Department of Planning and Zoning
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone:(802) 865-7188
(802) 865-7195 (FAX)
(802) 865-7142 (TTY)

David White, AICP, Director
Meagan Tuttle, AICP, Comprehensive Planner
Jay Appleton, GIS Manager
Scott Gustin, AICP, Principal Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
Anita Wade, Zoning Clerk
Elsie Tillotson, Department Secretary

TO: Development Review Board
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: November 17, 2015
RE: 16-0239CA; 18 Adsit Court

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Note: These are staff comments only; decisions on projects are made by the Development Review Board, which may approve, deny, table or modify any project. THE APPLICANT OR REPRESENTATIVE <u>MUST</u> ATTEND THE MEETING.

Zone: RL Ward: 1E

Owner/Appellant: Eugene Day III

Request: Appeal of zoning permit denial to replace main and center wooden porch posts with PT lumber, also replace railings/cross bars with PT lumber. Replace wooden porch ceiling in-kind. Replace wooden flooring with composite material.

Overview:
The appellant is seeking approval to remove existing wooden porch flooring and to replace it with a PVC-base composite flooring material. Both materials are tongue-in-grove. The home is listed on the Vermont Register of Historic Places and is subject to the standards of Sec. 5.4.8, *Historic Buildings and Sites*, of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance (CDO). The zoning permit application was denied, and an appeal has been filed.

Recommendation: **<u>Uphold zoning denial</u>** based on the following findings and conditions:

I. Findings:
On August 14, 2015, the appellant submitted a zoning permit application for renovations to the front porch of his home at 18 Adsit Court. Among the renovations, the existing wooden porch flooring was to be removed and replaced with Aeratis Traditions porch flooring (a PVC-base composite material).

After review of the application, zoning staff contacted the appellant on September 3, 2015 to inform him that removal of wooden material and replacement with composite material would be problematic under the historic preservation standards of Sec. 5.4.8. The appellant considered alternatives and responded to zoning staff on September 10, 2015 that he would like to pursue use of the composite flooring material.

On September 14, 2015, the zoning application was denied per the following reasons:

1. The subject property is included in the Vermont Historic Sites & Structures survey and is subject to review under the historic preservation criteria of Sec. 5.4.8, *Historic Buildings and Sites*, of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance. The sites & structures listing for

this property notes the front porch on the home and, in particular, the architectural details on this important building feature. Of the four Craftsman style Vernacular homes on Adsit Court, the listing notes that this house and the one next door (14 Adsit Court) are the best preserved examples of a style rare in Burlington. Sec. 5.4.8, (b) *Standards and Guidelines*, states that the removal of distinctive materials is to be avoided. Distinctive materials and features are to be preserved. Deteriorated historic features should be repaired. If replacement is needed, replacement materials should match existing. The proposed composite (PVC) porch flooring is a material change from the existing tongue-in-groove wooden porch flooring and is inconsistent with the standards of Sec. 5.4.8.

On September 25, 2015, the appeal was filed within 15 days as required. The appeal notes the deteriorated condition of the existing wooden porch flooring and the need to replace it. The appeal asserts that the composite material is similar in appearance to the wooden flooring and is expected to resist rot and hold paint better. The appeal also asserts that the denial prioritized materials over appearance.

Sec. 5.4.8, *Historic Buildings and Sites*, of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance is aimed at protecting historically significant buildings – to protect those buildings that are well preserved and also to stem the flow of deterioration of others that have been altered over time. The home at 18 Adsit Court is very well preserved with exceptional integrity. Building form, style, and materials all remain intact. The proposed work is within the front porch, part of the building's primary façade. The standards of Sec. 5.4.8 are aimed at preserving the appearance of building features and also at preserving materials. Under the standards of Sec. 5.4.8, there is longstanding precedent for materials retention, whether wooden windows, slate roofing, or wooden balusters. Some examples of historically significant properties with in-kind wooden porch floor replacement include 35 Isham Street, 272 Church Street, and 12 Brookes Avenue.

In sum, denial of the zoning permit application is appropriate per the following:

- The home at 18 Adsit Court retains integrity of building form, style, and materials.
- Sec. 5.4.8 calls for retention of historic features, including materials.
- Exterior materials composition has remained intact since construction in 1909.
- The proposed alteration is on the primary façade of this historic structure.

II. Recommended Motion:
Uphold the denial of zoning permit application 16-0239CA.