

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

May 23, 2019

Members Present

Jeffrey Bond
Robert Stowe
Susan Stilwell
Michael Nicholas
Sean Davis
Robert Weir

Members Absent

Robin Crews

Staff

Holley Preston
Lisa Jones
Ryan Dodson

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Request a Certificate of Appropriateness at 903 Main Street to construct a masonry block retaining wall.

Mr. Nicholas opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Mr. Bob Newnam, for First Presbyterian Church. Mr. Newnam stated that First Presbyterian Church owns the property. It is on the corner of Chestnut and Main Street. This all occurred because of that torrential down pour that we had back in October. It was recently laid with 8 inches of block and filled concrete on the top portion. Mr. Bond can tell you, there were no leak holes when that water came down and knocked the wall over. We put another wall back and I would say to the current standards, which allows water to come through those blocks and they lock together just like the old ones were. It obviously failed in many places, because the concrete ones fell that same day, which cracked them from all the pressure behind the wall. We went back with a wall that is 1 foot and 5 inches high for 35 feet and it steps up one more 8 inches of block for 10 feet. It is the same basic color and same material but a little bit heavier construction. I apologize for sticking it up there but they had a special on the concrete and I took it and tried to save the Church some money.

Mrs. Stilwell stated what is going to happen with the black pipe that is sticking out at the ground at the end of the retaining wall?

Mr. Newnam stated I can see the picture right here and I didn't see that, but it is obvious that it needs to be trimmed off. We will trim it off flush. That comes from that back down spout there and it has been there for a good while. The whole idea was to get past that wall so it didn't put any more water pressure against the downspout. Thank you for pointing that out.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I would think that in the wintertime it's going to make a very icy sidewalk.

Mr. Newnam stated I know what you were thinking. If it was higher and the sidewalk was a little higher, we could get in all the way to the curb underneath the brick. It is so low that you really can't do it. Really, a lot of times we think it's going to make a big difference but in Danville after about the 3rd day it melts and it all runs off anyway.

Mr. Davis stated what was the point of changing the elevation of the ground?

Mr. Newnam stated we didn't change any elevation that I know of.

Mr. Davis stated because the photo of the original appears that it was only 8 inches tall this one?

Mr. Newnam stated it was two courses of block and they were 8 inches tall and what we have now is two courses of block that are 8 inches except it's down in the ground a little bit lower to finish it off. Now what makes it look nice is that 4-inch solid cap that they didn't have before.

Paul Liepe from the Friends of The Old West End stated, I live directly across from this wall that has been installed. The reason I am standing here to speak to you, I think that it should have been done with materials that look Historic. This particular wall looks extremely modern; it is the same thing that you might see in a new development. I'm sorry that it has already been installed and I think it should have been done with some other materials that makes it look Historic. It is Historically inappropriate for that location.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I have to agree with you Paul. The first time that I saw this I wondered where that came from.

Mr. Nicholas closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Nicholas stated any discussion or motion?

Mr. Weir stated the last sentence in here says concrete block or poured concrete block is not allowed.

Mrs. Stilwell stated this does have a slight pattern to it and no wonder it was on sale.

Mr. Stowe stated in the staff recommendation is that the appearance of natural stone that staff recommends approval.

Mr. Davis stated I think the debate is that it looks very modern compared to a wall that is 48 inches from it. We had a house that the church owned around the other side of the

apartments, where the driveway goes up by the church where the wall fell down. They were going back with concrete but they were going to recover it with stucco because that was more appropriate than concrete blocks.

Mr. Nicholas stated there is nothing in the guidelines that it has to look historic. The concern is what materials are being used and what material appears to be. That is how I read this paragraph. The first preference is you use historic material and you can use a certain material to make it look modern. Do you use this certain material or if you do not does the material that you use appear to be historic material. Does it meet the guidelines and 2nd question does this appear to be the use of historically appropriate materials?

Mr. Bond stated so what was there before was concrete block?

Mr. Davis stated yes with stucco over it originally.

Mr. Weir stated so, basically he is putting back the same thing but it's got a base out in front of it.

Mrs. Stilwell made a motion that Item does not meet the guidelines as submitted. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mr. Stowe made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness that it does not have an adverse effect on the district or neighborhood with the condition that the pipe be trimmed back 2 inches behind the facade. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Stowe made a motion to approve the March 28, 2019, minutes. Mr. Bond seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Approved