

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

OCTOBER 28, 2021

Members Present

Robin Crews
Sonja Ingram
Susan Stilwell
Robert Stowe
Kathryn Waters
Robert Weller
Jackson Weller

Members Absent

Staff

Doug Plachcinski
Lisa Jones
Ryan Dodson

Ms. Crews called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING – OLD BUSINESS

1. *Certificate of Appropriateness Request 2021-225, to install a side yard privacy fence at 936 Main Street.*

Ms. Crews opened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Sonja Ingram arrived at 3:32.

Ms. Amy Whitehouse, applicant for 936 Main Street was not present to speak on this request.

Mr. Doug Plachcinski, Director of Planning and Zoning stated that he will leave it up to the board whether they table this item or act on it.

Ms. Stilwell stated she doesn't have to be here.

Mr. Ryan Dodson, Assistant Attorney with the City of Danville stated can we have a public hearing?

Ms. Crews stated we will now close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Weir stated I would be against this fence going all the way to the street. That will just disrupt everything along Main Street. It gets down to the definition of the end of the front of the house to the side of the house. I don't know where that demarcation line is, but I don't like this at all going all the way to the street.

Ms. Stilwell stated I agree.

Ms. Ingram stated I agree and reading this paper she is asking for a wooden fence. I'm interested in what is this image representing? Is it just the height? The description is not of a wood fence.

Ms. Crews stated it clearly says written on it paint mocha and 6 ft by 8 inches.

Ms. Ingram stated her written says 8-foot wood privacy fence which is completely different.

Mr. Stowe stated I agree because the last time that she was here she talked about a masonry wall and this one clearly is and it says 6 ft, 8 inches rather than 8-foot wooden privacy fence. She did ask previously for it to go to the street, and this is vague because it says side yard and it does not specify where that would begin. In my opinion I don't think that we can approve it.

Ms. Ingram stated when she was here before did she come with this masonry fence picture?

Mr. Weller stated not with this picture.

Mr. Stowe stated she had no picture and she asked us to approve a brick, or some sort of masonry type wall and we did not. We asked her to come back with some more descriptions.

Ms. Ingram stated if you don't have enough information do we probably just want to table it?

Ms. Crews stated that is one option or we can deny the application and have her resubmit it.

Ms. Stilwell made a motion to deny the Request 2021-225 because it is contradictory, and she needs to decide wooden or masonry and resubmit. Mr. Stowe seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING – NEW BUSINESS

1. *Certificate of Appropriateness Request 2021-373, to change the rear roof construction and appearance to meet Virginia building code.*

Ms. Stowe opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request is Ellen Paul, who stated I currently live at 1020 Main Street.

Ms. Crews stated presently what you are interested in the commission looking at today?

Ms. Paul stated this has to do with a head engineer report that we got in the back and I need to bring the whole rear addition up to 2018 code and inspections is requiring me to do the roof this way.

Ms. Crews stated is there any other information that you would like the commission to know about this application?

Ms. Paul stated one side of the roof was nonexistent for some time and the other side of the roof, I was going to try to save it, but it is kind of mis matched of a lot of different pieces of roof that were sawed together and parts of it maybe one over twelve, two over twelve parts were flat. The center part of the outside of the roof which is the west side of the roof the center part of that half of the roof was not leaking. However, it was a good foot maybe to a foot in a half along the edges of north side and south side of that roof was a continuous muddy rain and it was pretty bad. Also, doing the roof the way that inspections is requiring me to do. Mr. Evans from inspections came out and said this is the way that I want you to do it so that it complies with the 2018 code. It will actually be better for the house and it is going to look really nice and ninety percent of it is from the

rear. I was there with one of the board members and from the east side of the house you can't see the roof at all, and you almost can't see it from the west side. You are only going to see a small triangle from the front.

Ms. Stowe closed the Public Hearing.

Ms. Stilwell stated I will say that I was so confused earlier that I went and met with Ellen. When I got there, I realized this was a slumlord addition that made no sense, and it didn't configure into anything and everything was sloppy and never maintained. If the building code official is suggesting this then I feel he is certainly aware of our regulations and it should be appropriate. I am open to anybody else's comments.

Mr. Stowe stated can I ask for some clarification on the application? It also mentions changes to the driveway and windows.

Ms. Paul stated the reason for putting it in now is because I don't want to come before the board again. The reason is because there has been huge amount of equipment going down my driveway and it is on a hill. My driveway has been ripped up and torn out.

Ms. Crews stated let me ask the Attorney. Counsel, the certificate is for this application for the change of the rear roof construction and appearance to meet Virginia Building Code?

Ms. Stilwell stated should we do it separately?

