

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Scala, Mary Joy
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2016 12:43 PM
To: 'Christine Colley'
Subject: 611 Preston Place fence

Christine and Scott,

Thank you for your email and letter. I am happy to approve painting the perimeter fence SW3019, Smoke tree.
The BAR usually prefers painted wood to treated wood, and they would certainly support your request to remain eligible for the tax credit program.
You may proceed.

Mary Joy Scala, AICP
Preservation and Design Planner
City of Charlottesville
Department of Neighborhood Development Services
City Hall - 610 East Market Street
P.O. Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Ph 434.970.3130 FAX 434.970.3359
scala@charlottesville.org



Mary Joy Scala, Preservation and Design Planner, Department of Neighborhood Development Services
PO Box 91 Charlottesville, VA, 22901

Dear Ms. Scala:

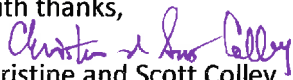
I sent you an email last week regarding the fence color at 611 Preston Place. We have applied to the VA Department of Historical Resources, and the reviewer asked for a remediation of the fence color. It is unpainted, and still new enough to have a bright raw wood tone. Since fences that pre-date the advent of treated lumber were painted, the DHR requires that we paint the fence. Suggested colors included white and a neutral gray close to the color of weathered wood. Since the last message, I have evaluated products available that will seal the wood, and I enclose a sample.

Since the Board of Architectural Review approved an unpainted fence, we are caught between the requirements of two organizations. The reviewer said we could paint it any color we liked, but it had to be painted to be eligible for the Tax Credit Program.

We are writing to ask whether you or the BAR would approve Sherwin Williams 3019, "Smoke Tree," as a finish for the fence. It is close to the color of the weathered wood fence present on the property when we bought it. We have retained the weathered fence we found along the South side of the driveway and behind the house, and as planned, we have re-used the weathered boards from the former solid or "privacy" fence that ran along two thirds of the street frontage. Gray paint would serve to unify the fencing surrounding the property, and help the house to fit in with the neighborhood, where unpainted fences prevail. It would also make for a less prominent fence than white or black paint.

We enclose a paint sample with SW 3019, "Smoke Tree," marked with an X. We are not sure whether this is an administrative decision or a matter for the BAR. If you can make this change administratively, we will be able to begin the work the first warm day and get our DHR amendment in promptly. If this change should go to the whole BAR, we need to move quickly to submit the application in time for the March meeting. Would you please let us know the proper procedure for the next step?

With thanks,


Christine and Scott Colley

23 Aug 2016

christinecolley@gmail.com

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Christine Colley <christinehcolley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 8:54 AM
To: Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: Fwd: DHR #2015-252, 611 Preston Place, Charlottesville

The forwarded letter from Jessica Ugarte, who is reviewing our application for tax credits to the DHR, is to let you know of the DHR's request that we paint the perimeter fence. We have been approved by the BAR for an unpainted picket fence--the fence of choice for many of our neighbors--but not acceptable to the DHR in the historic district. I will begin exploring possible products and colors today, and it would help to know if the BAR has a list of acceptable colors. Our goal is an unobtrusive color such as a soft flat black or neutral gray-brown approximating a weathered fence. This color range would fit in best with other fencing in the area, and would minimize attention to the fence and focus it on the house, which is a priority.

White is an obvious option, but the high contrast with surrounding pavement, mulch, and planting would draw attention to the fence. The lot at 611 Preston Place is the only one that was not graded prior to building, so the contour jigs up and down quite sharply. The fence follows, and I fear that the jagged line would stick out like a sore thumb in a bright color. Knowing the BAR position on colors would help focus research on the options. I can bring in chips for your consideration in a few days, or select the best option for an application to the BAR. Thanks, Christine Colley

Second, I'm hoping color precedents are well established, and that you can deal with this change administratively. If it needs to go to the BAR, I assume that would be the March meeting. We certainly are not going to be painting in this cold weather, but I hope we will get a warm spell or two before then!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Christine Colley <christinehcolley@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 7:56 AM
Subject: Re: DHR #2015-252, 611 Preston Place, Charlottesville
To: "Ugarte, Jessica (DHR)" <Jessica.Ugarte@dhr.virginia.gov>

Many thanks for your quick reply! We are very much on the same page--literally as well as figuratively: I had in mind the very passage you cited in thinking that added work should be distinguished from historical elements being rehabilitated, and that they should not "fake" a feature that was not present in the period of the main building. We enthusiastically agree that the raw wood is NOT a good look, but we were willing to bear with it for a while to get the low key look we want. We are relieved that the requested paint need not be white. If I interpret your comments correctly, the DHR does not have a list of approved colors. A soft black or neutral gray/brown approximating weathered wood would be an excellent solution. As you probably know, the Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review does have approved colors, and we will need to run this change by Mary Joy Scala to see whether it can be approved administratively or must go through BAR review at the March meeting. Hence, it may take some time for us to get back to you with an Amendment. It is too cold to paint anyway, so that may not delay us much. Thank you again for your quick--and patient--reply to our perhaps over-thought message.

