MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address: 14 Grafton St., Chevy Chase  
Meeting Date: 10/24/2018

Resource: Contributing Resource  
Chevy Chase Village Historic District  
Report Date: 10/17/2018

Applicant: Nicole Vanasse and James Guerra  
Public Notice: 10/10/2018

Review: HAWP  
Tax Credit: n/a

Case Number: 35/13-18FF  
Staff: Dan Bruechert

PROPOSAL: Porch Railing Installation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the HPC approve with one (1) condition the HAWP application:

1. The proposed design of the proposed railing is appropriate, but the railing and its members must be wood.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource to the Chevy Chase Village Historic District
STYLE: Dutch Colonial Revival
DATE: c.1892-1916

Figure 1: 14 Grafton St. is located to the west of Chevy Chase Circle.

BACKGROUND
In 2012, the homeowner applied for a HAWP to construct a front gate (attached). The description of work identified the gate as wood, however, the drawings included in the application identifies the material as Azek. This HAWP was approved by consent without a hearing. Because of the discrepancy between the applicant and Staff Report, Staff is unsure if it
was the HPC’s intent to approve Azex or wood for the proposed front gate. Prior to the completion of this Staff Report, Staff was unable to recall the previous approval from archives and will attempt to do so prior to the HPC meeting.

PROPOSAL
The applicant proposes to install an Azek stair railing on the front porch.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES
When reviewing alterations and additions or new construction within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District, decisions are guided by the Chevy Chase Village Historic District Design Guidelines (Design Guidelines) and Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A).

Chevy Chase Village Historic District Guidelines
The Guidelines break down specific projects into three levels of review - Lenient, Moderate and Strict Scrutiny.

“Lenient Scrutiny” means that the emphasis of the review should be on issues of general massing and scale, and compatibility with the surrounding streetscape, and should allow for a very liberal interpretation of preservation rules. Most changes should be permitted unless there are major problems with massing, scale or compatibility.

“Moderate Scrutiny” involves a higher standard of review than “lenient scrutiny.” Besides issues of massing, scale and compatibility, preserving the integrity of the resource is taken into account. Alterations should be designed so that the altered structure still contributes to the district. Use of compatible new materials, rather than the original building materials, should be permitted. Planned changes should be compatible with the structure’s existing design, but should not be required to replicate its architectural style.

“Strict Scrutiny” means that the planned changes should be reviewed to insure that the integrity of the significant exterior architectural or landscaping features and details is not compromised. However, strict scrutiny should not be “strict in theory but fatal in fact” i.e. it does not mean that there can be no changes but simply that the proposed changes should be reviewed with extra care.

- Decks should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not
- Exterior trim (such as moldings on doors and windows) on contributing resources should be subject to moderate scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if it is not. Exterior trim on Outstanding resources should be subject to strict scrutiny if it is visible from the public right-of-way.
- Porches should be subject to moderate scrutiny if they are visible from the public right-of-way, lenient scrutiny if they are not. Enclosures of existing side and rear porches have occurred throughout the Village with little or no adverse impact on its character, and they should be permitted where compatibly designed.

The Guidelines state five basic policies that should be adhered to, including:
Preserving the integrity of the Chevy Chase Village Historic District. Any alterations should, at a minimum, perpetuate the ability to perceive the sense of time and place portrayed by the district.

Preserving the integrity of contributing structures. Alterations to should be designed in such a way that the altered structure still contributes to the district.

Maintaining the variety of architectural styles and the tradition of architectural excellence.

Design review emphasis should be restricted to changes that will be visible from the front or side public right-of-way, or that would be visible in the absence of vegetation or landscaping.

Alterations to the portion of a property that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be subject to a very lenient review. Most changes to the rear of the properties should be approved as a matter of course.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8(b)

A HAWP permit should be issued if the Commission finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district.

2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical archaeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto of to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The applicant proposes to construct a front porch handrail. The proposal is for a “Pendleton” railing system, constructed out of Azek, 4’ (four feet) tall, with a 4” (four inch) square posts with a top cap, with 1 ¼” × 1 ½” (one-and-a-quarter inch by one-and-a-half inch) spindles set between the top and bottom rails. The run of the railing will be sufficient to clear the four front steps to the front porch.

Staff finds the placement and design of the railing to be compatible with the historic house and the surrounding district. Staff has some reservations regarding the proposed material. The HPC has typically required either wood or metal for hand railings on primary facades in the Chevy Chase Village Historic District. This requirement is supported by the Guidelines that the property retain its integrity under “Moderate Scrutiny” and the policy of supporting design excellence throughout the district. Staff’s recommendation is based on this informal precedent. Azek is a material that can be milled and have identical dimensions to wood that can also be painted, however, it does not develop the same patina that wood would. This is why Azek can frequently be approved at the rear and in new construction but is often not appropriate on the primary façade.

