

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
May 21, 2009
MEETING NO. 4-09**

APPLICATION: HDC2009-00469
ADDRESS: 401 S. Horners Lane
Pump House
ACCEPTED: N/A
45 DAY LIMIT: N/A
OWNER: Mayor and Council
City of Rockville
REQUEST: Comment on proposed renovation
STAFF: Robin D. Ziek



PROJECT SUMMARY:

The City has begun working with an architect and the community to develop the preferred alternative for the renovation of the Pump House, a community center in East Rockville.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends support of Option 1, given the following findings:

The proposed Option 1 minimizes alterations to historic fabric, and meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards #2 (“The removal of historic materials ... that characterize a property shall be avoided.”); and #5 (“Distinctive ... construction techniques ... that characterize a property shall be preserved”); and #9 (“New ... construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.”).

BACKGROUND: The Pump House is a significant historic resource in the City of Rockville, and was designated as a historic district in 2005. It is a distinctive building type, and marks the late 19th century establishment of a public water system in the City of Rockville. It currently serves as a community center and is used by the local East Rockville Civic Association, as well as community groups including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and The Finest (a student study and dance program). The project has been scheduled since 2003 in the Capital Improvements Budget, and began with a kick-off meeting on December 16, 2008. The architect is Proffitt & Associates. They are based in Frederick, Maryland and have considerable experience with historic structures.

Property Area: 20,000 sf.
Zone: Park

Structure Area: 1,600 sf.

City of Rockville Permits Required:

Building Permit
HDC Certificate of Approval

Historic Significance: The Pump House is a good example of Victorian-era public architecture, with its monumental massing and interest in detailing evidenced by the use of stone lintels and corner pilasters. It was constructed in 1897, while Joseph Reading was Mayor and on land purchased from his father, William Reading. It is associated with the development of the citywide water system and, after the Typhoid Epidemic of 1913/14, was instrumental in moving the city to the development of a citywide sewerage system.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT and MATERIALS:

The renovation project will bring the Pump House up to code in terms of providing required egress, bathroom facilities, handicapped accessibility, and energy efficiency (with added insulation, etc). In addition, the existing, reduced window openings will be re-opened to their historic size. New doors and windows are also included in the project.

Investigation of the current interior conditions revealed substantial deterioration of the mortar joints of interior brick load-bearing walls. Repointing of the historic brick walls is now an additional product of the renovation.

OPTION 1:

The original ceiling height will be partially restored in the Community Activity Room. The increased height will allow the restoration of the original window openings as the current dropped ceiling sits below the original window height. The steel beam that runs east-west in that room may, however, need to be retained (mostly due to cost), and that will result in a ceiling that drops to eight feet at its lowest point. Double doorways will be added to this room to provide insulation from the front doors and conserve energy.

The new windows will be wood, thermally glazed, and 2/2 double-hung sash to replicate the original windows, one of which is still in situ on the west elevation (apparent on the inside, but covered from view on the exterior).

All the existing doors will be replaced with hollow metal, insulated doors. Options for the front door include a central door with small sidelights, or a continuation of the existing configuration.

The interior plan is still being finalized, but will be only slightly modified to accommodate the abovementioned code issues. At the north end, the existing storage room will be modified with the establishment of a hallway leading directly to the egress door. Storage areas will be delineated to either side of this hallway for firesafety reasons. The existing cement floor in this

addition will be topcoated with a new cement layer to bring the floor up 4” to remove the existing step between this addition and the Community Activity Room.

An additional bathroom will be added adjacent to the existing bathroom. Both will be handicapped accessible.

The existing kitchen will be renovated to become a Craft Room, with a sink, counter space, and a small refrigerator. This room is proposed to be open to the interior hall, but separated from the entrance hall with a door and sidelights, similar to the existing condition.

OPTION 2:

This option includes many of the same features of the Option 1, including an additional bathroom, secondary egress from the Community Activity Room, restoration of the original window openings, and raising the height of the ceiling in the Community Activity Room.

Option 2 includes a community office in the area now occupied by the bathroom and washer/dryer room, adjacent to the Craft Room. Two new bathrooms are proposed to be installed in the central area between two brick load bearing walls, and accessed from the Craft Room. The south brick wall would be cut in two places for doorways. In addition, a small closet area would be retained at the entrance lobby.

Option 2 proposes an egress hallway in the north addition that turns ninety degrees to a new doorway at the rear (w elevation). The new doorway would be established by expanding an existing window opening.

The ceiling in the Community Activity Room would be similar to that shown in Option 1.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

In both Option 1 and 2, the landscape material around the Pump House will be removed. Currently, there is a high shrub that hides the front (E elevation) of the building and blocks the front windows as well. Corner evergreens will also be removed. The City plans to work with the community in the future to develop a landscape plan, and therefore that is not part of this proposal.

COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:

Staff finds that the proposed alteration meets the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* # 2 (“The historic character ... shall be retained and preserved.”); and #5 (Distinctive ... finishes and construction techniques ... that characterize a property shall be preserved.”). Option 1 would be the preferred option in terms of historic preservation as it has the least impact on original fabric (i.e., the central brick load-bearing walls).

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995)

Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- ✦ 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- ✦ 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.