

## Department of Planning and Zoning

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**TO:** Design Advisory Board  
**FROM:** Scott Gustin  
**DATE:** November 10, 2015  
**RE:** 16-0507SP, 475 Lake Street

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Zone: DW-PT                      Ward: 3C  
Owner/Applicant:      City of Burlington / New Moran, Inc.

**Request:** Sketch plan review of renovations to the vacant Moran power generating plant with north side addition. Proposal to include a market space, event/concert hall, co-working spaces, and historic displays.

### **OVERVIEW:**

The applicant is seeking sketch plan review of proposed renovations to the vacant Moran plant. The existing building is to be fitted up for a variety of interior uses, the steel latticework on the building's north side is to be enclosed, and a new loading dock is to be constructed next to it. Site work includes new surface parking and circulation, pedestrian improvements such as walkways, sitting areas, and a new center promenade, and shoreline improvements. Note that the "illustrative plan" depicts Waterfront Access North improvements and the new skate park already under construction via separate permit. A would-be marina is also depicted. This marina, if proposed, would be under separate future permit.

The Moran renovations and site work included in this proposal would largely be in place of the previously approved renovations and site work. Only the Waterfront Access North and skate park work approved under the prior permit have been constructed. Community Sailing Center work is also previously permitted, but work has not yet commenced.

### **ARTICLE 5: CITYWIDE GENERAL STANDARDS**

#### ***Sec. 5.4.8, Historic Buildings and Sites***

##### ***(a) Applicability:***

*These regulations shall apply to all buildings and sites in the city that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the State or National Register of Historic Places.*

The Moran was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. Alterations and additions are, therefore, subject to review under Sec. 5.4.8.

##### ***(b) Standards and Guidelines:***

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

The application, while proposing new use, strives to maintain those building details, massing, and materials that are characteristic of the power generating facility.

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Significant effort has been made to retain massing, spatial relationships, and materials associated with the Moran building. While alterations are proposed, they are consistent with the defining characteristics of the building.

- 3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Alterations proposed for the Moran building are distinctly identifiable, and distinguishable from the original structure. No conjectural features are proposed.

- 4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

Significant effort has been made to assure the retention of important and character defining features of the Moran building in order to allow reasonable interpretation of the structure by the public in its proposed new use.

- 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

See above.

- 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials recognizing that new technologies may provide an appropriate alternative in order to adapt to ever changing conditions and provide for an efficient contemporary use. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Existing windows have been badly damaged, as has some of the brick work. The original building superstructure will be clearly evident in project implementation. New brick work and window replacement will be consistent with existing characteristics.

- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

Abatement of asbestos and lead paint as well as other hazardous materials has required significant attention, but no actions are proposed that will affect the integrity of the building mass.

- 8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

None identified.

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

The plan reflects considerable and attentive analysis of the qualities of the existing vacant electric generating facility and the thoughtful re-use of the structure. There is clear discernment between the original building mass and details and the proposed alterations such as the steel latticework enclosure and the west-facing center window. This discernment will both inform the public of what is old and new and present a pleasing and highly functional new structure.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

While the proposed alterations are effectively permanent, the proposed work leaves the essential form and integrity of the building intact.

## **ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS**

### ***Part 1, Land Division Design Standards***

Not applicable.

### ***Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards***

#### ***Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards***

##### ***(a) Protection of important natural features***

The site contains no significant natural areas as identified in the Open Space Protection Plan. While the site is along the Lake Champlain waterfront, it (and the rest of the downtown waterfront) is not included in the Riparian and Littoral Conservation Zone.

Some existing trees and associated scrub growth along the immediate shoreline will be removed as part of the proposed shoreline improvements. New rip rap, seawalls, and plantings will be installed.

##### ***(b) Topographical alterations***

The existing site is generally flat and will remain so. The site plan depicts general topographic information but is not especially detailed. Upon permit application, a separate topographic plan is recommended.

