

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
September 3, 2024 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on September 3, 2024, in Council Chambers, at 37 Green Street, Concord.

Attendees: Claude Gentilhomme, Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Ron King, Douglas Proctor, Amanda Savage, and Merle Thorpe

Absent: Co-Chair Jay Doherty

Staff: AnneMarie Skinner, City Planner; Brian Tremblay, Code Inspector

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Hengen called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

2. Minutes – Approve August 6, 2024, meeting minutes; Approve August 9, 2024, special meeting minutes
Claude Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Ron King, to approve the minutes from the August 6, 2024, meeting and the August 9, 2024, special meeting, both as written. All in favor. The motion passed. Merle Thorpe recused due to not being a member yet for the August meeting or special meeting.

3. Staff Memorandum

Sign Applications

4. Advantage Signs, on behalf of Sheep Davis Limited Partnership and Concord Area Trust for Community Housing (CATCH), requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0032), as part of a major site plan (Case 2022-24), for a new 32-square-foot non-illuminated freestanding sign (SP-0303-2024) at 303 Sheep Davis Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District as part of a major site plan. (2024-049)

Joshua Messenger (128 Hall St, Ste. C, Concord) presented the request, noting that the sign is for CATCH, and the sign will be an mdo sign on a post, painted with vinyl graphics.

Co-Chair Hengen commented that the sign has a lot of words making it hard to read, noting especially the full address is too wordy.

Mr. Messenger stated that the address is required to be on the sign by the fire department.

Co-Chair Hengen suggested removed the words “Sheep Davis Road” but retaining the “303” address numbers.

Member Gentilhomme said that the street address numbers would be better placed the top of the sign in the arched area, with the CATCH logo in the lower right corner.

Member Savage agreed that the “303” in the top archway portion of the sign is probably all that is needed.

Member King stated that he felt the phone number type size was too small.

Member Proctor stated he felt all the information is helpful for someone new to town, including the street name, and is fine with the sign as submitted.

Co-Chair Hengen expressed that any sign loses impact and legibility the more loaded it gets with information, emphasizing that the ADRC consistently recommends removal of street names.

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Member Savage reiterated the previous suggestion to move the “303” to the top archway, remove the street name, and move the logo to the bottom right corner.

Member King again expressed his feeling that the phone number should be bigger.

Member Proctor clarified the location of the sign as being on the north side of the entrance.

Discussion ensued about the location remaining on the north side of the entrance or moving to the south side entrance, with the conclusion that the proposed location on the north side of the entrance is acceptable.

There was brief discussion about any landscaping around the sign, and it was noted that the landscaping plan included in the packet showing the proposed landscaping is sufficient.

There was more discussion about the size of the words and numbers on the sign, including increasing the size of the phone number. Mr. Messenger noted that the CATCH logo needs to be a certain size due to federal regulations because the housing is a federal program.

Member Savage moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application, with the conditions that the “303” numbers are placed more prominently at the top of the sign; the words “Sheep Davis Road” are removed completely from the sign; the CATCH logo is moved to the bottom right corner; and, the phone number for the property management is increased in size. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Advantage Signs, on behalf of The Bare Collective and B.N. Miller Properties, LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0034) for a new 4-square-foot non-illuminated building sign (SP-0322-2024) and a new 3.45-square-foot non-illuminated window sign (SP-0323-2024) at 6 Hills Avenue in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District. (2024-051)

Joshua Messenger (128 Hall St, Ste. C, Concord) presented the request.

Member Gentilhomme asked about the visibility of the sign, specifically calling out what appears to be a stairway railing in front of the sign.

Mr. Messenger explained that walking up 6 Hills Avenue there is a courtyard, and the sign will be on the entryway of the door.

Member Thorpe noted that there is an arch to the left of the window with an entrance immediately to the right. The sign will be hanging over Hills Avenue, but is inside the courtyard. Member Thorpe further stated that the sign will be blocked by the diagonal wall when viewed from the sidewalk, and suggested moving the sign 12 inches to the left (east) and up about 6 inches to provide more pedestrian visibility.

