

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

July 13, 2010

The Design Review Committee held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 13, 2010, in the Second Floor Conference Room in City Hall at 8:30 AM.

Present at the meeting were Duene Cowan, Jennifer Czysz, Jay Doherty, Claude Gentilhomme, Elizabeth Hengen, Ron King, and Frederick Richards. Mr. 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 July 21, 2010, 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:

- **City of Concord** for one freestanding sign at the Ft. Eddy Road Reprocessing Center at **10 Intervale Road**

Mr. Henninger reported that the Design Review Committee had reviewed this application preliminarily last month and provided comments. As a result of the Committee's comments, the amount of text has been reduced and the changeable message panel is being relocated onto the reprocessing facility at the end of Intervale Drive. They also propose to add granite posts and landscaping at the base of the sign.

Ms. Hebert noted that "City of Concord" had been removed from the sign. Members suggested replacing "Fort Eddy Road" with "City of Concord".

The Design Review Committee found the design and placement of the freestanding sign to be appropriate for the location and use, and recommended approval subject to the suggestion that "Fort Eddy Road" be replaced with "City of Concord".

- **Holiday Inn** for one replacement freestanding sign and three replacement affixed signs at **172 North Main Street**

There was no one present on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Henninger reported this is a corporate rebranding. He reported he expected updated plans but they had not yet been submitted. The designs as submitted were not in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance requirements for maximum size. Signs on the east and west facades of the building cannot exceed 200 square feet and on the southerly façade cannot exceed 65 square feet. The applicants have indicated they will reduce the affixed signage to comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

He reported that the existing freestanding sign will be removed and replaced with a whole new structure. At this time, the proposed freestanding sign as proposed is also oversized. Mr. Walker indicated they had discussed requesting relief from the Zoning Board of Adjustment relative to the freestanding sign.

Members felt the proportions of the pylon were totally inconsistent with other signage downtown. Mr. Walker reported that the existing freestanding sign is 23 feet tall and the new one will be 21 feet tall.

Ms. Hebert inquired as to whether the post and the panel will be illuminated and there was a lengthy discussion regarding illumination.

Ms. Hengen also suggested that there should be landscaping at the base of the freestanding sign.

The Design Review Committee recommended approval of the affixed signage provided that they are reduced in size to comply with the Zoning Ordinance. The Committee further recommended approval of the freestanding sign subject to compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and further subject to the provision that the pylon not be lighted and that it match one of the primary colors on the building so that there is not the sharp contrast of the white against the natural tones of the building.

- **New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association** for one replacement affixed sign at **341 Loudon Road**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal for a replacement sign for a new business in the rear unit of an existing multi-use building. This sign will be located in the sign band as previously approved in the overall signage plan.

Dan Booth from NH Signs was present on behalf of the applicant and, in answer to a question by the Committee, noted that there is no available space at this time in the freestanding sign for a panel for this business.

Members suggested placing a border around the sign to make it stand out from the light colored background.

The Design Review Committee found the design and placement of the replacement affixed sign to be appropriate for the location and use, and recommended approval subject to the suggestion that there be a border around the sign to make it stand out from the light colored sign band.

- **Parmenter Place** for one freestanding sign at **15 Parmenter Road**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal for a freestanding sign for the housing development currently under construction. This project identification will be placed at the entry to the site.

Mr. Dunning was present representing the Concord Housing Authority.

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

- **People's United Bank** for one replacement panel in a freestanding sign and three replacement affixed signs at **197 Loudon Road**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal for replacement panels in the free standing sign and the new affixed signs replacing the Ocean Bank signage.

There was no one present on behalf of the applicant.

The Design Review Committee found the design and placement of the replacement signage to be appropriate for the location and use, and recommended approval as submitted.

- **Weston Solutions** for one freestanding sign and one affixed sign at **45 Constitution Avenue**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal for signage for a recently constructed and occupied building. The freestanding sign will be on a brick pedestal with granite cap and base.

There was no one present on behalf of the applicant.

The Design Review Committee found the design and placement of the signage to be appropriate for the location and use, and recommended approval as submitted.

Site and building plans related to an application by **Banks Chevrolet** at **137 Manchester Street. (#2010-31)**

Mr. Henninger reported the applicant had asked that review of this application be postponed until next month.

Site and building plans related to an application by **Frank Alosa** at **151 Manchester Street. (#2010-30)**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal to convert a variety store to a pizza restaurant. He reported they plan to repaint the building, remove the non-conforming signage. The elevations show the location and size of the proposed signs but the applicant does not yet have a design for the signs.