Ms. Crews stated there is no separate application for the others.

Mr. Dodson stated as long as it is ultimately referencing that it is compliance with the building code. I am sure inspector Evans gave the best way to uphold the regulations as closely as possible in the district with what is in the building code.

Ms. Crews stated for the wood flat surface, but did anyone weigh in on the other information throughout her application?

Ms. Paul stated I can wait for this, but the regrading is more like a repair to what has happened to the driveway because of the heavy equipment. There will be no work on it until my neighbor does their rear deck because they are probably wanting to use my driveway to get their heavy equipment in. I can come back after they do their rear deck.

Ms. Crews stated mine was really a question of protocol because the application is strictly for the rear roof.

Mr. Dodson stated right, separately, would probably be the safest bet then.

Ms. Crews stated that is what I was kind of advising the commission to consider only the application as it concerns the rear roof line.

Ms. Paul stated do I need CAR approval to repair and regrade it back to the way it was before? There is not going to be any visible difference at all, and it will stay the same. I am just going to bring it back up where it used to be about six inches or so as it goes down the hill because it has been torn up.

Ms. Crews stated I apologize because you may not know this, but we do have Doug on the line as staff. Doug did you hear that question?

Mr. Plachcinski stated this question is for landscaping grading?

Ms. Crews stated she is considering it as repair.

Mr. Plachcinski stated for landscaping as long as it is not a structure like a retaining wall or anything then that is fine, and it would not require CAR review.

Ms. Crews stated so again we will focus the commission attention today on just the rear roof line addition and Ms. Stilwell has made some comments about it.

Ms. Ingram stated when you have removing windows, that is not going to be part of this?

Ms. Crews stated the commission is considering today that it is merely to change the rear roof construction and appearance to meet building code and that is a stand-alone issue. Doug is that correct?

Mr. Plachcinski stated the windows were on the previous CAR application and we have already covered everything else, and this is for the roof area. She has already received her COA for the other repairs.

Ms. Paul stated the east side of the rear addition, I can't fit two windows in, and I thought that I would be able to. I don't know what the commission came back with for this meeting but what I am asking for is that there are two windows that are not going to fit in the back. So, where the existing windows are, I was thinking that in order to make it look right, but a second window on the east side there is not going to look right. I have new drawings showing with one window and on my application it does bring this up.

Ms. Ingram stated which drawing are we talking about?

Ms. Paul stated it is the east side.

Mr. Plachcinski stated I think as long as it is in the materials and the commissions are comfortable ruling on it then it is fine. The goal is to make sure that she is using the appropriate materials. Then there also may be a building code issue with where the windows must be placed now than where there were previously.

Ms. Ingram stated so the windows are in this application then?

Mr. Weller stated the removal of the windows is in the application.

Ms. Paul stated they are not there right now.

Mr. Weller stated but what I mean is that the windows were previously approved, and it is removing the two windows. It is not an issue with any of the material that is being used just an issue with the removal of the windows.

Ms. Paul stated correct, and the upper window is still in place believe it or not and the lower window I have a window to put in there that I save from onsite.

Ms. Ingram stated you don't have a photograph of that side?

Ms. Crews stated I don't think we were supplied with a photograph.

Ms. Ingram stated I should have taken a photograph when I was out there.

Ms. Paul stated for me to explain the way that it looked before, as I told you a little while ago the inside of the rear addition had fallen into the basement. The whole interior of this part had already fallen into the basement. On this side there were modern additions built out, so it didn't look anything like this. The left part of this side was existing, and it was rotted, and the right side had been demolished. When they put on these slapped on additions and the old maps show the house going straight back without the additions but there is no way to get a picture of it.

Ms. Ingram stated this is the addition that you were able to salvage some of the original materials from?

Ms. Paul stated yes, as we were doing the demo part, inspections wanted me to take down the whole L of the other side as I told you a little earlier. As we got into the demo, we started hitting some wood that was not completely rotted out and once we hit that wood we stopped, and inspections was not happy about stopping but there was like a conflict because you want to make inspections happy, and I want to be happy and save as much as possible. We then stopped and inspections came out and they didn't like it, so I had to get the engineer back out to say that it is okay to try to rebuild it and save as much as possible of the old beams that were still in there.

Ms. Ingram stated I just want to clarify that I think that the roof is fine because it is an addition, and it is not overpowering the main house and it is lower and I think it will look better to. I am a little concerned about those windows because when I look at the drawings if you have two or more windows there it seems to me to look okay. Is the drawing like the distance correct?

Ms. Paul stated they may be lower to the right and I did this as fast as possible. It takes a long time to hand draw these things. I would say like if you went into the addition and you have a hard hat and you want to come in then you would see that it is not going to look right. In other words, if you put another window over there you are not going to have what I call the tube to the window and in the back part to the window it is going to be different.

