

Brattleboro Design Review Committee

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Minutes

Design Review Committee: Barbara George, Robin Renzoni-Sweetapple, Teo Senni, Mary McLoughlin

Staff: Sue Fillion, Rod Francis, Brian Bannon

Public: Robin Johnson

The meeting was convened at 12:00 noon. The Design Review Committee (DRC) discussed their role. Ms. George suggested that the National Park Service technical bulletins and guidelines for tax credit projects are a good resources for applicants. Staff will make these available to applicants.

2015-220 Delta Epsilon, Inc.; Urban Center District; request for Site Plan and Design Approval to remove most ivy on building exterior and yew tree, construct fountain with old steeple cross, install a wall sign and construct ADA entrance at 210 Main Street; Tax Map Parcel #275217.000

Robin Johnson, applicant explained that the project is in a bit of flux due to dealing with fire safety issues. The original idea was to have a small laundromat with a café in the basement. This required a new public entry on Grove Street. He distributed a new plan that shows a ramp up to the main entrance. He also spoke to finding a permanent location for the cross. There was a discussion of prior permitting for the property.

Ms. George advised that the front façade is the most important and that it should have the least change. She noted that the pool with the cross is massive and detracts from the façade. She suggested that it be minimized or moved so that it is not a major feature of the Main St. façade. She also noted that the handicap ramp is a heavy addition to the front façade. A better location for the ramp would be to the side or rear.

Ms. Renzoni-Sweetapple noted that ADA access is not required for the main floor at this time. There was discussion of a limited use limited application (LULA) elevators as a means to achieve handicapped access. Staff will research whether Cultural Facilities Grants can be used for private properties.

There was a discussion of the materials that will be used for the new entrance. Mr. Johnson stated that they have stone from the steeple. They may need some additional granite pieces. There was also discussion of the roof pitch on the side entry. Mr. Johnson noted that it is more like the front façade roof pitch than the side. Ms. George suggested that if it is to be a main entrance it should perhaps match the front façade.

Regarding signage, the DRC requested to see the graphic for the signs as well as how it will look on the façade.

There was a discussion of landscaping. Mr. Senni noted that the yew is being removed and that these were often planted deliberately at religious buildings. It was felt that it should be maintained in the landscaping.

The DRC summed up the following recommendations:

1. The ramp should not be placed along the front façade.
2. Yew and ivy should be maintained in the landscaping.
3. The new side entry should match the pitch and materials of the front entry.
4. The ramp should not stick out any further than necessary for ADA accessibility.
5. The cross and fountain should be minimized or relocated.
6. The signage is not as represented in the meeting materials. The DRC would like to see where it will be located on the front façade and the graphics for both signs.

Staff spoke about Open Meeting Law, email communications, and conflict of interest and ex-parte communication.

Ms. George suggested that the DRC do a tour of the historic districts. Mr. Bannon suggested that the DRB be invited as well.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Ms. George, Ms. Renzoni-Sweetapple, Ms. McLoughlin, Mr. Senni, Ms. Fillion, and Mr. Francis conducted a site visit. Public in attendance included Robin Johnson, his partner, child, Anne Howe, and an unnamed member of the public.