

**City of Concord, New Hampshire  
Architectural Design Review Committee**

**December 8, 2009**

The Design Review Committee held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 8, 2009, in the Second Floor Conference Room in City Hall at 8:30 AM.

Present at the meeting were Jay Doherty, Elizabeth Hengen, Ron King (who arrived at 9:25 AM), and Frederick Richards. Messrs. Woodward and Henninger, Ms. Hebert and Ms. Osgood of the City Planning Division were also present, as was Mr. Walker, the City's Zoning Administrator.

The Design Review Committee met in order to review the proposed design of certain sites, buildings, building alterations and signs that are on the Planning Board's regular agenda for December 16, 2009, and which are subject to the provisions of the City of Concord's Zoning Ordinance in respect to Architectural Design Review. Comments on and criticisms of the items were made.

The following proposals were evaluated.

**Agenda Items**

Consideration of proposed placement and design of signs:

- **Checkmate Pizza** at 41 Washington Street (2 affixed signs)

James Roy was present as applicant to answer questions from the Committee.

Mr. Henninger reported that the Design Review Committee had reviewed this signage proposal last month and reported to the Planning Board that the sign did not blend in with the architecture of the building and the neighborhood. The telephone number was disproportionate to any other text and needed to be scaled down. Members felt that it would be difficult for someone passing by to read the name of the business. There were too many elements to the sign and the color scheme in general was jarring. He reported that the Planning Board had tabled action on the application and asked that the applicant meet with the Design Review Committee to discuss possible revisions to the signage.

Mr. Roy explained that he had cleaned up the building exterior and the sign, and was responding to comments from his customers that they had difficulty finding him. Mr. Roy expressed concern about the cost of placing the sign inside the face posts.

Committee members suggested ending the sign over the door on the inside face of the posts. They further recommended that the yellow background be toned down, the posts not be wrapped with the signage and the telephone number reduced in size. Mr. Roy

expressed concern about the cost of placing the sign inside the face posts. The committee suggested that the same appearance could be obtain with a border on the sign.

Mr. Roy indicated he would work with the City's Zoning Administrator and return with a revised design more in keeping with the neighborhood.

- **Old Europe Restaurant** at 76 N. Main Street (1 hanging sign & 1 affixed sign)

There was no one present on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Henninger explained this proposal for replacement panels in existing boxes for a new use. He explained the signage exceeds what would today be permitted but because these are replacement panels in existing boxes, Code has ruled that they comply with the Zoning Ordinance. He reported they propose internally illuminated panels.

Committee members found the graphics to be attractive but, in terms of marketing the image of fine dining that the applicant wants to project, the internally illuminated white background of the panel would be too stark.

Ms. Hengen noted that one side of the hanging also included the abutting "Blooming Iris" store. Mr. Henninger responded that they would need to apply separately for that sign.

While the graphics on the sign are attractive, the Committee objected to the size and the internal illumination of the sign. It was of the opinion that the signage was not in keeping with the increase in quality of signage and facades of the abutting properties like "Butters" and "Things Are Cooking". They felt there were some things the applicants could do in terms of color and illumination that would make it much more attractive. The overall graphic presentation is not indicative of what appears to be happening inside.

Committee members noted that there is grant money available for upgrading signage and facades and the applicants should be made aware of that resource.

- **Outfitters Thrift Shop** at 5 Market Lane (1 hanging sign & 1 affixed sign)

Russ Aubertine from Advantage Signs was present on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Aubertine reported that this will not be internally illuminated but will be lighted from the building. In answer to a question from the Committee, he explained that they propose a white background because any colors would distract from the logo.

Members noted that, in general, any stark white sign would be out of character with the neighborhood.

Mr. Aubertine explained that he could tone down the white background to an off white or a cool gray but the applicant did not want a cream background.

The Design Review Committee found the design and placement of the sign to be appropriate for the location and use and recommended approval subject to the background color being a cool gray or light cream.

