

Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report

Date of Meeting: July 11, 2011

CAPP2011-0012

Historic District: Goose Creek

Project Planner: Lauren Murphy

Action Item

CAPP 2011-0012 Brian & Polly Ahalt: New Residential Construction. PIN #491-19-4157.

Background

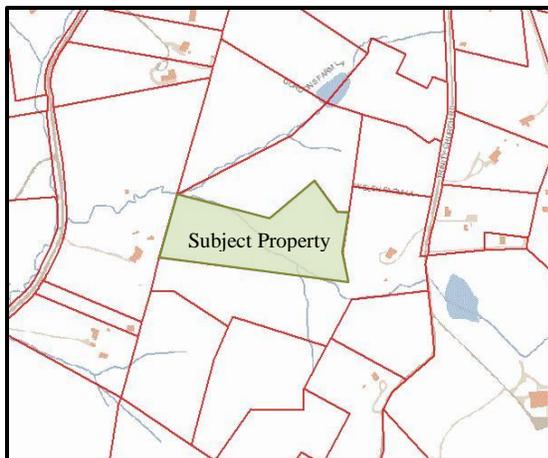


Figure 1: Subject Property, Trinity Church Road

The subject property is located on Trinity Church Road in the Goose Creek Historic District. Trinity Church Road is a narrow, gravel, dead end road running north/south and intersecting with the more highly traveled gravel Hughesville Road to the north. The proposed house is located on a 7.5 acre parcel, on the West side of Trinity Church Road, in the Welsh family subdivision. The HDRC reviewed and approved CAPP applications for two other properties within the same family subdivision: 18651 Trinity Church Road (CAPP2009-0019 Kennedy) and 18671 Trinity Church Road (CAPP2010-0018/CAAM2011-001 Young).

With this application, a two-story, 2,100 square foot house with a full, exposed basement is proposed.

Staff will provide the HDRC with any zoning comments or issues at the meeting on July 11th.

Analysis

This application is evaluated under the Historic District Guidelines: Goose Creek (“Goose Creek Guidelines” or “Guidelines”), Chapter 4, *Guidelines for New Construction*, with references to Chapter 3, *Guidelines for Site Elements*, and Chapter 7, *Guidelines for Materials*, where appropriate.

1. General (Chapter 3: Site Elements)

A. Landforms and Features:

The proposed application seeks to locate a new residential structure on a vacant lot. The Goose Creek Guidelines recommend minimizing any grade changes and preserving existing landforms in their natural state (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Landforms and Features, page 38, Guidelines 1& 2). The subject property has moderately steep slopes (see Figure 2 below) which limit the areas suitable for construction. The proposed house is modest in size to accommodate the topography of the subject property and the applicants will limit disturbance and grading in order to preserve the natural topography. **The application meets the Guidelines for land forms and features.**



Photo 1: General Area of proposed house, viewed from Trinity Church Road

B. Siting:

The Guidelines state that new construction should be sited according to historic precedents (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Siting, page 39, Guideline 1). Farm houses were typically sited between two higher landforms, on a saddle of land, rather than the on the ridge of a hill. The proposed house is sited on a flatter area of the property in order avoid extensive grading within the large areas of moderately steep slopes (see yellow shaded areas in Figure 2). While the proposed house site is at a high spot on the subject property, the proposed site is not the highest point in the surrounding area and the site is well shielded by the sloping topography on adjacent sites. The surrounding historic houses are sited closer to Trinity Church Road than the proposed house. However, the property does not have road frontage on any public road and is therefore unable to mimic the historic precedents for setbacks. **The proposed site meets the Guidelines for siting of new construction.**

