review five items. First, some of the Committee asked that they add trees in the center greenspace. To meet others who liked the greenspace open in the middle, they compromised and added trees on the ends. They have added trees in the islands of the parking lots. When surveying to place walking paths, it was discovered that it would affect drainage. They are placing park benches in the corners of the property instead. A stone wall is being added at the entrance to enhance aesthetics. They removed the tall lampposts and went with pedestrian scale lighting instead. Lastly, they found it would not be cost effective to break up the architecture of the buildings. Ms. Shank said that the Applicant has been very responsive to Staff, Board, and Committee requests.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion, seconded by Mr. Simonis, to recommend approval of the application as presented. Of the four present, three were in favor. Motion passed.

15. John Flatley Company requests an amendment to ADR approval for exterior elevation changes for a new multifamily building at 32-34 South Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District. (2022-14)

Postponed to next month.

16. Greenman-Pederson, Inc, on behalf of the City of Concord, requests review under RSA 674:54 for the proposed Canal Street Riverfront Park, which includes walking paths, a pavilion, scenic overlooks, and an expanded parking area at 11 Canal Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District. (2023-107)

Matt Walsh (City of Concord Manager) represented the application.

Mr. Walsh noted that in addition to the park, there will be significant streetscape improvements along Canal Street and surrounding streets. A ten-foot-wide path will be added. The goal is to add bump outs at Community Drive and the Crescent / Walnut Street connection to facilitate a crosswalk. There will also be on street parking added. The park itself consists of reconstructing a parking lot and the addition of a new sewer system, large pavilion, amphitheater, and stage. Restrooms will be added in a future phase. There are agreements with all the abutters to allow these renovations to happen, and to include the phase two sewer improvements.

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Mr. Gentilhomme noted that the bathroom entrances are in sight of the onlookers when watching the shows and that a wall providing privacy should be extended. Mr. King felt a backdrop was needed in relation to the pavilion for performances. The Committee discussed flipping the amphitheater around so toilets were behind the audience. Performers backdrop was the river. And the natural slope of the site worked with the amphitheater. Mr. Walsh confirmed the design intent to slope up. Ms. Shank noted that stage performances often create their own sets. Mr. Walsh also confirmed that the underside of the canopy is open tresses, which would accommodate equipment for shows and lighting.

Mr. Walsh talked about the canoe shape and the first-settler people's connection at the site. Then Mr. Gentilhomme noted a fabric tensile structure could be over the stage. Harking back to the indigenous peoples.

Mr. Walsh stated that the lighting package was designed to be sensitive to the residential neighbors. There are also lights associated with the hydro dam that provide support.

Co-Chair Doherty recommended the gable roof of the pavilion run the same way the entirety of the building. The size of the structure doesn't seem to warrant the additional horizontal gable. Others agreed; Mr. Gentilhomme also cautioned against the peek being too shallow. Ms. Shank noted that the gable would provide more visual interest than the flat roof from the street. Mr. Walsh shared that a mural was intended to be placed on this façade as well.

Mr. Walsh shared that City Council approved funding for the project the night before. The project is anticipated to begin in September 2023. Members were in support overall of the design and felt it was a very exciting project.

No vote was taken since the project falls under the provisions of RSA 674:54 for municipal projects.

Other Business:

Jonathan Halle asked to present to the Board on the Marriott application that was postponed in May by the Committee as no one was present to answer questions. He stated that the Applicant had been to ADR and the Planning Board prior to Covid and got approval for a façade change that the property owner never constructed. At this time, they are only seeking approval for a replacement sign and a replacement panel in a pylon sign.

Mr. Halle also mentioned he had recently submitted an ADR application for an update to the porte cochere, which required a building permit and ADR approval. He shared the proposal with members. The Committee was not opposed.

Co-Chair Doherty made a motion, seconded by Mr. King, to approve the two signs as permitted and presented. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gentilhomme motioned, seconded by Mr. King, to approve the porte cochere as renderings reflected. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Mr. King made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicen Twardosky
Administrative Specialist

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The next meeting will be held on July 5th, 2023