

STAFFORD COUNTY ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

June 6, 2016

The meeting of the Stafford County Architectural Review Board of Monday, June 6, 2016, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Jeromy Range, in the ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Range, Dodgen, Bailey, Gossett (6:05), McAdams, and Osborn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eakin

STAFF PRESENT: Baker and Knighting

GUESTS PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Range called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Dodgen if he would call the roll.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Mr. Dodgen called the roll and stated there was a quorum with five of the seven members present.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Certificate of Appropriateness Application COA16151317, 107 Washington Street

Mr. Range asked the applicant, Michelle Flynn, for 107 Washington Street, Wine and Design, to tell the ARB what her plans were.

Ms. Flynn introduced herself as the owner of Wine and Design in Fredericksburg, and she has leased 107 Washington Street from John Simpson. She stated in trying to apply for an occupancy permit, she is required to widen the front door to 36 inches to be ADA compliant. She stated she would also like to add a sign on the front of the building, on an existing arm. She stated all of the windows have been replaced with vinyl windows except one and she would like to replace that last window. She explained there were pictures of the existing doors and the door she is proposing to install. She stated Wine and Design is a franchise and she is trying to add some of the corporate items to the building by painting the new front door the magenta color shown on the last sheet. She stated she had a paint sample with her if the members would like to see it.

Mr. Osborn asked how many windows were in the building and if they were replaced by Billy Howell.

Ms. Flynn stated there were 10 windows and they had been replaced by Mr. Howell, but she had no idea when they were replaced.

Ms. Baker stated Mr. Howell came in with 3 requests in 2014, for hardiplank siding, new windows, and the deck on the back. Mr. Dodgen inquired if Ms. Baker recalled why the one window was not replaced, but she did not.

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Mr. Dodgen asked if the application had been approved. Ms. Baker affirmed.

After going over the floor plan, Ms. Flynn corrected her statement and explained that there were 13 windows.

Mr. Range asked that the record reflect that Ms. Gossett had arrived at 6:05. He further stated he did not remember the vinyl windows being part of the 2014 COA.

Mrs. Bailey stated if she remembered correctly the windows had already been replaced. She stated she thought Mr. Howell had done some work prior to getting a COA. Mr. Range agreed.

Ms. Baker read from the previous application “each window of the structure has new beige metal flashing installed over the existing wood trim to provide a wood like appearance”. She stated the application at that time was just for flashing. The windows had previously been installed.

A brief discussion ensued concerning the replacement windows and the ARB members agreed that the window replacement never came before this Board.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the window that Ms. Flynn wanted to replace was operable.

Ms. Flynn stated no, it was painted shut.

Mr. Dodgen asked about the door swing. Ms. Flynn explained that the County required that an emergency push bar be installed on the door and the door would open out for fire safety. She stated it would look more like the door 1A on the reference photo. Mr. Dodgen further asked if the door to be replaced was the main entrance. Ms. Flynn stated that it was not and that most people would park behind the building and come up the stairs into the building, but for handicap accessibility she was asked to have the front door handicap accessible. She stated the back stairs were too steep.

Mr. Dodgen asked if a ramp was required. Ms. Flynn stated it would be a temporary metal ramp that could be put in place as needed. Ms. McAdams pointed out that in case of emergency, the ramp may not be in place. Ms. Flynn explained that if someone was in the building that used the ramp to come in, they would leave the ramp there until they left. She stated the ramp would not impede the door opening.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the ARB had a copy of all of the requirements for ADA egress as he had not seen a removable ramp for ADA access. Ms. Baker stated Ferry Farm’s new structure would have one. Ms. Flynn added that La Petite was using one as well.

Ms. Gossett asked about the back elevation of the building concerning the steep stairway from the parking lot. She asked Ms. Flynn if she knew the distance from ground level to the first floor. Ms. Flynn stated she did not know.

Ms. Gossett asked if the rear ramp had been discussed with County staff. Ms. Flynn stated that because it was so steep, the building department felt as though ground level access would be better.

Mr. Dodgen stated if it was a 4-foot elevation change, the ramp would be 48 feet.