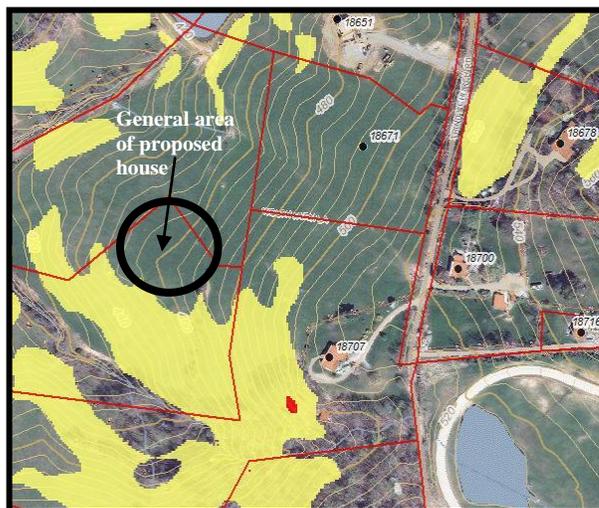


Figure 2: General Area of proposed house, note steep slopes in yellow and surrounding topography

2. Design (Chapter 4: New Construction)

The proposed design is modest in size and scale and is a departure from the 2-story variations of colonial and farm house designs typically proposed for new residences in the Goose Creek District. The proposed design incorporates traditional elements and design details into a more overall contemporary design. The Guidelines provide for the introduction of more contemporary architecture, especially in the rural areas where the design should relate to “the natural landscape rather than to other buildings” (Goose

Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Introduction, page 57, Guideline 2). In addition, the subject property has moderately steep slopes which provide the opportunity for a new home to be built into the topography.

A. Orientation:

The proposed house is angled towards Trinity Church Road. This orientation minimizes the view of the rear elevation from the public road and also helps preserve the sloping topography of the site. However, the side entry garage may be visible from Trinity Church Road with the currently proposed orientation. **If the house will be visible from the road, the house could be rotated slightly towards Trinity Church to help further shield the view of the garage from the public way.**

B. Massing:

The Guidelines state that early structures in the Goose Creek District were “rectangular in shape and one-and-one-half to two-stories tall” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Massing, page 61, text). The proposed structure mimics this early form and is modest in mass when compared with surrounding structures (both new and historic buildings). The primary façade is articulated with a front porch and three roof dormers which help to break up the mass of the house. The main block is further broken up by a recessed block with a lowered roofline. The applicants are also proposing a side-entry garage which will project out approximately 11 feet beyond the foundation of the front porch. This placement of the garage does not follow historic precedents or the Guidelines, which recommend that outbuildings, including garages that are not included in the mass of a new building, should be subordinate to the main building (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Accessory Structures and Breezeways, Guideline 2, p. 46). **Projecting the garage in front of the main block is not a subordinate location. The garage addition should be in the same plane as and/or recessed from the front elevation to meet the Guidelines.** Side-entry garages are the lowest preference of the Guidelines for accessory structures and the projecting garage does alter the otherwise simple form of the structure. Staff notes that the subject property is located near the terminus of Trinity Church Road and given the large setback, the proposed structure is not highly visible from the road. **The proposed application is generally consistent with the Guidelines for massing of new construction, however, further discussion of the impacts of the side-entry garage is necessary.**

C. Complexity of Form:

The majority of the surrounding structures (including the Young property under construction) have simple forms. The proposed dwelling also has a relatively simple form but also has a projecting, side-entry garage which is a non-traditional feature and impacts the form of the building. Staff notes that the Guidelines for accessory structures provide a hierarchy for garage placement and design which indicate a preference for detached garages and garages connected by a breezeway over garages incorporated into new construction (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 3). The Guidelines for form suggest the use of a rear ell to maintain a simple main block (Goose

Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Complexity of Form, page 63, Guideline 1). The current garage instead forms a front ell and is not subordinate to the main block. The HDRC could discuss the feasibility of relocating the garage to the rear of the structure as a rear ell or connecting the garage to the structure with a breezeway in order to maintain a simple main block while still providing the modern convenience of the garage desired by the applicants. As indicated above, a slight rotation in the orientation may also provide the necessary screening of the garage from the public way in the current location.

