

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
August 7, 2018 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on August 7, 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, Doug Shilo, and Claude Gentilhomme. Heather Shank, Sam Durfee, and Lisa Fellows-Weaver of the City Planning Division, and Craig Walker of the Code Division, were also present.

Sign Applications

- 1. Brixmore Capitol SC LLC requesting ADR approval to replace an existing wall sign at 80 Storrs Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.**

The applicant was not present at the meeting. There were no comments from the Committee.

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

- 2. Coldwell Banker Lifestyles, on behalf of John Pappas Revocable Trust, requesting ADR approval to replace an existing wall sign at 84 N. Main Street in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.**

Steve Aubertin represented the application. Mr. Gentilhomme felt that the type of business should be noted in the sign. Mr. Aubertin noted that the client has various branches offering different services and that they like the consistency of the basic corporate logo.

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

Building Permits in Performance Districts

- 3. Spring Corner Realty, LLC, requesting ADR approval for construction of a carport at 2-10 North Spring St. in the Civic Performance (CVP) District.**

Sheldon Pennoyer represented this application. He explained that a variance has been granted for setbacks. He explained that the proposal is to building a carport. Materials proposed will be similar to the dormers, using clapboards and asphalt shingles on the roof. Mr. Pennoyer noted that during renovations, vertical pilasters were found under the exterior of the residential structure, which they plan to keep. The Committee thought this was an improvement.

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

- 4. Jonathan Chorlian, on behalf of the City of Concord, requesting ADR approval for construction of an ADA accessible ramp in the right of way in front of 1 Eagle Square; a park and new parking area in the right of way in front of 4-6 Dixon Ave; and a patio and green space along the Storrs Street frontage of 8-14 Dixon Ave in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.**

Jonathan Chorlian presented the application along with Steve Duprey, John Jordon of Jordon Design PLLC, and Eric Buck of Terrain Planning & Design, LLC.

Mr. Chorlian gave a presentation providing details of the projects included within the Granite Center. He stated that there are six items that he is requesting approval on; three small area site improvements, and three façade changes.

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At 1 Eagle Square, the proposal is to provide ADA access in the City right of way to the storefronts, add a canopy structure over the main entrance, and redesign the storefronts. Improvements to 6 Dixon Ave. include seven new prefabricated balconies and the removal of the existing entry vestibule, which will be replaced with a storefront door to match existing windows. 14 Dixon Ave. improvements include new storefront doors with side lights, new windows, and a new patio and landscape area. Also proposed is a new ADA accessible path, landscaped areas, and a small plaza in the Dixon Ave right of way.

14 Dixon Ave.

The Committee first discussed the architectural changes. Mr. Shilo asked if there would be new lighting. Mr. Chorlian stated that he does plan to update the lighting as the budget allows. He stated that he will return to the ADRC with a proposed lighting plan. Ms. Hengen suggested that the applicant research the historical treatment of the transom lights. She asked if there are any historical photos. She noted that it would be worthwhile to look into prime buildings such as this with high visibility, as they are important in the downtown district. She added that the NH Historical Society may have photos since the building is eligible for the National Register. .

Additional discussion was held relative to the proposed fence along the patio and around the landscaped area. Mr. Chorlian stated that the fence is intended to provide a buffer for privacy. The retaining wall will be a precast concrete block with a granite capstone. The patio railing is mounted on to the top of the retaining wall.

Mr. Anderson expressed concerns that accessible access in the City right of way is being cut off from one direction, and used to provide access to the applicant's property from another direction. He recommended that the improvements to provide accessibility be located on the applicant's property. He also shared concerns from engineering and general services regarding the need for and ownership of maintenance of the sidewalk. It was noted that a license would be required from the City if anything was to be placed in the right of way.

Ms. Shank noted that it's unclear how the space will be used, which doors will be entrances, or whether additional space will be needed for tables and chairs. Based on these uncertainties, she did not feel comfortable utilizing the right of way to provide access for a private business. Members of the Committee disagreed, feeling that it was a valuable use of the public space to provide accessibility at what is proposed to be the main entrance. Mr. Gentilhomme noted that there is plenty of space for seating and a walkway. Mr. King questioned why the patio wasn't proposed to be larger. Mr. Chorlian noted that it may become larger in the future, however, without an identified restaurant tenant, it is proposed as is for budget reasons.

