

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
July 2, 2024 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on July 2, 2024, in Council Chambers, at 37 Green St.

Attendees: Co-Chair Jay Doherty, Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Claude Gentilhomme, and Douglas Proctor

Absent: Ron King and Amanda Savage

Staff: Alec Bass, Senior Planner; AnneMarie Skinner, Acting City Planner; Brian Tremblay, Code Inspector; Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Hengen called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Minutes – Approve June 4, 2024 meeting minutes

Mr. Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Mr. Proctor, to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2024 meeting as written. All in favor. The motion passed.

Item 11, 41 S Main St, was moved up on the agenda and was heard prior to Sign Applications.

Sign Applications

3. Darcie Roy Sign Permits and PSCO Sign Group, on behalf of Santander, request architectural design review for a new 45-square-foot internally illuminated freestanding pylon sign and two new 17.6-square-foot internally illuminated wall signs at 73 West St in the Neighborhood Commercial (CN) District.

Darcie Roy (7 Burning Tree Ln, Wallingford, CT) is present to represent this application.

Ms. Roy stated the business wants to reface the existing 45-square-foot, double-sided pylon sign and retrofit the lighting to LED. The two box wall signs will be replaced with 17.6-square-foot channel letter sets, with LED face lighting.

Co-Chair Doherty noted that the signs will be an improvement to the building.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion to approve as submitted. Co-Chair Doherty seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

4. American Sign Inc., on behalf of Sierra, requests architectural design review for a new 90.65-square-foot internally illuminated wall sign, a new 2.5-square-foot hanging blade sign, and a new 24-square-foot internally illuminated tenant pylon panel sign at 10 Loudon Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Brian Lafo (614 Ferry St, New Haven, CT) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Lafo stated they are proposing an LED channel letter set on the building with a canopy that will go over front door, noting that the channel letters are the Sierra standard.

Co-Chair Doherty made a motion to approve as submitted. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Kevin Rutter, on behalf of The Smoking Turtle, requests architectural design review for a new 24-square-foot

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externally illuminated wall sign at 9 Pleasant St Extension in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

The applicant is not present to represent this application.

Mr. Bass noted that this was a sign permit previously presented to the Architectural Design Review Committee and denied by the Planning Board. The new application proposes a redesigned sign from the previous sign permit application that was denied.

Co-Chair Hengen noted that, in accordance with the Architectural Design Guidelines, the logo in the circle is effective, but the simple and direct message at the bottom of sign is obscured by all the words and “the smoking turtle smoke shop” is difficult to read.

Mr. Gentilhomme and Co-Chair Doherty agreed with Co-Chair Hengen’s assessment.

Mr. Bass explained that the previous application that was denied was to fix an existing non-conforming sign. The Planning Board denied the application because of the graphic design, readability of the sign, and its inconsistency with building’s blade sign on the front of the building. The applicant redesigned the existing non-conforming sign in an effort to address the reasons for denial.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated that the typeface of the words “the smoke turtle smoke shop” needs to be thinner to allow for space between the words.

Co-Chair Hengen stated the entire sign is dense and repetitive. For legibility and a more direct message, the words “the smoking turtle” at the bottom are not needed and their presence contributes to the density.

Co-Chair Doherty noted the sign needs to be simplified and more legible.

Co-Chair Hengen moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the following condition: that in accordance with Section 5.4(b) of the Architectural Design Guidelines, some of the words be deleted in order to simplify the message and make it graphically more legible, and the suggestion that the bottom line text “smoking turtle smoke shop” be removed as it is redundant and would improve the legibility of the sign. Co-Chair Doherty seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

6. NEOPCO Signs, on behalf of Seth Hipple, requests architectural design review for a new 28-square-foot internally illuminated freestanding sign at 390 Loudon Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Glen Schadlick (5 Crosby St, Concord, NH) and Seth Hipple (390 Loudon Rd, Concord, NH) are present to represent this application.

Mr. Schadlick stated this is a new sign with an opaque aluminum burgundy background with the logo backlit with translucent vinyl. The letters would be pushed through so that it goes to the edges and lights up slightly on the face.

Co-Chair Doherty stated it is a well-designed sign. It has nice lines to it and the logo is right in the center. It is readable and the night view is simple to explaining the business and who they are. Co-Chair Doherty asked if the non-glowing text is just applied to the face of the sign?

