June Minutes

Thursday, June 2, 2022; 7:00 p.m.

A public meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Thursday, June 2, 2022. To adhere to social distancing measures, the meeting was not held at 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, but was conducted as a virtual web meeting/conference call.

Ms. Flynn Giles moved to approve the May 5, 2022 minutes. Ms. Danna seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Members present: Allan Shad, Chair; Erica Zoren, Vice-Chair; Bruno Reich, Secretary; Julianne Danna; Ellen Flynn Giles

Staff present: Beth Burgess, Samantha Holmes, Kristen Haskins

This report and any recommendations are based on the Guidelines adopted by the Commission. The report is prepared by Commission staff and does not represent the views of the Commission or of the Department of Planning and Zoning.

PLANS FOR APPROVAL

Regular Agenda
1. HPC-22-24 – 6060 Old Lawyers Hill Road, Elkridge
2. HPC-22-21 – 3910 New Cut Road, Ellicott City (continued from May and subsequently withdrawn)

OTHER BUSINESS
1. Rules of Procedure Update – Vote on proposal to update Rules of Procedure to address demolition by neglect, update meeting procedures for hybrid meetings and make technical corrections.
2. Design Guideline Update – General feedback and comments on Chapters 1, 2, 4 and Glossary.
3. Administrative Updates – Application forms
REGULAR AGENDA

HPC-22-24 – 6060 Old Lawyers Hill Road, Elkridge, HO-447
Applicant: Finn Ramsland

Request: The Applicant, Finn Ramsland, requests Advisory Comments to construct an addition and make exterior alterations at 6060 Old Lawyers Hill Road, Elkridge.

Background and Site Description: This property is located in the Lawyers Hill Historic District. The property is also listed on the Historic Sites Inventory as HO-447, Maycroft. According to the Historic Sites Inventory form, the building on the property was constructed in 1871 by Charles G. Mayer, husband of Susan Dobbin Mayer who was the daughter of George Washington Dobbin, prominent lawyer, judge and educator who built his home on the hill, later known as Lawyers Hill in his honor. The Inventory form notes the building as a fine example of the Queen Anne style, that remains today much as it was when originally constructed. The Inventory form states:

“IT is built in an L plan in the Queen Anne Style with frame siding for the first floor and fish scale shingling above. Two gabled roof dormer windows are set into the west side and one into the east side of the gabled roof of the main section of the house which is a four bay wide, four bay deep, two and a half story, gabled roof (running north-south) frame structure with tall corbeled brick square chimney set into the middle of the west side of the roof line. The two dormers on the west hold double hung rectangular windows with fourteen square lights around one light over one light, while the rectangular, double hung window on the east side holds six-over-one lights with fish scale shingling decorating its pediment.

A two-story high gabled roof (running east-west) wing extends from the north side of the east wall. Its first floor has a continuous one-story high bay window built on a stone foundation running along the east, north and south sides of this section holding two rectangular windows on each of the three elevations and forming a beautiful and charming dining room with mantle niece in the middle of its north wall.”

Scope of Work: The Applicant initially applied for a Certificate of Approval; however, additional details on the drawings and other specifications were needed. The Applicant has amended the application and is now seeking Advisory Comments from the Commission. The Applicant proposes to construct an addition, expand the deck and make alterations to the decking and seeks Advisory Comments on the proposed work.

The addition will be located on the front of the house, under the porch to the right of the front door. The deck addition will be located on the right side of the house, adjacent to the historic wraparound porch and connect to the existing right side deck. A set of stairs will be constructed off the existing right side deck to access the back yard.

The application also proposes to replace the porch decking with a composite material, but specification sheets and images were not yet provided.
Figure 1 - Addition to be located within red circle area under porch, to the right of the front door. Expanded deck will be located to the right, adjacent to the historic porch.
Figure 2 - Aerial view of house.