D. Height, Width and Scale:

The overall height of the structure is 26 feet and 10 inches. The Guidelines state that the height of a new building should be “within ten percent of the average height of adjacent historic structures” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Height Width & Scale, page 64, Guideline 1). The recently approved Kennedy house (CAPP2009-0019) was approved at approximately 29 feet tall. The HDRC also recently approved a single family dwelling for Brian and Carol Young at approximately 34 feet tall (CAPP2010-0018 and CAAM2011-0001). Due to the increased height of the Young dwelling, the height of this proposed house falls just outside of the ten percent range when the average height of the new structures is utilized but is within ten percent of the height of the Kennedy structure which is the most similar to historic farm houses. Considering that the average height of one story is 10’, the proposed height is in keeping with the surrounding historic properties. The Guidelines advocate the use of porches and porticos to help relate the structure to a human scale (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Height Width and Scale page 64, Guideline 3). The applicants are proposing a front porch which will run the length of the main block (evaluated below). **In general, the height, width, and scale of the proposed structure are consistent with surrounding structures and the Guidelines for new construction.**

E. Directional Expression:

The proposed structure has a horizontal expression, similar to the recently approved Kennedy and Young houses as well as historic farmhouses throughout this area of the historic district. The Guidelines state that the directional expression of new construction should reflect surrounding historic structures (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Directional Expression, page 65, Guideline 1). **The horizontal expression meets the Guidelines for new construction.**

F. Roof Form and Materials:

The Guidelines for new construction indicate that roof form should relate to adjacent historic structures; the proposed roof is a gable form which is the most common and preferred in the District (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Roof Form and Materials, page 66, Guideline 1). The proposed roof pitch is twelve-in-twelve which meets the Guidelines for roof pitch (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Roof Form and Materials, page 66, Guideline 2). The applicants are proposing 30 year architectural shingles. The Guidelines indicate a preference for standing seam metal, wood, or slate but provide the HDRC with the discretion to

approve dark, consistently colored asphalt shingles on new construction. **The roof form and materials are consistent with the Guidelines for new construction.**

G. Roof Features:

The Guidelines support the use of dormers in new construction to aid in breaking up the mass of larger roofs (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Roof Features, page 67, Guideline 1). Three roof dormers are proposed on the front elevation. The dormers will match the pitch of the roof (twelve-in-twelve) and are scaled appropriately to the main block. **The dormers meet the Guidelines for roof features.**

H. Chimney:

The Guidelines indicate that chimneys should be located according to historic precedents, typically on the gable end, and should be constructed of locally available fieldstone or brick (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Chimneys, page 68, Guidelines 1 and 2). The proposed chimney is located mid-wall rather than on the gable end but will not be visible from the front of the structure and is unlikely to be visible from the public roads. The Guidelines also take into account the asymmetrical location of chimneys in homes with irregular floor plans (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Chimneys, page 68, graphic). The applicants' statement of justification (SOJ) indicates that they intend to use a natural stone veneer on the exposed chimney in the future, however, the currently proposed material is concrete with a stucco finish. Staff notes that the Chimney may not be visible from Trinity Church Road. **However, cladding the chimney in stone is consistent with the Guidelines.**

I. Cornices, Overhangs and Parapets:

The proposed cornices are generally consistent with the Guidelines. The use of composite materials will replicate the workability and visual qualities of wood, especially at the large distance from the road. The side elevations show a continuation of the white trim across the entire elevation, acting as a return in the gable roofs. This trim detail will call attention to the non-traditional details of the house and is not consistent with historic siding. **Staff recommends removal of this detail and a continuation of the siding with six-inch reveal on both side elevations.**

J. Doors:

The Guidelines state that new doors should be related to door styles historically found in the Goose Creek District (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 72, Guideline 5). The applicants are proposing a fiberglass front door with nine simulated lites and a single raised panel. While many doors in the District are solid wood with raised panels, alternative styles are present (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 70, graphic). The proposed door is consistent with the style of the house and while wood is the preferred material, fiberglass can mimic the appearance of a wood door when viewed from a distance (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 72, Guideline 7). The applicants' have indicated that the fiberglass door will be painted and have a faux wood grain. As

with cementitious siding, a smooth finish would more accurately emulate wood. Full glass panel French doors are proposed on the rear elevation as an exit from the basement. While the single glass panel doors are not a typical door style in the District, they are located on the least visible elevation and will not be immediately apparent from the public road. **Staff recommends a smooth finish fiberglass door as a condition of approval, although it is noted that the distance from the road may mitigate this detail.**

