

Department of Planning and Zoning

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Design Advisory Board
From: Mary O'Neil, AICP, Senior Planner
RE: ZP 15-0895CA; 124 Staniford Road
Date: April 14, 2015

File: ZP 15-0895CA

Location: 124 Staniford Road

Zone: RL **Ward:** 4N

Date application accepted:

March 19, 2015

Applicant/ Owner: Justin Larrow

Request: Rebuild front porch, new railings, fir decking; replace roof; replace siding (clapboard on bottom, shakes on top); move front door and reconfigure front windows; new double hung windows; add on to side porch; build new back porch; deck with rails; new doors.



Background:

- Non-applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements; Replace existing roof and siding, asphalt shingles, wood shingles on top half of house. March 2015.
- Zoning Permit 90-025; install treated lumber retaining wall 3 1/2 ' high along 35' of front property line. Fill front yard to top of wall. Approved February 1990.

Overview: The applicant has proposed general improvements to this duplex residence. The Design Advisory Board is tasked with review of two specifically requested alterations: The request to re-arrange the primary façade of the building, and to rebuild the porch in a different style than existing.

The house is listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. See attached listing.

Staff has administrative authority, and finds the project in conflict with Section 5.4.8 (b) and therefore warrants denial; however staff will defer to the interpretation made by Historic Preservation Review Committee, within the Design Advisory Board for a final decision.

Article 5: Citywide General Regulations

Section 5.4.8 Historic Buildings and Sites

(b) Standards and Guidelines

The following development standards, following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, shall be used in the review of all applications involving historic buildings and sites subject to the provisions of this section and the requirements for Design Review in Art 3, Part 4. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site. They are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic features, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. These Standards are intended to be applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

- 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 was constructed as a residential property; a use that continues today. The applicant suggests that they wish to move toward making the structure a single family home again, but determines the path in that direction is to move the principal entrance; swapping it for a window location. The state register listing notes that a secondary door has been added for the apartment; but identifies the original door by its symmetrical arrangement on the primary façade. Rather than suggesting that the door addition has destroyed that spatial arrangement, the designation simply acknowledges that there has been an alteration.

This standard requires minimal change to spaces and spatial relationships; Primary facades are held to the most rigorous requirements. If the applicant truly wishes to gravitate toward the original single family use, then rearrangement of the front façade is directly contrary to this standard. **Adverse finding.**

- 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 character of this building includes the symmetrical arrangement of the primary façade; a central entrance door between double hung windows. In its style and extant appearance, the arrangement is consistent for the time period and this example. To alter these features and spaces by swapping a door for a window location diminishes the integrity of the resource and is in conflict with this standard. **Adverse finding.**

- 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.*

To alter the location of building openings on a primary façade is to create a false sense of development and historic appearance.

The baluster/rail style porch that is proposed is not stylistically appropriate for this structure, or a reproduction of the characteristic shingle style half wall. Unless the applicant can demonstrate otherwise by photo or plan, the balustered porch is not consistent with the historic character of the building and therefore a conjectural feature that cannot be established to have previously existed. **Adverse finding.**

- 4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

The door to the 2nd unit was added sometime prior to 1983. While it interrupts the arrangement of the primary façade, it does not destroy that integrity of the front façade which is still clearly evident.

The addition of an enlarged side porch or a rear deck is a typical alteration reflecting a structure's evolution. As placed on secondary facades, greater flexibility is afforded.

Affirmative finding.

5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

One of the strong characteristics of this building is the shingled front porch with half-wall. The applicant proposed a baluster/rail arrangement that is not in keeping with the house's style or original appearance. To meet this standard, the porch should be replaced to match the existing.

Adverse finding as proposed.

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.*

If the porch is being replaced due to deterioration, then *the new feature is required to match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials.* As proposed, the application does not meet this standard. **Adverse finding.**

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 physical or chemical treatments are proposed. Not applicable.

8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

Not applicable.

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 rearrangement of the primary façade building openings will alter spatial relationships that characterize the property and are noted in the historic designation description. Placing the principal entrance next to the entrance to the 2nd unit is creating a false sense of history, and is inconsistent with this standard.

The proposal to construct a new front porch of a starkly different character would be incompatible with this Dutch Colonial Revival style building and also in conflict with this standard. **Adverse finding.**

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.*

While it may be possible to consider the proposed alterations reversible, to complete the project as proposed will diminish the existing historic integrity, and move the resource further away

from its original appearance. An historic structure can lose its merit slowly, with minor alterations that cumulatively destroy historic character and those qualities that make it worth acknowledging. As this building is noted as being “This handsome, well-preserved Dutch Colonial Revival house...the only example of such architecture on Staniford Road”, it is worthy of efforts to retain that value that was acknowledged and recorded more than 30 years ago.

Adverse finding.

