

Department of Planning and Zoning

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Design Advisory Board
From: Ryan Morrison, CFM, Associate Planner
RE: 55-57 Howard Street, ZP17-1280CA
Date: June 27, 2017

File: ZP17-1280CA

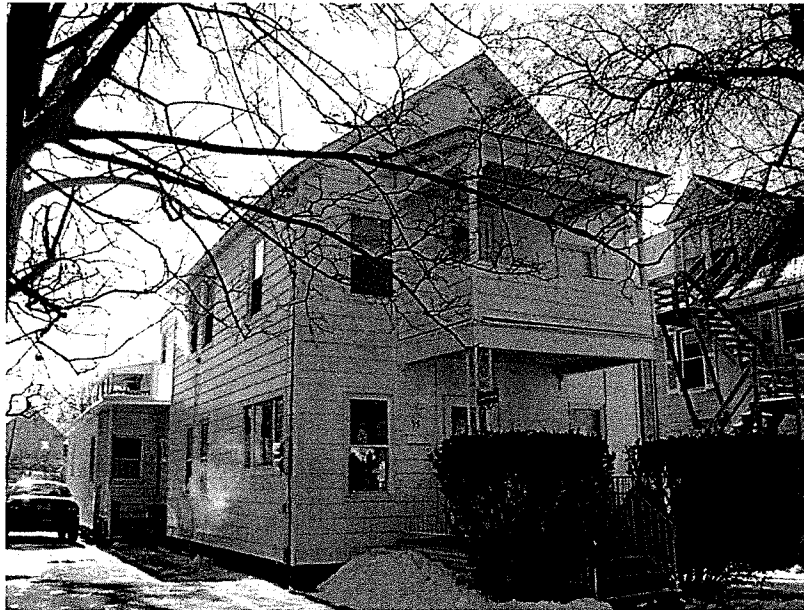
Location: 55-57 Howard Street

Zone: RL **Ward:** 5S

Date application accepted: June 14, 2017

Applicant/ Owner: PJ McHenry

Request: Alterations to a two family home (rebuild and widen existing 2-story front porch, relocate 2 windows and 2 doors, replace doors, add trim to existing windows, exterior lights, reinforce basement walls, & accompanied site work). The building (c. 1885) is listed on State Register of Historic Places.



Background:

- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit 12-0299NA;** repair slate roof. Approved 9/7/11
- **Zoning Permit 17-1191HO;** establish a medical office (acupuncture) as a home occupation. Some interior remodeling is also proposed. Currently under DRB review.

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Overview: The property owner proposes to rebuild and widen the existing 2-story front porch, relocate 2 windows and 2 doors, replace doors, add trim to existing windows, add exterior lights, and reinforce the basement walls. Associated site work proposed includes the removal of existing asphalt around the rear of the structure, and reconfiguring the front walkway.

According to the state historic survey conducted in 1977, the structure was built circa 1885, originally as a residence. The state listing notes that the structure has a stone foundation, aluminum siding, and a slate roof. The listing also notes that the structure's current use (in 1977) was 'apartments'. Assessor's property listings as early as 1984 note that the structure has been a 2-unit residence. The structure is not included on any National Historic Register.

ARTICLE 5: HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES

(a) Applicability

1. The building is 50 years old or older.

The building at 55-57 Howard Street was constructed ca. 1885 and is more than 50 years old.

2. The building or site is deemed to possess significance in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the city, state, or nation in history, architecture, archeology, technology, and culture because on or more of the following conditions is present:

A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or,

B. Association with the lives of persons significant in the past; or,

C. Embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or representation of the work of a master, or possession of high artistic values, or representation of a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or,

D. Maintenance of an exceptionally high degree of integrity, original site orientation and virtually all character defining elements intact; or,

E. Yielding, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory.

The building is a contributing resource on the State of Vermont Register of Historic Places. It is a 2 ½ story structure, with a front gable orientation, a rear wing, and front porches. The siding is aluminum, the foundation is stone, and the roof is slate.

3. The building or site possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

See item 2 above. The historic survey was conducted in 1977. While the property has no zoning permit history, it appears that some alterations have occurred over the years. However, there appear to be no zoning permit approvals for these changes. It is difficult to pinpoint a date when aluminum siding was added to the structure, however the historic survey documents its existence in 1977.

