

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
October 9, 2018 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on October 9, 2018 in the 2nd floor conference room at 41 Green Street.

Present at the meeting were Co-Chairs Jay Doherty and Elizabeth Durfee-Hengen, Members Ron King, and Doug Shilo. Craig Walker of the Code Department was present along with Sam Durfee, and Lisa Fellows-Weaver of the City Planning Division.

Sign Applications

- 1. Aldi, on behalf of Dundee Investment Associates, LLC, requests ADR approval to install two new wall signs at 287 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.**

Craig Moore of Barlo Signs represented the application. He explained that the proposal is for the installation of two new signs on the new building. Both signs will be the same size and are internally illuminated. There is no pylon proposed at this time.

Mr. King asked if the signs meet the new Design Guidelines. Mr. Walker confirmed yes.

Mr. King made a motion to approve the design as submitted. Mr. Shilo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Express Jewelry Center, on behalf of NHH Invest, LLC, requests ADR approval to install a new projecting sign and a new window sign at 4 N. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.**

The applicant was not present.

Mr. Shilo stated that this appears to be a bracket sign with details on the window. Ms. Hengen asked if the proposed lettering meets the allowable square footage requirement. Mr. Walker replied that the sf totals have not been exceeded. A discussion was held regarding the three lines of text as they are different fonts and different sizes. In addition, the telephone number appears to be the most prominent text on the sign.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to approve the design with the recommendation that the details of the bracket location be reviewed by staff, and that the font size of the phone number of the window graphic be reduced to the same size as the subtext. Mr. Shilo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Altitude Trampoline Park, on behalf of Steeplegate Mall Realty LLC, requesting ADR approval to install a new internally illuminated wall sign at 270 Loudon Road in the Gateway Performance District (GWP).**

David Dameo represented the application. He explained that this sign will be placed above the entrance facing Rt. 106. The font will be the same as the previously approved sign and will be internally illuminated. Mr. Shilo made a motion to approve the design, as submitted. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Frank Cummings requests ADR approval to install a new projecting sign at 347 Village Street, Penacook, in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.**

The applicant was not present.

A discussion was held regarding the need to add the type of business to the lower area of the sign.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to approve the design, as submitted, with the suggestion that the applicant consider adding their professional service to the sign. Mr. Shilo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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5. Paull Nails, on behalf of 31 S. Main Acquisition, requests ADR approval to install a new wall sign at 31 S. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

It was noted that this is a new proposal from a prior submittal. Mr. Walker stated that the banner should be removed when the permanent sign is installed. The minutes of the June 12 ADRC meeting were reviewed.

Ms. Durfee-Hengen made a motion to deny the application referencing the prior comments from June 12, 2018, which stated that the sign was hard to read given the color scheme and the font style and the sign is not consistent with those of the neighboring businesses and appears to be out of place. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. The Hotel Concord requests ADR approval to install a new internally illuminated wall sign at 11 S. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

Anthony Mento of SMP Architecture, and Jamie Simchik, owner of the property represented the application. Mr. Mento stated that the ZBA has granted two variances for the size and location of the sign. Based on the comments and concerns from the September 11 ADRC meeting, new renderings were provided. Mr. Mento explained that the windows have been reduced to 4 ft., which has reduced the sign from 320 sf to 256 sf. In addition, the 4 ft letters now are consistent with other hotels in the area. With this change, the area between the windows is now not so crowded, which was another concern.

Another request was to provide a rendering that incorporated ascent lighting. The night rendering provided shows that this proposal, with the 4ft letters, still allows the sign to be visible from I-93.

Mr. Mento stated that he believes that with these changes, they have achieved all of the Committee's requests.

Mr. Doherty asked what percentage of the building will be used for the Hotel Concord. Mr. Simchik replied that with the lower 1 and 2 levels, lobby, 3rd, 4th and 6th floors, he believes it is approximately 40%.