He reported that the City Council had recently approved a phased construction plan with the first phase commencing in 2011 for improving Manchester Street and reconstruction and signalization of the Airport Road/Manchester Road intersection. Normally landscaping would be required at the front of the building but, since this new roadwork will bring Manchester Street almost to the building and the construction will last four or five years, that is not being recommended at this time.

Steve Milbourne from Steven Milbourne Design was present on behalf of the applicant.

The Design Review Committee recommended approval as submitted.

Building restoration plans by the **Jacob Ciborowski Trust** at **36-42 North Main Street. (#2010-32)**

Mark Ciborowski was present as applicant and explained that this project is a near duplication of the renovations he did at 70-74 North Main Street. He explained that the plywood and metal placed over the façade in an earlier renovation will be removed and the underlying granite repaired as best as possible. The existing slate-covered concrete steps will be removed and replaced with granite steps and landings. The steps to the elevator entrance will be removed and the elevator stop lowered to eliminate the barrier for ADA accessibility. The existing glazing and door entrances will be removed and replaced with granite bases and new insulated window units with grids above in a black finish. New entrance doors in mahogany with panel sidelights will replace the existing doors. The marquee overhanging the street will remain but will be reduced in size from four feet high to about 18 inches high. It will have a wood ceiling underneath with down lighting and the perimeter wrapped in black metal with "Phenix Hall" in gold letters on the front panel.

He reported that as long as he was working on this building he looked at his small abutting infill building housing the "Christian Science Reading Room" and considered updating the façade of that building at the same time. He noted that the building is in good shape but asked for suggestions relative to renovating or leaving it as it is. Since this is a good example of the architecture of its time, members suggested that he not try to update it. However, Committee members were of the opinion that the sign could be improved.

The Design Review Committee recommended that the renovations be approved as proposed by the applicant.

Site and building plans related to an application by **Sam's Club** on behalf of **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** at **304 Sheep Davis Road. (#2010-28)**

Sam's Club for two affixed signs at **304 Sheep Davis Road**

Mr. Henninger introduced this proposal for additional signage at Sam's Club. He reported they propose a second sign on the gasoline canopy and a new affixed sign on the building for the pharmacy.

He also explained the proposed changes to the site and building to accommodate the construction of a drive-through canopy. He reported they propose to remove two planters in front of the building relocate the existing trees to two new landscaped islands in the parking lot. This is being done as part of a larger interior renovation.

Mayme Colburn from WD Partners Architects was present to answer questions from the Committee.

Mr. King asked about conflicts with pedestrians and Mr. Henninger responded that they have increased the amount of markings and area marked for the pedestrian crossing at the main entrance. Ms. Colburn also noted that they are adding bollards to separate pedestrians from vehicles.

The Design Review Committee recommended approval of the changes to the building, the site plan, and the two new affixed signs as submitted.

Site plan related to an application by **St. Paul's School on Dunbarton Road. (#2010-29)**

Ms. Hebert introduced this proposal for an expanded parking lot. She reported they propose to reconstruct an existing 23-space parking lot and expand it to 55 spaces. She reported they have not yet submitted full details on landscaping and lighting. She explained they propose to use pervious asphalt pavement in the parking lot except for the access drive, which is fairly steep. The driveway off Dunbarton Road will be essentially in the same location.

She reported that this application is scheduled for determination of completeness by the Planning Board in July and public hearing in August.

The Design Review Committee indicated it would wait until next month to review updated plans for comment.

Site and building plans related to a submittal by the **Concord School District** pursuant to RSA 674:54 for three new elementary schools.

Philip Lewis and Laura Wernick from HMFH Architects, Erin Reardon from Nobis Engineering, and Matt Cashman, Facilities Manager from Concord School District were present for the applicant.

Mr. Lewis reported that since they were last before the Design Review Committee they had gone met several times with the school district to discuss prior comments from the Committee and City staff, and to identify cost-cutting measures. He presented changes to the site and building plans that came about as a result of discussions with the school district as well as the Committee's comments.

- **Dame - Eastman School at 123 Portsmouth Street**

Mr. Lewis reported that Dame-Eastman had received the most radical changes since last reviewed by the Committee. He reminded members that the last design showed a brick building with pitched roofs. Because the new building will be attached to the existing Broken Ground School and for cost saving purposes, they have now proposed a very simple flat-roof shape and are using block in various colors and textures for the exterior. They have taken the simple design of Broken Ground and transformed it into something energetic and engaging. It is also much more economical.

