



HOWARD COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
*ELLCOTT CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT ■ LAWYERS HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT*  
3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

*Administered by the Department of Planning and Zoning*

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## August Minutes

The regular meeting for the year 2009 of the Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, August 6, 2009 in the Tyson Room II located at 8930 Stanford Boulevard in Columbia, Maryland.

Members present: Lisa Badart, Chairperson; Eileen Tennor, Joseph Hauser and Samuel Crozier

Staff present: Samantha Stoney, Mina Hilsenrath, Jim Vannoy and Virginia Vargo

Absent: Dan Bennett

Chairperson Lisa Badart opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and asked the Commission members if there were any changes to the June 2009 minutes (there was no meeting in July 2009). Joseph Hauser made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Eileen Tennor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **PLANS FOR APPROVAL**

- 1) #08-51c – 6090 Lawyers Hill Road, Elkridge, HO-381
- 2) #09-23 – 3892 College Avenue, Ellicott City
- 3) #09-24 – 3716 Court Place, Ellicott City
- 4) #09-25 - 3820 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, HO-302

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **#08-51c – 6090 Lawyers Hill Road, Elkridge, HO-381**

Final tax credit approval.

Applicant: Elkridge Assembly Rooms, Inc.

**Background & Scope of Work:** The Applicant has submitted documentation that \$3,300 was expended on eligible pre-approved work to have the exterior doors and windows repaired and painted. The Applicant seeks \$330 in final tax credits.

**Staff Comments:** The repair and painting of the windows and doors complies with the work pre-approved on September 4, 2008.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends Approval of final tax credit.

**Testimony:** The Applicant was not present. Ms. Badart mentioned that the neighborhood is very pleased with the result.

**Motion:** Mr. Hauser made a motion to approve the tax credit. Ms. Tennor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**#09-23 – 3892 College Avenue, Ellicott City**

Construct rear deck.

Applicant: Matthew Wehland

**Background & Scope of Work:** The Applicant proposes to construct a deck on the rear of the house. The Applicant has indicated the deck will be large, but will barely be visible from College Avenue. The railings will match the front porch as closely as possible and will be painted white. The deck will be thirty feet three inches wide by twenty feet deep, constructed with two-foot by six-foot treated lumber.

**Staff Comments:** The Application complies with Chapter 7 (page 54) recommendations for new construction of decks, “decks should not be added to a historic building’s primary façade or a façade highly visible from a public way.” The deck will be built on the rear of the house and will hardly be visible from the street.

**Staff Recommendations:** Staff recommends Approval.

**Testimony:** The Applicant, Matthew Wehland, was sworn in by Chairperson Badart. Mr. Wehland presented photographs that were taken from the road. Ms. Badart asked if the back of the house is visible from anywhere, and Mr. Wehland replied that possibly a corner of the deck is visible because it is higher but the other areas are covered by trees. Mr. Hauser inquired about a previously approved driveway and Mr. Wehland replied the project will not be taking place because his parents have moved.

Mr. Hauser asked how high the deck will be off the ground. Mr. Wehland replied about 11 feet. There will be stairs leading down from the deck, but they will not be visible. Ms. Tennor asked if the deck will have a roof like the front porch or be open, and Mr. Wehland replied it will be open. The property is 1.7 acres total, with 1.2 in the backyard leading down to New Cut Road. There is a picture of the railing that will be on the deck and the height will be determined by Code.

Mr. Crozier asked if Mr. Wehland is going to cover the gap between the deck and the ground, such as installing lattice, and Mr. Wehland said it will be left open. Mr. Hauser asked if the deck rails could match those on the front. Mr. Wehland stated that was his intent.

**Motion:** Ms. Tennor made a motion to Approve the application to create the deck, as submitted, and the railing to match the front. Mr. Hauser seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**#09-24 – 3716 Court Place, Ellicott City**

Demolition of existing retaining wall, construction of new retaining wall.

Applicant: Wallscapes, Inc.