Ms. Flynn stated the parking lot next to the property was the same grade as the front.

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Ms. Gossett stated historically the door has always been recessed and she was concerned about changing that. She asked since the structure was in a historic district, if building permits could grant some type of waiver.

Ms. Baker stated she would have to check.

A brief discussion ensued concerning the replacement door being recessed and opening out.

Mr. Dodgen stated it could be done. He stated the door frame could be set with the stop on the inside and the hinge on the outside. He stated the door opening would have to be reframed anyway to allow the 36 inch door.

Ms. Gossett stated that would retain the character.

Mr. Range stated the ARB had discussed the door, and briefly discussed the window. He asked if anyone had any questions or comments on the signage.

Ms. Flynn stated the sign could be whatever product the ARB wanted. She stated she only needed the logo, but it could be any type of sign.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the bracket was existing and if the sign would be installed on the existing bracket.

Ms. Flynn stated yes.

Mr. Range asked if any members would like to propose a type of material for the sign.

Mr. Dodgen stated he saw four items - replacing the door that swings out, replacing the window, the color of the door and the sign.

Mr. Range stated they were not asking permission for the door color, she just presented it for discussion and get the ARB's opinion if the Benjamin Moore magenta would be historically appropriate.

Mr. Dodgen asked if it could be broken into those parts and vote separately.

Mr. Range agreed and stated they would start with the replacement of the existing front door.

Mr. Dodgen stated he felt that the door needs to be inset like the current door.

Mr. Range stated Ms. Baker would capture that as a condition that the door would have to be inset at least as much as the current door is inset. He asked if there were any other conditions.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the ARB was okay with the divided lite door proposed.

Mr. Range stated it looks very much like the door that was removed and blocked. He stated the door that is currently in place is not an original door, it was made on site to fit the unusual opening.

Mrs. Bailey asked if the new door would be wood.

Ms. Flynn stated yes.

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Mr. Range stated condition 2 would be a wooden door. With no other conditions he asked for a motion.

Mr. Dodgen made a motion to approve the door with two conditions.

Mr. Range repeated the motion and stated the two conditions were 1) the door was inset at least as much as the current door and 2) the door would be wood.

Mr. Osborn seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mr. Eakin was absent).

Mr. Range moved on to the signage with a clarification that it would hang on the existing sign arm.

Ms. Gossett asked that the sign be wood.

Ms. Flynn agreed.

Mr. Range suggested the condition for the sign would be composed of wood. He asked if anyone wanted to make a motion with the condition of the sign being wood.

Mr. Dodgen stated he would make a motion.

Ms. McAdams seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mr. Eakin was absent).

Mr. Range stated number 3 was removing the possibly historic window and replacing it with a new vinyl window similar to the vinyl windows in place.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the window was located in a room with a laundry sink. Ms. Flynn explained that the plan he was looking at was subject to change. She asked the Board to refer to exhibit A-1-1 which showed the existing floorplan. She explained that the floorplan showed a landing at the bottom of the stairs that led into the half bath and into another bathroom with a shower. She further stated that A-1-0 showed that the half bath would be removed and the full bath would be converted to an ADA compliant bathroom. Ms. Flynn stated that her original idea was to change the room with the window into a storage room. She added that it was decided it would remain as a second, non-ADA compliant bathroom.

Mr. Dodgen stated that the window in question was located in an area that did not require for it to be operable. Ms. Flynn responded that changing the window was simply for visual reasons. Mr. Dodgen asked if the work she was planning to do was part of her lease. Ms. Flynn explained the planned work was part of her lease and that the landlord was actually paying for the work to be done.

Ms. Gossett felt that the existing window could be operable, it just needed to be cleaned up, which was her preference. Mr. Range inquired whether Ms. Flynn noticed any draft coming through the window during the cold season. Ms. Flynn stated she did not notice as the whole place wasn't exactly warm. Ms. Gossett stated that a storm window would generally minimize any type of draft. She added that that was generally the ARB's recommendation.