The HPC could, however, find that under Moderate Scrutiny Azek is a compatible new material on a new feature and should be approved as proposed. The discrepancy between the previous Staff Report and application materials in the previous HAWP gives Staff some pause, but Staff believes that in instances such as this, Staff should adopt a more conservative approach absent a clear directions from the HPC.
STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends the HPC approve with one (1) condition the HAWP application;

1. The proposed design of the proposed railing is appropriate, but the railing and its members must be wood.

and with the general condition applicable to all Historic Area Work Permits that the applicant will present 3 permit sets of drawings to HPC staff for review and stamping prior to submission for permits (if applicable). After issuance of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) permit, the applicant will arrange for a field inspection by calling the DPS Field Services Office at 240-777-6370 prior to commencement of work and not more than two weeks following completion of work.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: NICOLE VANASSE
Contact Person: 240 472 3974
Contact Email: vanasse@comcast.net

Tax Account No.: _______________________________
Name of Property Owner: NICOLE VANASSE/JAMES GUERRA
Daytime Phone No.: 240 472 3974
Address: 14 GRAFTON ST CHEVY CHASE MD 20815
Contractor: WALPOLE OUTDOORS Phone No.: 202 368 1455
Contractor Registration No.: _______________________________
Agent for Owner: STEPHEN MEAD

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISES
House Number: 14
Street: GRAFTON
Town/City: CHEVY CHASE Nearest Cross Street: CEDAR PARKWAY
Lot: Block: Subdivision: 009
Lot: Block: Subdivision: 009

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT, ACTION, AND USE

1A. Check all applicable:
- Construct
- Extend
- Alter/Renovate
- A/C
- Stai
- Room Addition
- Porch
- Deck
- Shed
- Move
- Install
- Wreck/Raze
- Solar
- Fireplace
- Woodburning Stove
- Single Family
- Revision
- Repair
- Revocable
- Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)

1B. Construction cost estimate: $24,000

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit #

PART TWO: COMPLIANCE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTENSIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 WSSC 02 Septic 03 Other:
2B. Type of water supply: 01 WSSC 02 Well 03 Other:

PART THREE: COMPLETE OR VACANT-EYERING WALL

3A. Height _______ feet _______ inches
3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
- On party line/property line
- Entirely on land of owner
- On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

[Signature]

Date: 10/01/18

See reverse side for instructions
THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION

1. **Written Description of Project**

   a. **Description of existing structure**

   14 Grafton Street sits in the historic setting of Chevy Chase Village, section 2. Over the years we have added touches to the surrounding property which have been approved by the HPC and constructed by Walpole Outdoors, such as a front and side yard gates, driveway gates, and a garden arbor.

   b. **Description of project and effect**

   Now we are facing the need to add front stair railings for the safety of our family and friends. We have once again called upon Walpole Outdoors to help us design and install product which will complement the property as well as serve a very important purpose.

   The following pages contain photos of the front of the property, an attempt to illustrate how the railing might look after installation, and a drawing by Walpole with specifications for size and materials.

   We propose using the Pendleton style which is very simple and elegant. The spindles will be 1 1/4" and spaced every 2 1/4" inches to match the original railings on the porch. The 4 posts which secure the railings will be 4" square, which is smaller by 2" from the gate posts. The caps on the posts will match the caps on the existing front gate.

   It is our great wish to have this installed by the holidays so that we may all be safe and secure.

   Thank you.
Existing Property Condition Photographs

Existing front stairs without railings.

Seeking to add Walpole railings for consistency with the gates and arbor already created and installed on the property. (all approved in earlier documentation)

View from front walk with another featured Walpole product, the front gate.
### Project Layout & Installation Plan

**Customer:** Nicole Vanasse  
**Address:** 14 Griffin St, Caley Chase, MD

**Order Information:**
- **Order #:** [Blank]
- **Cust. Street:** [Blank]
- **Date:** 9/26/18
- **Salesperson:** [Blank]

### Grade Notes

**GRADE**
- **RAIL:** [Blank]
- **STEP:** [Blank]
- **BOTTOM-LEVEL TOP:** [Blank]
- **BOTTOM-STEP TOP:** [Blank]
- **LEVEL TOP & BOTTOM:** [Blank]

**CURVES**
- **HL:** [Blank]
- **HR:** [Blank]
- **Straight Rail:** [Blank]
- **Coved Rail:** [Blank]
- **Top depth:** [Blank] inches
- **Straight Rail:** [Blank]