As with the front door, wood is also the preferred material for the garage door. However, an alternative material may be appropriate given the limited visibility of the side elevation from Trinity Church Road (Trinity Church dead-ends near the property). The currently proposed garage door has twelve panels and two windows (without grilles). A more simplified design would blend with the siding and be less noticeable from the road and would relate to door styles found on historic accessory buildings elsewhere in the District (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 72, Guideline 5). Plantings are also suggested by the Guidelines as a means of screening attached garages (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Accessory Structures and Breezeways, page 46, Guideline 3a).

K. Windows:

The applicants are proposing a mix of window styles on the proposed house. The majority of the proposed windows are six-over-one double hung. One double hung four-over-one is proposed (in the gable) and one four square casement window. All of the windows on the front façade are vinyl and will have simulated divided lites (SDL) as indicated in the applicants' materials list. The Guidelines provide examples of typical window styles in the Goose Creek District (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 70, graphic). The currently proposed grille pattern is not common to the District and a more traditional style, such as six-over-six (seen on many new construction projects) would be more consistent with the Guidelines. The use of SDLs in the front façade windows meets the Guidelines provided that the muntins are fixed on the interior and exterior and a spacer bar is used between the glass (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 73, Guideline 9). The windows on the second story are smaller, which meets the Guidelines for diminution of fenestration, but reflect the same uncommon grille pattern (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 70, text). **Staff recommends as a condition of approval that the front windows be one-over-one or six-over-six in order to remain consistent with the Guidelines and common window styles in the district.**

The windows on the side and rear elevations are undivided (one-over-one) double hung windows. The Guidelines recognize one-over-one as a common window style in the District. The fenestration pattern on the rear elevation deviates from traditional window placement, however, the rear façade is the least visible from Trinity Church Road and the ratio of windows to solids is balanced. As with the front windows, these windows are vinyl. The Guidelines state that windows should be constructed of wood which may

be vinyl or metal clad (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Doors Windows and Shutters, page 73, Guideline 10). A wood or wood-clad window would be more in keeping with the traditional appearance of windows than the proposed vinyl windows which do not approximate wood. Staff does note that the windows will be a significant distance from Trinity Church and Hughesville Roads. **The HDRC may wish to further discuss the proposed window material at the July 11th meeting.**

L. Front Porch:

Front porches are a common feature found on many homes in the District. The inclusion of a porch in new construction helps relate the home to other historic buildings. The Guidelines for front porches state that new porch designs should “reflect the size, materials, proportion and placement of historic porches in Lincoln, or rural areas of the District” (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Front and Rear Porches, page 74, Guideline 1). The proposed front porch is eight feet deep and runs approximately 31 feet across the front elevation. Unlike many other porches in the area, the proposed porch is created by the overhang of the roof on the main block and does not have a separate roofline.

The proposed porch has four squared columns – the materials list indicates that the columns are 6x6 wrapped in 1x1 Azek trim whereas the elevations note the columns as 8” squares. **The column size should be clarified with the applicant at the HDRC meeting.** The Azek wrapping will emulate wood and meets the Guidelines for materials. Due to the low height of the porch above grade, railings are not required and as proposed, the porch is relatively unadorned. Staff suggests the inclusion of minor traditional details (such as chamfered posts or a column base) may give some articulation to the porch and aid in defining this area of the house, consistent with the Guidelines for details and decoration (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Architectural Details and Decoration, page 77, Guideline 1). The applicants’ materials list indicates that the ceiling of the porch will be 1x6 boards with beading which meets the Guidelines.