Figure 3 - Floor plan showing proposed additions.
Figure 4 - Existing front elevation

Figure 5 - Proposed front elevation - alterations circled in red.
Figure 6 - Existing right side elevation.

Figure 7 - Proposed alterations circled in red: addition, expanded deck and new staircase.
HPC Review Criteria and Recommendations:

**Chapter 7: New Construction: Additions, Porches, Garages and Outbuildings**

1) Chapter 7 recommends:
   a. “Attach additions to the side or rear of a historic building. Design and place additions to avoid damaging or obscuring key architectural features of the historic building.”
   b. “Design additions to be subordinate to the historic building in size, height, scale and detail and to allow the form of the original structure to be seen. Distinguish an addition from the original structure by using vertical trim or a setback or offset between the old section and the new.”
   c. “Design additions so that if they were to be removed in the future, the form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.”

The location of the addition will be on the front side of the house, and it will be constructed underneath and within the existing porch. The drawings provided are more conceptual and the massing and specific detailing is not visible. A deck is proposed to be constructed off the historic porch, in order to wrap around the right side of the house and connect to the existing deck. The design of the deck, to include posts, railings, balusters, fascia board and decking, is unclear. Additionally, how the deck will tie in to the historic porch is not clear.

2) Chapter 7 recommends:
   a. “Use window sash patterns that repeat or are similar to the sash patterns of existing windows. Sliding glass doors, picture windows and skylights are generally out of character for Lawyers Hill’s historic buildings, but they may be used if not on a primary facade or in a highly visible location.”
   b. “Use exterior materials (including roof, walls and foundations) similar to or compatible with the texture and color of those on the existing building”
c. “For frame construction, use wood siding rather than aluminum, vinyl and other synthetic materials. Synthetic siding may be used on additions not visible from a public road.”

d. “Construct porches, decks, stoops and exterior stairs of painted wood rather than poured concrete or unpainted wood.”

The application states that the siding will match the existing siding, and that the windows and doors will match the existing, but the specific details on the existing wood siding profile and window and door design that will be matched were not provided. All paint colors are proposed to match the existing, but the specific details were not provided.

The existing porch flooring is constructed of painted wood. The material of the existing right side deck is unknown. The new decking is proposed to be composite however, the Guidelines recommend that porches, decks and stoops be constructed of painted wood rather than concrete or unpainted wood. The design of the deck and stairs (such as the material and color of treads, risers, fascia, railings) is unknown.

Chapter 6.F: Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Existing Buildings; Porches

3) Chapter 6.F recommends:
   a. “Maintain and repair porches, including flooring, railings, columns, supports, ornamentation and roofing, that are original or appropriate to the building’s development and style.”
   b. “Replace deteriorated features with new materials that match the original as closely as possible in material, design and finish.”

The application proposes to replace the porch decking (flooring) with a composite decking material. It is unclear if the historic porch decking is proposed to be replaced or just the right-side modern deck flooring.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends the HPC provide advice on the proposed location and size of the room addition, the deck expansion, the material choices for the deck, siding and windows and provide advice and guidance on the additional details needed on the architectural drawings so that the addition and deck expansion can be more clearly visualized for the Certificate of Approval application.

Testimony: Mr. Shad swore in Finn Ramsland. He provided an overview of the project, which involves moving an interior staircase to a new area of the house, in order to expand the kitchen and walkways in the main areas of the house. He said they looked at different options for moving the stairs and found this was the most in keeping of the original house. He said the area above Figure 3 was originally part of the porch and was added on by the previous owners after a fire and this would bring the house back to its original proportion. The intent is to match the existing materials on the front and side of the house. The wood siding would match the same characteristics of the existing and they might be able to reuse the existing siding in most case for the walls that will be moved out.

Mr. Ramsland referenced a modern door on Figure 3, Item 3 which was added by previous owners and explained the doors will be reused in the addition. He said the intent is to reuse as much as possible from what is existing. He explained they will match the dimension, height, width, number of lights and design of the windows and construct them out of wood to match historic windows.