Christine H. Colley

On Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 2:37 PM, Ugarte, Jessica (DHR) <Jessica.Ugarte@dhr.virginia.gov> wrote:

> Hello Mrs. and Mr. Colley.

>

>

>

> Thank you for your email. As with every project, all work done during
> a Historic Tax Credit Program project must be fully reviewed and approved.
> This includes work to the surrounding site, which fencing and any
> other work done to the yard is a part of. While this site work is not
> a Qualified Rehabilitation Expense, and so is not eligible for tax
> credits, it still falls under our purview if it is done during a
> Historic Tax Credit Program project. As this newly-installed fence is
> visible in the submitted Part 3 photographs, it therefore comes under
> this review should Historic Tax Credits be sought for the other work that was done on the property.

> Please note that my request was not to specifically paint the fence
> white; it was to finish the currently unpainted, raw-wood fence along
> the front yard (where it is most plainly visible) with paint or an
> opaque stain. The color is really up to you, and could be any subtle
> color that would blend in with the surrounding landscape to recede
> from view. I only used the example of whitewash as a "for-instance"-type of a historic finish.

> As you note, in this particular case we are not dealing with a
> historic feature. So according to Secretary of the Interior's
> Standards for Rehabilitation #9, which deals with new construction,
> any new features must be "compatible" with the historic structure and
> "protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment."

> • #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new
> construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize
> the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and
> shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural
> features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

> As completed, and as is shown in the submitted Part 3 photographs, the
> bright, unfinished wood fence has a negative visual impact on the
> overall historic character of the site and surrounding Historic
> District. I understand that raw, unpainted wood will, over a period
> of years, weather to a dull grey. But again, that will take years, and
> even then it is not really a historically appropriate appearance for a
> fence installed in a historic, residential neighborhood that has a
> Period of Significance that extends to 1940.

> Therefore, in order to resolve this issue and remediate this new and
> un-reviewed work's impact on the historic character of this structure
> and the surrounding Historic District, please either paint or stain
> the wood in such a way that the wood grain is not visible. Again, it
> can be any shade you wish, even a shade that approximates a weathered wood appearance.

> Regards,
>
>
>
> Jessica Aurora Ugarte
>
> Tax Credit Reviewer, Department of Incentives
>
>
>
> Virginia Department of Historic Resources
>
> 2801 Kensington Avenue
>
> Richmond, Virginia 23221
>
> t: 804/482-6452
>
>
>
> PLEASE NOTE THAT UNLESS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED OTHERWISE,
>
> ALL APPLICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS
>
> SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO CHRIS NOVELLI AT THE DHR.
>
>
>
>
>
>
>
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Christine Colley [mailto:christinehcolley@gmail.com]
> Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 12:31 PM
> To: Ugarte, Jessica (DHR)
> Subject: DHR #2015-252, 611 Preston Place, Charlottesville
>
>
>
> To: Jessica Aurora Ugarte, Tax Credit Reviewer
>
>
>
> From: Scott and Christine Colley
>
>
>
> Subject: DHR #2015-252: The Quarters—Charlottesville
>
>
>

> Thank you for your letter of 3 February 2016. You reminded us that
 > all work done along with rehabilitation submitted to the Historic Tax
 > Credit Program must protect the historic character of the structure,
 > site, and surrounding Historic District, and commented that the
 > unpainted picket fence we added after completion of the house
 > rehabilitation is not compatible with the character of the property
 > and the surrounding district. Your recommended remediation is to add
 > an opaque white finish. We will certainly do that if it is necessary
 > to remain eligible for the program, but we have some questions as to whether there might be other options.
 >
 >
 >
 > Ironically, we chose the unpainted fence in an effort to fulfill
 > exactly the goals you cite: to protect the historic character of the
 > property, and to enhance its compatibility with and contribution to
 > the Rugby Road University Corner Historic District. We viewed the
 > fence surrounding the property not as an attempt to recreate an early
 > nineteenth century structure, but as a modern structure used to
 > “frame” The Quarters: to set it apart from surrounding—mostly
 > 1930’s--buildings and traffic, and highlight views of the house.
 >
 > Accordingly, we did not include the fence in our application. We
 > described and photographed it in an effort to be transparent about the
 > whole project, but did not include justification for the aesthetic choices involved.
 >
 >
 >
 > The style and height of the fence were chosen to fit the guidelines
 > set by the Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review. We removed
 > split rail and wire fencing which did not fit those guidelines, and
 > solid wall “privacy” fencing that obscured the view of the house from
 > the street. We chose pickets because a variety of picket fencing is
 > characteristic of Preston Place; see attached photos showing street
 > views of weathered pickets at #s 222, 224, 226, and dark painted
 > pickets at # 220. (See attached photos taken a few houses up the
 >
 > street) We left our fence unpainted so that it would fit in with the
 > neighborhood, and weather over time to become less and less visually
 > prominent. There is not a single white painted fence on Preston Place,
 > or within several blocks.
 >
 >
 >
 > The contour of the land is another reason for our choice. The
 > Quarters was built as a dwelling for farm laborers/managers on what
 > was, in the 1820’s-30’s, open farm land, and the site was not graded
 > before construction. The area was not broken up and marketed as lots
 > until the early twentieth century. Nearby houses—with the exception
 > of Wyndhurst (1850’s), next door—were built from the early 1930’s on,
 > and the lots were graded before building. As a result, The Quarters
 > now sits on a small city lot that is very different from surrounding
 > lots. The rocky hilltop rises and falls quite sharply, and the fence