Ms. Hengen stated that although she appreciates the efforts that the applicant has made; she does not believe that visually, there is any difference. She referenced this area of downtown Concord as the "backdoor of Concord" and asked what it is that should be conveyed to the people driving through Concord. She stated that there has been many ideas discussed as to what we want to convey but there has never been a complete policy decision made by the City. She added that this may be the time for the ADRC and the Planning Board to really look at this area and make some decisions. She commented that it is difficult for the Committee to act on something when there are no policies in affect. Should the Committee act on this application, and approve it, this sign would be the first large sign within the core-area of downtown Concord. She added that this area of Concord is in the national historic district and the impact carries greater weight. She stated that with reference to the premise of hotels, nothing been hashed out. She expressed concern with doing a disservice to the City as there is no clear policy.

Ms. Hengen made a motion to table this application. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Hengen suggested that there be a joint meeting scheduled soon with staff, ADRC, Planning Board, and ZBA members to discuss this matter.

Mr. Mento replied that the comments are understandable as this is something new for the City and is within the center of Concord. He stated that the goal is to try to get people to come in to town. The proposal is minimalistic and stylish and they are not trying to be disrespectful. Mr. Simchick stated that they are trying to do the right thing, in an elegant fashion and not have a sign that is obtrusive. He stated that he hopes that the lighting on the top of the building is not

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weighing on the decision or complicating the matter as the lighting was added as a request of the planning staff. He stated that staff requested that there be something at the top of the building coming down the building.

Ms. Hengen stated that her motion did not have anything to do with the lighting ascent at the top of the building.

Mr. Simchik asked if the joint meeting with the Planning Board, ADRC, and ZBA would be handled by Ms. Shank and expressed concern with the delay. Ms. Hengen stated that the meeting should convene within 30 days.

Mr. Simchick stated that they are working hard to meet the City's guidelines, and asked if there are any additional suggestions from the Committee.

Mr. Shilo commented that he appreciated the change in the lighting; however, he believes that the recommendation was 50% and the issue is if Concord wants people on I-93 to be able to see the business signs. The minutes indicated 20% and Mr. Mento stated that they did what was requested in the minutes.

Site Plan & Subdivision Applications

7. Granite State Baptist Church requests ADR review as part of a Major Site Plan application for construction of a new parking lot at 236 Sheep Davis Road in the Industrial (IN) District.

The applicant was not present.

Mr. Durfee explained that the Granite State Baptist Church previously came before the ADRC for an addition and now they are adding a 56 space parking area to the south of the lot with landscaping.

Mr. Doherty noted that the church has created a very nice area and took the suggestions of the Committee in the past. He noted that the current area is a dirt lot now. He referred to the plan and noted that the trees proposed will also improve the area.

Mr. Durfee stated that a lighting plan has not yet been submitted. He added that the planning and engineering departments have both issued comments, which have been addressed.

Ms. Hengen made a motion to approve the design, as submitted. Mr. Doherty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Nobis Engineering, on behalf of 125 NSS LLC, requests ADR approval as part of a Major Site Plan application for construction of two building additions and related site improvements at 125 N. State Street in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

Ting Chang from Nobis Engineering and Ellen Albrecht from ENS Associates were present along with the property owner, Fred Potter.

Ms. Chang gave an overview of the project. She explained that there are two additions proposed to the existing building that will consist of a one-story conference room and a three-story office space to be used by two separate businesses, under common ownership. She noted that the property is also part of a concurrent subdivision application, Rollins Court. She spoke to the parking area; she is working to align this site as a gateway into Rollins Court, 135 N. State Street. Ms. Chang explained that a CUP has been requested to allow for 20 parking spaces where 36 are required. A variance was granted by the ZBA for the parking spaces. There will be space available for the construction of additional spaces if warranted in the future.

Ms. Albrecht provided an overview of the elevations of the property noting that they are trying

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not to be higher than the existing roof with the new additions. The new additions will consist of the same shingles and same asphalt.