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Mr. Dodgen made a motion to vote on the replacement of the existing window with a vinyl window. Mr. Osborn seconded the motion. The motion for replacement was denied 6-0.

Mr. Range summarized the motions for the record. He stated that item number 1, to replace the front door with an inset equal to the current door and made of wood was approved, as well as item number 2, which approved the wooden signage. He further stated that item number 3, replacement of the window, was disapproved.

Ms. Flynn stated she would like to get the Board's opinion on the magenta color according to the franchise. The ARB did like the color.

Ms. Flynn further inquired about the possibility of having additional, freestanding, wooden signage on posts in the flower bed. Mr. Range stated that if the sign was higher than one foot, it would have to come before the ARB.

Mr. Osborn stated that Mr. Degan bought a building from him including some doors similar to what she was looking for. Mr. Osborn recommended she see Mr. Degan about the doors.

2. Aquia Church Lighting

Mr. Osborn reiterated that he was going to have Wack's engineer come to the meeting to explain the lighting on the building. He explained that the plans had been approved by the transportation department. He suggested asking transportation to join a meeting so the ARB could get an idea of what was required, particularly in light of a historic structure. Mr. Osborn further stated that he did visit the site and that the lights were very bright. He felt that the church would not object to changing the lights, but would likely not be willing to pay for it, since the lighting had been approved.

Ms. Gossett stated that the brightness was not her main issue, but the posts and their positioning which were in no way historically compatible. Ms. Baker added that the light post, as she recalled, were not part of the original application. She added that the lighting was approved as part of the site plan process. Mr. Range felt that the lighting issue slipped through the cracks and suggested having discussions with the approving authority to prevent these types of things from happening.

Ms. Gossett was uncertain where the ARB fell in the County's process of approving a site plan. Ms. Baker explained that a package was submitted to the ARB at the beginning, but the package did not include the lighting. She explained that when the site plan was submitted it had lighting on it. Ms. Baker further explained that the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) showed the conditions of the ARB, and the lights were not part of that.

According to Ms. Baker there was a process in place as part of the permitting process to catch these types of things, which in this case obviously did not work. Ms. Baker stated she would speak with the Zoning Department to figure out a way to prevent these types of issues. Mr. Range asked for this to be added to next month's agenda.

Ms. Gossett felt that part of the ARB's role was to educate their colleagues which would be best accomplished if they came to the meeting to talk through the issues. Mr. Range asked Ms. Baker to invite the respective staff to the next meeting. Ms. Baker stated she would try and added that there is no longer a designated preservation planner and that it now went through the environmental planners. She explained that they simply went by the conditions on the COA and were not as knowledgeable on these types of things.

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Mr. Dodgen asked what the objection was with this project. Ms. Gossett stated that apart from the lack of review by the ARB, it was also the placement of the posts.

Ms. Gossett stated that Aquia Church was one of three national historic landmarks in Stafford County and therefore the ARB has to hold themselves, as well as everybody else, to a much higher standard than a regular historic building.

Ms. Gossett further stated that the landscaping around the church would also have to be taken into account. She reiterated that the ARB worked really hard with the church to minimize the landscape impacts. Ms. Gossett felt that there was a blatant disregard for the character of the 18th century landscape.

Mr. Range asked if there was anything that could be done to mitigate. Ms. Gossett suggested talking to the county staff that approved the lighting to see if the two post immediately closest to the church could be taken down. Mr. Range asked Ms. Baker who the responsible staff was. Ms. Baker explained that the Sheriff's Department reviewed for safety, and transportation, Amy Taylor, reviewed the lighting to ensure the code requirements are met. Ms. Baker added that the Board of Supervisors was getting ready to review new lighting requirements.

Mr. Range agreed to have a meeting with all mentioned parties but was wondering who would have to pay for the removal of the lights. Ms. Baker stated that it would be up to the church, unless the Board of Supervisors took action to appropriate money, which she felt was unlikely.

Mr. Dodgen asked about the likelihood of the two lights in question being turned off to see if there would be sufficient lighting without the two posts closest to the church.

Ms. Baker stated that the engineer would have to redraw the plans.