- > reflects the irregularity of the land. A white painted fence would
- > emphasize the irregular contours, and jagged lines would draw
- > attention to the fence--another reason we have worked hard to design a
- > fence that would visually "disappear" as much as possible.
- >
- >
- >
- > Clearly any fencing that was part of a historic building complex
- > should be restored or reconstructed in its original design. However,
- > a fence designed much later to protect a historic building in a
- > radically changed setting seems to us a different matter. The fence we replaced dated from about 1970.
- > In its original state, The Quarters may have had fenced areas for
- > animals, but it is doubtful that it had any sort of fence to set off
- > the building until the 1930's, when the area had been divided into
- > lots and construction of houses was in progress. Now there are large
- > homes twenty-five feet from the West and South walls, and automobile
- > traffic forty feet from the front door. Restoring even a little of the
- > appearance of the original open setting is impossible now.
- >
- >
- >
- > Building a fence at The Quarters is about mediating the relationship
- > of the house to a crowded, busy University neighborhood: the fence
- > helps to define a private outdoor space, and discourages random foot
- > traffic—not just generalized goals given that the Sigma Chi fraternity
- > house is almost directly across the street. We have left the remains
- > of a mid-nineteenth-century ice house--which IS part of the historic
- > complex--intact in the front yard; the fence significantly reduces the
- > liability inherent in having an uneven, rocky front yard with a large
- >
- > hole surrounded by jagged wall stubs as its main feature. Fraternity
- >
- > guests, often in a party mood with little attention focused on the
- > footing, park along the street frontage.
- >
- >
- >
- > Our goal is a fence that serves these purposes without drawing much
- > attention to itself. We assume that the fence—indeed ANY fence—is not
- > part of the historic complex we are trying to preserve, but a means to
- > protect it. We want attention to go to the view of the house, not to
- > the fence. That is why we replaced solid fencing with open pickets, and left it unpainted.
- > Painting the fence white would make it more like nineteenth-century
- > fences in urban settings, but in that period, The Quarters was not in
- > an urban setting. More important, the cost would be shifting emphasis
- > away from the historic building we want to show off, and introducing a
- > color at odds with the frontage fencing typical of the area.
- >
- >
- >
- > Is there a way to consider the fence along with the driveway and other
- > features that support modern life in the house but do not seek to

> replicate aspects of the historic setting? The drive and walkways are
> placed to fit the pattern of movement now rather than what was there
> in the nineteenth century, and we have thought of the fence in much
> the same way from the beginning. All these features support modern
> life in the house, but are not part of the project to preserve the
> original character of the house. That is why we did not include these elements in our application.

>

>

>

> The Quarters is a historic property that dates a century earlier than
> the 1930's homes that define the visual character of the Rugby Road
> University Corner Historic District. The later homes reflect the
> urbanization of Charlottesville, while The Quarters is a remnant of
> rural settlement pre-dating the expansion of the city. The
> construction and scale of The Quarters is very different from those of large surrounding brick houses.
> These facts make it a bit difficult to plan a transition that both
> fits the neighborhood and is respectful of the original character of
> the house. A nineteenth-century neighborhood of urban homes never existed on the site.
> On the other hand, features that adapt The Quarters to the present use
> and appearance of the area are inevitably different from features
> typical of the period the house was built. Our thinking has been an
> effort to balance preservation and adaption, and we are confident that
> you will be able to help us refine that further.

>

>

>

> We are sorry not to have included this detailed reasoning in the
> application, but since the fence design had been approved by the
> Charlottesville Board of Architectural Review, and we were not
> submitting the hardscape work to be considered for tax credits, it did
> not occur to us that it would be an issue. We are grateful to you for
> informing us of the problem, and hope it will be possible for you to
> reconsider the problem on the basis of an email. If you prefer, we
> will be happy to put our reasoning in the form of a written Amendment
> to mail in a few days. We intend to comply with recommendations for
> remediation required to remain eligible for tax credits; our goal is a
> solution that protects the house and helps it to fit smoothly into the
> historic district. Please let us know what you conclude and the next
> steps from this point. Thank you again, we hope to hear from you soon.

>

>

>

> Sincerely,

>

>

>

> Christine and Scott Colley