



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
August 9, 2021
Council Chambers

You may view and listen to the Architectural Review Board meeting in its entirety [here](#) . The time of each presentation is in brackets below [0:00].

Members Present

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair
Karen Irvin, Vice Chair
Laura Galke
Helen P. Ross
James Whitman
Adriana Moss

Members Absent

Sabina Weitzman

Staff

Chuck Johnston
Cathy Eckles
Taylor Owen

Chairman Gerlach called the Architectural Review Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Gerlach determined that a quorum of six members was present and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Mr. Johnston confirmed that they had. Mr. Johnston then introduced, Taylor Owen, Administrative Support Specialist III, a new member of the Planning & Building Department.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA [3:26]

Chairman Gerlach asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Mr. Johnston had the following change: moving the discussion of 400-406 Lafayette Blvd from other business on the August 9, 2021 agenda to a discussion in the supplementary meeting on August 23, 2021. Additionally, Mr. Johnston mentioned that 400 William Street will also be discussed in the supplementary meeting for August.

Ms. Irvin mentioned moving the discussion of the NAPC Webinar to the next meeting when Ms. Weitzman would be present. Ms. Moss stated that she is fine to discuss the Webinar materials on her own and not make an adjustment to that agenda item.

Ms. Irvin motioned to approve the agenda as submitted, Ms. Ross seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS [6:19]

Ms. Moss motioned to approve the July 12, 2021 minutes as submitted, Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS [6:48]

Chairman Gerlach asked if any Board member had engaged in any *ex parte* communication on any item before the Board. No Board member had any *ex parte* communication to report.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST [7:38]

Chairman Gerlach asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest for any item before the Board. No Board member had any conflict to report.

CONSENT AGENDA [\[8:27\]](#)

- i. COA 2021-44 – 503 Sophia Street – Fence Installation
- ii. COA 2021-46 – 303 Fauquier Street – Sign Installation
- iii. COA 2021-47 – 1213 Prince Edward Street – Fence Installation
- iv. COA 2021-48 – 1408 Sophia Street – Fence Alteration – removed from consent agenda due to a public comment. Chairman Gerlach then made the item 9c for the agenda.

Ms. Moss motioned to approve items COA 2021-44, COA 2021-46 and COA 2021-37 on the consent agenda, with removal of COA 2021-48. Ms. Galke seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING [\[12:53\]](#)

New Applications

i: COA 2021-43 – 715 Caroline Street – [\[14:01\]](#) – 715 Caroline Street, LLC requests to replace the existing front entry door with a new full-view, wood door.

No representative from application was present. Chairman Gerlach referenced the Standards for Rehabilitation, #6 specifically, from the Fredericksburg Historic District Guidelines which states: “Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. If replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.”

Ms. Irvin agrees with the conclusion of the staff report, that the door needs to be repaired if possible, but then reiterated the Standards for Rehabilitation, particularly that new materials should match materials being replaced. Ms. Irvin suggested that if replacement is necessary, it would be worthwhile to pry off the paneling from the bottom to reveal the original door to make the best match of what was initially there.

Chairman Gerlach mentioned that they do have the option to continue this item until the next regular meeting in September, to allow the applicant the option to have a conversation with the board.

Ms. Ross stated that she is inclined to go with the staff’s recommendation to deny. Ms. Irvin agreed.

Ms. Ross made a motion to deny the request for exterior alterations at 715 Caroline Street, in particular the replacement of the entry door because it does not meet the standards of City code 72-23.1 D2, specifically standard 6 which states that deterioration architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Adriana Moss seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-2, (Mr. Gerlach and Mr. Whitman voted no)

ii: COA 2021-45 – 1204 Princess Anne Street – [\[21:46\]](#) – Mr. Johnston reviewed the project, stating that Thomas Mitchell requests to make exterior alterations to return this building to use as a single-family residence including removing an existing one-story addition, constructing a two-story addition at the rear, painting the masonry exterior, removing shutters, removing the awning, and installing fencing.

