

Minutes
March 18, 2010
North End - Huntington Heights Architectural Review Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00

Members present:

Chip Carpenter, Mary Kayaselcuk, Robin Stippich, Drew Velkey, Deirdre Wells.

Members Absent: The Board has two vacancies

Staff present: David Watson, Sheila McAllister, Saul Gleiser

After the roll call, the Chairman recognized the Director of Planning Sheila McAllister. Ms. McAllister expressed her apology for the staff recommendation given at the last meeting, and that in the future recommendations would not be included in ARB packets. After visiting the project site, Ms. McAllister stated that she agreed with the Board findings that the project was out of scale. Ms. McAllister clarified protocols stipulated under Roberts Rules of Order, noting that once a meeting has been adjourned, a motion cannot be reopened for reconsideration. Roberts Rules does, however, allow for the discussion and subsequent amendment of the motion for purposes of clarification.

Review of the minutes. Minutes of the March 4, 2010 were reviewed and approved.

Public Hearing

COA-10-226 345 54th Street. Detached garage.

Mr. Carpenter emphasized that although a structure has already been started on this property, the Board should address only plans for the structure. The structure on the property is an issue for the Codes Compliance Department.

The Chairman explained the protocol for the discussion, noting that all questions and comments should be directed to the Board. The Chairman also requested that all comments be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Carpenter called for an abbreviated staff report, noting that the report was given at the last meeting. Staff reviewed noted the inclusion of additional sections of the Guidelines and additional photographs of the project and surrounding properties. New elevations showing window placement were also provided, as well as material samples of siding and roofing material.

The additional Guidelines sections were:

II.F. Factors Considered When Approving Applications.

viii. The compliance of the proposed use with the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Newport News, Virginia.

ix. The location of the building, addition, or alteration as it relates to setbacks, side yards, building spacing, and lot sizes in the pattern of the neighborhood.

x. The bulk size of an addition in relationship to the original structure. Small lot sizes in the District and the scale of original structures create a unique setting. While the relationship of the addition to the original structure is a prime factor, as a general guideline, thirty percent of the structure's original footprint area should be the maximum allowable sum total footprint of all subsequent additions combined.

xi. The composition of the building, addition, or alteration as to the appropriateness of scale, detailing, shape, materials, and roof form and pitch. Attention will be given to the conformity of building orientation, the treatment of windows, doors, porches, and other appurtenances.

xii. The conformity of additions or alterations to the circulation network. Vehicular drives and pedestrian paths and walks should reflect the character of the original scheme. Attention will be given to materials, color, texture, and scale.

xiii. The exterior developments, such as lighting, non-vegetative landscaping, parking areas, and fences. Materials, colors, textures, scale, form, and composition should reflect the character of the local neighborhood.

xiv. The blending of accessory uses with main structures. Attention will be given to garages, storage sheds, and other related uses and to the materials from which they are constructed.

And III. C. 2.b. Require that projects relate to the visual integrity of each building as a whole and to the other structures on the property.

Require that projects relate to historic design and detail in:

- (1) Building heights
- (2) Scale
- (3) Orientation, spacing, and site coverage of buildings
- (4) Façade proportions and window patterns
- (5) Size, shape, and proportions of entrances and porch projections
- (6) Materials, texture and color.

Mr. Carpenter noted that at the last meeting that the issue the Board seemed to struggle with at the last meeting had to do with defining scale. Over the past week, it was pointed out that the eave height was the one element that can concretely show that the new structure is out of scale with the primary structure. It appears that the difference between the heights in the eaves is in excess of six feet.

Ms. Wells noted that the elevations are not clear showing the height of the proposed structure, noting that the ridge vent was annotated at one height on the front elevation, but at a different height on the side elevation.

Mr. Stambaugh replied that ridge vents generally can add .75" to 2" to the structure height. Mr. Carpenter noted that the concern was not with the ridge height, but with the variation in height noted on the elevations.

Ms. Stippich provided photographs of numerous garages that faced Warwick Boulevard. She pointed out that all garages were significantly lower in height than the primary structure on each property. No structure exceeds 1.5 stories in height. Ms. Stippich asked for clarification regarding the guidelines that state that construction on existing footprints may be exempt. Staff explained that in the zoning ordinance, the word "may" means that an activity can occur. If, for example, there was no record of a garage pre-existing on the property, then the structure would be required to meet side and rear yard setbacks.