Mr. Schadlick stated yes, it is vinyl graphics.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated the text below the logo that shows on the non-night view rendering is long, consisting

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of continuous lines, making it difficult to read without stopping to look at the sign. Mr. Gentilhomme questioned the necessity of both URLs on the sign.

Co-Chair Hengen suggested having “injury lawyer” as a tag line on the sign instead of the website addresses noting that the websites addresses are hard to read. They are also so similar that it is hard to pick out one from the other, even when standing there looking at it.

Mr. Hipple noted he does not want to put the words “injury lawyer” on the sign as they do practice other types of law.

Co-Chair Hengen stated the two websites make the sign less legible and fight with the sign.

Mr. Hipple asked if it would help if there was just one URL.

Co-Chair Hengen stated it would help.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated the sign is good looking, but you cannot read the bottom two lines.

Mr. Schadlick stated limiting content is something they have had previous conversations about and if the Architectural Design Review Committee is going to make a stipulation to have the URL removed they would ask to be removed from the consent agenda and have a public hearing at the July 17, 2024 Planning Board meeting.

Co-Chair Doherty added as a suggestion that just the night view graphic be used for the sign for clarity of the message.

Co-Chair Hengen made a motion to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the following condition: that since the design as proposed is not a simple message and the amount of words proposed make the entire sign difficult to read, in accordance with Section 5.4(b) of the Architectural Design Review Guidelines, one of the two websites be removed to improve overall legibility; and, the suggestion that the applicant consider revising the sign to just be the night view graphic for optimal clarity of the message. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

7. NEOPCO Signs, on behalf of Field & Fire, LLC, requests architectural design review for a new 29-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign at 82 N Main St in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Glenn Schadlick (5 Crosby St, Concord, NH) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Schadlick stated he received a variance for this sign. It is designed to be similar in size to the Bangor Savings Bank sign which also received a variance. The sign is the franchise color and copy. The sign is non-illuminated with raised plastic acrylic letters cut out from coming off the background. The Planning Board did approve a blade sign that is similar.

Co-Chair Doherty asked if the Bangor Savings Bank sign is internally illuminated.

Mr. Schadlick replied yes.

Co-Chair Doherty moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

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8. Signarama Concord, on behalf Bobcat, requests architectural design review for a new 59.95-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign at 309 Sheep Davis Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Kendra Price (249 Sheep Davis Rd, Concord, NH) is present to represent this application.

Ms. Price stated the applicant is about 50 feet from the road and they want to advertise the type of machines they have on the property.

Co-Chair Doherty asked if the red behind “bobcat” is the same red in the Toyota sign.

Ms. Price stated yes.

Co-Chair Doherty asked if the sign is internally illuminated.

Ms. Price stated it has the capacity but it will not be internally illuminated.

Co-Chair Doherty moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Signarama Concord, on behalf of Newbody Kendra Price, requests architectural design review for a new 7.87-square-foot and a new 1.82-square-foot non-illuminated window sign at 1 Merrimack St (Penacook) in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Kendra Price (249 Sheep Davis Rd, Concord, NH) is present to represent this application.

Ms. Price stated the business wants to install vinyl on the window with the logo.

Mr. Bass stated this location had a previous sign application that was denied by the Planning Board and this is a new application with a new design.

Co-Chair Doherty stated the readability is a little difficult due to the location of graphics and the post in the window.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated readability would be improved by putting black and shifting to the left in the middle of the logo design.

Co-Chair Hengen suggested the top line not be centered, that the text “massage &” be on the left, and the text “energy healing” on the right. The eye will pick that up as being centered.

Mr. Gentilhomme moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted with the following suggestions: that the top words be adjusted so that the text “massage and &” be on the left side of post and “Energy and Healing” be on the right side; that the logo and text “Newbody” be shifted to the left so that they are centered on the post; andm a black applique be used in the center of the logo and in the two holes of the “b” in “Newbody”. Co-Chair Hengen seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Signarama Concord, on behalf of The Wedding Place, requests architectural design review for a new 7.8-square-foot and a new 3-square-foot non-illuminated window sign at 1 Merrimack St (Penacook) in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Kendra Price (249 Sheep Davis Rd, Concord) is present to represent this application.