Mr. Ramsland said they are seeking to add a composite decking material for Item 2, the added deck and for the treated 2x4 lumber on the existing deck on the right side of the house. He said that is the north
east facing side and gets low sunlight, lots of moisture and would prefer a material not prone to rot. They would like to construct Item 4, the proposed new staircase in same type of composite material as the added deck. For the railing, they look to mirror the existing railing on the opposite side of historic porch. He said the historic porch painted wood flooring will remain and is not proposed for removal.

Mr. Reich thanked Mr. Ramsland for the explanation and said it sounded like they are trying to do a careful remodel and preserve the character of the house. Mr. Reich said keeping the wood porch was important, he saw no issues with the composite deck material on the right side deck and new deck. Mr. Reich expressed some confusion on the window proposal, but said it sounded like the same fenestration pattern on the front. Mr. Ramsland said transom windows and the boxed out set of doors by the deck in Figure 6 are all new, they are proposing to turn those into windows (new windows to be built). They would add two windows there, and move the transom window and door over to the upper left circle in Figure 7. Mr. Reich asked if the sidelights would be new and Mr. Ramsland said they would be new, but would match the size of the windows to the right of the door. Figure 8 shows the multi light transom window they would move and reuse. Mr. Reich said the grille pattern looked really tight compared to the rest of the windows on the house. He said it was not uncommon for a transom over the door to look different, but it was hard to tell given the images. Mr. Reich requested drawings with all the notes and information about materials, plans, elevations, cut sheets for materials, as much information as the owner can provide.

Ms. Danna expressed concern for needing the specifications on the windows, doors, etc. For the new deck/walkway, she said they do not have any railing information, and asked if the deck shown on Figure 7 would be composite. Mr. Ramsland said yes, that would be composite, including the existing deck that is pressure treated. She expressed concern for how the walkway would look adjacent to the historic porch and what it would look like overall. He said they could attempt to match the railings on the existing porch and said the other option could be low visibility railings with horizontal high tension lines that are hard to see. He did not propose that because it is a very modern railing looking system. He asked for guidance on which is preferred or other options and examples.

Ms. Zoren agreed with the comments already stated. For the proposed addition, her concern was that the Guidelines recommend against building additions on the front of the house and this is the main front façade. She understands the reasoning for it, but the Guidelines recommend an offset to distinguish new construction, so it sets back from the main elevation and stands alone. She suggested the addition wall be set back 1 or 2 feet from the main front door wall, letting the main elevation read as such and have the addition offset. For the side deck, Ms. Zoren had the same concerns as Ms. Danna. She said decks are usually completely on the back or far from the front elevation. She said the side deck will change the look of the house and be awkward, with the historic wood painted porch and composite decking abutting it. She recommended exploring the deck in 3D if they want to pursue it. Ms. Zoren did not have any concerns on the composite deck replacing the existing pressure treated deck and for the construction of the new stairs. She questioned the new deck proposed to be adjacent to the historic porch linking to the existing deck and if they really need to connect. She said the reuse of all materials is appropriate. She summarized for the Applicant to consider offsetting the proposed parlor wall by a foot or two, and really consider the side deck and what it will do and the best way for it to blend and not obscure the historic porch and house.

The Commission reviewed a photo of the house from a previous site visit to see the porch railing. Ms. Danna referenced a transom and Mr. Ramsland said he would try to match a transom window found on a few windows around the house.
Mr. Ramsland said that upon approach to the house, the right corner is not highly visible and he would document that. He said they would try to match the composite to the painted wood floors with a dark gray to blend. He referenced Figure 6 and Figure 7 and said one area would be under the addition that was already done, between the porch and the deck and an area of the porch that currently has a swing on it. He said he would do a better job documenting the sides of the house to show that it should not look that different.

Ms. Flynn Giles agreed with Mr. Reich’s comments. She found adding the railing to the porch would be a positive factor to tie the old into the new and provide balance. She agreed there were some details that were hard to see with the sketches they have.

