

Asheville-Buncombe Historic Resources Commission Meeting
Minutes of July 13, 2016
1st Floor North Conference Room - City Hall
4:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Brendan Ross; David Carpenter (arrived at 4:08 p.m.), Craig Cline, William Eakins, Woodard Farmer, Richard Fast, Elias George Mathes and Bryan Moffitt

Absent: Julie Hansbury, Leslie Klingner and Amanda Warren

Administrative

- Mr. Eakins moved to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2016, meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Moffitt and carried unanimously.
- After Chair Ross explained the public hearing rules, all those present in the audience and staff who anticipated speaking were sworn in.

Consent Agenda

1. Certificate of Appropriateness - 94 Pearson Drive - Enclosure of rear deck with new roof and screening

Owner/Applicant:	N. Rachel Stein
Subject Property:	94 Pearson Drive
Hearing Date:	July 13, 2016
Historic District:	Montford
PIN:	9649.03-2140
Zoning District:	RS-8

Property Description: Early 20th century plain 2-story vernacular shingle style dwelling. Shingles over German siding.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Add roof over rear deck to create screened porch. New roof material will match existing on house. Door will have wood frame. Porch posts will be 4" x 4" consistent with existing posts on deck, per attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Guidelines & Submittal Requirements: Staff has no concerns.

The guidelines for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73 in the Design Review Guidelines for the Montford Historic District adopted on April 14, 2010, and amended August 14, 2015, were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the request for the following reasons:

1. New porch will be located on the rear and will be consistent with the structure in roof form, scale and materials.
2. New porch will not obscure character defining features.

ADOPTION OF FINDINGS OF FACT

Based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - project description; Exhibit B – photographs of subject property (8 pages); Exhibit C – Sanborn Fire Insurance map; Exhibit D – door specification; Exhibit E – roof plan; Exhibit F – porch rendering; Exhibit G – engineering report; Exhibit H – site plan; and the Commission’s actual inspection and review of subject property by all members, Mr. Moffitt moved that this Commission adopt the following FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. That notice of public hearing on this application was published in the Asheville Citizen-Times on the 13th day of July, 2016, and that each owner of real property situated within two hundred feet of the subject property was notified of this hearing in the mail on the 29th day of June, 2016, as indicated by Exhibits (I) and (J).
2. That at this hearing the applicant and affected property owners were all given the opportunity to offer oral and documentary evidence as well as submit questions to each other, the Historic Resources Commission staff and Commission members.
3. That the application is to add a roof over rear deck to create screened porch. New roof material will match existing on house. Door will have wood frame. Porch posts will be 4” x 4” consistent with existing posts on deck, per attached drawings and plans. **All necessary permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**
4. That the guidelines for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73 in the Design Review Guidelines adopted on April 14, 2010, and amended August 14, 2015, were used to evaluate this request.
5. This application does meet the design guidelines for the following reasons:
 - a. New porch will be located on the rear and will be consistent with the structure scale and materials.
 - b. New porch will not obscure character defining features.
6. That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness are congruous with the special historic character of the Montford Historic District.

This motion was seconded by Mr. Eakins and carried unanimously.

As there was no objection to 94 Pearson Drive Certificate of Appropriateness being placed on the Consent Agenda, the FINDINGS OF FACT were adopted and the Certificate of Appropriateness was issued.

Public Hearings

1. **Certificate of Appropriateness - 170 West Chestnut Street - Replacement of 5 windows on rear and side elevation; replacement of front porch stair and railing; repair of brick walkway and installation of stone steps in front yard**

Historic Preservation Specialist Alex Cole used site plans while she reviewed the following staff report:

Owner/Applicant:	Deanna Border
Subject Property:	170 W. Chestnut Street
Hearing Date:	July 13, 2016
Historic District:	Montford
PIN:	9649.02-8402
Zoning District:	RM-8

Property Description: Early 20th century 2-story dwelling. Shingles over weatherboards. Montford brackets, overhanging eaves. Exposed brackets, stone foundation. (R. S. Smith architect) Constructed before 1917.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Replacement of wood front porch stair and wood handrails with new wood stair and wood handrails; replacement of 4 non-original windows on rear elevation and 1 non-original window on east elevation with new wood 2/1, double-hung wood windows matching those already existing on the house; repair of existing brick walkway in front yard and installation of two stone stairs at end of brick walkway; repair/repointing of chimney, per attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Guidelines & Submittal Requirements:

1. Staff has concerns regarding replacement of a non-original handrail with new wood handrail.

The guidelines for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73, Windows and Doors found on 84-85, and Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking found in the Design Review Guidelines for the Montford Historic District adopted on April 14, 2010, and amended August 14, 2015 were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the request for the following reasons, provided concerns are addressed:

1. Replacement of porch elements will match original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
2. New windows will be wood.
3. Location, configuration, and materials of walkway is being preserved.
4. New walkway material is compatible in terms of dimension, configuration, materials, color and texture.