- **Revolution Cyclery at 24 Pleasant Street (1 hanging sign)**

Russ Aubertine from Advantage Signs was present on behalf of the applicant.

The Design Review Committee found the design to be creative and playful. The committee found the design and placement of the sign to be appropriate for the location and use and recommended approval as submitted.

**Site and building plans related to an application by Duprey Acquisitions, LLC, on behalf of the City of Concord, for expansion of an existing parking lot at 6 Theatre Street.**

Steve Duprey was present as applicant along with Dana Adams from Opechee Construction Management.

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal to acquire and consolidate two City parcels in order to expand and build a surface parking lot to support the nearby office and residential projects recently approved. In response to concerns expressed last month by the Committee about exposing the view of the backs of the abutting South Main Street buildings, he presented a slide show demonstrating the existing conditions.

Mr. Adams explained the changes made to the plan in response to last month's comments by the Committee. He reported that they are not planning any changes to the northerly parcel except cleaning it up a bit. He also described the revised landscape plan. He reported they tried to cluster landscaping such that unsightly elements of the abutting buildings were screened.

Mr. Adams commented that the landscape plan was designed to screen the most objectionable elements on the back of the buildings facing the parking lot as well as dumpsters. A screen fence is proposed at the top of the retaining wall since it is not possible to plant at this location.

Ms. Hengen felt the redesign was a really nice improvement but she was concerned about whether this is in keeping with the recently adopted Master Plan as well as the

Downtown Master Plan, which she recalled called for further development along Storrs Street.

Mr. Adams noted that this lot is so narrow that it does not provide much development opportunity except for the possibility of a property owner on Main Street wishing to buy some of this space to increase his ability to expand. The City also has reserved the right to take this property back if the City has a need for it, but the city would have to provide replacement parking.

Mr. Duprey addressed the committee about why the parking lot was necessary. This lot provides sufficient parking, along with spaces to be leased at the Capitol Commons parking garage, to satisfy the project lenders. The Sanel Block project was rezoned to the Central Business Performance District which does not require any on-site parking. They are leasing 150 spaces in the Capitol Commons parking garage and that is all that is available for lease at this time. The lenders required that sufficient and dedicated parking be provided for the life of the loan (20 years). He told the committee that the lenders believe that Downtown is competing directly with suburban sites with ample parking. He recommended that office uses no longer be allowed in the Industrial Districts if the community wants to see more development and redevelopment in the downtown. He noted that he could buy a vacant office building on Chenell Drive and create the same amount of office space as the Sanel Block for less money.

Mr. Henninger asked what would be done with the dumpster screening and Mr. Adams responded that they will do something other than a stockade fence. He indicated that they would work with City staff to determine appropriate screening for the dumpsters and the fence on top of the retaining wall.

The committee discussed the design of the retaining wall and noted that the example provided by the applicant is different from other walls in the city recently constructed including that of a new redi-rook retaining wall on Garrison Street. The committee suggested that the shape of the blocks as they appear on the exterior of the wall be reduced in size.

The Design Review Committee recommended approval as submitted subject to further review of the fencing and screening for the dumpsters, and further review of the planting plan by the City's landscape architect.

Site and building plans related to an application by **26 Centre Street LLC** and **Marian Sagona** at **26, 26 ½, and 28 Centre Street**.

Mr. Woodward presented a brief update relative to this proposal to demolish an existing building and to construct a parking lot to the rear of the property. He reported that the abutter at 28 Centre Street has joined this application in order to provide a consolidated entrance and exit to the two properties. 26 Centre Street LLC has also received a commitment from the owners of the abutting property at 65-69 North State Street to utilize the access in order to consolidate the access to the corner property.

He reported that the plan is still being revised but once the site plan has been finalized, the property owner will provide building plans for review.

There was no action necessary at this time.

There was no further business to come before the Committee and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen L. Henninger  
Assistant City Planner

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