Mr. Johnston read the public comment received from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. into the record. (Attachment 1)

The applicant's representative, Ms. Melissa Colombo, was present for the meeting. Ms. Colombo reiterated that the project's foot print would not be changed, the project would maintain the current footprint of the building. Ms. Colombo addressed the public comment regarding the rear dormers, and stated that "there would be no way to put an addition on this address with a second story and save those rear dormers, unfortunately."

Chairman Gerlach asked about the visibility of the dormers from Princess Anne Street and Ms. Colombo responded that they are minimally visible. Ms. Irvin asked if the dormers were being removed, and Ms. Colombo responded that they are not being removed from the original structure, but that they will be encapsulated in the new addition.

Chairman Gerlach also inquired if the applicant had selected materials for the gutters and downspouts. Ms. Colombo stated that the building currently had aluminum that would be removed, but there were not materials selected for the gutters and downspouts yet. Chairman Gerlach asked the applicant to work with staff to get approval administratively before installation.

Ms. Galke commented that this property is in a high archeological zone, and any ground disturbance would need to be handled with sensitivity. Ms. Colombo asked for clarity on the Archeological Ordinance. Chairman Gerlach responded that it is now a law and asked Ms. Colombo to work with staff to confirm the ordinance.

Ms. Ross asked about the deteriorating roof over the porch: if there would be any materials to be saved. Ms. Colombo stated that any original materials that are able to be repaired/replaced would be used, and any new materials used would be architectural shingles that are more dynamic than the other asphalt shingles currently on the roof. Ms. Ross also expressed a desire for wood shutters to replace the current vinyl shutters, to which Ms. Colombo stated that adding operable wood shutters would significantly change the budget, and the original shutters have been previously disposed of and therefore were not an option to repair. Ms. Ross reiterated HFFI's comment regarding the brick and concrete, that cleaning would go a long way, but she was hesitant to paint the masonry porch floor.

Ms. Irvin motioned to approve the application, with the conditions that the final material specifications will be verified with the Historic Resources Planner prior to building permit approval, and with the recommendation that the fence be painted or stained. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. Ms. Moss clarified that the removal of painting the brick was another condition of the approved application. Chairman Gerlach confirmed with Ms. Irvin and Ms. Ross that they accept that modification to the motion – to include a third condition of denying the withdrawn proposal to paint the brick to the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

iii: COA 2021-48 – 1408 Sophia Street – [49:25] – Mr. Johnston reviewed the project, stating the ARB approved the construction of a new residence on this property. At the time, the applicant planned to repair the existing historic brick wall at the front of the property in kind. Since that time, the applicant has determined that there is not enough brick available on site to repair the damaged section of wall on the north side of the entry. The applicant has additionally been unable to source an appropriate matching historic brick. Instead, the applicant proposes to move several courses of brick from the intact side of the

wall to the damaged side to level the height of the two sections. A new section of wrought iron railing, approximately 18 inches in height would top the brick wall between the existing piers. The proposed alteration serves to preserve the existing historic material, and the simple design of the wrought iron infill is compatible with the character of the site and the district. The proposed alteration should be approved as submitted.

Mr. Johnston then read the public comment from HFFI into the record. (Attachment 1)

Chairman Gerlach stated that the HFFI comment regarding the approval of gas lanterns was inaccurate, and that the gas lanterns were included in the application presented at the October 26, 2020 meeting, and approved by the ARB. Ms. Irvin had a different recollection of the October 2020 meeting, and that the lanterns were not approved. Chairman Gerlach suggested that the application be continued to the supplementary meeting on August 23, 2021 to speak with applicant, and then vote at the September 13, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Irvin motioned to continue COA-2021-48 for modifications to the brick wall to the September 13, 2021 meeting, with a discussion added to the agenda for August 23, 2021. Ms. Moss seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT [\[56:44\]](#)

There were no additional general public comments.

OTHER BUSINESS [\[57:59\]](#)

- i. Pre-Application Discussion: 400-406 Lafayette Blvd. This matter has been moved to the August 23, 2021 - Supplementary Meeting.
- ii. Ms. Moss presented information regarding the NAPC Webinar: Community Outreach Strategies to include materials covered during the webinar, and also ideas to encourage and build public support. After Ms. Moss presented the material from the webinar, the board discussed and then decided to form a committee to develop strategies and new initiatives regarding community outreach. Ms. Moss and Ms. Ross were unanimously selected to become the subcommittee and give an update towards the end of the year.

