

STAFF REPORT
for
JUNE 5, 2019 HRC MEETING

Case #: COA2019-052
Staff: Michelle M. McCullough

Applicant: Jeff Allen
Owner: Jayne and Doug Williams

LOCATION

District: Old Salem Historic District
Street: 907 South Church Street
Buildings: Vacant Lot
Local Historic Landmarks#: N/A

REQUEST(S)

- Installation of Moravian-style garden including plantings, gravel drive, garden shed, fence, benches, grading of rear yard, and removal of Magnolia tree.

APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

Old Salem Historic District Guide to the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Process and Design Review Guidelines

(Please refer to the applicable sections of the *Guidelines*, as detailed in the staff comments.)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Please refer to the information provided with the application.

STAFF COMMENTS

At this time, staff does not know what existed on this site during the period of significance.

STAFF FINDINGS

Commission staff finds that the work is not incongruous with the character of the Old Salem Historic District because:

- 1) The garden is a new landscape design for the site and is proposed to be installed based on historic documentation of Moravian gardens and reconstructed gardens in the District. The scale and placement of new vegetation are compatible with other gardens in the District. The proposed plants will be based on documented indigenous and historically appropriate species that existed and were used in the District. (*Significant Landscape Features*, Old Salem Guideline 3)
- 2) The proposed project includes a split pea-gravel pathway. The proposed pathway is a new design entering from the southwest corner adjacent to the sidewalk leading to the rear of the property and the new outbuilding and will be for vehicular use. The pathways will be constructed of tan-colored pea-gravel strips, similar to the one at Single Brothers Garden, and grass will be planted in between the two strips. The pathway is compatible in location, pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, texture, and material with the character of the District. (*Driveways and Parking Areas*, Old Salem Guidelines 1-3)

- 3) The proposed project includes construction of a shed. The shed is a simple, 7' x 7', single story outbuilding, constructed of a wood shingled roof, wood shiplap siding to be painted Lancaster Whitewash, a stone foundation, a wood door with a hammered iron strap hinge, and no windows. The proposed shed is located in the southeast rear corner of the site. The proposed shed's lot coverage and spacing; setback; orientation; massing; complexity of form; height, width, and scale; directional expression; roof form and materials; exterior building materials; doors and windows; exterior architectural elements; and color are compatible with the District. (*New Construction: Accessory Structures*, Old Salem Guidelines 1-3 and *New Construction: Principal Structures*, Old Salem Guidelines: All)
- 4) The proposed project includes installing fences that will be 48" high, a rustic split-rail wood fence style adjacent to the sidewalk at the western property line, along a portion of the northern property line, with an open gateway at the center on the east side, and a removable post at the gravel drive. The proposed fences are compatible in location, design, style, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, material, and color with the character of the District. (*Fences*, Old Salem Guidelines 4-6, and 9)
- 5) The proposed project includes installing six simple, wood benches, similar in style to other benches found throughout District. The proposed benches are compatible with the District in design, scale, material, and location. (*Communal Areas*, Old Salem Guideline 3)
- 6) The proposed project includes grading the slope behind the tree line at the rear of the site to establish a terracing that exists at adjacent properties. Terracing was a method used by the Moravians on properties with such a steep slope to create additional usable land and is compatible with site topography in this area of the District. Additionally, proposed are a series of natural stone slab steps with boulder cheek walls down the embankment. This area is not visible from the District. The proposed steps and walls would be a new design that is compatible to the District in location, pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, texture and material with the character of the District. (*Significant Landscaping Features*, Old Salem Guideline 2; *Walkways and Steps*, Old Salem Guideline 3; and *Walls*, Old Salem Guideline 4)
- 7) The proposed project includes the removal of a Magnolia tree that is not noted as a significant landscape feature. The City's Urban Forester reviewed the tree, and, in his report, he noted that the Magnolia is being dominated by a larger Red Maple tree growing within four feet of the Magnolia. The Magnolia is misshapen due to a process called phototropism, and he stated that it is unlikely the tree will be able to correct its current growth pattern. He also stated if the Magnolia tree was removed, there would be less competition for available resources, allowing the Red Maple tree to thrive. (*Significant Landscaping Features*, Old Salem Guidelines 1 and 4)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2019-052 at the vacant lot located at 907 South Church Street within the Old Salem Historic District (PIN# 6835-31-4985.00.00) with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant shall make every effort to protect and preserve in place any significant archaeological features. If, while doing the project, any archaeological features are discovered, stop work immediately and contact staff to evaluate the findings;
- 2) The applicant shall remove the Magnolia tree below existing grade, grinding out the stump;
- 3) The applicant shall have staff review and approve all final planting selected.

- 4) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;
- 5) Commission staff shall review and approve any revisions or deviations to any portion of the as-submitted work, that qualifies as a minor work, prior to commencement of that portion of the project; and,
- 6) The applicant shall submit the Certificate of Appropriateness Request for Certification of Completed Work form and photo documentation of the completed project to HRC staff within ten (10) days of its completion.