##### ***(c) Protection of important public views***

There are significant public views from the project site across the lake and towards the Adirondacks. There are also significant public views across the site from Battery Park. Existing public views will not be adversely impacted by the renovated Moran or by the new sailing center building. Insofar as the proposed work includes improved pedestrian access to the waterfront, these important views will be more readily available to the public.

##### ***(d) Protection of important cultural resources***

The project site is located on fill soils. The site has no archaeological significance. The Moran building is historically significant as noted under Sec. 5.4.8 (above) and 6.3.2 (b) below.

*(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy*  
See Sec. 6.3.2 (f).

*(f) Brownfield sites*

The site is included on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List. No information relative to this item is included in the sketch plans; however, as part of the prior permit approval, a corrective action plan (CAP) had been established and implemented for the interior of the Moran building. The CAP status of the site will need to be addressed as part of the formal permit application for this latest proposal.

*(g) Provide for nature's events*

Stormwater management is not addressed in the sketch plans. Whether any new or upgraded stormwater management measures are proposed will need to be addressed in the formal permit application.

*(h) Building location and orientation*

The location of the Moran building will not change. What is effectively a rear entryway facing Lake Street will be revamped as one of two primary entrances into the structure. The proposed changes result in a clearly articulated main entrance facing the public street.

*(i) Vehicular access*

Only limited vehicular access is proposed right up to the Moran building. It appears that vehicular access to the building is limited to service vehicles and trucks coming to the new loading dock. Most vehicles will be directed to a new surface parking area to the southeast of the building or to the on-street parking located along Lake Street extension.

*(j) Pedestrian access*

Much of the proposed hardscaping is pedestrian-related. New concrete walkways are proposed in several locations. In the center, a new pedestrian promenade reaching from Lake Street out into the lake will be installed. Wide swaths of pavers are proposed around the building and through the site to provide ease of movement for pedestrians as well as limited vehicular access to the building. Well defined pedestrian routes will provide access from parking areas to the building, the lakeshore, and the nearby bike path.

*(k) Accessibility for the handicapped*

Several handicap parking spaces are depicted on the plans. They are located with ready access to pedestrian circulation areas and the Moran. It is the applicant's responsibility to comply with all applicable ADA requirements.

*(l) Parking and circulation*

All of the new parking included in this proposal is located to the southeast of the Moran building. The sketch plans submitted are reduced-size, and so are not true-to-scale. Therefore, dimensional adequacy of the parking and circulation cannot be assessed. Full size, true-to-scale project plans will be required with the formal permit application.

The proposed parking is broken into distinct components and includes new landscaping, apparently consisting of trees and shrubs within the landscaping islands and peripheral green spaces. The parking areas incorporate direct, well-defined pedestrian routes into the rest of the site.

No parking lot shading analysis is included in the sketch plans. This criterion establishes a target of 30% shading of the parking areas with new shade trees. At least 1 shade tree for every 5 parking spaces is required. Minimum caliper size at the time of planting is 2.5” – 3.5” and a mature canopy diameter of 35’ is expected. Such details will be required with the formal permit application.

While not part of Design Advisory Board’s purview, it bears mentioning that an updated parking analysis will be required as part of the formal permit application. The parking now proposed is similar to that included in the prior permit approval; however, the mix of uses is different.

*(m) Landscaping and fences*

General landscaping information has been provided in the sketch plans. New trees will line some portions of the interior pedestrian walkways. As noted above, some new trees will screen and shade the new parking area. A new public green is proposed to the north of the building and will be defined, at least in part, by new landscaping. A detailed landscaping plan will be required as part of the formal permit application.

*(n) Public plazas and open space*

Much of the proposed site work is aimed at creating a pleasant pedestrian environment. The layout of the site invites pedestrian access into the building and to the lakeshore. Ample opportunity for exploring the building, the site, and the lakeshore is afforded. A large paver area with associated seating walls will hug the new public green, and new terraces are proposed on both the east and west sides of the building. Rooftop public access will be provided.

*(o) Outdoor lighting*

No outdoor lighting information is included in the sketch plans. The formal permit application must include a photometric plan of the site delineating separate lighting environments (parking & circulation, walkways, and building entries) and fixture cutsheets.