**Background & Scope of Work:** The Applicant proposes to remove the existing timber retaining wall and rebuild the wall using Diamond Pro Block retaining wall with geo-grid. The current timber retaining wall is built into a steep hill and is beneath the far edge of the parking lot. The hill will be excavated for the installation of the new retaining wall and footings. The Applicant proposes to use six inch #7 stone footings for the walls and four inch diameter HDPE drainage pipe and #57 drainage stone. The wall will

be backfilled using the excavated soil; the remainder of the slope will be graded out and stabilized with grass seed and straw. The top of the retaining walls will be capped. A concrete curb and gutter will be installed along the top of the wall, which will direct rainwater into the street.

**Staff Comments:** The Historic District Commission has not previously approved geo-grid material for retaining walls (A geo-grid retaining wall exists along the eastern edge of the parking lot on the adjacent property; however there is no evidence that the use of this material on the adjacent lot received HDC review and approval). Chapter 9.D (page 69) of the Guidelines state “retaining walls of granite, brick or timber may be appropriate” and that “concrete walls can be used in locations with very little visibility.” Because this wall is designed to resemble masonry block, Staff finds the use should be consistent with that of other wall types that might be allowed in places with low visibility. According to MDAT, the structure was built in 1961 and as such, is not historic. Additionally only the cap of the wall will be visible from the parking lot and very little, if any, will be visible from the street. Due to the unique conditions of this property, staff has no objection to the use of the Diamond Pro Block® material.

**Staff Recommendations:** Staff recommends Approval.

**Testimony:** Ms. Badart swore in Rich Murphy of Wallscapes, Inc. the contractor. Mr. Murphy stated that he is a structural engineer and works mostly on retaining walls. Mr. Hauser explained that he cannot remember seeing the existing wall when driving by. Mr. Murphy explained that the wall is on the downhill side of a slope at the back of the property and the entire wall is only 85 feet long. The wall extends from the corner of the building 65 feet and turns 90 degrees. There is a row of cedar trees that block views of the wall.

Mr. Murphy explained that the water will be redirected as originally designed, to flow on to the street. Currently the paving on the parking lot has failed, allowing water to spill down the timber wall. Once the wall is constructed, a concrete curb will be formed on top of the wall. Mr. Hauser asked if there will be a fence on top of the wall, and Mr. Murphy said there is not an existing railing on the wall. Mr. Murphy said there is a railing on the plans, but he has not been contracted to install a railing.

PVC sleeves will be installed in the curb which could hold an aluminum railing. Mr. Murphy stated that installing a railing would make ingress and egress from the parking lot difficult because it is so small. Mr. Crozier suggested that Mr. Murphy check the Code about the need for a railing.

Mr. Hauser explained that he would prefer to see a wall color that resembles the color of granite which is frequently seen in Ellicott City, rather than the color of brick, which was used on the wall of the adjacent property. Mr. Murphy presented choices of stone for the retaining wall and the Commission preferred Dakota Blend, which is a darker gray.

Mr. Crozier inquired about the disturbance of the tree root system. Mr. Rich explained the trees should not be harmed during construction.

**Motion:** Mr. Crozier made a motion to approve the application, using the color Dakota Blend, that care is taken for the existing trees and specifications for handrails are examined. Mr. Hauser seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**#09-25 - 3820 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, HO-302**

Construct new house as an addition to historic house, make exterior renovations to historic house, and remove trees.

Applicant: Craig Stewart

**Background & Scope of Work:** The Applicant is interested in purchasing the property at 3820 Old Columbia Pike and has submitted an offer contingent upon HDC approval of the proposed new construction/addition to the existing historic house. According to MDAT, the historic house was built in 1899 and is approximately 851 square feet. This property is listed on the Historic Sites Inventory as HO-302, the Charles Ringley House #1. According to the survey sheet, which dates to 1982, the structure may be log construction that has been covered with siding. However, this information is unconfirmed and could only be determined by opening up walls inside the house.