The floor of the porch is currently proposed as concrete, although the SOJ indicates the applicants intend to add flagstone at a later date. In the mean time, exposed concrete is not a common or historic treatment for the floor of a front porch and would not meet the Guidelines. **A wood tongue and groove floor would be more consistent with the Guidelines and in keeping with historic buildings.** This type of flooring could be installed at the time of initial construction, bringing the porch into compliance with the Guidelines; however, staff does note that the floor of the porch will not be visible from the road.

M. Deck:

The applicants are proposing a 15 foot wide deck which extends ten feet beyond the rear façade. The deck is proposed to be constructed of pressure treated lumber with a full flight of stairs accessing the rear yard. The Design Guidelines are not supportive of decks within the historic districts and specifically state that a full flight of stairs to ground level should not be used and decks should not appear to be supported by stilts (Goose

Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Decks, page 75, Inappropriate Treatments 1, 3 and 4). Where decks are proposed, the Guidelines indicate that they should be located on the least visible elevation and the transition from house, to deck, to yard should be as direct as possible (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Decks, page 75, Guidelines 1 and 2). The proposed deck may be visible from the road. However, staff notes that Trinity Church Road dead-ends near the subject property and would not be heavily traveled. In addition, the rear façade is the least visible from the majority of Trinity Church and Hughesville Roads.

In order to reduce the number of stairs and transition more quickly from deck to yard, a significant amount of alteration to the natural landscape would be necessary which is not supported by the Guidelines (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements, Landforms and Features, page 38, Guidelines 1& 2). The Guidelines are supportive of using traditional porch designs to help relate decks to traditional structures (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Decks, page 75, Guidelines 3). If the stairs are eliminated, it will be important for the deck to be designed as a rear porch in order to avoid the appearance of a deck supported by wooden stilts. The applicants could incorporate traditional porch elements into the deck such as a roof and screening of the open space under the deck. If the deck remains as currently designed, it should be screened with plantings (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Decks, page 75, Guideline 4).

The Guidelines also state that pressure-treated lumber should not remain unpainted in areas where it will be visible (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Decks, page 75, Inappropriate Treatment). **To address this concern, staff recommends an alternative wood or composite product or a condition to require the painting of the pressure treated lumber to match the color scheme of the house.**

As currently designed, the proposed deck is not consistent with the Guidelines for new construction. Staff notes that the setback from the road and the limited visibility from the public right-of-way may help to mitigate the impacts of the deck.

N. Foundation:

The proposed house has a large amount of exposed foundation due to the walk-out basement. The SOJ indicates that the concrete foundation will be covered with stucco on the front elevation (similar to the proposal for the chimney), similar to parging with concrete. The Guidelines support distinguishing the foundation from the rest of the structure through a change in materials which may be accomplished with the stucco; however, stucco is not a preferred material for foundations. The Guidelines state that stone should be used as the foundation material (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Foundation, page 76, Guidelines 1 and 2). The applicants' ultimately intend to veneer the concrete foundation with local fieldstone as stated in the SOJ. However, until the veneer is installed, the foundation would not meet the

Guidelines. **In order to be consistent with the Guidelines, staff recommends a condition that the foundation is veneered with fieldstone.**

O. Materials and Textures:

- a. Siding – the applicants are currently proposing to use Hardieplank siding for the entire structure. The Guidelines indicate a preference for wood siding but allows for the introduction of new composite materials in new construction. Hardieplank is a common substitute for wood and can mimic the visual qualities

