

**VILLAGE OF PITTSFORD  
Historic Preservation Board  
Monday May 11, 2020 at 6:00 pm**

**PRESENT:**

**Members:** William McBride  
Lisa Cove  
Ken Morrow  
Mark Harrington  
Virginia Searl

**Village Attorney:** Jeff Turner  
**Village Clerk:** Dorothea Ciccarelli  
**Recording Secretary:** Linda Habeeb

Member McBride called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. McBride read the following statement:

“Pursuant to Governor Cuomo’s recent Executive Orders 202.1, and due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Village Hall is closed to the public during official meetings. The members of the HPB and the applicants for this meeting will participate in the HPB meeting from their homes for this meeting. This HPB meeting will be made available to the public for viewing through videoconferencing link if they so choose, which is identified on the Village website.”

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Board members had no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Bill Keane, 42 E. Jefferson Road, Fence**

**Present:** Bill Keane, Homeowner

**Application: Submitted, date-stamped, and Building Inspector reviewed on 04/03/20.**

**Discussion:** The applicant stated that he is proposing removing the existing metal fence on the west side of the backyard and the cross fence that goes from the garage to the fence and replacing with a 6-foot-high, dog-eared wooden fence with a gate in the front. He is also proposing removing the vinyl white fence in the front of the house. The gate will be perpendicular to the main fence that's going to be installed and will be approximately 8-feet wide and opens in the middle for access. All fencing will be within the property line replacing existing fencing.

**Motion:** Member McBride made a motion, seconded by Member Searl, to approve the application, as submitted.

**Vote: McBride – yes; Cove – yes; Morrow - yes; Harrington – yes; Searl - yes. The decision was filed in the office of the Village Clerk on May 11, 2020.**

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**Peter & Jill Crooker, 15 Sutherland Street ~ Railings**

**Present:** Bill Keane, Homeowner

**Application: Submitted, date-stamped, and Building Inspector reviewed on 04/23/20.**

**Discussion:** The applicants are proposing constructing railings for the front stairs of the house, located at 15 Sutherland Street. The proposed railings will be made of wood and will match the style of the existing porch railings in design, dimensions, and color. Ms. Crooker further explained that the house was built in 1914 and has never had railings. She stated that they now need to install the railings for safety reasons.

Member Cove stated that according to Village records, this is a 1914 Frank Shearer House. She further stated that according to the National Register of Historic Places, this is a two-story frame house with American Foursquare massing, front-facing gable roof with shed dormers and ogie-shaped, rafter tails, full-width porch, with shed roof. The porch has rock-faced, cast concrete piers, supporting battered square posts. This was specifically stated in the documents as a significant contributing factor to this structure. She stated that although she understands the need for railings as a safety measure, she is concerned about obstructing the stone and stone steps. She suggested that the applicants consider a metal or iron, simple railing either on one side or both sides that would not disrupt the visual appeal of the home.

Member Searl stated that the Village of Pittsford Design Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings discusses porches and their railings. She stated that it's important that the new work match the details of the original porch railing. She also pointed out that the railings are removable. If, in the future, someone wanted to restore the porch to its original appearance, the railings, as proposed, could easily be removed, without any damage to the original structure. She stated that, in her opinion, the proposed railings are compatible with, and in keeping with, the architecture of the home.

Member Cove referenced number 9 of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards: "New additions, exterior alterations and related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that categorize the property. New work shall be differentiated from the old, and shall be compatible with the mass scale." She commented that adding these railings will alter the view of the house and significantly obscure the beauty of the stonework at the entrance of the house. The safety concern can be addressed by installing a less heavy metal bar or a wrought-iron bar on one side or both.

Member Searl explained that Standards 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are referring to additions to a building, and a railing is not considered an addition to a building. Member Cove stated that a railing is an exterior alteration that significantly alters the view of the house. The railings are a character-defining feature of the home. The placement of the railing is not going to be in keeping with the massive stone entrance. She provided photographs of Village homes that have stone steps and stone columns that used either a very simple wrought-iron railing or a simple bar railing that is functional, safe, and doesn't disrupt the view of the home.

Mr. Turner stated that in reviewing Standard 9, the Board needs to consider whether the proposal will destroy any historic materials. Member Cove stated that it impacts the architectural style of the home, and it was not the intent to have a wood railing going down the sides of stone pillars. She further explained that, in her opinion, wood railings will block the view of that entrance.

Member McBride stated that the wooden rails would be an extension of the style and the character of the railings that already exist on the porch. He also noted that the railings are removable. The proposed railings are designed in the same style as the existing railings around the porch, and they do not destroy the view of the piers on the side, which are still fully viewable. The Board needs to decide whether the change to the character of the steps and the front of the house is significant enough that it negates the other elements that are on the positive side of installing the railings.

Member Searl commented that there's a significant amount of the block on the building. The amount of the obstruction caused by the railing is very minimal. You'll be able to see through these railings; it's not a solid rail.

Member Cove stated that if we went back to 1914, and the builder was building this house, and he was going to put in railings, he would have constructed very traditional wood steps like all the other houses. But that's not what he did, he put these pillars in and he put the stone in for a reason. So now we're in 2020, and we need a functional railing so people are safe walking up and down the stairs. That will change the intent of what the architect built.

Member Searl explained that the Standards for Rehabilitation are the most lenient of the preservation standards developed by the Park Service. The overall goal of the standards is to allow practical, contemporary use of historic structures. "Rehabilitation," as used in the standards, is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration to make possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property that are significant to its historical architectural and cultural values." These standards don't say not to make any changes unless it's exactly what the original architect intended. In the spirit of the ordinance, and in the spirit of the Secretary of the Interior Standards, allowing alterations that are appropriate and compatible with, and in keeping with, the architectural design of the building is what the Board needs to look at. Board members need to decide if the proposal will have an adverse impact on the structure.

**Motion:** Member McBride made a motion, seconded by Member Harrington, to approve the application, as submitted.

**Vote: McBride – yes; Cove – no; Morrow - yes; Harrington – yes; Searl - yes. The decision was filed in the office of the Village Clerk on May 11, 2020.**

**Minutes:**

**Motion:** Member McBride made a motion, seconded by Member Cove, to approve the February 10, 2020 minutes, as drafted.

**Vote: McBride – yes; Cove – no; Morrow - yes; Harrington – yes. The decision was filed in the office of the Village Clerk on May 11, 2020.**

**Motion:** Member McBride made a motion, seconded by Member Cove, to approve the March 9, 2020 minutes, as drafted.

**Vote: McBride – yes; Cove – no; Morrow - yes; Harrington – yes. The decision was filed in the office of the Village Clerk on May 11, 2020.**

**Motion:** Member McBride made a motion, seconded by Member Cove, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm.

**Vote: McBride – yes; Cove – no; Morrow - yes; Harrington – yes. The decision was filed in the office of the Village Clerk on May 11, 2020.**