The Applicant proposes to build a new structure on the property, which will connect to the existing historic house. The new structure will have a principal façade and may look like a separate house as it is set back from the street and wraps around the lot; but it will connect to the back of the historic house. The Applicant proposes to remove the rear addition of the historic house, a porch that was enclosed around 1975, and build a new addition totaling 392 square feet that will link the historic house to the new house. The Applicant would like to replace the asphalt shingle roof with fiberglass shingle and siding of the historic home with HardiePlank™ lap siding (color to be tan), which is currently vinyl. The exposure of the HardiePlank™ will remain the same as is currently there in order to distinguish the two structures.

The proposed new house/addition will be 1-½ story, 2,423 square feet, and have a two-car garage, front porch and pergola, rear deck, and expanded driveway. The following materials will be used on the new construction:

- 1) Windows –Pella® simulated divided lite with exterior grilles, white (Swiss Almond) (variety of different styles)
- 2) Roof – Fiberglass shingle
- 3) Front door – Craftsman style, 9 lite over 3 panel, cedar stain
- 4) Siding- HardiePlank™ lap siding, green (Wild Grasses)
- 5) Porch and rear deck material - Trex®
- 6) Garage doors – Craftsman style, cedar color
- 7) Exterior light fixtures – Black with stained glass
- 8) Stone – Mastercut fieldstone
- 9) Trim – Dark brown (Spicenut)
- 10) Gable shingles – HardieShingle™ straight edge notched panel, tan (Bark Mulch)
- 11) Gutters and downspouts – Round, dark brown
- 12) Pergola – Stone veneer half columns, cedar pergola
- 13) Rear deck railing – wood painted white
- 14) Cement parging/stucco – Dark brown, to match trim (visible only from certain rear angles)

Four trees will be cut down because of the construction, but the Applicant has indicated he intends to plant new trees in the front yard. The Applicant proposes to demolish the shed at the rear of the property.

**Staff Comments:** This property presents difficult design challenges based on the shape of the lot and the location of the existing historic house. The Applicant incorporated the historic house into the design of the new construction in a creative manner to adhere to Zoning Regulations and avoid demolition of the historic structure. Zoning Regulations do not allow for more than one dwelling unit on a parcel. By connecting the two structures, the proposal should satisfy the regulations. The existing house sits very close to the road and Staff concurs with the Applicant's choice to locate the new construction back from the road.

As mentioned above, this property presents a unique situation. The original historic building is quite small and, in comparison, the lot is relatively large (.68 acres). The historic house is located at the far western edge of the property. Chapter 7.A (page 51) of the Guidelines recommend that "additions should be subordinate to historic buildings and not compete with or obscure the existing structure." However, Staff finds the Applicant has addressed that recommendation through the design and location of the new construction addition. The Application complies with Chapter 7.A.2 through 7.A.5 recommendations for 'Size, Scale and Form; Spacing; Details; and Materials.' The historic house will still stand alone and the addition is designed to look like a neighboring property, even though the two are connected. The view of the historic house is not interrupted because the new construction is set back. While the new construction is significantly larger, the colors, proportions of the windows, doors, roof height and use of materials are compatible with the historic structure and do not overpower it.

The Application also complies with Chapter 8.1 recommendations on 'Size, Scale and Form' for new construction of principal structures, such as "integrate a new building wider than neighboring buildings by breaking the new building façade into sections that are similar to the widths of neighboring buildings. The garage is broken apart from the main house, mimicking the placement of the historic house.

The Craftsman style of the new construction is not frequently seen in the Ellicott City Historic District, but the design is simple, aesthetically pleasing and in scale with other nearby homes.

**Staff Recommendations:** Staff recommends Approval.

**Testimony:** Ms. Badart swore in the Applicant, Craig Stewart. Mr. Stewart said that he would like to amend the application. After doing some research into cost he found the proposed garage and mudroom would be very expensive. He presented Commission members with 10 sets of the revised application. The difference between the original and revised application is that the mudroom and garage have been removed and a screened-in porch has been added.

Ms. Badart asked if the Commission is actually approving the entire addition in specificity or is the HDC approving in concept. Samantha Stoney replied that the Commission is approving the application in specificity.

Ms. Badart swore in the Applicant's son, Mark Stewart.

Mr. Stewart stated that he has renovated 14 properties in Historic Ellicott City and has had a business office on Main Street in Ellicott City for 25 years.