In *A Field Guide to American Houses* (Virginia & Lee McAlester, 1998) the authors note that only about 10% of Colonial Revival houses have gambrel roofs, a feature which 124 Staniford exhibits. This sub-type, identified as Dutch Colonial, frequently may include a full width porch; again evident in this example. Identifying features noted: “Façade normally shows symmetrically balanced windows and center door (less commonly with door off-center); windows with double hung sashes, usually with multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes, windows frequently in adjacent pairs.” The direct influence of Georgian and Adamesque styles were the backbone of the revival, and are the likely source of the symmetry observed. “Colonial Revival” refers to the entire resurgence of interest in the early English and Dutch houses along the Atlantic coast, and was explosively popular beginning around 1910 but continuing at least until the post war period. Variants of this style were popularized with House Plans and kits available nationally, which supports the pervasiveness of these examples. 124 Staniford Road retains the visual, material and arrangement characteristics synonymous with this architectural style. Alteration of these features and characteristics original to the house would diminish the historic integrity of the property.

Article 6: Development Review Standards

Part 1: Land Division Standards

Not applicable.

Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards

Section 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:

Not applicable.

(b) Topographical Alterations:

Not applicable.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

There are no public views from this site. Not applicable.

(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:

Burlington’s architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city’s or the region’s pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites

listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Section 5.4.8(b).

The subject property is listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources. See Section 5.4.8, above.

(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:

Not applicable.

(f) Brownfield Sites:

Not applicable.

(g) Provide for nature's events:

The proposed new side porch will have a roof over it, protecting residents from inclement weather. **Affirmative finding.**

(h) Building Location and Orientation:

No change to building location or orientation. Not applicable.

(i) Vehicular Access:

No change to vehicular access. Not applicable.

(j) Pedestrian Access:

No change. Not applicable.

(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:

Although encouraged, accessible entry is not a requirement. Not applicable.

(l) Parking and Circulation:

No change. Not applicable.

(m) Landscaping and Fences:

Not applicable.

(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:

Not applicable.

(o) Outdoor Lighting:

Where exterior lighting is proposed the applicant shall meet the lighting performance standards as per Sec 5.5.2. No lighting is included within this application. Not applicable.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:

Not applicable.

Part 3: Architectural Design Standards

Section 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

Proposed buildings and additions shall be appropriately scaled and proportioned for their function and with respect to their context. They shall integrate harmoniously into the topography, and to the use, scale, and architectural details of existing buildings in the vicinity.

The following shall be considered:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

No significant change is proposed to the to massing or height. Not applicable.

2. Roofs and Rooflines.

NO change proposed to the existing roofline. The new side porch is proposed to have a roof similar to the front porch. Assumably it will be asphalt shingle to match the existing material.

Affirmative finding.

3. Building Openings

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and readily identifiable from a public street whether by a door, a canopy, porch, or other prominent architectural or landscape features. People with physical challenges should be able to use the same entrance as everyone-else and shall be provided an “accessible route” to the building. Attention shall also be accorded to design features which provide protection from the affects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage.

As is proposed, the new door location will be visible from the public street and easily identifiable. At issue is the appropriateness of altering the arrangement of building openings on the primary façade of a historic building. Please refer to Section 5.4.8 for further discussion.

The front porch will provide protection from the effects of inclement weather.

Window openings shall maintain consistent patterns and proportions appropriate to the use. The window pattern should add variety and interest to the architecture, and be proportioned to appear more vertical than horizontal. Where awnings over windows or doors are used, the lowest edge of the awning shall be at least eight (8) feet above any pedestrian way, and shall not encroach into the public right-of-way without an encroachment permit issued by the dept. of public works.

Other than the proposed “swap” of door and window on the primary elevation, all other window replacements are in existing locations.

Buildings placed on a side or rear property line where no setback is required shall contain neither doors nor windows along such façade so as not to restrict future development or re-

development options of the adjacent property due to fire safety code restrictions. Otherwise they should be setback a minimum of 5-feet.

Not applicable.

(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Section 5.4.8. The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.

The subject property is listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources. See Section 5.4.8, above.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

There are no protected public views from the site. Not applicable.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:

The overall project goals are aimed at providing an active and inviting appearance from the public right-of-way. **Affirmative finding.**

(e) Quality of materials:

The applicant proposes clapboard and shingles as sheathing, although it is not defined if they will be wood or a fiber cement product. In any event, they are replacements for aluminum siding that was present in the 1980s. Windows are a quality Anderson product expected to be of a durable nature. **Affirmative finding.**

(f) Reduce energy utilization:

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI. Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.

There is no concern about shadow cast onto adjacent structures related to alterations proposed. **Affirmative finding as conditioned.**

(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:

Not applicable.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:

Not applicable.

(i) Make spaces secure and safe:

All construction is required to meet ingress and egress standards as defined by Burlington's Fire Marshal and building inspector. **Affirmative finding as conditioned.**

Recommended conditions if approved:

1. All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI. Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.
2. No change of use is included within this approval. The property remains a two-unit residential use.
3. Standard Permit conditions 1-15.