

STAFF REPORT
for
September 4, 2019 HRC MEETING

Case #: COA2019-086
Staff: Michelle M. McCullough

Applicant: Hayes Wauford, Wilson-Covington Construction Company
Owner: Wilson-Covington Construction Company

LOCATION

District: Old Salem Historic District
Street: 508 Salt Street
Buildings: Salt Flax House
Local Historic Landmarks#: N/A

REQUEST(S)

- After-the-fact grading work, installation of PVC downspouts, installation of timber retaining wall, and installation of brick paver patio and walkway

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

The Salt Flax House received approval for a comprehensive landscaping installation, specifically the installation of a retaining wall, terrace floor, parking bay and sidewalk, and fences in COA2015-034, which expired June 4, 2018. The certificate of appropriateness (COA) was renewed by a Minor Work COA, COA2016-057, for one year, expiring on June 4, 2019. This application is for similar work, however, there are differences in material for the terrace floor and retaining wall. Originally, the terrace floor was to be slate pavers, and the wall was to be stone.

STAFF FINDINGS

Commission staff finds that the grading work, installation of PVC downspouts and installation of brick paver patio and walkway is not incongruous with the character of the Old Salem Historic District because:

- 1) The grading at the rear of the property will not adversely affect the character of the property or District. The grading proposed will allow for positive drainage away from the rear door of the house without the installation of additional drains. The site was examined in 2014 by an Old Salem archaeologist and the grading will be completed in a manner that will not disturb any known archaeological sites on the property. (*Significant Landscape Features*, Old Salem Guidelines 1 and 2 and *New Construction Principal Structures*, Old Salem Guideline Archaeology 1)

- 2) The installation of PVC downspouts at the rear of the property are appropriate with the property and District. The copper downspouts and existing gutter system is being retained. The PVC downspout leaders extend from the copper downspouts to daylight at an appropriate fall below grade and were installed at the rear of the property in locations necessary to deal with water intrusion issues. The PVC pipes are below grade and will be covered with dirt and grass. The pipes were located so that they do not encroach on any unexcavated areas of the site. (*Gutters*, Old Salem Guidelines 1 and 3 and *New Construction Principal Structures*, Old Salem Guideline *Archaeology* 1)
- 3) The new brick patio and walkway are compatible with the property and the District. The new patio and walkway are made of brick and are compatible in location, pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, texture, and material with the character of the structure and the District. (*Walkways and Steps*, Old Salem Guideline 3)

Commission staff finds that the installation of a timber retaining wall is incongruous with the character of the Old Salem Historic District because:

- 4) The new retaining wall is compatible with the property and District in regard to location, size, and scale. However, the list of appropriate materials for walls is limited to stone and brick. The new retaining wall is made of wood timbers constructed to retain the higher elevations of the site to the north and west of the patio area. The wood timbers are 6"x6" rough sawn oak timbers, and the wall is 46" in height. The retaining wall was constructed to avoid any known archeological sites on the property. (*Walls*, Old Salem Guideline 4)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2019-086 at the Salt Flax House, located at 508 Salt Street, within the Old Salem Historic District (PIN# 6835-23-6400), with the following conditions:

- 1) The retaining wall shall be constructed of brick or stone and the wood timbers be removed within 30 days;
- 2) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;
- 3) 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
- 4) 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.