

**BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA**

July 9, 2019

**Regular Meeting
Town Hall**

Present: Angela Toler, Chairman
Michael Whitlow, Vice Chairman
Gary Vaughan

Absent: Nancy Lehew
Andrea White

Staff: Jeremy F. Camp, Planning Director/Zoning Administrator
Matt Farace, Planning Technician
Connie L. Potter, Sr. Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Toler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

- FRCOA001476-2019. Certificate of Appropriateness Application to replace 30 wood windows with vinyl windows at 144 Chester Street.

The applicant Philip Wine clarified that there are 42 window replacements rather than 30. Mr. Wine handed out additional information that was not included in the staff report.

Mr. Camp said the property is located at 144 Chester Street on the west side of Chester Street, south of Union Street. The proposed window replacements are for the main house structure. The property is zoned C-2 and located in the historic district. Photos of the building were included on the 2nd page of the staff report including a more recent photograph before the 2 lower level front elevation windows were installed. The applicant started the installation of the windows and had installed 2 of the new windows when he was told he needed to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to be reviewed by the BAR. From speaking to the applicant, they are only replacing the windows in the main house.

The building is quite historic, Circa 1830. Per the Historic District Guidelines, the application is not something staff could approve because the proposed materials are not

“like” for “like”. The applicant has stated that it is unfeasible to install wood replacement windows and is proposing vinyl replacement windows from Lowes.

Staff’s conclusion per the guidelines is that there has been no demonstrated information on whether the windows can be restored. That would need to be elaborated on further to determine if it is truly unfeasible to save the windows. There is also no information of the cost of wood window replacements. This is not something the BAR can primarily base their decision on, but it is a factor for consideration. Based on the guidelines, staff recommends that the applicant either go with wood window replacements or try to restore the existing windows. Mr. Camp noted that it is unclear if the existing windows are original or not. Based on the reading of the historic survey, indications are that the existing wood windows are not original and have been replaced at some point in time. There is no clarification on whether the original windows were 2/2 or 6/6. The applicant is proposing a 6/6 window. The addition is much newer and blends in nicely, which compliments the building.

Mr. Camp clarified that there are 2 different styles of windows with 6/6 on the sides of the building and 2/2 on the front façade. The applicant would like to have all the windows in the same design.

Mr. Vaughan “guessed” that the old wood windows were probably put in in the early 1900s.

Mr. Camp said at that point in time the windows would have been 60-80 years old.

Mr. Wine said his understanding is that all the windows have been replaced and there is no consistency in the windows.

Chairman Toler expressed that the Historic District Guidelines clearly say they should be wood windows. We’ve had countless meetings with county staff, town staff, community volunteers, and input for years at this point and all agree that the historic district is important, worth investing in and that it is worth saving. Currently they are working on the Community Development Block Grant. There are about 30 property owners submitting applications to do this kind of work and they are being held to national historic preservation guidelines. Vinyl replacement windows don’t have a chance in those guidelines.

Phillip Vaught stated that the subject property is a residential apartment building. People live there and they use these windows daily, unlike other historic buildings on Main and Chester Street that operate during the day and this building is home for several families. The practical reasoning behind purchasing vinyl over wood is to accommodate the daily use of these windows by the residents. Mr. Vaught and the owner of the property are interested in preserving the historical character of the Town as well, but the task of doing so must be weighed against the benefit of providing residents with suitable rental amenities. Beyond that it is not economically feasible for them to replace them with wooden windows. If we were to follow the staff report recommendation to replace the

windows with wooden replacements, the cost would be astronomical. A rough estimate would be \$40,000. That is nearly four times what they are spending on a vinyl equivalent. Regarding the other recommendation in the staff report to repair the windows, the property owner has been doing so for the last forty years. These windows cannot be salvaged. They have been repaired and re-glazed many times over. Panes are falling out and they are posing a safety hazard for the residents. The property owners have a tuff task of wanting to comply and contribute to the historical nature of Chester Street, but it is also a place where people live. The windows that have been selected were chosen in an effort to make the building more uniform and visibly appealing and to maintain the style the building has had for years. Most of the windows that have existed on the property have the 6/6 style. None of the windows are standard size. Many are particularly wide, and we were not able to order the 2/2 configuration because they would not work. The staff report says that the original windows should be repaired instead of being replaced unless not possible. For this property owner it is not possible to repair or replace with a wooden equivalent based on finances. They cannot save the windows they are falling out. As people are opening the windows to put in AC units, the panes are falling out and it is a big risk. The ballpark estimate for the wood windows was \$40,000 vs. \$12,000 for the vinyl.

BAR continued discussion with Mr. Wine, Mr. Vaught and each other.

Mr. Vaughan moved to allow vinyl 1/1 windows on the front of the building and use 6/6 vinyl windows on the rest of the building.

BAR members held more discussion with each other. They determined that the applicant could come back with a proposal to salvage the front 9 windows if possible. Mr. Camp stated he could determine the approval of those administratively. Chairman Toler clarified that for this meeting the BAR would approve the package for all of the façade and the applicant could come back with a proposal for the front nine windows and Mr. Camp could approve those administratively.

There was no second on the original motion.

Vice Chairman Whitlow moved, seconded by Mr. Vaughan that the façade of the building remain wood windows and the 2 that have already been done be replaced with 6/6 wooden windows and the remainder of the property can be 1/1 vinyl windows that have already been purchased.

It was clarified that the windows on the front will be 2/2 wood windows and the remainder of the windows will be 6/6 vinyl.

Chairman Toler clarified that it is approved to restore the front windows or replace them like for like and the vinyl windows that have been purchased can be used on the remainder of the property.

**VOTE: Yes – Whitlow, Toler, Vaughan
Absent – Lehew, White**

OTHER

Vice Chairman Whitlow said he would like to start a chain of emails regarding updating the guidelines and setting some goals. BAR members suggested doing one section at a time.

Mr. Camp asked if the BAR wanted to schedule that for the September meeting and asked if they wanted to use sections from other jurisdictions and do away with the current guidelines and start from scratch or edit the existing guidelines. BAR members agreed they would like to amend the existing guidelines rather than starting from scratch.

Matt Farace said he would create a “Box” file and BAR members could edit the information at will.

Mr. Vaughan moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Whitlow to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE: Yes – Toler, Whitlow, Vaughan
Absent – White, Lehew**

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Connie L. Potter
Sr. Administrative Assistant