

Draft Meeting Minutes
Hartford Design Review Committee
March 29, 2016

Members Present: Michael Davidson, Evan Eccher, Jonathan Schechtman and Chair Denise Welch-May.

Staff Present: Lori Hirshfield

Others Present: Bill Bittinger, representing Railroad Row LLC, Eric Bunge representing Northern Stage, Lou Becker, Jay Barrett, Cynthia Silvey, Brooke Ciardelli and Byron Hathorn representing Rio Blanco, Linda Johnson (Methodist Church) Connie Henderson (Methodist Church).

A meeting of the Design Review Committee (DRC) was held on Thursday, January 28, 2016 at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street in Room 1. Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

1. Application by Railroad Row, LLC and Janet Wang for Waxing Studio and Salon” business sign at 15 Railroad Row, Lot 45-125-000 White River Junction.

Lori Hirshfield explained that normally signs are administratively approved by the DRC chair but for this one, Denise had some concerns she wanted the rest of the DRC to discuss. Denise explained her concerns about the colors and letter design not fitting in with the overall design of the building. She also expressed concern about the black background and the lack of balance with the other corner section of the building sign area. She also recognized that signs often represent a business’ branding and was looking at how to balance this with the design concerns.

Following discussion amongst the Committee and with Mr Bittinger, Denise made a motion to approve the application as presented with the following conditions.

1. Placement of the sign to be centered in the building’s grey sign panel facing Railroad Row.
2. Place a black band or decorative piece of proportional size on the other corner building grey sign panel area facing Bridge Street.

Evan Eccher second the motion, which was approved unanimously

2. Sketch Plan Review for Assisted Living Facility on Gates Street in White River Junction, Lot 45-181-000, by Rio Blanco

Lori Hirshfield introduced the application noting that it was an informal sketch plan review for the Design Review Committee to provide feedback on the concept plans before the property owners finalizes an application for submittal. Architect Lou Becker reviewed the irregular size and steep grades, its location between a residential area and commercial area, and how it steps back from n urban streetscape to a wooded slope. He noted that as a residential building, they want it to reflect a home with the sense of a front porch and back yard. He also reviewed the history of the building

He reviewed the preliminary drawings of the building, noting the following. It would step back from Gates street similar to the new Northern Stage building next door, providing visibility of the Methodist church and opportunity for green space. By doing this, the massing of the building is pushed away from the street and into the hillside where it is less visible and blends in better. The

85,000 Square foot building will vary in height with the green space in the front and stepping up opportunity for green space. By moving the mass of the building away from the street, it would require increasing the height in another section of the building above the allowed height for the zoning district. He provided more detail on the architectural approach and how it fit within the WRJ Design Guidelines and Design Plan, and design elements within the Design Review District.

Cynthia Silvery reviewed the site planning and Landscaping. This included a residential garden, public spaces and a variety of native forest type and streetscape landscape material.

Lou Becker reviewed the floor plans, and orientation of the building, public spaces, parking, window designs, and building façade treatments.

The Design Review Committee was favorable towards the approach and sensitivity to the church and location in the DR District.