Ms. Ingram stated do you mean from the interior or exterior it is not going to be symmetric at all.

Ms. Paul stated it will not be symmetric at all.

Ms. Ingram stated it must be the drawing that is confusing.

Ms. Paul stated it is. These windows are probably another foot over or something like that it is possible. It is probably not the safest place to walk in right now.

Ms. Ingram stated you don't have any photographs, do you?

Ms. Paul stated I don't have any of that side but if you want to give me a recess, I can ask my contractor to message me a picture of that side. Just give me a couple of minutes and you can continue and come back to me. Do you want me to do that?

Ms. Crews stated we will continue to the next item of our agenda.

2. *Certificate of Appropriateness Request 2021-375, to install retaining wall in the front yard of 864 Pine Street.*

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Keisha Corbett who stated, I live in Charlotte, North Carolina. The issue at hand is that the grading on Pine Street has been causing the water to flow toward the house for some time, and a year ago, I had to replace the inner wall of my basement because it was bowed. I had a guy to come out because I knew that I had to reconfigure my yard because as you can tell by the picture, if you are from this side going up my yard it goes uphill. So, with him coming out to try to level my yard out and make the water run towards the street and not towards my house where I won't have that problem again, the suggestion was that I basically build a retaining wall to make my yard flat. What I am asking for is to attach onto the right retaining wall that is already there. It marks the far end of my yard, and my goal is to put a wall where that black line goes from the street all the way back to where that wall is already there. What I will be using is an interlocking block that I am going to get from Chandlers down the street to basically build my front yard and it will be leveled out and graded so I will not have an issue with the water going back towards my house like it has been doing for some time. This will also be in my favor to partition for a driveway because that is my driveway that you are looking at on the bottom half of that picture.

Ms. Crews opened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Crews closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Weir stated how high is this wall?

Ms. Corbett stated the wall will be leveled with the sidewalk all the way to the right. So, I can make a flat front yard and that is all that I am trying to do. The material that will be on the side if you are standing there looking at that marker, it is not going to be cinderblock because that is not going to look good. It will be the same color stone as my steps that I have there. They will fill it in from what I am told from my grading guy you won't be able to see the cinderblock wall that is already there. They will cover that up when they bring it up. So, you will just literally see that cliff top if you are looking straight on from the front of my house. Then you will just see the new interlock on this side which will make my front yard kind of a partition for my driveway.

Mr. Weir stated again how tall?

Ms. Corbett stated so I would say from the street it is going to be leveled to the sidewalk and coming from the sidewalk it is going to be leveled and it is going to go straight to that wall which is connecting. I am going to say it is going to be leveled as soon as you come off the sidewalk and I would say it is going to be maybe two feet by the time you get to that wall to the right.

Mr. Weir stated so you are going to be leveling out your front yard tilting towards the street?

Ms. Corbett stated yes sir.

Ms. Ingram stated did you say that an engineer came out to look at the drainage or somebody from the city?

Ms. Corbett stated no, the guy that is going to be my grading basically told me that this is what I have to do. I thought in my head that this is what I should do but I was just going to try to maneuver my front yard before the fall came in and moved the dirt around. When he came, he said that is not going to fix anything because if you don't have a partition your yard is going to keep sloping off into the driveway. What I am doing is just making a front yard that I have never had but if I don't then I am going to be doing this every couple of years because there is going to be no way for the water to drain itself.

Ms. Ingram stated there are a lot of these kinds of retaining walls in town. Did he say if the water will affect your driveway or anything if you did this? He didn't say it would cause any other damage if you did this and that it would go out to the street?

Ms. Corbett stated yes, so when they grade it, they level it inch by inch so the water now should not be going towards my house it should be flowing towards the street where the drain is at. It will be filled in with dirt because I have other places in my yard that have sunken down and when he comes, he is going to fill all this stuff in so the water will go the correct way.

Ms. Ingram stated will it have one of those concrete caps on it?

Ms. Corbett stated no, the concrete cap will not be there. What will happen is these interlock blocks are blocks about this big and they are going to be staggered and stacked upon each other to build a wall. They will be textured on the outside and it will not be cinderblock like that.

Ms. Waters stated I think what she is asking is what are you capping it with on the very top?

Ms. Corbett stated you don't have to cap it because that is the way the blocks are made.

Ms. Ingram stated can you though, because the other side is like a brick wall with the concrete.

Ms. Corbett stated but once that is filled in up to the top of that cap and I personally don't like the way that looks and that is what it is at this point. I can easily paint that or put some sort of stone on top of that for it to match but I can promise you that it is not going to look good if I put the cinder block wall there.

