

## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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OFFICES OF PLANNING COMMISSION  
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### **DORSET DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**August 17, 2020**

Members present: Kit Wallace, Chair, Arnie Gottlieb, Jim Clubb, Lindy Bowden, Michelle Pagán and Ruth Tanenhaus

Also present: Tyler Yandow, Zoning Administrator, Rob Giaotti, Town Manager, Christopher and Laura Scarlotta

Minutes: R. Nawrath

Chair K. Wallace opened the meeting at 5:30 PM via Zoom

#### **Application: Village Residential:**

#### **Christopher and Laura Scarlotta-Reconstruct 2<sup>nd</sup> floor deck and railing 59 Church Street**

K. Wallace spoke to the project:

- The applicants have an upstairs deck where the balusters had rotted. They replaced the deck as it was before except with the addition of a cable railing system replacing the rotten balusters.
- As to the cable railing system: nothing in our criteria specifically addresses this aspect of construction, but the deck is on a non-character defining elevation. This deck was clearly not part of the historical structure.
- We have to consider this a porch. The criteria are different from decks. The issue here is the material that was used.
- The Criteria involved are:
  - 9.4.4.2.8 (alterations and additions)  
*"New porches, decks or entrances may be introduced only on non-character-defining elevations and must be attached in ways that minimize the loss of historic fabric. These units must be located so that they do not diminish the original character of the historic structure or damage historic wall materials."*
  - 9.4.5.5 (New construction, porches)
  - 1. *"As long as their design and architectural detail complements the rest of the structure, porches may run across the house front, wrap around the sides and rear, and may be one story high."*
  - 4. *"Molded or shaped rails with turned, jig sawn, or square balusters are preferred. Industrial type railings, railings made from construction lumber such as 2x4's, unduly thin balusters, or balusters placed in front of or behind the rails are not allowed."*
- It is more closely a porch than a deck, as a deck is typically close to ground level. The preferred rails and balusters are listed. But the word is "preferred" not "required". So the question is - does this complement the rest of the structure as per 9.4.5.5.1?

## Comments:

- L. Bowden: You can't see the railing unless you are looking for it. The top railing is cedar and would look better painted white. In theory, the cable is not recommended but it doesn't bother me.
- J. Clubb: It's more industrial style. I notice it walking down the street. If the top is painted white, it wouldn't look so noticeable.
- A Gottlieb: If you are not looking for it, you can't see it. It is barely visible from the street; overall it is a great looking house. It would have looked better with a more traditional baluster. But this is one of those gray areas that something else would be preferable.
- K. Wallace: We need to proactively reach out to people to be sure we don't get these repeated "after the fact" decision-making meetings.
- J. Clubb: Is there still a picket fence on the side of your house, Mr. Scarlotta?
- C. Scarlotta: No, it had rotted out and it was removed.
- J. Clubb: Perhaps put up some trees where the picket fence used to be. C. Scarlotta will consider it.
- A Gottlieb: How committed are you to those wires? Would you object to putting baluster up?
- C. Scarlotta: We like the look of it and would prefer to keep it. It's also a matter of safety as we have small children visiting us quite often.
- J. Clubb: Would we be setting a precedent? If they planted trees, it would be helpful. It might mitigate the problem.
- Discussion on planting some trees, where to put them and how that would make a difference
- C. Scarlotta: we will look into planting trees

K. Wallace: moved that we approve the application as proposed with the caveat that the top railing be painted white and that they consider planting trees or other vegetation to screen the porch.

M. Pagán 2<sup>nd</sup>

Approved unanimously

## SIDEWALKS

M. Pagán: Marble is specifically mentioned in the history book, and also in the Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

This is from page 314, of **Dorset, in the Shadow of the Marble Mountain**, the town history written by Tyler Resch:

*"The church is built of locally quarried marble, thereby representing (along with the village's unusual marble sidewalks) the industry that dominated Dorset township during the 19th century."*

Problem: Someone drove over the new pieces of marble sidewalk by the Daniels house. They broke the pieces of marble. The pieces that were replaced are different. They don't look like marble at all. It's totally white. But they ARE marble and it is extremely difficult to find old marble now. So there is nothing we can do about these two new sidewalk slabs.

Further discussion:

The consensus is that the marble work outside the library is not historic – set in concrete. What can be done?

J. Clubb: they put down examples of two ways of installing marble by the church. Selected concrete setting for the first round – by the library. Much negative reaction led to further sidewalks being dry laid.

M. Pagán: But, at the Wilson House in E. Dorset, it is the same poor marble.

R. Giaotti: Those methods were chosen because of access to public buildings. Federal guidelines dictated how the marble was installed by the library. As for color: we will have to source material from what is available, and it's been difficult.

M: Pagán: the walks that go up to the houses in the village need to be addressed. Now we have bluestone walkways going in.

Gottlieb: walkways going straight up to a house are so much more noticeable than from driveway to door. More discussion, with the conclusion that we want to revise the new criteria to reflect the need for marble to be the material of choice for walkways going from the public sidewalk to a front entrance to a building. Those from a driveway or other side feature will have marble as the preferred, but not required, material.

## **BYLAWS REVISIONS**

R. Giaotti: All town zoning bylaws are being re-written and streamlined. We can make a case for the DRB criteria to be as we revised them. Have not yet been taken up by the PC because the Town Plan was being redone.

Discussion on the history of the bylaws being rewritten and the process going forward.

R. Giaotti: we should have the DRB meet with the consultants who are working on the new bylaws. The consultants would stay throughout the process including public comment, etc. The DRB has copies of the draft of the new bylaws, and will compare to our proposed revisions prior to meeting with consultants.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

K. Wallace: Remind the applicants that final approval isn't at the DRB level but at the Planning Commission level. Can it be added to the application that the applicant has to get final permission from the PC, just so there is no confusion?

T. Yandow: I can change anything on the application; the issue is, will people read it? Tyler will come up with some new language for the application about this process.

J. Clubb: property owners by the Dorset Field Club have received letters from the Field Club saying that there is something that will be happening at the Field Club. But it doesn't mention what it would involve. Has anyone heard about this? No one answered that they had heard of anything happening at the Field Club.

**Enforcement:** How do we enforce the rules; how do we prevent people from doing things to their property without a permit? Real Estate agents know the rules. When property changes hands, perhaps a letter can be inserted from the tax office. Kit would be happy to draft a letter. If we send it to everyone in the district it would be great.

Jim Clubb pointed out the installation of brand new (not replacement) lights outside the Colony House on Church Street. He pointed out why, in this situation, it was not even the fact that something was done without the appropriate permitting; it was that these lights could not even be approved if we wanted to because of the specific rules. Jim then went on to cite the multiple specific rules that prohibited the type of lighting that was already installed at the Colony House and the fact that we have historically been quite strict about this with prior permit applications: i.e. the Dorset Field Club sign lights; the Thompson Residence and the Dorset Inn. He added we have to be consistent in the application of the rules. Jim said he has heard multiple negative comments about this and the 'light pollution' that it has caused with people asking, "Where is enforcement of the rules?"

R. Gaiotti: It is best to present these issues to Tyler Yandow, Zoning Administrator, and it is best to do it in writing. The issue Jim mentioned can be referred to Tyler to speak to the homeowners about their violation.

A Gottlieb moved: to empower Tyler Yandow, Zoning Administrator, to approach the homeowner in question about their violation re: the lighting.

M. Pagán 2<sup>nd</sup>

Approved unanimously

Arnie Gottlieb moved to adjourn

J. Clubb 2<sup>nd</sup>

Adjournment: 6:54 PM

Kit Wallace, Chair