
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
DESIGN REVIEW & PRESERVATION BOARD**

MINUTES

14-Nov-01

Present

J. BIANCO, CHAIRMAN
J. FORTUNA
P. EVANS
N. STAMLER
D. BROWN

Absent

N. GOFF
B. KRONENBERGER
M. BRADY
B. PLUMLEY

Also Present

M. JOHNSON
W. WARNER
S. HANSON
N. WEITZMAN
A. KROVONET

The meeting commenced at 5:40 PM.

Minutes from the regular October meeting were approved.

M. Johnson reported that the scope of the Guidelines had expanded to include the city of Fort Collins, CO's Design Standards and Guidelines for Large Retail Establishments. Once this addition was complete, the Guidelines would begin their approval process and go to print.

Next, S. Hanson and N. Weitzman presented drawings for the Armory Hotel.

Reaction to use of masonite hearty-plank(?) siding as an alternative to clapboard was favorable.

Concern was registered with respect to the architectural rationale re: how and where transitions from exterior brick to siding were taking place. For example, there is little cost-benefit to putting the brick at the lowest levels on the side facades as that portion of the North and South faces will be least visible. On the other hand, the first and last vertical segments of these facades (before and after the upper story windows -- set apart on the elevations with a white vertical stripe) seem like natural transition areas. On the former set of schematics (10-5-01), the eastern edges of these portions were actually shown as brick.

Much discussion took place re: the courtyard and entrance. Much on this topic had to do with ADA compliance and how, from an aesthetic perspective, that could best be accomplished. Design Guidelines for the city encourage grading treatments such that the visual effect of compliance is negligible and there is not a "regular" way in apart from a "handicapped" way in. A dissenting voice at the meeting remarked that stoops at the entrances contributed to their sense of grandeur. Someone else noted that ADA compliance might be met with only one of the entrances treated. In any case, as plans developed, the Board requested a more detailed presentation of the courtyard landscaping.

Mention was made that internally-illuminated signs were discouraged under the new Design Guidelines. Some Board members indicated that there was room for flexibility to accommodate tasteful exceptions, but that in any case, they would like to see greater detail with respect to the two proposed signs.

P. Evans made a motion to approve the plans conditioned upon revisions discussed with respect to the North and South facades and further updates to the Board on choices of materials and facade treatments. N. Stamler seconded. D. Brown objected to the internally-illuminated sign. The motion carried with D. Brown's abstention.

- 2 -

Next the Board revisited the issue of granting discretionary authority to Board staff on sign applications for slot or panel replacements within composite sign structures in the commercial strip areas (i.e., Washington Street, South Main Street, Old Saybrook Road (including Main Street Extension and East Main Street), and Newfield Street. P. Evans moved approval, N. Stamler seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Next, W. Warner and M. Johnson presented the Board with two chapters of the City of Middletown's 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development for their feedback at the next meeting. D. Brown requested a copy of the full plan.

Next, M. Johnson presented the Board with conceptual images of potential waterfront development for the area of the Connecticut River riverfront known as "South Cove" and solicited their feedback in anticipation of the DPCD's hiring of a conceptual architect. W. Warner brought Board members up to date on the outcomes of the Mayor's Select Committee on Waterfront Development and the conceptual land use plan that has been developed. Reaction by the Board was mixed with a many comments emphasizing a preference for a more naturalistic, less people-intensive river's edge. Members' all expressed a preference *against* a concrete-styled plaza riverfront like Harbor Park. M. Johnson told Board members they would be kept informed as conceptual plans for the waterfront developed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Munro W. Johnson
Community Development Specialist