The applicant has noted that the majority of windows on the structure are vinyl, including those on the front façade. These windows appear to have been installed sometime after 1994/95. An Assessor's photo from 1994/95 shows what appear to be storm windows over the front façade windows, which are typically found on wood windows to protect from the elements. In more

recent photographs, storm windows do not appear to be installed over the windows, which could partially be due to the fact that vinyl windows tend to be more durable to the elements. Due to the lack of zoning permits on the property, it appears that the installation of the vinyl windows would constitute a violation. Any change now to the windows (i.e. replacement, relocation, etc.), with the possible exception of adding new wooden trim, would require the windows to be brought into full compliance by reverting to wooden windows.

The front porch metal railings/spindles/posts (first story) also appear to be unoriginal. The current proposal will result in railings, spindles and columns take on a more historic appearance. However, based on previous practice, the use of pressure treated wood for the spindles, and for any other portion of the new deck, should not be allowed.

Lastly, the proposed porch decking will be that of a wood-grain pattern composite board. This material has been accepted for replacement porch decking on historic structures.

(b) Standards and Guidelines

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.*
The building at 55-57 Howard Street was constructed for residential use, and currently contains 2 units. There are no plans to change the use of the property. Certain historic elements have been lost with installation of aluminum siding, vinyl windows, and the metal porch posts, railings, and balusters. While the aluminum siding has been documented since the historic survey of 1977, the vinyl windows and the first story metal railings, posts and balusters haven't, and as described above, any change to those will require that compliance be achieved – meaning that the vinyl windows be replaced with conforming wood windows, and the porch railings, balusters and posts be replaced with more historic, wooden materials. Overall, the proposal would see a 2-story replacement porch with a more historic appearance.

Exchanging the doors and easternmost windows (both stories) on the front façade may change distinctive façade spaces and spatial relationships. However, it may be that this would be of little concern, considering the changes to the structure over the years.

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.*
The Historic Survey of 1977 notes that the structure has 'front porches' and fenestration with '2 over 2 sashes'. However, the front porches do not entirely appear to be original. The proposal will replace the 2-story porch with a new, wider 2-story porch. It is clear that the applicant is making an effort to give the replacement porch a historic appearance with historically styled columns and spindles.

Exchanging the front doors and easternmost windows on the front façade (both stories) will still see a level of symmetry between the 1st and 2nd story front façade. However, as noted above, if the vinyl windows are at all altered, (i.e. relocated), they will have to come into compliance – meaning complete replacements with windows that correspond to the building's historic origins.

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.*
The reconstruction of the 2-story front porch will be consistent with a number of neighboring residential structures.
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
There are no identified changes that merit retention and preservation.
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
There are no extant materials, finishes, or construction techniques or example of craftsmanship that merit preservation.
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 recognizing that new technologies may provide an appropriate alternative in order to adapt to ever changing conditions and provide for an efficient contemporary use. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
The application is not intended to replace deteriorated features, but to increase the function of the building. No missing features have been identified or are planned for replacement.
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.*
No such treatment is included in this proposal.
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
There are no known archeological resources on the property.
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 shall 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.*
The reconstructed porch will be differentiated from the old, and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing. In keeping with previous precedents, the spindles should not be made from pressure treated wood. Grey composite decking will be utilized. The replacement doors will be fiberglass with a half-moon transom window, and the existing vinyl double hung windows will see new wood trim. However, as noted above, if there is any alteration to the vinyl windows, they will have to be replaced with windows made of wooden materials.

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.*

Although unlikely, if the proposed front porch were to be removed in the future, the form and integrity of the historic structure would be unimpaired.

ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS

Part 1: Land Division Design Standards

Not applicable.

Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

There are no important natural features on the subject property. Existing green space amounts to a lawn area.

(b) Topographical alterations

The property is essentially flat and will remain so. No significant topographical alterations are proposed.

(c) Protection of important public views

The subject property is not affected by any identified public view corridor.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

The building, constructed c. 1885, is listed on the State of Vermont Register of Historic Places. See Sec. 5.4.8 above.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

No part of this application would prevent the use of wind, solar, water, or other alternative energy device.

(f) Brownfield sites

The subject property is not an identified brownfield.