Ms. Cole said that it appears that the handrails are not original to the house and the guidelines indicate that architectural features, such as handrails, should not be added where they did not exist historically. Typically when reviewing handrails necessary for safety reasons, metal pipe railing is recommended since it does not create a false historic appearance and is less visible.

Ms. Deanna Border, applicant, explained that they have lived in their home for 14 years and would like to renovate it by replacing the five non-original windows on the rear and side elevation. They are also requesting to replace the front porch stair and railing, and to repair the brick walkway in front yard. She provided the Commission with several pictures showing examples of other Richard Sharp Smith houses in the district with wooden handrails. She explained that they had not been able to determine if a handrail existed on their house prior to the existing one.

Chair Ross opened the public hearing at 4:13 p.m., and when no one spoke, she closed the public hearing at 4:13 p.m.

Mr. Farmer stated that, in his opinion, the proposed railing is consistent with other houses as demonstrated. However, he did question whether it was appropriate to install a new railing without knowing if one previously existed.

Mr. Moffitt noted that most of the houses in Montford didn't have handrails historically. He also noted that the stairs did not appear to be original, and pointed out that the top riser is not flush with the porch floor and thus creates a trip hazard. He stated that in his opinion the applicant had presented adequate examples of wooden handrails on other Richard Sharp Smith houses in the district.

There was some discussion, initiated by Chair Ross, of when handrails are permitted according to the guidelines and when they are not. Mr. Carpenter said that in some instances historic handrails have been replaced due to deterioration from exposure to the elements. There was discussion about whether a stair railing had been present on the house historically, and it was the consensus that there likely had been based on the evidence presented by the applicant. The Commission agreed it was appropriate to replace the existing railing in this circumstance.

ADOPTION OF FINDINGS OF FACT

Based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - photographs of subject property (17 images); Exhibit B – window specifications; Exhibit C – drawings of proposed stair; Exhibit D – walkway materials; Exhibit E – site plan (received July 6, 2016); Exhibit F – photographs illustrating windows to be replaced (2 pages – received July 6, 2016); Exhibit G – photographs of subject property taken by staff (5 pages – received July 6, 2016); and Exhibit H - photographs of handrail examples from Richard Sharp Smith houses within the Montford District (4 pages – received July 13, 2016), and the Commission’s actual inspection and review of subject property by all members, Mr. Moffitt moved that this Commission adopt the following FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. That notice of public hearing on this application was published in the Asheville Citizen-Times on the 29th day of June, 2016, and that each owner of real property situated within two hundred feet of the subject property was notified of this hearing in the mail on the 29th day of June, 2016, as indicated by Exhibits (I) and (J).
2. That at this hearing the applicant and affected property owners were all given the opportunity to offer oral and documentary evidence as well as submit questions to each other, the Historic Resources Commission staff and Commission members.
3. That the application is to replace wood front porch stair and wood handrails with new wood stair and wood handrails; replacement of 4 non-original windows on rear elevation and 1 non-original window on east elevation with new wood 2/1, double-hung wood windows matching those already existing on the house; repair of existing brick walkway in front yard and installation of two stone stairs at end of brick walkway; repair/repainting of chimney, per attached drawings and plans. **All necessary permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**
4. That the guidelines for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73, Windows and Doors found on pages 84-85, and Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking found on pages 50-51 in the Design Review Guidelines for the Montford Historic District, adopted April 14, 2010, and amended August 14, 2015, were used to evaluate this request.
5. This application does meet the design guidelines for the following reasons:
 - a. Replacement of porch elements will match original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
 - b. Replacement of porch railing is in keeping with guideline 5 for Porches, Entrances and Balconies.
 - c. New windows will be wood.
 - d. Location, configuration, and materials of walkway are being preserved.
 - e. New walkway material is compatible in terms of dimension, configuration, materials and texture.
 - f. While it is not appropriate to add elements that create a false historical appearance, evidence was presented to the Commission there may have existed an historic handrail previously and the proposed handrail is congruous with the guidelines.
 - g. Windows to be replaced are non-original and window openings will not be changed.
 - h. Character defining chimney is being repaired rather than removed.