Mr. Stewart said the house is virtually unchanged from the early 1920s, except for the enclosure of the 1970s porch. The historic home will eventually become an accessory apartment for himself in the future. The new construction will be for Mark Stewart and his family.

The mudroom and garage were eliminated and the front porch was extended 19 feet to create a screened-in porch. The existing grade is 8 feet below the proposed porch elevation. A portion of the area beneath the porch will be left open and a subsequent application will show a circle driveway and parking will be available underneath the house.

The Applicant considers the style of the existing house to be a bungalow, part of the Craftsman family. The Applicant thinks the Historic Sites Inventory file refers to the structure as a log home because the first floor framing is rough-hewn log and dates back to 1888. However, there have probably been alterations and the dimensions of the current house do not indicate that it is a log home. The Applicant plans to use HardiePlank™ and HardieShingle™ siding. The intention is to take the roof off the old house and use shingle which will match the new construction.

Ms. Tennor asked why the new porch cannot be built at an angle. Mr. Stewart replied that historically a porch would not have been angled with this style of home. Ms. Badart commented favorably about the porch and the proposal. Mr. Crozier asked why the porch roof did not have a pitch. Mr. Stewart said he is trying to maintain the character of a pergola; the open part of the pergola will be visible, but the flat roof will not be visible.

Mr. Crozier asked about the trees that will be cut down and Mr. Stewart confirmed that 3 Holly trees and 1 Poplar tree will come down. Mr. Crozier asked for an explanation of the driveway. Mr. Stewart explained the current driveway configuration, which comes 60-70 feet into the property with a spur that is about 10-20 feet long. A turnaround is proposed for the future that will come around the side of the home.

Mr. Hauser supported the idea of a Craftsman structure in the Historic District because there are not many in the area. He mentioned that it is unfortunate that zoning requires the old structure be connected to the new construction. Mr. Hauser expressed concern about the French doors on the front porch and suggested tall windows on the front instead, to create a balance.

Ms. Badart suggested front door be simplified and offset by windows to reduce the bulk of the doorframe. Mr. Stewart stated that his rendering is actually a West Coast version of the Craftsman as opposed to the East Coast. Mr. Hauser asked if there is another location for the doors to the porch from the area where they will entertain. Mr. Stewart said there is access to the porch from the kitchen. Ms. Tennor said the doors closest to the center doors mimic the set of windows on the opposite side, so instead of having two sets of doors, installing a shorter window would provide balance.

Mr. Crozier and Mr. Stewart discussed the grade that the porch will be built on. Mr. Crozier likes the clean look of the porch without a railing and suggested changing the grade to avoid the railing requirement. Mr. Stewart explained they will have plenty of dirt from the construction to raise the grade so a rail won't be necessary.

**Motion:** Mr. Hauser made a motion to approve the application as amended, and Samuel Crozier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Other Business:**

**Solar Guidelines**

Ms. Tennor thinks the guidelines flexible enough to adapt to the constantly changing technology. Ms. Badart made a motion to approve the Draft Solar Guidelines with inclusion that HDC is receptive to future new technology. Ms. Tennor seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Roofing Shingles**

Mr. Hauser brought up the question of possible acceptance of lighter colored shingles for roofing in the Historic District. He has seen some new white ones that are acceptable, and Ms. Tennor would be interested in seeing them. Mr. Hauser said it will take a change of attitude for approval of white shingles on historic structures. Ms. Badart compared this to past use of wood shingles which bleach to white over time. Mr. Hauser said he would look at white shingles on a new structure such as the one the Commission heard this evening on Old Columbia Pike.

**Election of Officers**

Ms. Badart made a motion to make Mr. Hauser the President; Mr. Crozier, Vice President; and, Ms. Tennor, Secretary. Mr. Crozier seconded the motion. The vote was 3 for and 1 against. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

\*Chapter and page references are from the Ellicott City or Lawyers Hill Historic District Design Guidelines.

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Elmina J. Hilsenrath, ASLA  
Executive Secretary

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Lisa Badart, Chairperson

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Virginia L. Vargo, Recording Secretary