Mr. Carpenter noted that the pictorial evidence provided by Ms. Stippich show that the slope (pitch) on the garage roofs match that roof pitch on the primary structure.

Ms. Kayaselcuk stated that, historically, all the properties that have or had accessory structures such as carriage houses or garages in the district were built with the eaves at or lower than the eaves on the primary structures. Ms. Kayaselcuk also noted that the Board should also consider incorporating the National Park Service (NPS) standards for historical preservation into the Guidelines. A copy of the TPS standards was submitted for the record.

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*
2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.* More information can be found on the NPS website.

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

Mr. Carpenter asked the Board if there was any consensus regarding peak height or eave height. Specifically, what changes would the Board deem appropriate. Ms. Wells stated that in addition to the eaves not exceeding the eaves on the primary structure, the pitch of the roof needs to match the house. Ms. Wells further stated that she does not believe that this garage should necessarily match the garage on the adjacent parcel.

Ms. Stippich stated that she had consulted with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to ask about standards regarding building height. Ms. Stippich was told that the height of a story is purposely not defined as it varies with each structure. It is generally measured as the distance from the ground floor to the ceiling. The first story in the garage is noticeably higher than the first story in the primary structure.

Mr. Carpenter noted that the Board needs to stay focused on the external appearances of the structure as the Board does not make rulings based on interior considerations.

Mr. Velkey stated that from his perspective, he would like more information regarding the primary structure. Specifically, what is its height and pitch of the roof? Without this information, it is difficult to determine scale.

Ms. Wells and Mr. Velkey stated that the roof peak and eave height of the section of the primary structure closest to the garage should be the point of reference. Ms. Wells noted that the door opening on the proposed garage is very high and out of scale.

Mr. Carpenter stated that the Board was only giving guidance to Mr. Stambaugh so that he can engineer a solution in order to gain approval. The last meeting did not provide succinctly the changes necessary to gain approval. The goal should be to settle this in one meeting, and avoid repeated deliberations.

Mr. Stambaugh stated that he has a better understanding of what the Board is asking. He stated that the door opening is of primary concern to him, more so than the roof line.

Ms. McAllister noted that the Board can take into consideration the scale and size of the garage in relation to the surrounding properties specifically, and the neighborhood in general. Mr. Gleiser noted that the Guidelines in section II E. on page 18 call for this type of consideration. Mr. Carpenter challenged Mr. Gleiser on this point noting that the hierarchy of the Guidelines show that section III. G which specifically addresses accessory buildings is the relevant section for review, and not section II E. which provides *guidelines for consideration of additions, new building uses, and modification*.

The Board and applicant discussed gutter on the garage, concluding that any gutters proposed for the garage should match the gutters on the primary structure.

Mr. Carpenter opened the meeting for public comment.

Alton Huneycutt of 343 54th Street Newport News, VA addressed the Board and stated that many of his concerns had been addressed in the Board deliberation. He did ask that if a new structure was being built on an historic footprint, does the size of the new structure need to be consistent with the former structure. Mr. Carpenter answered that the historical footprint only addresses setbacks. Mr. Huneycutt repeated his objection to the proposed structure.

Mr. Carpenter asked if there was any further public comment. Hearing none, the public comment was closed.

Mr. Carpenter asked the Board if it was prepared to make a motion. Ms. Stippich asked if the motion should include stipulations about height. Staff stated that the previous discussion regarding building height and roof pitch was conducted for the benefit of the applicant in order to provide guidance for the submission of a new plan. Staff recommended not putting any design criteria into a motion as the Board should avoid putting itself in the position of designing a structure for an applicant. The Board agreed with staff's opinion.

Ms. Wells suggested making a motion, and then later adding any further guidance as needed. The motion should not contain specific instructions for the drawing of plans, but instead clarify the motion made at the previous meeting and cite specific areas in the Guidelines.

Ms. Wells made a motion to amend the motion made on March 4, 2010 to deny COA-10-226 based on Section III G. which states that the roof height (eave and peak) and pitch of the new structure must relate to the original house roof form and pitch.

Mr. Velkey provided a second.

Aye: Kayaselcuk, Stippich, Velkey, Wells, Carpenter
Nay:

Motion to amend carried 5:0

The Board then reviewed the previous discussion with Mr. Stambaugh regarding compliance with the Guidelines.

New Business

Ms. Kayaselcuk stated that the Guidelines should be updated to include the National Park Service Standards for preservation, and to clarify the definition of scale.

Adjourn.