6. That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness are congruous with the special historic character of the Montford Historic District.

This motion was seconded by Mr. Eakins and carried unanimously.

Based upon the foregoing FINDINGS OF FACT and for the reasons set forth therein, Mr. Moffitt moved that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued. This motion was seconded by Mr. Eakins and carried unanimously.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness - Local Landmark - Reynolds Summer House - Rehabilitation of existing structure, including construction of stone posts at front porch and modification of existing iron railing

Historic Preservation Specialist Alex Cole used site plans while she reviewed the following staff report:

Owner/Applicant: Charles Rapp & Joseph McClean Gregory/Natalia Okelberry
Subject Property: 31 Ellington Drive/Reynolds Summer House
Hearing Date: July 13, 2016
Historic District: Local Landmark
PIN: 9730.99-4374

Property Description: Designed by Douglas Ellington, the Reynolds Summer House is a one-story, stone and timber frame, vernacular dwelling with a semi-polygonal plan, gable roof, and wide front porch. The house was constructed for Senator Robert Rice Reynolds in 1946, and was originally sited on 250 acres. The site now consists of 3.89 acres and is surrounded by the recent development encompassing the majority of what is now known as Reynolds Mountain.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Modification of existing front porch posts and railings, including reconstruction of stone posts and knee walls around existing metal posts per the architect's original drawings. Existing metal railings will be shortened and reinstalled between stone posts/walls. Repair of stone masonry porch flooring using existing materials, per attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Guidelines & Submittal Requirements:

1. Staff has concerns regarding modification of existing front porch railings and posts based on adopted ordinance and Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff has asked the applicant to provide additional information that supports the request to modify those elements specifically put forth in the ordinance.
2. Clarification that existing stone will be reused for porch flooring repair and that new mortar will match existing.

The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation were used to evaluate this request, with specific reference to Building Exterior – Entrances and Porches, and Masonry:

- **Building Exterior – Entrances and Porches**

***Identify, retain, and preserve**

-Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances – and their

functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

-Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing entrances and porches which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished; stripping entrances and porches of historic material such as wood, iron, cast iron, terra cotta, tile and brick.

***Repair**

-Recommended: Repairing entrances and porches by reinforcing the historic materials; repair will also generally include limited in-kind replacement with compatible substitute material of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of repeated features where there are surviving prototypes such as balustrades and columns.

-Not Recommended: Replacing an entire entrance porch when the repair of materials and limited replacement of parts are appropriate; using a substitute material for the replacement parts that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the entrance or porch.

- **Masonry**

***Repair**

-Recommended: Repairing masonry walls and other masonry features by repointing the mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration such as deteriorating mortar and/or cracks in mortar joints; removing deteriorated mortar by carefully hand-raking the joints to avoid damaging the masonry; duplicating old mortar in strength, composition, color and texture; duplicating old mortar joints in width and in joint profile; repairing masonry features by patching, piecing-in or consolidating the masonry using recognized preservation methods – repair may also include the limited replacement in kind of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of masonry features when there are surviving prototypes.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends in favor of the proposed modifications provided the applicant can provide evidence to support modification of those significant features listed in the landmark ordinance and the Commission makes findings to approve the project.

Ms. Cole explained that the existing front porch is different than the original design shown on drawings by architect Douglas Ellington. The landmark designation report does include a description of the existing front porch posts and railings as being metal salvaged by Senator Reynolds (who commissioned the house), noting they are also called out in the ordinance as being a significant feature of the house. The applicant is proposing to construct the stone posts and knee walls as indicated on the original drawings. They would then shorten the existing metal railing and reinstall with the stone walls. Staff had concerns regarding modification of significant features called out in the ordinance, but noted that they had communicated with the applicant about presenting evidence as to why making the proposed changes would be appropriate.

In response to Mr. Moffitt's question to staff about the Commission's ability to modify a significant feature in a landmark ordinance, City Attorney Jannice Ashley explained that while the designating ordinance indicates why an historic building or site is especially significant, the Commission still can issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify any feature if it finds a compelling reason to do so.

Mr. Eakins read a portion of the landmark ordinance where these specific significant features were described ... "cast iron porch railing and posts..."

Mr. Carpenter noted that a defining characteristic of Mr. Ellington's buildings is that he recycled elements from many different construction projects.

Ms. Natalia Okelberry, project manager, showed a picture of what the front porch currently looks like. She noted that the posts and railings are not actually composed of cast iron, but some other metal, and thus is a discrepancy in the ordinance. She stated that regardless of what direction is taken, there needs to be some modification of what is there now due to the state of deterioration of the porch presently. She explained that Senator Reynolds likely did not oversee the final stages of construction of the house due to family deaths. She said that the section of railing had been installed on the front of the house to keep his mother-in-law safe, who was residing in the home at that time. In her opinion, the railing was never meant to be permanent. She explained that they have uncovered other issues, including the roof being constructed differently than the original plans, since submitting this application, and will have to submit another application to address those issues.

Mr. Joseph McClean Gregory, property owner and grandson of Senator Reynolds, provided background information on the construction of the house. He stated that his grandfather lost interest in the house due to family issues occurring at the time, and the house was thus not built to the construction drawings. He asked the Commission to allow them to complete the original design, and stated that it would honor the site and house to do so. He stated that at some point they might decide to donate the home to the City.

Chair Ross opened the public hearing at 5:13 p.m. and when no one spoke, she closed the public hearing at 5:13 p.m.

There was considerable discussion regarding the modifications requested. Some Commission members expressed reasons in support, with others expressing concerns regarding the proposed changes. Reasons for support centered on the unusualness of the metal porch posts as supports and the applicant's testimony that they were not intended to be permanent. The Commission also discussed concern that there is not enough evidence to support modification of these features since they are called out in the ordinance as being significant, with some Commissioner's noting that they are part of the evolution of the building even though they were not part of the original design. In summary, (1) because the Commission needed more information about the project and thought a site visit by all Commission members would be beneficial; and (2) because the applicant will need to revised the proposal to include modifications to the roofline, Ms. Okelberry asked for a continuance.

Mr. Moffitt moved to continue this matter until the August 10, 2016, meeting. This motion as seconded by Mr. Farmer and carried unanimously.

Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten said that staff will work to arrange a time for the site visit, possibly August 3 at 2:00 p.m. An e-mail will be sent out to the Commission to verify this date and time.

Other Business

Discussion of Guidelines for Fences in Front Yards and Level of Review

At the suggestion of Mr. Farmer and staff, it was the consensus of the Commission that an amendment should be made to the guidelines to make all proposed fences in front yards major work applications, which will be reviewed by the Commission and not by staff (as is the present situation).

Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten asked that the Commission think about any possible changes to the guidelines regarding fences in front yards. If changes are recommended, staff will meet with the neighborhood to gain public input on any changes to the guidelines.

Downtown Design Guidelines Joint Task Force with HRC Update

Mr. Farmer, along with Mr. Moffitt, updated the Commission on the first joint HRC/Downtown Commission Downtown Design Guidelines Task Force, noting that they are studying any potential for more stringent design review mechanisms for downtown development than what currently exists. They reviewed two ways (1) neighborhood conservation overlay district; and (2) local historic district designation. The next step will be to focus on ways to strengthen and define the Design Review Guidelines. Staff has been requested to evaluate all options and bring forward the pros and cons of each option.

Buncombe County Funding Update

Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten said that Buncombe County has allocated \$4,500 this fiscal year for the Asheville-Buncombe Historic Resources Commission, with no dedicated funding.

At the suggestion of Chair Ross, Mr. Fast said that he would be happy to check on seeing if the County would be willing to appoint a liaison to this Commission.

Comments from Commissioners, Public and Staff

Chair Ross said that Councilwoman Julie Mayfield (liaison to the Historic Resources Commission) encouraged the Commission to adopt a resolution encouraging the City to prioritize restoration of the Thomas Wolfe Cabin. Unfortunately when Councilwoman Mayfield asked for the funding as part of the proposed bond package, she did not received enough support. After discussing this with Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten, it was their recommendation that this item be discussed at their annual retreat. Mr. Farmer then moved that the Historic Resources Commission encourage the City Council to prioritize the full restoration of the Thomas Wolfe Cabin. This motion was seconded by Mr. Eakins and carried unanimously.

Upon inquiry of Mr. Carpenter of the status of the community garden space, Mr. Fast said that an agreement has been given to a few members of the Montford Neighborhood Association and they are now waiting on their response on the design.

Adjournment

At 5:59 p.m., Mr. Moffitt moved to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Eakins and carried unanimously.