Member Thorpe wonder about the projection of the sign off the wall, expressing concern over the egress from the door to the studio being wide enough to not be impacted by the additional projection.

Member King stated that moving the sign up and to the left will address that concern.

Member Thorpe next discussed the window sign, noting that the HOA typically has purview to comment before an application is made. Member Thorpe does not believe the HOA has reviewed the window sign.

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Co-Chair Hengen stated that HOA review is outside other authority of the ADRC.

Member Thorpe suggested moving the window sign to the left window to be closer to the arch to provide connection and greater visibility.

Member Savage moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted, with the suggestions to move the hanging sign to the left and up to improve pedestrian visibility and to move the window sign to the far-left window instead of the center window. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

6. NEOPCO Signs, on behalf of Cornerstone Realty Holdings, LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0033) for a new 34.17-square-foot internally illuminated freestanding pylon sign (SP-0319-2024) at 119 Old Turnpike Road in the Industrial (IN) District. (2024-050)

Glen Schadlick (5 Crosby St, Concord) presented the application noting that it's a new pylon sign to replace the existing sign that has been in place illegally for about 25 years. Mr. Schadlick explained that he met with Code and came up with the proposed sign that fits the square footage allotment and the location is the only area for placement given the existing berm. Illumination will be low-voltage LED with a semi-opaque green background. The posts will not be illuminated. The sign will be approximately 10 feet in from the driveway, and the grass around the sign now is the landscaping.

Member King suggested more landscaping.

Mr. Schadlick replied that the property owner does not want to add any additional landscaping that would need maintenance and suggested bark chips.

Member Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

7. NEOPCO Signs, on behalf of Bangor Savings, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 6.4-square-foot non-illuminated blade sign (SP-0320-2024) at 82 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Glen Schadlick (5 Crosby St, Concord) presented the application. Mr. Schadlick stated that the sign will be a non-illuminated blade sign. The sign will be placed in between the two awnings and centered over the "82" address sign, moving over and up, to meet height requirements.

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

8. NEOPCO Signs, on behalf of Go Native and NADACA LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 8.4-square-foot non-illuminated blade sign (SP-0324-2024), and a new 13.3-square-foot non-illuminated window sign (SP-0325-2024) at 23 North Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Glen Schadlick (5 Crosby St, Concord) presented the application, noting that the former Rowlands had a huge sign on the canopy over the entrance. The applicant owns Birkenstock and have opened a nice gallery at this location. There will be vinyl graphics in the window and a blade sign at the left of the entrance with the required distance below the sign for clearance. The sign will not be illuminated.

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Member Gentilhomme stated that he likes the design, the writing is good, and he likes the sign.

Member Thorpe commented that immediately to the south is the Scandinavian shop with an awning that obscures the proposed sign.

Mr. Schadlick stated that the proposed sign will be up just a little bit and the site has no façade to enable placement elsewhere.

Member Thorpe suggested projecting the blade sign out more to clear the awning.

Mr. Schadlick stated that further projection would go beyond the 5-foot requirement and also worries about more projection turning the sign into a sail.

Member Thorpe wondered about the measurement to the bottom of the canopy and suggested dropping the sign a bit to be more in line with the canopy.

Mr. Schadlick stated any lowering would not meet the clearance requirement.

Member King moved, seconded by Member Gentilhomme, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Signarama of Concord, on behalf of Granite Edvance Corporation, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0039) for a new 36-square-foot externally illuminated freestanding sign (SP-0290-2024), and a new 29-square-foot externally illuminated freestanding sign (SP-0291-2024) at 3 Barrell Court in the Office Park Performance (OFP) District. (2024-05)

Neither the applicant nor the property owner was in attendance.

No one in the group noted anything of significance that needed to be changed.

Member Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Total Image Solutions, on behalf of 125 Loudon LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0038) for a new 99.1-square-foot internally illuminated pylon panel sign (SP-0326-2024), a new 12.32-square-foot internally illuminated canopy sign (SP-0327-2024), and a new 38.83-square-foot internally illuminated canopy sign (SP-0328-2024) at 125 Loudon Road in the General Commercial (GC) District. (2024-055)

Neither the applicant nor the property owner was in attendance.