Mr. Gentilhomme left at 9:30.

Mr. Shilo moved to recommend approval of the patio with the condition that the applicant coordinates with all necessary City departments relative to the right of way and access. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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Ms. Hengen moved to recommend approval of the façade changes, subject to the condition that the transom light be a single panel, unless historic photos demonstrate an alternative condition, and that the applicant work with staff to make revisions accordingly based on the applicant's research into the NH Historical Society or the Library photograph collection. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6 Dixon Ave.

Mr. Chorlian explained the improvements, including seven new apartments with balconies, and the removal and replacement of the existing entryway. Mr. Chorlian explained that the balconies are proposed to project 3 feet, but will be under the eave line of the roof. Materials were discussed. Mr. Shilo suggested that the materials be a black powder-coated aluminum or steel with a galvanized or zinc rich primer to prevent rust and flaking of paint. Mr. Chorlian concurred. Ms. Hengen stated that the balconies should be diminutive. Discussion ensued relative to the width and sizes of the balconies as compared to the existing balconies of Remi's Block, and the recommendations of the Design Guidelines. Ms. Shank noted that the Design Guidelines do not specify maximum dimensions. Mr. Chorlian agreed to reduce the size of the balcony on the south elevation to 6 feet for aesthetic reasons. The Committee was split on whether the balcony on the north side should remain 14 feet in length, or be split into two smaller balconies. Two members felt that the larger balcony mirrored the rail of the entrance and could provide some shelter from the elements. Two other members felt that the length was inappropriate and didn't work aesthetically. Ms. Hengen stated that the building fenestration is what defines the shape and form of the exterior, and that linking two windows with a balcony disrupts that rhythm and interrupts the function of the windows aesthetically.

Mr. Chorlian stated that the existing plaque on the building will be removed.

Mr. Shilo moved to recommend approval, subject to the conditions that the south balcony is reduced to 6 feet in width, and that all balconies are black and either constructed of powder coated aluminum or, if steel, be galvanized or have a zinc rich primer to prevent rust and paint flaking. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Gateway Park – Dixon Ave Right Of Way

A serpentine walkway is proposed to make the path accessible. Mr. Anderson expressed concern regarding the width and tightness of the turns as it will be difficult for maintenance. He suggested increasing the width. Mr. Shilo suggested making the curved area wider and forego the straight sections to make it more whimsical and fun. Mr. Duprey replied that he would agree to make it wider; however, they must maintain 5% and are still limited by the curved edge. Mr. Anderson also noted that a clear accessible pedestrian path needs to be provided across the front of 6 Dixon through the vehicular oriented area. Mr. Chorlian agreed to provide with a change in hardscape materials.

Additional discussion was held regarding the plantings proposed along the walkway. Mr. Buck explained with regards to stormwater, the water will drain into the plantings. Plantings proposed

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were oak trees, arborvitaes, and more ornamental trees around patio. Around Remi's building there will be shrubs with some height. Ms. Shank requested a landscape plan be submitted to staff. Mr. Chorlian stated that they are waiting to provide the landscape plan until they had the layout closer to completion.

Mr. Chorlian stated that they are building all these features on City property at their expense. Mr. Chorlian stated that the maintenance is the City's responsibility as it is a public way; however, although they do not have a legal obligation to maintain this area, they will probably maintain the plantings. He will also check into using a snow melt system for this area. Mr. Chorlian commented that he believes this will become a major connection between Main St. and Storrs St., and will unlock development capacity and parking capacity.

Mr. Anderson stated that General Services has requested stamped pavement be used as opposed to pavers. The applicant and Committee were not receptive to this suggestion and preferred to use pavers. The materials proposed for the retaining wall is a precast concrete.