A discussion was held regarding the windows and the span of the railing. Ms. Albrecht explained that the railing will be at every other window. Mr. Shilo asked about the differences in width of the windows. Ms. Albrecht explained that the 3 ft. module proposed would be best as alternatives would be very busy on the proposed elevations. Additional discussion was held regarding the deck location and moving the deck line back.

Ms. Hengen stated that a lot of effort has been put into mimicking the details of the original buildings. She commented that items could be simplified while keeping the expressions of the rest of the building. Ms. Albrecht replied that “more simplified” could be cost effective for the client by leaving some details out. Mr. Doherty stated that he likes the character of building and commented that it is an interesting form but the proposal is not out of place. Ms. Hengen commented that they would like to see the project without the roof deck. Mr. Shilo stated that he would like to see different colors introduced and suggested the railing could be a darker color. Ms. Albrecht stated that there is a lot going on with the existing building and she believe that the proposal allows everything to fit and flow better; trying not to create visual clutter.

Ms. Hengen made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed additions with the conditions that the deck railing on the southern addition be moved back to the deck line as shown on the plans and the minimum height meet all necessary code requirements; lower the roofline of the connection between the north addition and the original building; and that the trim details on the north side of the northern addition be simplified so that they recall, but do not mimic the original building. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Chang provided an overview of the site plan and landscaping. She stated that 16 trees are being added and three trees will be removed. Ms. Albrecht stated that they intend to use some of the existing trees. Ms. Fenstermacher requested that the Bradford Flowering Pear tree not be used as it is a weak wooded tree. She referenced the City’s street tree list for other options.

Mr. Shilo asked if there is a lighting plan. Mr. Potter replied that there are not going to be any lights on site.

Mr. King commented that the addition is a very nice proposal; however, it is now intercepted with trees. Mr. Shilo commented that he likes the symmetrical façade; it is more prominent and makes it recede some as well as the proposed shrubs and trees.

Ms. Hengen made a motion to recommend approval as submitted with the substitution of the Bradford Flowering Pear tree. Mr. Doherty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

9. T.F. Bernier, Inc. on behalf of Harold E. and Judith Ekstrom, requesting ADR review as part of a Major Site Plan application to construct a new 4-story building for 38 apartments, and associated site improvements at 56-64 Warren Street, 32-36 N. Spring Street, and 17-19 & 21 Green Street, in the Civic Performance (CVP) District.

Tim Bernier of T. F. Bernier, Inc. and Chris Carley of Carley Associates represented the application. Harold Ekstrom, property owner, was also present.

Mr. Carley provided a brief overview of the amended rendering as a result of last month’s ADRC meeting. He explained that the Bris olé has been extended outward, the column design was adjusted and transoms were added over the entrance doors. He explained that he attempted to divide the dormers; however, that created additional problems. The color was changed to beige/ butterscotch brick and the granite belt course has been changed to a soldier course brick to stand

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out. The brick is now being carried all the way through to avoid the EIFS. Another change in color was made on the trim from a brown/beige to a grey to pick up on the granite trim.

Mr. Carley provided an overview of the proposed carports.

Mr. Doherty stated that he appreciates the efforts to address and incorporate the Committee's comments. He is in favor of the changes to the plan with the proposed color changes and building design.

Ms. Hengen asked if black balconies had been considered. Mr. Carley replied that it is an ongoing discussion and noted that they are also toing with black window frames. Additional discussion was held regarding coining, adding a fin wall, or adding another column to suggest support for the brick. Mr. Carley stated that he would prefer a fin wall and add some perforation.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to recommend the building plans as submitted with the conditions that the applicant explores darker color options for the balcony and railings; look at the belt coursing for granite lintels above the windows; look into the entrances and acknowledge the heaviness of the second and third floors and add heavier columns or fin walls. Mr. Shilo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bernier spoke to the site plan and stated that there have been no changes made since last month's meeting. A discussion was held regarding the pedestrian access. It was suggested that the walkway be adjusted to be in an angled pattern and add landscaping to be used to assist with aligning the curve.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to recommend approval, as submitted. Mr. King Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.