Brian Tremblay noted that the request is to reface the existing signs.

Member Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the condition that the white on the freestanding Citgo sign have an opaque background so that the background doesn't read at the night, only the letters. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Charter Foods North, LLC, on behalf of Sarnia Properties, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0040) for a new 23.56-square-foot internally illuminated tenant pylon

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panel sign (SP-0321-2024) and three new internally illuminated building wall signs of 9.76-square-feet (SP-0310-2024), 8.76-square-feet (SP-0312-2024), and 7.32-square-feet (SP-313-2024) at 321 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District. (2024-057)

Donna Lakin (321 Loudon Rd, Concord) presented the application, noting that they are removing the Long John Silver log and adding the Taco Bell log. Ms. Lakin noted the freestanding sign is an existing sign and the request is to reface the existing sign.

There was discussion amongst the members regarding the white Taco Bell logo and its illumination. The members noted the white is part of the logo, and cannot be changed. Further discussion ensued to determine the right lumens for the sign.

Co-Chair Hengen moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the condition that the nighttime lumens on any white portion of the signs not exceed 500 lumens. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Abbigail Rollins on behalf of Witchlight Oracle Apothecary LLC and Moksha Investments LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0041) for two new 2-square-foot non-illuminated window signs (SP-0315-2024 and SP-0316-2024), and a new 0.785-square-foot non-illuminated door sign (SP-0317-2024) at 21 Warren Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District. (2024-063)

Abbigail Rollins (3 Berle Dr, Boscawen) presented the application, noting that the proposed signage is interim only.

Member Gentilhomme wondered about including a brief description of the site.

Ms. Rollins reiterated that the proposed signage is interim and permanent signage will follow in the future. Ms. Rollins noted that she is working with a pre-existing community and the marketing of the business is being done through social media. The vinyl decals will be applied to the inside, with nothing being placed on the outside of the building for now. The façade is in need of replacement in areas, which is underway by the landlord. Ms. Rollins explained that she needs to know what the permanent façade looks like before designing the permanent signage. She acknowledged that the words are small and hard to read, but this is interim signage. She further noted that she just had the grand opening and had a line of people out the door and down the sidewalk.

Member King moved, seconded by Member Gentilhomme, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Ian Vongphayboun, on behalf of Asian Thai Kitchen and Spring Corner Condominium, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0036) for an existing non-permitted 18-square-foot non-illuminated awning sign (SP-0305-2024) and an existing non-permitted 6-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign at 62 Pleasant Street in the Civic Performance (CVP) District. (2024-053)

Neither the applicant nor the property owner was in attendance.

Member Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

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Building Permit Applications

14. Brian Balise of PCA, on behalf of Sierra and DSM MB II LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0035) for exterior building alterations at 10 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District. (2024-052)

John Matthews (881 E St, Tewksbury, MA) presented the application. Mr. Matthews noted that the previous site was a Bed Bath and Beyond, which went bankrupt. The brand was in the building façade. Sierra is the new occupant with a different color scheme and a desire to upgrade the existing storefront to Sierra colors and new wood detail coming up one side, across, and down. Mr. Matthews noted he feels the façade improvement fits in well with the rest of the center.

Member Gentilhomme asked for confirmation that the background color is a painted effice that is whiter than the other business projections.

Mr. Matthews confirmed, noting that the trim at the top will be changed to be more of a wood color for a more upgraded look. The storefront will be changed to metal and glass, and moving the door location to glass.

Member King moved, seconded by Member Savage, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted.

