

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, April 25, 2011 - 5:30 P.M. - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Members Present: Theresa Hamacher, *Chair*; Art Bardige, *Vice Chair*; Robert Crocker, Catherine Henn, Maryann Thompson, *Members*; Heli Meltsner, Mark Golberg, Constantin von Wentzel, *Alternates*

Members Absent: none

Staff: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: Carol Anastasi, 70 Mt. Vernon St; Hugh Phillips, architect

With a quorum present, Chair Theresa Hamacher called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. She made introductions and reviewed the hearing procedures.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-382: 70 Mt. Vernon St., by Carol Anastasi.

Reconstruct the porch facing Mt. Vernon Street with wood, fiberglass, and polyurethane components, maintaining existing porch roof, deck framing, and brick piers.

Sarah Burks explained that the application was subject to binding review of the Commission because it consisted of alterations to a porch including replacement of porch components with alternate materials and different design and dimensions. [Mr. Golberg arrived].

Carol Anastasi, the owner, introduced her architect friend Hugh Phillips, who had advised on the project. Ms. Anastasi said she wanted to keep everything looking the same way, within her limited budget. She said the railings would be similar to what was there, but would carry straight across rather than curving down at the ends. She noted that the porch had been entirely rebuilt in 1992. It was slowly rotting away. She said she did not want to use much wood when rebuilding it this time, because of the maintenance requirements.

Catherine Henn asked if the alternate materials would be painted and if they would look like wood. Would the railings be higher than existing?

Ms. Anastasi replied that the materials would be painted. She said she was not sure about the railing height requirements. The existing railings were 30 inches high.

Constantin von Wentzel said that if materials were replaced in kind (wood with wood) that it was considered a repair and the railing height did not have to change to meet code. He noted that he had built a new porch at his house and used a simple wood bar at the code height above the traditional-height railing in order to meet the code requirement.

Maryann Thompson said the porch's condition did not appear to be bad.

Ms. Burks attested to the areas of rot, especially at the top rail.

Mr. von Wentzel suggested that the applicant consider using a cast of the existing balusters in urethane if a matching design could not be found as a stock item.

Mr. Bardige asked why the wood had rotted so quickly.

Mr. Phillips indicated that the contractor had probably used an inappropriate species of wood like pine that did not stand up to the weather as well as a denser hardwood.

The Commission discussed the curved top rail and the importance of retaining that design element.

Ms. Hamacher moved to approve the application, on the condition that the design of the component parts be replicated “like for like” with wood or the alternate materials and that the materials be painted consistently.

Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Mr. Crocker moved to grant the continuances requested for the hearing dates of cases AH385: 87 Raymond Street and AH-386: 37 Lancaster Street.

Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

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Mr. Bardige moved to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Henn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner