

City of Concord, New Hampshire

Architectural Design Review Committee

February 7, 2002

The Design Review Committee held a special joint meeting with the Concord Heritage Commission on February 7, 2002 in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street at 8:30 AM.

Present at the meeting were Design Review Committee members Duene Cowan, Susanne Smith Meyer, Elizabeth Hengen (who is also an alternate member of the Heritage Commission), Claude Gentilhomme (who arrived at 8:40 AM), and Hamilton Rice. Members of the Heritage Commission present were James McConaha, Chairman, Robert Johnson, Barbara Kuhlman Brown, Christopher Carley, and Lorrie Carey. Also present were Doug Woodward and Jill Seifried of the City Planning Division, and Roger Hawk, Ken Lurvey, and Matt Walsh of the Community Development Department.

The purpose of the special meeting was for the Committee and Commission to provide comments and suggestions to the Community Development Department on the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the Sears Block, a copy of which had been forwarded to all parties in advance of this meeting.

As the Heritage Commission had started their meeting earlier, Mr. McConaha continued to chair the joint meeting. Introductions of all present were made around the table. Community Development Director Hawk indicated the Department's interest in seeking the advice and input of both groups as the City proceeded to acquire and market this important downtown property.

The following suggestions and recommendations were made by members of both bodies:

- More background should be provided on Vision 20/20
- A reference to the Downtown Master Plan should be included
- Section VI, Special Design Requirements, and subsections D and E in particular, contain too much detail and should be more oriented to general principles. Photographs of Main Street, and of Durgin Block and Eagle Square in particular, should be included to provide the context in which the redevelopment is to take place, and as well as some local examples of projects that are deemed to represent good design.
- The emphasis in the required response to the RFP should be qualifications and experience, particularly the developer's portfolio. A short listed group of respondents could then focus more on design. There was a concern that the initial responses not be judged on quick design sketches that might be submitted.
- There needs to be more emphasis on the desire for a pedestrian passway through the block.

- A reference needs to be included to the availability of tax credits for a redevelopment project done within the National Register District.
- The Sears Block buildings, with the exception of the Record Palace should be noted as “contributing buildings” to the National Register District.
- Retail uses should be promoted along all of the street frontages, not just South Main Street.
- The appearance of the parking garage is an important issue that is not addressed.
- To the extent buildings or portions thereof could be saved and reused, the “Shapiro Building” has a more interesting façade.
- The pedestrian rhythm of storefronts and entryways is very important; more than one entry is needed into the block.

It was explained that the process would be to send notices out about the RFP which will indicate that the full RFP package is available for purchase at \$100.00. It will also be posted on the City’s web site. Doug Woodward asked the Committee and Commission members for suggestions on to whom it should be sent. He also invited them to consider participating in a development team if the opportunity presented itself.

Mr. Hawk thanked the members of both groups for their time and valuable suggestions and ideas.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas G. Woodward
Clerk