Mr. Dodgen felt that it would come down to a collaboration between the County and the church to achieve the goal which was the historic significance.

Mr. Range felt that there was not much the ARB could do at this point other than asking the church to remove the lighting. He did however recommend having Ms. Baker invite the appropriate people to prevent similar issues from happening again in the future.

Ms. Baker stated she would ask the Sheriff's Department to visit the site to make a determination. Mr. Osborn added that she should also talk to VDOT since the road leading up to the church was a state road.

Ms. Bailey asked if it was possible to change the wattage of the light bulbs. Ms. Gossett agreed that there was a way to soften the lighting.

Mr. Osborn pointed out that one of the trees was also missing, but he believed that the tree naturally died and had to be removed.

3. Wayfinding Signs in Falmouth

Ms. Baker reiterated that the issue was the visually unappealing metal back of the signage and stated that she had spoken with the Public Works Department regarding the signs. According to Public Works staff they did not have double sided signs but they suggested painting the back. Ms. Baker asked the Board if they were okay with the back of the signs being painted. Mr. Range felt that at the least they should be painted.

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He stated that he would, nevertheless, like to express his disappointment that the ARB was not included in the choosing of the historic signs, although he did understand the signs were inside a VDOT right-of-way.

Ms. Baker stated that it did come before the ARB, however not for approval but to show the ARB what was being done. Mr. Range remembered and retracted his previous statement.

Mr. Range stepped down as Chairman and turned it over to Mr. Dodgen in order to continue and completion of the discussion of 303 King Street.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. Certificate of Appropriateness Application COA1615123, 303 King Street

Mr. Dodgen asked if there were any drawings or descriptions of the fence. Mr. Range stated he had emailed them to the members. Ms. Baker stated she would print them out.

The Board took a recess at 7:07 and reconvened at 7:12.

Mr. Range explained the different views shown on the drawings. He reiterated that Ms. Gossett had been concerned with not being able to see the neighboring historical building and presented the changes made to the fence showing that it would not affect the view. Mr. Dodgen pointed out that the drawings showed a solid wood fence as opposed to the alternating batten fence that was there previously. Mr. Range stated that the alternating batten fence was too expensive which is why he chose the solid version.

Mr. Dodgen inquired whether a permit was required for the fence. Ms. Baker did not believe so.

Ms. Gossett asked how many post holes the fence would require. Mr. Range explained that he would re-use the existing holes.

Mr. Dodgen inquired if Mr. Range was still planning on putting in a gate and how big it would be. Mr. Range affirmed, but explained that it would be an invisible gate that would not be noticeable and that he would probably take one of the panels and cut it in half.

Ms. Gossett stated that she liked the way the lattice looked. Mr. Range added that he would try to do his best to recreate the proposed look, but hadn't been able to find the right pieces.

Ms. Gossett asked if Mr. Range would consider painting the fence. Mr. Range affirmed, but stated that he would not paint it white as that would require too much maintenance and he was trying to leave it more natural looking.

Ms. McAdams made a motion to approve the fence as presented. Ms. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 (Mr. Eakin was absent, Mr. Range abstained).

REPORTS BY ARB MEMBERS

Ms. Gossett asked about the Counting House items on the Board of Supervisors agenda for June 7th.

Ms. Baker stated that the Board held a public hearing for the rezoning of the property in March which was deferred to the June 7, 2016 meeting to allow time to exclude additional uses that would be allowed on the property. She added that there would also be future deed restrictions that would go with the property, but

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they were waiting on that paperwork to catch up. She explained that the deed conveyance was also going on the June 7th agenda.

Ms. Gossett asked if the deed restrictions would limit the by-right use. Ms. Baker confirmed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 2, 2016

Mrs. Bailey stated she would abstain from voting on the minutes since she was absent.

Ms. McAdams stated other than some typos she felt the minutes were accurate.

After a brief discussion it was decided to table the minutes to the next meeting in order to correct the typos.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Osborn made a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Bailey seconded.

The motion passed 6 – 0 (Mr. Eakin was absent).

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.