STAFF UPDATE [\[1:14:35\]](#)

Ms. Kate Schwartz had her baby at the beginning of August. She will be out on leave until November.

Mr. Johnston also mentioned an advisory committee for the ARB as discussed with Chairman Gerlach and Councilman Matt Kelly at the end of July. The committee would meet quarterly to be a sounding board for the ARB, made up of different user groups (such as developers, attorneys, bankers, designers, etc) in the community as the committee members.

Mr. Johnston then discussed the Dowman House Grant that was received from VDHR in the amount of \$35,000 that would allow for an extensive program for an appropriate level of preservation at the Dowman House property, which is also known as historic Idlewild house.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

There were no announcements or reports.

ADJOURNMENT [\[1:21:23\]](#)

Chairman Gerlach adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair



9 August 2021

To: Kate S. Schwartz
ksschwartz@fredericksburgva.gov

The Historic Fredericksburg Foundation has reviewed the upcoming agenda and related COA documents for the August 9, 2021 meeting of the Architectural Review Board and submits the following comments on select projects.

COA 2021-48 - 1408 Sophia Street – *request to remove this project from the Consent Agenda*

HFFI was able to review the proposed project and find that the application and staff recommendations do not provide a history of the walls under discussion. It would be helpful to be able to establish an age and material makeup prior to approval of this project. Further, documentation of the damage to the historic brick wall would also be useful to review. These entrance walls to 1407 Caroline Street were previously considered part of a contributing resource, and the removal of the building at that property does not negate the status of these historic remnants.

HFFI would prefer to see these walls treated as historic remnants with brick repairs, as stipulated in the Historic District Design Guidelines – “Retain any existing historic fences and walls. These should not be removed or replaced with contemporary features.” If such repairs are truly impossible, the Guidelines further stipulate wall materials and design that “relate to those found in the neighborhood.” It would be helpful to see examples of fences in the neighborhood that include these proposed iron pickets. Perhaps wooden pickets painted to match the brick would allow a visual integration of replacement materials in the areas where the brickwork is unable to be repaired/replaced in kind.

Further, the previous application (COA 2020-27) included drawings that did NOT include gas lanterns or removal of existing finials, and we would like to see more information or discussion Minutes that help explain this change of design.

COA 2021-43 - 715 Caroline Street

HFFI was able to review the proposed project and its own archival photographs of the property under consideration. We thank the applicant for providing photographs documenting the damage, and do acknowledge that this door has certainly seen some hard use. However, we support the Historic Resources Planner’s recommendation to deny this request.

COA 2021-45 - 1204 Princess Anne Street

HFFI was able to review the proposed project and its own archival photographs of the property under consideration. While we appreciate the desire to return this structure to its residential function, we have some questions and comments related to the proposed plans. First, in relation to the painting of the brick exterior, we support the Historic Resources Planner's recommendation to deny this request. Second, in relation to the shutters, we would appreciate seeing functional shutters installed on the structure to help support the existing Dutch Colonial Revival character of the building – as seen in early 20th-century images of the building.

In discussion of the repair of the concrete deck and entry stairs, we are in support of the recommendations, although are cautious in supporting the painting of the concrete, as this provides for further maintenance in the future. Similarly, we support the recommendations regarding the proposed roof repair and replacement plan.

The fencing plan, however, provides pause, as the Historic District Design Guidelines stipulate that “fence and wall materials and design should relate to those found in the neighborhood,” a guideline that we do not see supported at the surrounding properties. Additionally, the horizontal design is unusual and does not appear to be “compatible with the historic structure.” If privacy is the issue in play, a traditional picket privacy fence might be the more compatible alternative.

Finally, the addition itself, while largely on the footprint of the existing addition, does not appear to be subordinate to the original structure. The sides that protrude beyond the original structure are visually jarring and we would appreciate seeing a smaller scale addition that would not extend beyond the existing plane of the historic walls. A smaller scale design (in height) might also help retain the rear dormers, which are distinct character-defining features of this unique historic residence.