Mr. Shad agreed with most of the comments already made. Mr. Shad asked if Mr. Ramsland was proposing for the new deck to have composite materials for the railings as well. Mr. Ramsland said he is flexible in that area and will do what the HPC thinks is best. He said if wood is a preference they can do that as well, he said he has not looked specifically at the railing material yet. Mr. Ramsland asked what they would prefer to see, painted treated lumber or composite. Mr. Shad asked if the existing deck rails are wood. Mr. Ramsland said they are wood. Mr. Shad asked how they are holding up and Mr. Ramsland said they are not holding up and they would most likely replace the railing at the same time.

Mr. Shad said that Mr. Ramsland will need to submit a lot more information, details and specifics on what is existing, what is being proposed, different materials, systems, etc when he comes back for a Certificate of Approval. Mr. Reich recommended matching the wood railing from the other side of the deck. He suggested looking at hardwoods such as Ipe or Mahogany, which will last much longer than treated wood.

Mr. Ramsland explained the addition will follow along with the existing stone foundation of the house, which is one reason they do not want to offset the addition. He said he is very committed to getting that front window on the house looking correct and appropriate. He referenced moisture issues in the basement and wanting to keep the addition wall on the existing foundation to eliminate the moisture issue.

Ms. Holmes asked the Commission which types of drawings or perspectives would be more helpful to have. Mr. Reich said structural plans, a site plan, and a section would helpful.

HPC-22-21 – 3910 New Cut Road, Ellicott City
Applicant: Bryan R. Moody, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks

Update: This application was continued at the May HPC meeting, but was subsequently withdrawn by the Applicant.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Rules of Procedure Update** - The Howard County Historic Preservation Commission will vote on amendments to the Commission’s Rules of Procedure to update meeting procedures for demolition by neglect, update meeting procedures for hybrid meetings, and make technical corrections. Proposed amendments have been posted for 30 days prior and can be found at [https://www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/historic-preservation-commission](https://www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/historic-preservation-commission)
**Motion:** Ms. Flynn Giles moved to accept the modifications to the Rules of Procedure as presented. Ms. Danna seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Flynn Giles moved to authorize the Executive Secretary to confirm the certification and submit the document as necessary. Mr. Reich seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. **Design Guideline Update** – General comments and feedback on the following chapters:
   a. Chapter 1: Introduction
   b. Chapter 2: History
   c. Chapter 4: The Role of the Federal Government
   d. Glossary

3. **Administrative Updates** – Application Form Updates

   The Commission discussed historic trees in order to update the Advisory Comments application so that the form requests the correct information for the Commission to determine what trees are historic. Ms. Mary Kendall provided background on the Forest Conservation Act and updates to the Forest Conservation Manual in 2021. The Manual, section 2.2.5 provides a definition of a historic tree and provides some guidance/criteria on identifying a historic trees – such as Specimen trees with a DBH of 30” or greater or understory trees with a DBH of 10” or greater. Ms. Kendall asked the HPC to provide guidance on additional criteria that should be considered to identify historic trees. Ms. Danna provided some criteria for consideration, such as memorial trees or fruit trees, and whether part of an orchard existed during the property's period of significance. Another item is the cultural significance of the area and trees that have more meaning to different cultures or context of the site. Mr. Reich suggested adding criteria from the Avoca plan, such as the condition, invasive or native, intentional/part of historic plan.

   Ms. Holmes provided an update on the Tax Credit Pre-Approval form, explaining a new section that was being added back in and no longer will be considered a supplementary form. Ms. Holmes explained that all forms have been updated with new instructions, to correspond to those currently required with the pdf submission and that all applications contain information including the updated email address, preservation@howardcountymd.gov, which Ms. Holmes and Ms. Burgess both receive.

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

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S. Allan Shad, Chair

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Beth Burgess, Executive Secretary

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Samantha Holmes, Preservation Planner