



STATE OF VERMONT

AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Stephanie Hesson
Environmental Board District #4 Coordinator
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS

Divisions for:

- * Community Development
- * Historic Preservation
- * Housing
- * Planning

National Life
Office Building
Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT
05620-0501

Telephone:
802-828-3211
800-622-4553

Fax:
802-828-2928

Historic
Preservation
Fax:
802-828-3206

Re: Monitor Barn/Vermont Youth Conservation Corps Headquarters
Richmond, Vermont
Act 250 # 4C1145
DHP # CH04-079

Dear Stephanie:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Act 250 permit application for the Monitor Barn/Vermont Youth Conservation Corps Headquarters in Richmond. The project consists of relocating and reconstructing the historic West Monitor Barn and developing the site as a permanent statewide headquarters for the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. It includes converting a portion of the Monitor Barn for offices and meeting space; construction of an addition to the barn for additional offices, restrooms, mechanical systems and a kitchen; and construction of associated drives, parking areas, landscaping and other site improvements. The project also includes construction of rustic cabins and lean-tos on the back portion of the property. The building plans that we reviewed are dated October 29, 2004. The Site Master Plan is dated September 28, 2004, and the Landscaping Plan is dated October 25, 2004.

The Monitor Barn is listed on the State Register of Historic Places and is clearly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The East Monitor Barn, on the neighboring property, is already included on the National Register, and the West Monitor Barn is expected to be nominated in the near future. Built in 1903, the West Monitor Barn is an architectural representation of a high point in agricultural industry in Vermont at the turn of the century. In his book Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings (which pictures the West Monitor Barn on its cover), Tom Visser notes that "The design of this monitor-roofed bank barn ... reflects the culmination of the gravity flow barn design". Hay was brought in through the high drive, dumped into flanking storage bays, and forked into the cow stables below. Manure was shoveled from the stables to the basement level below, where it was removed. The monitor provided additional light to

the barn interior and fostered improved ventilation through wooden air shafts that extended from the stock floor to vents in the monitor. The Monitor Barn is widely recognized as one of the most significant historic agricultural resources in the state. Its context of agricultural open land and the adjacent historic East Monitor Barn complex contribute to its historic character and enhance the public's appreciation and understanding of the site, viewed by 40-50,000 motorists per day from nearby Interstate 89 and Route 2 which passes directly in front of the barn.

The Division has reviewed this proposed undertaking for purposes of Criterion 8, 10 V.S.A., Chapter 151 (Act 250). Project review consists of evaluating the project's potential impacts to historic buildings and structures, historic districts, historic landscapes and settings, and known or potential archeological resources. The purpose of the Division's review is to provide the Environmental District Commission with the information necessary for them to make a positive finding under the "historic sites" aspect of Criterion 8.

Based on a very careful review of the project, which was also subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Vermont Historic Preservation Act, **the Division has concluded that while moving and reconstructing the Monitor Barn constitutes an adverse effect, it is not undue provided that the conditions listed below are met.** Moving an historic building from its original location is by definition an adverse effect, but the Monitor Barn was so severely deteriorated, that moving it slightly and reconstructing it with salvageable components was its only option for survival. Some aspects of the design for the reconstructed Monitor barn have not yet been developed and the Division wants to review and approve them when they become available. Additional background and project detail may be found in the Memorandum sent to Eric Gilbertson by Steve Libby of the Richmond Land Trust on November 2, 2004 (copy attached).

1. All work on the Monitor Barn will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and will be undertaken as depicted on the project plans dated October 29, 2004, and in the Libby Memorandum dated November 2, 2004. The work includes: installation of 6/6 true-divided light wood double-hung windows on the walls of the barn; installation of a gray Vermont slate roof with lead-coated copper flashing; reconstruction of the monitor with 6-pane true-divided light wood windows that operate on an awning system that opens all the windows to a consistent angle not to exceed the pitch of the barn roof (6/12); installation of vents in the monitor in the 2nd bay; subdivision of the stock floor into offices; preservation of the open character of the haymow and highdrive levels with exposed framing, studding, rafters and sheathing; reconstruction of the cupola with a lead-coated copper roof; construction of a 2-story, clapboarded, gable-roofed addition set back as close as practical to the rear façade of the barn and connected to the barn by a shorter, recessed connector; and, construction of a 42-car gravel parking lot with soft edges and no painted lines. Any changes from the above-referenced plans will be reviewed and approved by the Division prior to construction.