(g) Provide for nature's events

The revised front entry will continue to be sheltered by a porch roof. There appears to be room for snow storage at the end of the driveway. According to the application, the site disturbance does not rise to the threshold for requiring an Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan (400 sf).

(h) Building location and orientation

The mass of the 2-story front porch will increase with the reconstruction/widening of both levels. However, the existing front yard setback will remain. Buildings within the neighborhood do not exhibit a consistent rhythm and pattern along either side of the street; however, there are a

handful of buildings with 2-story front porches along Howard Street. The front entry is prominent and readily identifiable from the street.

(i) Vehicular access

The existing curb cut and 11' x 84' 4 1/2" driveway will remain unchanged.

(j) Pedestrian access

This criterion requires that a pedestrian walkway directly link the primary building to the public sidewalk, which the site plan indicates. A concrete walkway bordering the driveway will provide pedestrian access to both the front porch entry and the entry on the building's east side.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

None is required for two family homes; however encouraged.

(l) Parking and circulation

The property will continue to utilize the existing driveway to serve the parking needs for both units. The duplex use requires a total of four off-street parking spaces. Parking spaces require a minimum depth of 20 ft. Given the length of the driveway, it technically can fit the required 4 parking spaces required for both units. However, due to the maximum allowance of two stacked parking spaces, without the presence of a parking assistant, the City only recognizes two legitimate parking spaces in the driveway. However, in redevelopment, it would be possible to conduct the proposed structural changes without the required amount of parking, as this would continue an existing condition without exacerbating it (not increase the level of non-conformity).

(m) Landscaping and fences

There is a good amount of existing green space on the property. The proposal will add additional green space after the asphalt areas behind the duplex are removed. New landscaping is proposed to be installed in front of the porch. Plantings will consist of redosier dogwood, checkerberry, and interrupted fern.

(n) Public plazas and open space

No public plaza or open space is included or required in this proposal.

(o) Outdoor lighting

New outdoor lighting fixtures will illuminate the front building entry, as well as the second story porch. Locations are noted, and a cutsheet has been provided. These are acceptable residential fixtures generating low levels of illumination.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

The applicant has not identified changes that would require additional utilities. There are no mechanical units noted on the site plan, nor on the elevation drawings.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment

1. Massing, Height, and Scale

As the reconstructed porch will not extend above or beyond the dimensions of the existing building, massing, height, and scale will not change.

2. Roofs and Rooflines

No change to the roof/roofline will occur as a result of the proposal.

3. Building Openings

As proposed, the location of the entry doors and existing windows, on both stories, will be modified slightly. The centrally located 1st and 2nd story doors will swap locations with the corresponding easternmost windows. However, due to the fact that there are no zoning permits for the vinyl windows, they appear to be in violation. Any change to the vinyl windows, whether it be replacement or relocation, will require that they are changed to compliant wooden windows. Should the applicant elect to not relocate the vinyl windows, then feasibly they can remain as-is until such time that they need a zoning permit to replace or repair them. A future zoning permit will require that they be replaced with windows compliant with the historic nature of the structure.

(b) Protection of important architectural resources

See Sec. 5.4.8.

(c) Protection of important public views

Not applicable.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

The front entry to the home is clearly articulated with an existing, 2-story open porch, which will be replaced with a wider, 2-story front porch. The structure is fairly narrow, with the gable end facing the street. What little building mass there is facing the street is broken up with the porch and windows. There are no large blank walls or expanses of roof.

(e) Quality of materials

The existing home is clad in aluminum siding. The new porch will consist of composite decking, and wood railings and posts. Approval of pressure treated spindles should not be granted due to the historic nature of the structure, and previous determinations that have ruled out use of pressure treated materials to replace historic features. The spindles should be made of material consistent with wood typically used on historic porches. The applicant proposes to install wood trim around the windows. The doors will be fiberglass, with wood frames, and 'half moon' transom windows.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

The building must comply with the city's current energy efficiency standards.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

No advertising is included in this proposal.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

There is no proposal to add new, or change existing, meters, mechanical units, etc.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

The proposed building must comply with the city's current egress requirements. Building entries will be illuminated.

Items for the Board's consideration:

1. The use of pressure treated materials shall be prohibited.
2. The double hung vinyl windows, if replaced or relocated, shall be replaced with wooden or clad wooden double hung windows consistent with historic preservation.