**Notes:**
- **SCALLOPS:** [Blank]
- **Coved Rail:** [Blank]

**Select one:**
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]

**Select one:**
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]
- **HL or HR:** [Blank]

### Special Travel Considerations

**Payment Arrangements**

**SDB: Deposi:**

**SDB: Completion**

**Is Job Pinned?**
- **Yes:** [Blank]  
- **NO:** [Blank]

**Drive Time?**
- **Hours:** [Blank]

**Start Time:**
- [Blank]

**Stop Time:**
- [Blank]

**Length of Carry:**
- [Blank]

**Any other Special Equipment?**
- **Core Drill**

**Power and Water Location:**
- **Show them on layout**

**Where do we Park?**

---

**Plan Approved by Customer:**

**Date Site Ready:**

---

[Signature]
## WALPOLE OUTDOORS

**STEVE MEAD**  
PO BOX 59701  
POTOMAC MD 20859

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSTOMER #</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ORDER #</th>
<th>BRANCH</th>
<th>CUSTOMER 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/28/18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BILL TO NAME**  
**SHIP TO NAME**  
**STREET / P.O. BOX**  
**SHIP TO STREET**  
**CITY**  
**STATE**  
**ZIP**  
**CITY**  
**ZIP**  
**CONTACT NAME**  
**MAIN PHONE**  
**OTHER PHONE**  
**CUSTOMER E-MAIL**

### QUANTITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4&quot; LONG X 36&quot; TALL SECTIONS OF CUSTOM PENDLETON RAILING – 1 1/4&quot; PICKETS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4&quot; SQUARE POSTS WITH STEEL PIPE FOR CORE DRILL INTO STEPS – 18 TALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4&quot; SQUARE WESTPORT STYLE POST CAPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROFESSIONALLY INSTALLED BY WALPOLE OUTDOORS  
FACTORY FINISH SHERWIN WILLIAMS WHITE  
20% END OF SUMMER SALE INCLUDED IN PROPOSAL

**PENDING APPROVAL FROM MONT. COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERV.**

### MATERIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEDAR</td>
<td>LIFE GUARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLID CELLULAR VINYL</td>
<td>STEEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEEL</td>
<td>ALUMINUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTRUDED VINYL</td>
<td>COLOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>NATURAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INSTALLATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTALLATION</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAKE DOWN EXISTING</td>
<td>DISPOSE OF EXISTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTALL BY WALPOLE</td>
<td>MATERIALS ONLY - DELIVERED TO SITE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### APPROVALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROVALS</th>
<th>PAYMENT POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVALS DRAWINGS REQUIRED</td>
<td>FINANCED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deposit Method**  
**Amount**  
**Payment Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CA</th>
<th>CK #</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,018.00</td>
<td>One-Third with order, Balance C.O.D. upon completion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Changes**

| Balance Due | $2,018.00 |

**CONTRACT TOTALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charges</th>
<th>$3,810.40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>$126.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Price</td>
<td>$4,037.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The customer is responsible for establishing property lines and fence lines, for clearing all underbrush and/or concealed objects, and for conforming to local zoning by-laws; the customer is responsible for any damages resulting from failure to do so. This quotation is subject to conditions beyond our control and does not include costs arising from extraordinary conditions, for example, arborvitae which requires the cementing of posts or the use of compressor for drilling and joining posts, or clearing trees, brush or other obstructions from the working area. This agreement along with all documents and drawings incorporated herein by reference, constitutes the entire agreement between Walpole Outdoors LLC and the customer and there are no verbal agreements or representations in connection therewith. This agreement shall be modified only in writing by an authorized representative of each party and neither party shall have the authority to waive this prohibition.

All sales subject to approval of Walpole Outdoors LLC  
You may cancel this agreement if it has been signed at a place other than Walpole's normal place of business, provided you notify Walpole in writing at our main office or branch office by fax, email, delivery or ordinary mail posted not later than midnight of the third business day following the signing of this agreement. If cancelled beyond this period Walpole has the right to recover costs incurred for engineering, special materials or manufacturing costs.

By signing this agreement, the customer acknowledges having read and understood the terms and conditions listed on the front of this agreement.

By signing this agreement, the customer acknowledges having read and understood the terms and conditions listed on the front of this agreement.
"ROUGHED IN" ILLUSTRATION

*FOR PLACEMENT ONLY*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner's mailing address</th>
<th>Owner's Agent's mailing address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicole A. VaNasse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Grafton St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevy Chase MD 20815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Barry's</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Grafton St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevy Chase MD 20815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Atkins</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Grafton St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevy Chase MD 20815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Will's</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Grafton St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevy Chase MD 20815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>