Mr. Lewis indicated that the mechanical units would be on all inside for ease of maintenance and chillers will be screened.

Mr. King found this design to be very playful but was concerned that in 40 years this might look dated.

Mr. Gentilhomme also indicated that he found the design playful and liked it, but he did not see evidence of the classroom function in the design. He liked the playfulness and suggested that it be toned down some. Mr. Lewis noted that the design details were added to break up the mass of the building. Mr. Henninger advised that this might be the first time that the committee has requested an applicant reduce the amount of architectural detail to expose the building mass rather than asking for additional details to break up the mass of the building.

Mr. Lewis indicated the school district's building committee had also found the new design to be too busy and suggested toning it down as well.

Mr. Richards liked this design a lot more than the last submittal. He found it playful and thought it would age well. He felt they were going in the right direction.

The committee suggested that the yellow toned block be used only at the building entrances to further identify those entrances.

The Design Review Committee felt this was an improvement over the earlier design and recommended simplifying and unifying the distinct masses but also suggested that it not be toned down so much that it loses the fun.

- **Conant School at 144 South Street**

Mr. Lewis explained that the changes to the Conant School designs were made not only for the purpose of cutting costs but also preserving the character of the project. He reported that the earlier proposal had a lot more pitched roofs and now has flat roofs. However, they kept the pitched roof at the entry to provide an important place for the cupola on the building. They added a canopy at the rear of the school where students typically come into the building and removed the canopy at the front entrance. This will be a red brick building with towers of block and metal panels. Textured block on the lower levels and metal panels at the upper levels would be used primarily on the west wing of the building

Mr. Gentilhomme suggested that the pillars at the entry should be increased in size to make them heftier and Mr. Lewis responded that was the intention.

Mr. Cowan felt this was a lot more successful redesign than the Broken Ground design. It was a more sophisticated design.

Mr. Doherty preferred the pitched roofs of the previous design.

There was discussion about whether or not the bays along the front of the building should extend above the roof line or have a pitched roof, about how to incorporate the 'pineapple' motif into the façade, and the eave design for the cupola structure. Mr. Lewis advised that the red element has already been eliminated at the main South Street entrance and that they would be reevaluating how the above referenced elements are detailed.

The Design Review Committee felt that overall this was an improvement over the earlier design.

- **Kimball School at 17 North Spring Street**

Mr. Lewis then explained the revisions made to the design for the Kimball School. He reported this building will be almost completely constructed of brick. They are now using much less metal and glass. The previously proposed metal and glass were seen as being too industrial looking. The stone archway at the entrance of the existing school will be preserved and replaced on the site. The service area will be of concrete block. The mechanical equipment will be mostly enclosed and the chillers will be screened on the roof.

He reported that the window pattern has been broken up more to try to recall more carefully the original building on the South Spring Street facade. Instead of a full

canopy there will be a smaller “ribbon” which will also serve as a sign band on the soothé façade. They are still trying to get more of the granite from the existing building into the design of the new building. The front entrance façade will be a different color brick to reflect the transition from the old neighborhood school building to the new school.

Members had concern with the main entrance façade facing south towards Pleasant Street. The Board felt it was too plain and looked like the blank wall left behind when a building attached to another is demolished.

Mr. King really like the North Spring Street façade but had a lot of trouble with the main entrance façade. Mr. King felt the new building entrance needed to feel more inviting and welcoming and more to scale for the students.

Mr. Henninger suggested the entrance façade might be the appropriate place for the introduction of the re-used granite. Mr. Richards suggested continuing the North Spring Street design around the corner to the main entrance façade, particularly using the window detail of the North Spring Street façade.

Ms. Wernick explained the contrast between the historical reference and the new construction.

Mr. Henninger suggested the color change of the brick should take place farther down the main entrance façade. Members agreed and also suggested doing something about bringing down scale for the young students who will be attending this building, and suggested adding detail to the large blank façade to break up the mass of this wall.

(Mr. Gentilhomme left the meeting at 11:10 AM.)

The Design Review Committee felt more attention needed to be paid to adding life to the south-facing wall and integrating it better with the North Spring Street façade.

Overall the committee found the design changes to be appropriate and asked the applicant to address their concerns with the main entrance façade on the south side of the building.

There was no further business to come before the Committee and the meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen L. Henninger
Assistant City Planner