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Ms. Price stated this will be printed vinyl applied on the window.

Co-Chair Hengen stated these are two different signs and sign applications, and requested that the Committee vote on each individually. The Committee will consider the upper sign first and then the lower sign, which is the five lines of text.

Co-Chair Doherty stated the upper sign is hard to read. The name of the business with the font is hard to read. The size and scale are too small. Co-Chair Doherty stated there is a lot of white space and suggested maximizing the font size to improve readability.

Co-Chair Hengen stated it is a very elegant sign graphically but agrees it is difficult to read because of “The Wedding Place” font being so floral that it makes it harder to see the other letters.

Mr. Proctor stated the scale of the letters is only readable to a pedestrian and suggested increasing the letter size.

Co-Chair Doherty stated that making the cake logo smaller so that “The Wedding Place” took more of the space, would improve readability.

Mr. Gentilhomme moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application for SP-0280-2024 as submitted with the following suggestions: adjustments be made to the sign to make the text “the wedding place” more legible from a distance; and if the applicant wants the tagline to be read that it be made more legible. Mr. Proctor seconded.

Discussion

Co-Chair Doherty stated he is struggling with the motion, that this is a direct message, and he will not vote for a suggestion as it should be a condition.

The motion passed on a vote of 3-1 with Co-Chair Doherty in opposition.

Co-Chair Hengen moved the group to the second sign, noting that there is so much text it is no longer a simple and direct message, per the Architectural Design guidelines.

Mr. Gentilhomme agrees with Co-Chair Hengen. Mr. Gentilhomme stated even if you are walking by there is a lot of terminology. Mr. Gentilhomme noted the important thing is that it is “by appointment only”.

Mr. Proctor stated the last three lines are important.

Co-Chair Doherty stated the “www” seems like extra letters for the URL. Co-Chair Doherty suggested to have the phone number and website on same line to simplify.

The Committee had discussion on moving three lines of text to the door. A motion was made and then withdrawn.

Co-Chair Hengen moved to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application for SP-0281-2024 with the following conditions: that the amount of text be substantially reduced in order to improve simplicity of the message in concert with Section 5.4(b) of the Architectural Design Review Guidelines; and, that the sign be dropped down to be almost at the bottom of window with the understanding that the top sign is being moved up. Co-Chair Doherty seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

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Building Permit Applications

11. SRsolarNH, on behalf of 41 South Main Street, LLC, requests architectural design review for installation of solar panels at 41 S Main St in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District. (2024-035)

This item was moved up on the agenda and heard prior to Sign Permit Applications.

Josh Koehler (PO BOX 470, Candia, NH) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Koehler stated this is a solar array on a roof on the south side of the building. It will be nine rows of three, four rows of three, then two, and then four rows of three.

Co-Chair Hengen asked if they will be parallel and flush with the roof?

Mr. Koehler stated they follow the roof and it is a 42-degree angle roof. Mr. Koehler noted they are all black on black.

Co-Chair Hengen asked about glare.

Mr. Koehler stated there could be a bounce but it would not affect anyone. If there was a bounce it would be up and not impact anyone driving.

Mr. Gentilhomme moved to recommend the Planning Board approve as submitted. Mr. Proctor seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

12. ReVision Energy, on behalf of Fourkph, LLC, requests architectural design review for installation of a building-mounted solar collection system on a flat roof at 54 Regional Dr in the Office Park Performance (OFP) District. (2024-038)

Ivy Robichaud (7 Commercial Dr, Brentwood) is present to represent this application.

Ms. Robichaud shared this is a single-story commercial building. They want to install a small solar array on the back southern corner of the roof to produce enough energy to offset bills at the location.

Co-Chair Hengen moved to recommend the Planning Board approve as submitted. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Site Plan and Subdivision Applications

13. Ari B. Pollack and Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell, PC, on behalf of Onyx Steeplegate Concord, LLC, request approvals for an amendment to a major site plan, architectural design review, and certain waivers from the Site Plan Regulations to demolish portions of the existing/former Steeplegate Mall at 270 Loudon Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District. (2024-039)

Ari Pollack (214 N Main St, Concord, NH) and Doug Richardson (200 Reservoir St, Suite 306, Needham, MA) are present to represent this application.