Mr. Doherty moved to recommend approval, subject to the conditions that a landscaped plan be submitted to staff, that a clear accessible pedestrian path will be provided across the front of 6 Dixon through the vehicular oriented area with a change in hardscape materials, and that the walkway width and maintenance will be further discussed with staff. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Eagle Square

Mr. Chorlian stated that the façade of The Eagle Square storefronts will be redesigned with a black metal storefront system and decorative cast iron columns, similar to the storefronts down the street at Mark Ciborowski's building. A canopy will be added over the entrance and will be parallel with the sidewalk. He explained that they are trying to improve the energy efficiency of these stores and create a unified appearance. He noted that currently the appearance of the storefronts is disorganized and inconsistent aesthetically. He added that he will return with a signage package for this project.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the sidewalk in front of Eagle Square. Mr. Chorlian explained that based on prior discussions the sidewalk is now wider, incorporates six benches, and removed four previously proposed stairways. Mr. Shilo commented that he appreciated the changes.

Mr. Anderson stated that where the slopes are either at 5% or above will require railings. He noted that General Services and Engineering are concerned with maintenance of the sidewalk due to the narrowness of the walkways and the proposed jogs in the seating wall for benches and columns. He recommended that the entire wall be a flat face to allow easier maintenance and snow removal. Mr. Chorlian stated that they intend to snow melt the upper sidewalk. He added that he feels that the pedestrian traffic will be split between the two levels. Ms. Shank commented that the area is too crowded with too many features in a tight space.

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Lengthy discussion ensued relative to safety concerns with the walkway and the need for railings due to the low curb/lip adjacent to the ramp, which Engineering feels is a tripping hazard. A number of suggestions were made, including to raise the height of the wall where needed to minimize the tripping hazard. The applicant was receptive to this suggestion.

Mr. Anderson noted that he is open to other options, but recommended that the wall be designed to allow railings to be installed, since this is what the City will need to do if it turns out that the ramp creates a tripping hazard. Mr. Chorlian suggested removing the benches to avoid an awkward situation with the possibility of railings in the future, and just have a low seating wall that changes in elevation, as needed, with the height of the ramp. Ms. Shank noted that the seating wall and columns could be easily shifted back 5 or 6 inches to allow a minimum of 5 feet 5 inches for the lower walkway, since the width is no longer needed for benches.

Mr. Shilo moved to recommend approval of the ramp, subject to the conditions that the recessed benches are removed; that a continuous seating wall be provided instead, punctuated by granite posts that mirror the existing granite columns of the building; that the seating wall be taller such that the reveal on the ramp side is not less than 12 to 14 inches in height (with the understanding that railings will be installed if there are safety issues); that with the exception of the area in front of the steps, a minimum of 5 feet 5 inches in width will be provided for the existing walkway below the ramp; and that additional seating blocks between the existing granite posts are acceptable, as may be needed, to address slope issues. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hengen moved to recommend approval of the façade changes and canopy, as submitted. Mr. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Site Plan & Subdivision Applications

- 5. Stephen Duprey, on behalf of 14 Dixon Avenue Development Company, LLC, requesting ADR approval as part of a Major Site Plan application for reconstruction of two existing parking lots and conversion of nonresidential space to seven (7) residential units at 14 Dixon Avenue in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.**

Steve Duprey and John Chorlian represented the application.

Mr. Duprey stated that a variance was granted by the ZBA for landscaping to not be required. Mr. Chorlian explained that the parking lot is proposed to be reconfigured and reconstructed. A new retaining wall is proposed on top of the existing wall, and will raise the elevation of the lot. The single entrance and exit will remain.

Ms. Shank suggested removing two spaces and adding two shade trees. If planted correctly, they could shade the entire lot, provide aesthetic enhancement, and mitigate heat island effects.

Mr. Chorlian explained that the lot is very small. There is limited space for landscaping and snow storage. He stated that there may be space to provide one or two shade trees at the north end of the lot, and he will look for additional areas to provide landscaping.

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It was suggested that the retaining wall be used as an opportunity to add climbing or draping vegetation to enhance the wall and provide some green relief. Ms. Hengen felt that this enhancement along Storrs Street was a good tradeoff for shade trees in the parking lot.

Ms. Hengen moved to recommend approval, subject to the conditions that one or two shade trees be provided in a planting bed at the north end of the parking lot, and that a planting bed be added along the top of the existing retaining wall such that vegetation will hang down over the wall. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Shank, City Planner