Member Thorpe wondered about the line of shrubs, and Mr. Matthews noted that the shrubs will be trimmed to accommodate the signage.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Site Plan Applications

15. Brixmore Property Group, and Nobis Group, on behalf of Brixmore Capitol SC, LLC, requests an architectural design review recommendation (PL-ADR-2024-0037) for exterior building alterations, including a 2,850-square-foot addition to the existing commercial building at 80 Storrs Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District. (2024-054). The Planning Board will also be considering minor site plan application (PL-SPM-2024-0019) along with this application for the building addition and associated site improvements. (2024-062)

Morgan Dunson (18 Chenell Dr, Concord), Mark Newman (450 Lexington Ave, New York, NY), and Shawn Laug (45 W 34th St Ph, New York, NY) presented the application. Mr. Newman explained that the application represents a re-demising and re-leasing of the 79,000-square-foot anchor space that is currently occupied by Burlington. Burlington has been downsizing to spaces of 25,000 square feet and moving locations if a current space cannot be downsized. Ongoing efforts to retain Burlington in a small space and lease the remainder of the space has resulted in signed leases with four tenants – Burlington, Ulta, Five Below, and Boot Barn – taking the space in the front. Mr. Newman noted that the space in the rear does not have a tenant yet and will be harder to lease. Part of the façade renovation is enhanced signage in the rear to attract retailers to the back space that doesn't have frontage. Mr. Newman stated that the 2,850-square-foot addition is to square off the box.

Mr. Laug described the project with the colors and elevations as shown in the submitted materials, noting the elevation change of about a 4- to 6-foot increase over the existing cornice line in front of the green mezzanine mansard. The peak behind Boot Barn is part of the mezzanine and will not be removed. The large peak on the Burlington side will be removed.

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Member Thorpe commented on the concept of dividing up the façade with signage blocks but is concerned with making it into a suburban mall and noted that dropping the parapet height would help.

Mr. Newman and Mr. Laug explained that dropping the parapet height would expose more of the mansard and that would be a problem.

Member Thorpe suggested the existing soft light green would help rather than white.

Mr. Newman and Mr. Laug noted that some of the white is a function of the retailers.

Co-Chair Hengen noted the building was renovated in the 1970s to get away from the suburban mall look, adding that a good contemporary design is very welcome, that Storrs St can make its own statement and does not have to look like Main St.

Member Gentilhomme wanted confirmation that the sidewalk breezeway will be retained.

Mr. Laug confirmed that the sidewalk breezeway will remain, adding that some portions are covered with canopy rather than breezeway.

Mr. Laug noted that the pale beige is stepped back at Five Below.

Member Savage said that the white strip below Five Below is distracting.

Mr. Laug replied that the strip above Five Below is also white, not the darker shadow coloring shown in the rendering. This makes both the above and below strip white and not two different colors as pictured in the rendering.

Member Gentilhomme said he does not like the white section above Boot Barn and Ulta.

Member Thorpe commented on possible changes to the signage to make it more contemporary, to create differentiation from a flat suburban look.

Member Gentilhomme expressed his desire to frame the signage and make extensions on the very top to frame the storefront and the sign.

Co-Chair Hengen noted there is a continuum design component throughout the rest of the building and would like to bring that into this façade improvement in some fashion.

Co-Chair Hengen left the meeting at 10:45 a.m. due to a prior engagement.

Discussion ensued amongst the remaining members about how to best craft a motion, with Member Proctor stating that he felt the application as submitted is fine and would vote in opposition for any conditions or suggestions for changes.

Member Thorpe moved, seconded by Member King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the following conditions:

- Change the white strip above and below each of the signs to a color that is comparable to the shadowed color above the Five Below sign that is depicted in the rendering;
- Lower the three interstitial parapets (one to the left of Five Below, one to the right of Five Below, and one to the right of Boot Barn) approximately 18 inches; and

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- The existing metal seam roof and wall shall remain the existing green;

and the following suggestion:

- “Punch” the storefront glazing on the northeast elevation.

The motion passed with four in favor (Members Gentilhomme, King, Savage, and Thorpe) and one opposed (Member Proctor). Co-Chair Hengen left the meeting prior to the making of the motion and vote.

Other Business

There will be a joint work session with the Planning Board on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., to discuss the recently-adopted ordinance for conditional use permits for obstruction of the State House Dome, as well as maximum height limits within the Central Business and Opportunity Corridor Performance Districts, as well as a discussion on the role of the Architectural Design Review Committee.

Adjournment

Member Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Member King, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:59 a.m. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
AnneMarie Skinner, AICP
City Planner