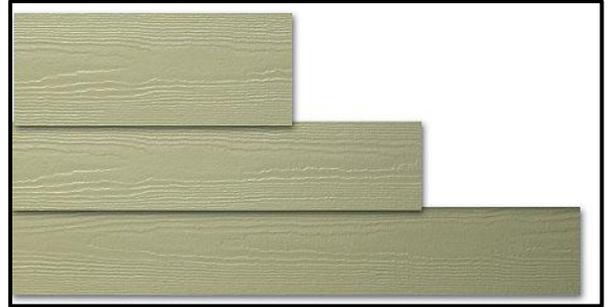


Figure 3: Currently Proposed Siding with faux wood grain

- and workability of wood (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Materials and Textures, page 80, Guideline 9). The elevations specify “cedar mill” which has a faux wood-grain rather than a smooth finish. The Guidelines support smooth-finish cementitious products (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Materials and Textures, page 80, Guideline 7). The six inch reveal is consistent with the Guidelines. **Staff recommends a condition of approval to use smooth finish Hardieplank in lieu of the cedar mill as currently proposed.**
- b. Roofing – as indicated above, the applicants are proposing 30 year architectural shingles. The Guidelines indicate a preference for standing seam metal (Goose Creek Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction, Materials and Textures, page 80, Guideline 8). **However, dark consistently colored shingles are acceptable for new construction.**
- c. Trim – the applicants’ materials list indicates that trim (including window/door casings, friezes, and corner boards) will be Azek. As with the Hardieplank siding, the Guidelines allow for the introduction of alternative materials on new construction provided that the materials have the same visual qualities as wood. The side elevations show a band of white trim across the entire elevation, acting as a return in the gable roofs. This trim detail will call attention to the non-traditional details of the house and is not consistent with historic siding. **The composite trim material meets the Guidelines, however, staff recommends removal of the white band of trim on the side elevations.**

Findings

1. The proposed structure is located on a rural, gravel dead-end road in a family subdivision. The subject property has large areas of moderately steep slopes which limit the locations of suitable house sites.
2. The proposed siting will be shielded by surrounding topography and will not require significant alterations to the natural landform which is consistent with the Goose Creek Guidelines for new construction. The property is setback a significant distance from the road which limits the visibility of the house from Trinity Church Road.

3. The Guidelines anticipate architectural designs that depart from historic precedents, especially in the rural areas where new construction should relate to the natural landscape rather than adjacent buildings.
4. The massing; height, width and scale; and directional expression are consistent with the Guidelines. However, the side entry garage which forms a front-ell alters the otherwise simple form of the proposed house.
5. The gable roof has a pitch of twelve-in-twelve which is consistent with historic roofs in the Goose Creek Historic District. The proposed dormers are appropriately scaled and help to break up the mass of the roof. While the Guidelines indicate a preference for standing seam metal roofing, asphalt shingles that are dark and consistently colored are approvable on new construction projects.
6. The Guidelines do not encourage decks in the Historic Districts. The proposed deck is located on the least visible elevation (rear) but appears to be supported by wood stilts and does not provide a quick transition to the yard area. The use of exposed pressure treated lumber is not in keeping with the Guidelines and an alternative wood or wood composite should be used.
7. The exposed concrete foundation is not consistent with the Guidelines. Stone is the most appropriate material. The applicants intend to utilize a stucco finish on the front elevation foundation.
8. The proposed windows are vinyl with six-over-one muntins on the front elevation, which is not a common grille pattern in the district, and one-over-one on the side and rear elevations, which is consistent with the Guidelines. The applicants have indicated that the muntins will be simulated divided lites. Vinyl is not a preferred material in the District and does not provide the same visual qualities as wood.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions to bring the application into conformance with the Guidelines:

1. That the house is rotated slightly towards Trinity Church Road to lessen the view of the side entry garage from the end of the road.
2. That the white trim band on the left and right side elevations is eliminated and replaced with siding at a six-inch reveal.
3. That the door is smooth finish fiberglass.
4. That the windows are six-over-six or one-over-one.
5. That the Hardieplank siding is smooth finish.
6. That the porch floor is wood (other than exposed pressure treated lumber).
7. That the foundation is veneered in a locally available stone.

The HDRC may also wish to have additional discussion on the proposed window material, deck and side-entry garage (to include door design, screening, materials, etc), which are not consistent with the Guidelines.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2011-0012 for the construction of a single family house at the property identified as PIN #491-19-4157 in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Goose Creek Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 9 and 10 of the staff report dated July 11, 2011 as submitted in the application.*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2011-0012 for the construction of a single family house at the property identified as PIN #491-19-4157 in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Goose Creek Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the findings included on page 9 and 10 of the staff report dated July 11, 2011 with the following conditions ...*
3. *Any alternative motion ...*