*(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design*

No new outdoor mechanical equipment is apparent. Judging from the floor plans, all of the mechanical equipment will be contained indoors. The dumpster and recycling facilities are also contained indoors. Any new utility lines must be buried.

**Part 3, Architectural Design Standards**

**Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards**

*(a) Relate development to its environment*

*1. Massing, Height, and Scale*

The massing, height, and scale of the existing structure will remain essentially unchanged. The enclosure of the steel latticework on the north will add to the overall scale of the building but reads as a distinct component. The new loading bay to the north of that will result in minimal additional building mass. While there are significant expanses of featureless brick wall due to the Moran’s history as an industrial power plant, both the original building and addition thereto read as an agglomeration of distinct components that effectively break up the building’s perceived mass. Proposed entry level terraces bring about an inviting new street level presence for pedestrians that was previously lacking.

## *2. Roofs and Rooflines*

The existing building is a multi-level flat roof structure. The proposed addition will reflect this appearance with flat roofs on varying planes.

## *3. Building Openings*

Most of the windows in the existing structure are broken or boarded-up. All windows will be replaced within the existing window openings. A new window, in a shape reminiscent of a sail, will be inserted in the building's western elevation. The addition to the north will stand in contrast to the original structure. The east and west elevations will be nearly all glass with some metal paneling. As noted previously, new entries will be constructed on the building's eastern and western elevations. These proposed entries are well articulated and easily identifiable.

### *(b) Protection of important architectural resources*

The Moran is included within the National Register of Historic Places. The building is clearly industrial in appearance. The proposed renovations respect the essential form and appearance of the structure. Additions to the structure are clearly not part of the original building but are stylistically sympathetic. See also Sec. 5.4.8.

### *(c) Protection of important public views*

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

### *(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge*

The existing building was constructed as a power plant standing alone at the northern end of the downtown waterfront. It was not constructed as an active, pedestrian oriented facility. The proposed renovations do much to improve the attractiveness and pedestrian-friendliness of the building. Site work draws people into the building and associated site amenities. The eastern elevation will be transformed from a rather bleak, faceless façade into the primary entrance.

### *(e) Quality of materials*

The brick sheathing on the existing building will remain. New precast concrete coping will be installed, as will replacement windows throughout. Window materials are not noted and must be as part of the formal permit application. The addition will be clad in metal paneling and glass. Some stone accents will be installed along the ground level. The noted materials are durable and of acceptable quality.

### *(f) Reduce energy utilization*

The sketch plans depict solar panels on the lower roof deck facing south. The upper roof contains 3 columnar wind turbines reminiscent of the long-ago smoke stacks. In addition to these renewable energy features, the renovated building will comply with the current energy efficiency requirements of the city and state.

### *(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site*

Two parallel building signs are included in the sketch plans. The smaller of the two, a "Moran" sign on the ground level facing east, appears to be in an acceptable location and of an acceptable size. Dimensions will be needed upon formal permit application to confirm. The larger of the two, a "Moran Plant City of Burlington" sign on the upper level facing south, appears too large and too high up the building. The maximum sign size is 200 sf, regardless of how large the building is.

Sign placement on the building is limited to 14' or the ceiling height of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. There is an existing "City of Burlington" sign in this area that could be retained or replaced in-kind as a legitimate nonconformity, but it cannot be made more nonconforming. As with the smaller sign, dimensions will be needed upon formal permit application.

*(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design*

No rooftop mechanical equipment is evident in the sketch plans. The top of the elevator shaft will project as will the proposed wind turbines. As noted before, solar panels are proposed on a lower roof deck. An interior mechanical room will house all building mechanicals.

*(i) Make spaces safe and secure*

Revamped building entrances are clearly visible and will presumably be illuminated. The dual-purpose pavers surrounding much of the building appear to enable access by emergency vehicles. Written approval of the Fire Marshal regarding the building's accessibility by emergency service vehicles will be required upon formal permit application.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

None required for sketch plan review.