

STAFF REPORT for AUGUST 4, 2021 HRC MEETING

Case #: COA2021-058
Staff: Michelle M. McCullough

Applicant: Dustin Hackler

LOCATION

District: Old Salem Historic District # 9, 10, 11, and 12
Streets: 513, 519, and 529 South Church Street
Buildings: Home Moravian Church
Status: Contributing
Local Historic
Landmark#: N/A

REQUEST(S)

- Removal and replacement of brick retaining wall; installation of handrail and exterior stair; and removal of two Eastern Hornbeam Trees.

APPLICABLE F DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

Old Salem Historic District: Guide to the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Process and Design Review Guidelines available at <https://www.cityofws.org/DocumentCenter/View/3451/Old-Salem-Historic-District-Design-Guidelines-PDF>

STAFF FINDINGS

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

- 1) The proposed work includes removing two Eastern Hornbeam trees so that the applicant can repair drainage issues on the property. The drainage issues are creating severe cracks in the brick wall next to the driveway of the property. The work to do the repairs requires excavation of the site where the trees are located. If the work takes place within the drip line of the tree, roots will be damaged/severed in the critical root zone, which could result in a decline in overall tree health and could result in tree mortality. (*Significant Landscape Features*, District Guideline 4)
- 2) The proposed work includes removal and replacement of an eighty-year-old retaining wall. The wall will be reconstructed with a pour-in-place concrete wall below grade with a brick veneer facing exposed above grade with a concrete cap, allowing for the wall to be more structurally sound. The wall will be located in the same location. However, it will be two feet higher to bring the top of the wall to grade, allowing for proper drainage. The brick will match the Christian Education Building. During the excavation and installation of the new drainage system, existing sidewalks and fences on the properties will be removed and replaced with like or appropriate material. (*Walls*, District Guideline 4)
- 3) The proposed work includes a new railing on the top of the retaining wall, for safety and code reasons. The new railing will match the existing railing on the East side of the building in pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, materials, and color. The railing will be black metal at a height of 42 inches off the ground from the backside of the retaining wall. The new railing is compatible in pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, materials, and color with the character of the structure and District. The new railing does not alter a building and does not detract from the historic character of the District (*Railings*, District Guideline #4 and *Safety, Accessibility and Code Requirements* Guidelines 1 and 6)

- 4) The proposed work includes a new set of concrete stairs, ten feet wide, located adjacent to the Christian Education Building, and will not be highly visible from Church Street. Concrete was used at MESDA, for a new set of steps, and differentiates the new steps from historic steps within the District. The new design is compatible in pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, texture, and material with the character to the structure and the District. (*Walkways and Steps*, District Guideline 3)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2021-058 at Home Moravian Church, located at 513, 519, and 529 South Church Street, in the Old Salem Historic District (PIN# 6835-33-3217, 6835-33-2355, and 6835-33-3217.00), with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant shall work with the City's Urban Forester and staff to select two new trees from the approved planting list and a new location for their planting on the Home Moravian Church property;
- 2) The inappropriate pavers in front of the Christian Education Building shall be replaced with a brick sidewalk;
- 3) The new opening adjacent to the new steps in the retaining wall shall be constructed of brick to match the retaining wall;
- 4) The new gate and hardware for the opening adjacent to the new steps in the retaining wall shall be black metal;
- 5) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;
- 6) 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,
- 7) 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.