

GLOUCESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

October 23rd, 2012

Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present: D. Porper, R. Chandler, P. Shea, N. Goodick, S. Goodick, C. Nazarian

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 o'clock PM by Chairman Porper

Single item on the agenda was a petition from Theo MacGregor and Jerrold Oppenheim regarding 57 Middle Street, Units 1,2 & 3, to remove, replace and enlarge rear decks and stairways, and to replace a concrete entry pad with granite.

Chairman Porper opened the meeting, noting that the residence had aluminum clapboard siding that at some future date the commission would hope could be restored to wood.

Chairman Porper then welcomed Andrew Stevens (general contractor) representing the petitioners to make a presentation describing the proposed work with illustrative photographs.

Mr. Stevens explained that the existing 3-level deck, made of pressure-treated lumber, was deteriorated. He presented a scale drawing showing the proposed new structure slightly wider and deeper than the existing from 8' x 22' to 10' x 25' with the purpose of adding needed space for the stairs and to make the structure symmetrical to the building on both sides.

He proposed a pressure-treated structure to be fully trimmed in white Azek with black aluminum railings having vertical balusters and an occasional decorative scroll panel. He also described the replacement of rotted trim around the front door and the addition of a Swenson granite slab in place of the concrete.

Chairman Porper asked each member for an opinion and all agreed the proposals were an improvement over the existing. There was a discussion about the dimensions and symmetrical layout with general approval. There was also a discussion about the type of granite, whether native to Cape Ann or elsewhere.

S. Goodick gave a good description of delay in another project attempting to use Cape Ann Granite and the somewhat lighter, smooth character of the Swenson stone. There was general approval for the granite in place of the existing concrete.

Chairman Porper expressed approval of the committee for the overall proposal and asked for further comments before voting.

C. Nazarian suggested that the petitioners consider a white finish on the aluminum railing system to better blend the Azek trim, house and railing materials. He also noted that a house of this period would typically have had white-painted wood railings, although he was not proposing a material than the aluminum in this case. There was some discussion on this proposal with the committee generally preferring the white finish and the petitioners indicating that they would be amenable to the change.

Chairman Porper acknowledged the attendance of one abutter, Marshal Parker from 96 Main Street. His comments returned to the color of the railing system, saying that he might prefer the black. He asked about the wider decks and stair layouts but did not object. He also had some questions about the type of stone but agreed that the Swenson type was fine.

P. Shea made a motion to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed modifications to the #57 Middle Street according to the application with new decks and stairs in the new dimensions having Azek trim and aluminum railings, and to the Easterly door trim repair, replacing the concrete slab with Swenson Granite. R. Chandler seconded the motion.

Chairman Porper asked if there was any other comment. C. Nazarian responded questioning why the railing color was not mentioned in the motion.

P. Shea stated that in his opinion the commission does not have jurisdiction about color. Chairman Porper disagreed but stated it was conditioned on certain parameters that could be discussed another time.

C. Nazarian suggested that the white color for the aluminum railings be a recommendation of the commission, not a requirement. In response, the petitioners raised the question of whether square or tubular balusters would be better. There was a short discussion and square balusters were generally preferred by the committee as closer to what would have been executed in wood.

C. Nazarian further suggested that if the railings were white that the decorative scroll panels should be omitted. There was a brief discussion and general agreement.

Chairman Porper proposed an amendment to the motion recommending the white finish for the aluminum railing system with no “curly-cues” and requested a vote. The motion was passed unanimously.

S. Goodick asked questions regarding whether ongoing projects on Middle Street he had observed were previously approved by the HDC. A short discussion followed with no problems noted.

S. Goodick made a motion to close the meeting. R. Chandler seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 o'clock PM by Chairman Porper.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles L. Nazarian
Secretary