

**Historic District Review Committee
Staff Report
Date of Meeting: April 11, 2011
CAPP2011-0002
Historic District: Waterford
Project Planners: Lauren Murphy, Heidi Siebentritt**

Action Item

CAPP 2011-0002 Custer: Addition of iron railing to existing porch staircase in the Waterford Historic District. PIN # 303-27-7303.

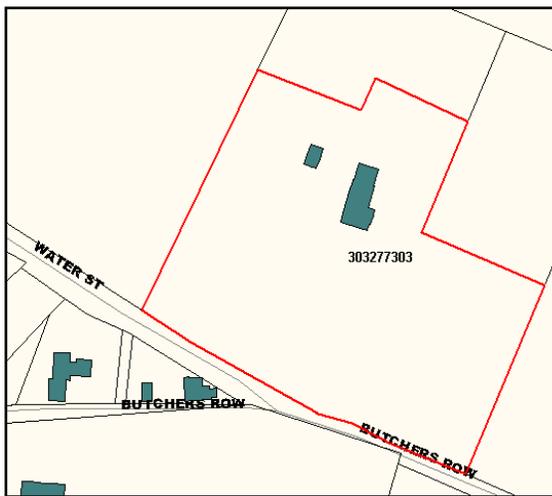


Figure 1: Subject Property, 40266 Water Street

Background

The subject property is located at 40266 Water Street in the Waterford Historic District. The property is part of the newly expanded Waterford Historic District which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 7, 2011. The property is considered to be in the Village portion of the Waterford District, rather than the Rural Area of the District.

The property is approximately 3.19 acres and contains a single family dwelling constructed in 1868, known as Moxley Hall. The Hall is a five-bay solid stone residence with a stone ell that was modified with a recent frame addition. A

wood frame porch expands across the front façade, accessible via six concrete stairs. Large Yew bushes flank the porch stairs as seen below:



Photo 1: Front Elevation "Moxley Hall"

According to the zoning referral letter dated March 30, 2011, there are no zoning issues with this application.

Analysis

This application is evaluated under the Historic District Guidelines: Waterford (“Waterford Guidelines” or “Guidelines”), Chapter 3, *Site Elements* and Chapter 7, *Guidelines for Materials* with references to Chapter 5 Section E, *Additions – Materials and Details*.



Photo 2: Example of picketed handrail in Waterford

The application proposes a minor modification to the existing porch via the addition of a hand rail. The applicant’s statement of justification indicates that a new insurance company is requiring the handrail and two design options have been provided to the HDRC for their consideration.

The first option is a railing with pickets. The railing posts are 36 inches in height and one inch thick, with half inch pickets. This option for the railing would feature a half curl finish. The second option is a more simplified version of the first railing without pickets. This option shows a decorative “lamb’s ear” design for the end of the railing. Both options would be wrought iron painted black. Wrought iron is a common material found throughout the Waterford Historic

District on railings, fences, and other details. The Waterford Guidelines do not provide specific requirements for railings but do provide some general guidance on fences, details and materials which are applicable to this project.

The Waterford Guidelines indicate that additions to existing structures should “use materials, building elements, architectural details, and colors that are compatible with the existing building (Waterford Guidelines, *Guidelines for Additions, Materials and Details*, page 82, Guideline #1). The proposed black railing is compatible with existing shutter details (black iron), shutters (black), and roof (black standing seam metal) in terms of both color and/or material. Both options for the handrail meet the *Design Guidelines for Materials and Details* on additions.



Photo 3: Example of lamb’s ear detail in Waterford

The Guidelines also indicate that the design of a new addition should be “compatible with the architectural style” and is “subordinate in size, scale, massing and siting” to the historic structure (Waterford Guidelines, *Guidelines for Additions, Location, Orientation and Attachment*, page 80, Guideline #2 and 3). Both handrail options meet these guidelines for new construction. The handrail without pickets is simpler thereby drawing less attention to the new railing and is more subordinate in detail to the porch. However, the majority of handrails in Waterford that relate to both residential and institutional buildings, (after a brief field visit) feature simple square pickets. This is further validated by Chapter 3 of the Guidelines which references ornamental iron in fences and details in Waterford (Waterford Guidelines, *Guidelines for Site Elements*,

Fences and Walls, page 45, text). Either option therefore relates back to the district and surrounding properties, as well as Moxley Hall, and would be an appropriate addition to the porch. **Staff notes that a handrail of either design will be largely obscured by the bushes flanking the porch steps.**

Chapter 7 of the Waterford Design Guidelines: Materials does not specifically address metal handrails, however, the Guidelines do indicate that “care should be taken to guard the prevailing character of each district through the choice of materials” (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials, Metal, page 113, text). The addition of the metal railing is consistent with other metal details in Waterford and existing details on Moxley Hall.

Findings

1. *Option One, a black railing with pickets and a half curl finish, meets the Design Guidelines for Materials and Details found in Chapters 3 and 5 of the Waterford Design Guidelines. Option One also complies with the Design Guidelines for Materials, specifically metal, found in Chapter 7 of the Waterford Design Guidelines.*
2. *Option Two, a black railing without pickets and a lamb’s tongue finish, meets the Design Guidelines for Materials and Details on additions Chapters 3 and 5 of the Waterford Design Guidelines. Option Two also complies with the Design Guidelines for Materials, specifically metal, found in Chapter 7 of the Waterford Design Guidelines.*

Recommendation

This application proposes to construct a simple iron handrail to the existing porch staircase to meet the requirements of the applicant’s insurance company. Both options proposed by the applicant are compatible with materials found on the house and are consistent with the design and scale of iron handrails found throughout the Waterford Historic District. Both options presented comply with the Waterford Guidelines for details and materials. Staff recommends approval of both options, which will allow the applicant to construct either design at their discretion.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2011-0002 for the construction of a black wrought iron hand rail at 40266 Water Street in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 3 of the staff report dated April 11, 2011 with the provision that the applicant may construct “Option 1” or “Option 2” as submitted in the application.*
2. *I move an alternative motion.*