Mr. Pollack stated this location has been targeted by a group named the "Urban Explorers". They are a band of young people that break into abandoned buildings, then destroy them, and film themselves having parties. There have been multiple break ins. The proposed solution is to demolish portions of the mall building that will not remain. They are looking to preserve certain parts of the structure and have them be included in the post development scenario. They are showing the Architectural Design Review Committee the three things

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they would like to preserve, all four sides for JCPenney, Altitude, and the old Bon Ton which will be Zoo Fitness. This is all temporary, as the JCPenney building will be leaving at some point. The area by Altitude Trampoline and Zoo Fitness will be near the residential community of the proposed future re-development.

Co-Chair Hengen asked if the masonry will be faced on the newly-exposed sections?

Mr. Pollack stated that is correct.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated they are telling they want to demolish parts of the building. The site plan is only showing what will remain?

Mr. Pollack stated correct.

Co-Chair Doherty asked if they will match similar materials?

Mr. Pollack stated correct.

Co-Chair Doherty asked if there will be security lights?

Mr. Pollack stated yes.

Mr. Proctor asked when signs come down if they are painting to blend?

Mr. Richardson stated yes, when the sign comes down that area they will need to be painted.

Co-Chair Doherty moved to recommend the Planning Board approve as submitted with the condition that the new exposed elevations be designed with matching materials such as brick and colors to match existing facades. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed.

14. Nobis Group and Warrenstreet Architects, Inc., on behalf of Riverbend Community Mental Health, Inc., and CATCH Neighborhood Housing, request approvals for a major site plan application, architectural design review, and certain waivers from the Site Plan Regulations, for a 28-unit multi-family residential building at 6 N State St (Tax Map Lot 7411Z 2) in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District. (2024-042)
No one is present for this application.

No one is present to represent this application.

Ms. Skinner stated the site is an existing parking lot. CATCH Neighborhood housing will purchase the land and is proposing to construct an 8-story building approximately 76 feet tall. It will include 28 residential units. The first floor will be the accessory residential uses: office, laundry room, and trash room. As it is in the Central Business Performance District, there are items not required: parking, solid waste enclosure, and landscaping. The only thing that is required may be sidewalk improvements on the N State St frontage. They are requesting waivers from Sections 6.03(c) and 11.05 of the Site Plan Regulations to have the determination of completeness and public hearing take place in one step at the same meeting. They are also requesting a waiver from Section 27.04 to allow for planting of more than 25% of one species. than the 25% of the eight being provided.

Co-Chair Hengen questioned the proposed building's lack of conformity to the Architectural Design Guidelines.

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Co-Chair Doherty agreed.

The group continued discussion about the lack of conformity to the Architectural Design Guidelines, and questioned the height of the appurtenant structure exceeding the 80-foot maximum height limit.

Co-Chair Hengen moved to recommend that the Planning Board not grant architectural design review approval as the proposed building does not conform to multiple elements of the Architectural Design Guidelines, including, but not limited to: Section 5.3(a) *Scale and Proportion*, new buildings should not exceed the average height of existing adjacent buildings, noting that this proposal doubles the height of the tallest adjacent building; Section 5.3(a) *Scale and Proportion*, window and wall openings should be in similar proportions to existing structures when they are in close proximity to the site development, noting that this proposal does not; Section 5.3(c) *Roof Form*, new roof forms should relate to the roof forms of adjacent structures where appropriate by duplicating the shape, pitch and materials, noting that the proposed project is a flat roof not relating to existing architecture of adjacent buildings in design nor material; Section 5.3(e) *Materials and Colors*, exterior colors should utilize materials appropriate for the character of the building, compatible with significant adjacent structures and subtle colors should be used on larger and very plain buildings, noting the proposed building does not achieve this compatibility, nor does it present a welcoming, distinguishable residential feel or discernible separation of floors when viewing the exterior of building; Section 5.1(b) *Setback from Street*, new construction should have setbacks which match the average setbacks of existing adjacent structures where possible, noting that the current site configuration should be positioned so the front of the building is at the back of sidewalk and not setback with a landscape area as currently proposed. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Adjournment

Mr. Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Co-Chair Hengen, to adjourn the meeting at 10:44 a.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Tremblay

Krista Tremblay

Administrative Specialist II