2. All future work on the Monitor Barn will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. The design and location of the following anticipated features will be reviewed and approved by the Division for Historic Preservation prior to construction in order to ensure compatibility with the historic agricultural character of the property and/or protection of potential archeological sites; high drive ramp and related retaining walls; insulation for external walls and stock floor ceiling; parking lot design and lighting plan; exterior building lighting; signs; sliding barn doors with inset egress door; vertical lift to the high drive level; two 4'x4' wooden air shafts to the vents in the monitor; accessible parking area; additional structures on the site, including transportation shed, dumpster enclosure, and rustic cabins and lean-to's. In addition, designs for any future buildings on the site, including those for office, dormitory and meeting spaces, shall be reviewed and approved by the Division prior to construction.

The project area also contains potentially significant archeological sites. Archaeological investigation for the Monitor Barn project was conducted between May 1998 and May 2004 and was focused on the relocation area as well as an approximately 2-acre section of the high terrace to the north of the new barn footprint. The larger area was evaluated to provide some options for future development by the Youth Conservation Corps.

All archaeological work is summarized in a report dated September 12, 2004 prepared by Dr. Peter Thomas. One prehistoric site, now designated as VT-CH-864 in the Vermont Archaeological Inventory, was identified immediately to the north of the new barn location. Based on current plans, VT-CH-864 will not be affected by the proposed construction and it is our understanding that the site will be preserved in place within a designated archaeological buffer zone.

The Division recommends that the following conditions be included in the Act 250 permit to ensure that the proposed project will not have an undue adverse effect on archeological resources.

3. The permittee will identify VT-CH-864 on the site plan and label it as a not-to-be-disturbed buffer zone. Copies of the revised site plan will be submitted to the District Commission and to the Division. In addition, the permittee shall also submit an archeological assessment(s) of all project components not included in the original review, such as the proposed cabins, lean-tos, and related infrastructure. If archeologically sensitive areas are identified, they should be also identified as archeological buffer zones and treated in a similar manner to the procedures outlined below for VT-CH-864.

4. Topsoil removal, grading, scraping, cutting, filling, stockpiling, logging or any other type of ground disturbance is prohibited within the buffer zones without written approval of the District Commission and the Division.

5. In the event that maintenance of all or part of the buffer zone is no longer feasible, VT-CH-864 shall be subject to additional archaeological study prior to any construction impact.

6. All archeological studies and assessments must be conducted by a qualified consulting archeologist and should follow the Division's Guidelines for Conducting Archeological Studies in Vermont. The permittee's archeological consultant may submit any scope of work to the Division for review and approval.

7. VT-CH-864 will not be impacted until any necessary mitigation measures have been carried out. Mitigation may include but is not limited to further site evaluation, data recovery, redesign of one more proposed project components, or specific conditions that may be imposed during construction.

8. Proposed mitigation measures will be discussed with and approved by the Division prior to implementation, and a copy of all mitigation proposals will be filed with the District Commission. The archeological studies will result in one or more final reports, as appropriate, that meet the Division's Guidelines for Conducting Archeological Studies in Vermont. Copies will be submitted both to the Division and the District Commission.

We hope that the District Commission will concur with the above nine recommendations for permit conditions and include them in the permit. This project reclaims a highly valued historic resource and guarantees its preservation and use into the foreseeable future. The conditions will ensure that the details of the project support that laudable goal. Please feel free to contact me or Nancy Boone if you have any questions about our comments. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Eric Gilbertson
Deputy Director
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

cc: Steve Libby, Richmond Land Trust
Gregory Rabideau, Architect
Thomas Hark, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps
Scott Newman, Vermont Agency of Transportation
Paul Bruhn and Ann Cousins, Preservation Trust of Vermont