

VILLAGE OF BALLSTON SPA  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
May 12, 2023 8 AM

Commission members Gary Stephenson, Carrie Chapman, and Steve Springer met at 17 East High Street, with Andrew and Kristina Maas in response to a building permit application dated May 08, 2023 and referred to the Historic District Commission on May 09, 2023.

The application seeks to “replace rotted wood on porch – replacing mahogany floor boards w/ same mahogany floor, replacing rotted column bases, replacing rotted spindles w/ reproduction spindles. Replacing rotted lattice with similar period appropriate lattice. Railings do not need to be replaced, we will be using original railings. Metal [stair] railing removed and wooden railing w/ period appropriate newel post put in place.”

Several aspects of the application come under the heading of “repair” as opposed to new work. These include replacement of the floor boards and restoration of the porch railings including replacing spindles with reproductions of the existing ones. Steve Springer recommended that mahogany be used for these replacements instead of the proposed cedar. Steve Springer and Gary Stephenson also volunteered to try and find a source for custom turnings more local than that found by the applicants. These repair items do not come under the auspicious of the HDC and the applicants were informed as such.

The aspects of the application that do come under review by the commission include “replacing rotted column bases”, “replacing rotted lattice with similar period appropriate lattice” and replacement of stairs with new ones.

In as much that the applicants had already modified several of the round posts, removing the lower portion and replacing it with a square cross section, the HDC took the position of evaluating the appropriateness of that new design. Noted is that additional moldings are proposed be added to the presently plain square post sections per the photo below:



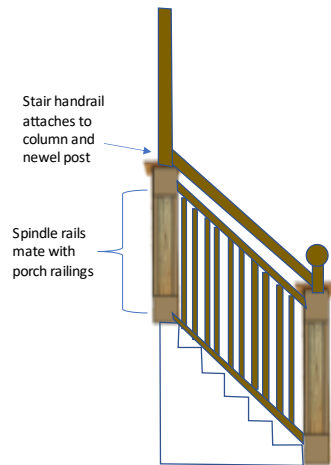
The proposed style was deemed not inconsistent with the rest of the building. The change was also deemed acceptable given the difficulties of preserving the present railings otherwise, given their rotted ends. The applicants were requested to save with the house long term, representative removed sections along with the base moldings in case the original post configuration should ever want to be restored in the future.

Lattice replacement was discussed with the applicants showing horizontal/vertical oriented lattice that they intend to order as no existing lattice, original or not was on site to evaluate. This proposed lattice has equal spacing between slats and spaces that is consistent with witness marks on the lower porch. Further it was confirmed that the lattice would be attached from the rear of exposed lower porch trim boards. The HDC members in attendance approved this choice shown below.



The proposed porch steps were then discussed. As the original steps had been entirely removed by a previous owner, discussion revolved around an appropriate design. The applicants proposed newel posts that would replicate the new lower portions of the porch posts. The same style spindles albeit a bit longer and a similar railing to the porch proper being

proposed. Consideration is given to the need for a higher railing to meet code and this would be in addition to the main rail afore mentioned. This additional rail will necessitate a smaller cross section on top of the main newel post. The commission recommended that this section be a rounded one to reflect the porch post treatment and have an appropriate finial. A sketch of the proposed steps from the applicants follows:



Current steps and railing are not original.  
Replace with new stringers and mahogany steps  
Newel posts will match column bases and include capitals.  
Spindles will be turned to match original spindles  
Spindle rails will mate properly with porch railings/column bases  
Handrail will be above spindle rail to be at proper height for use/safety

Aside from the content of the application, Commission members discussed pros and cons of different means for supporting the porch. Some concern was raised pertaining to the current arrangement with timbers laid directly on the ground without footing support.

In summary each of the attending members agreed to the following:

1. That the Commission has no objection to the new porch post treatment.
2. The proposed porch lattice design and attachment method is acceptable.
3. The new porch steps design is approved but the commission requests they remain in a consultative role as the design details are refined.

Submitted by Gary Stephenson acting for Chairman John Cromie.