STAFF REPORT
JUNE 7, 2023 HRC MEETING

Case #: COA2023-051
Staff: Michelle M. McCullough
Applicant: Ariana Hood

LOCATION
District: Old Salem Historic District #29
Streets: 9 East Academy Street
Buildings: Inspector’s House
Status: Contributing
Local Historic Landmark#: N/A

REQUEST(S)

- Installation of ADA ramp, porch, and railing

APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

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

STAFF FINDINGS

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

1) The project proposes to replace the existing porch floor at the rear, north facing, elevation due to severe deterioration and to make the porch comply with current accessibility building code. The new porch will be based on the original design, matching in-kind the material, footprint, and size. The only change will be to raise the porch and make it level with the interior floor. Raising the porch floor will allow for the entrance to be ADA accessible in a sensitive manner, preserving the site and its character-defining features and the structure’s character-defining elevations, features, and finishes. (Entrances, Porches and Balconies, District Standards 4 and 6 and Safety, Accessibility and Code Requirements, District Standard 1)

2) The proposed project introduces a new self-supported ADA ramp and landing that leads from the adjacent sidewalk on Church Street to the porch at the rear entrance to the building. The ramp will be 5’ wide by 13’ in length and the landing will be 5’ wide by 5’ in length. The ramp and landing will be made from wood and will match the design of the existing porch. There will be an 8’ in length by 5”-6.75” high (2 or 3 courses high) brick wall at the end of the landing adjacent to the sidewalk. The ramp meets accessibility building code in such a way that the site and its character-defining features and the structure’s character-defining elevation, features, and finishes are preserved. The design of the new landing and ramp are compatible with the scale, materials, details, and finish of the structure and existing rear porch. The ramp and landing are located on the least obtrusive elevation and do not detract from the historic character of the District. The proposed ramp and landing are self-supporting and are reversible and do not compromise the original design of the entrance or porch. (Safety, Accessibility and Code Requirements, District Standards 1-4, and 6)

3) The proposed project will retain the existing wood railing that is located around the existing porch except for a small section that will be removed on the east elevation, where the ramp will be installed. New railings, that will run along the north and east sides of the ramp and on both sides of the new steps at the existing opening in front of the rear door, will be installed. The design of the new railing will be compatible in pattern, spacing, configuration, dimension, scale, materials, and color with the character of the structure and District. (Railings, District Standard 4 and Safety, Accessibility and Code Requirements, District Standard 5)
4) The proposed project will install a granite step where there currently is no step, however there is a break in the existing railing directly in front of the rear door to allow for ingress onto the existing porch. The granite step is being salvaged from Main Hall on the Salem College campus. This new feature is based on physical evidence that such steps were found in Salem during the period of significance. It is an appropriate design and compatible in location, pattern, spacing configuration, dimension, scale, texture, and material with character of the structure and the District. Stone is an appropriate material. (Walkways and Steps, District Standard 3)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2023-051 at the Inspector’s House, 9 East Academy Street (PIN: 6835-33-1148.00), located in the Old Salem Historic District with the following conditions:

1) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;

2) Commission staff shall review and approve any revisions or deviations to any portion of the as-submitted work prior to commencement of that portion of the project; and,

3) 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.