Mr. Stowe stated she is asking about the one in the next yard.

Ms. Corbett stated I don't know anything about that yard that doesn't belong to me. I don't plan on doing that. That will be that same stone and I will get it from Chandler's, and you won't see the gray cinder block anymore and you will just see that cap.

Ms. Ingram stated I kind of think that it would look and fit better if it had the cap on top.

Ms. Corbett stated I didn't put this in there because I was so trying to get my yard down and figure out how it is going to look. I could easily put a brick stone that matches that stone just on top of that cap. The thing is the cap and the only way that is going to look like it is all the same is if I go back with cinder blocking and put that cap on there. I personally don't think that is going to be appealing to my house with that stone like that and unless I have to, I am not trying to match what is on the left side because I am trying to get away from all that ash color stone. I am trying to make it match with my brick because once they pull that dirt down there is about one layer of brick that is visible right now in front of my house. Once they pull that dirt down it is going to be four or five layers of brick that is going to be visible, and it is going to be more of that red color that it actually is. I will probably have to fill in and the brick is new. I am not sure that I have met you here before for a meeting. Probably within the last year I put the brick steps on there, so in front of my house when you pull that dirt away and make me a yard because there is so much dirt on the left side it is going to be more visible stone. Do you see how the brick is visible on this right side? The dirt is so high on the left side that you can't see that brick but once he pulls it down and makes it a flat yard you are going to see more brick. I am going to fill that in with the remaining brick that I have that matches the steps. You are going to have more of those red tones in the front of my house than what we see in this like silver ash concrete look. I am trying to tie that in, and my wall will look that reddish color and if I have to cap that with something else to match that then I am okay with that. If you are telling me that I have to be cautious about the left side that doesn't belong to me that looks like silver, then that is entirely a whole new ball game then for me. I can't control what is going to happen on the left side of me. What I got going on with my front yard.

Ms. Stilwell stated it is imperative that something is done to keep water from knocking into your house and that is the most important thing. I don't think what you are adding is going to help and work. I don't think it is really going to distract from the appearance and it is somewhat temporary. It is not like you are going to build like the white brick fence over there that we were going to have.

Ms. Corbett stated I am not against the fact that I put the wall up there and I am going to tell you I already had in my mind that I am not going to keep that silver. If you look at it and it is not going to look good, I am telling you now once you put that red on there. Before I knew that I needed to get this wall, I was going to cover that with stone but once they told me that when they fill it in you are only going to see the cap, I can get the

small little tiles and go over the top of that it will blend with what is already there. One they fill it in with dirt the only thing that you are going to see is the cap.

Ms. Ingram stated it is kind of like if it matches the house and her steps or to match that other side then I think we should go with her recommendation.

Mr. Weller made a motion that a Certificate of Appropriateness be granted for Application 2021-375 as submitted that it meets the guidelines. Mr. Stowe second the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Doug Plachcinski stated no other business but that we need to start moving forward on reviewing the design guidelines so to expect next month of we will probably want the commissioners on this board to give us some input directly about specific parts of the guidelines that they fill should be addressed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Mr. Weller made a motion to approve the August 26, 2021 minutes with changes on the 1st page from Ms. Stowe to Ms. Crews. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Stowe stated while we are waiting on Ms. Paul should we consider these as two items together or separately and if separately can we go ahead and take care of the first one?

Ms. Paul stated yes.

Mr. Weir made a motion to approve the Request 2021-373 for the roof as submitted that is meets the guidelines. Ms. Stilwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

Ms. Paul provided the picture of her house with the rear windows that Ms. Ingram was requesting to see.

Ms. Ingram stated I agree that it would look strange having the windows so close together there.

Ms. Waters stated so, was the second window to the right, was that also an original or were you asking for that anyway?

Ms. Paul stated that part of that wall back in the day had been demolished including the foundation under that wall. So, those two windows on the right are a totally new construction part of that wall. On the left-hand side, the window that exists right now is original and I am trying to save as much as I can that was originally there.

Ms. Waters stated as far as you know, it is more accurate than what was there?

Ms. Paul stated if the wall to the north side had been longer, I would have imagined it as having two windows.

Ms. Waters stated I was not on the board when we approved the original with the four windows and looking at the image, if she hadn't told us that there were four originally and had just submitted, I would have approved it. I wouldn't see any issue.

Mr. Dodson stated Ms. Paul can you show the pictures to the audience just in case?

Ms. Paul stated yes.

Mr. Weir made a motion to approve the Request 2021-373 to remove the window on the rear of the house and that it meets the guidelines. Ms. Waters seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Approved