LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING: AUGUST 20, 2012
AGENDA ITEM 7C

BAR Case No. THLP-2012-0075 Replacement of existing front door and replacement of existing front wood frame porch floor at the single-family detached dwelling situated at 208 Cornwall St. NW
Reviewer: Christopher Murphy, AICP
Address: 208 Cornwall Street, NW
Zoning: R-HD with H-1 Overlay
Applicant/Owner: David Stern and Bronwyn Duffy
Site Description: The subject dwelling is described in the 2000 Historic District Survey as being a c. 1890's five-bay wide vernacular interpretation of the Cottage Gothic Revival style. The dwelling features a center gable ad a full-width shed roof porch with scroll-sawn brackets and square–cut balusters. The center entry is framed by a three-light transom and panel-and-light sidelights. The exterior end chimneys are shouldered with corbelled caps. Later alterations to the dwelling include replacement of three windows on the second story of the façade and a two story addition with irregular roofline and a one story greenhouse with steeply pitched shed roof to the rear. The survey does not indicate a date for the additions.
Context: The 200 block of Cornwall Street is a collection of second and third phase of growth single family detached two story dwellings on flat, treed lots. The block is the first extension of Cornwall St. west of the original Nicolas Minor plan of Leesburg.
Description of Proposal: 1) Replace the 1980's replacement front door with a custom-built, solid wood, four panel door, and
2) Replace existing wood frame and floor on the existing front porch with 4" concrete slab covered in flagstone while retaining the original wooden vertical elements of porch.

STAFF ASSESSMENT:

Door. The proposed door is a solid wood, four panel door to replace a 1980's replacement door that began to deteriorate to the point where it was unable to be properly secured. In an effort to provide the owner safety and security, the proposed door was allowed to be installed on the condition that BAR review and approval be obtained before the door can be considered a permanent fixture.

Chapter V Guidelines for the Preservation and Modification of Existing Structures: Style and Design of the Old and Historic Design Guidelines (H-1 Guidelines), Section G.5 Porches and Doors stipulates that historic or original doors should be retained and repaired on all facades of structures within the H-1 Overlay. The original door had been replaced in the 1980's by a more ornate style of door not typical of the Cottage Gothic Revival Style with its five panels and a large center light in an oval shape. The proposed four-panel, solid wood door is a more suitable replacement and conforms to the Guidelines for Doors in Chapter V.

Porch. The Applicants propose the removal of the wood frame floor and its structure of the existing porch and replacing it with a four inch concrete slab covered in flagstone. The Applicant does not propose treating the revealed slab, except with paint or dye added to the concrete (grey) unless directed to do otherwise by the BAR.

Chapter V of the H-1 Guidelines Section G. Porches and Doors explains that porches and doors are quite often the focus of historic buildings. Their functional and decorative elements, including flooring, can be extremely important in defining the overall historic character of a building. The H-1 Guidelines stipulate that the retention, protection and repair of porches should be carefully considered when planning rehabilitation work. In support of this goal, the Guidelines express an inappropriate treatment of original and historic porches is to strip those porches of their original material. Instead, the Guidelines recommend the repair and replacement of damaged elements of porches by matching the materials, methods of construction, and details of the existing original fabric. (Chapter V, Sec. G.2, pg. 61)

The Applicants propose replacing the wood framing and decking of the porch with a concrete slab covered in flagstone, the Guidelines stipulate that evidence that the desired alteration (replacing wood with cement and stone) is appropriate to the historic and architectural character of the structure should be provided if an applicant proposes to alter a porch. (Chapter V, Section G.4, pg. 61)

Chapter VI Guidelines for the Preservation and Modification of Existing Structures: Materials Section A .1 Wood *Guidelines for Wood* says to retain original and historic wood features that define the overall character of the H-1 District.

Section A.3 says to repair rotted or missing sections rather than replace the entire element, matching the existing materials and detailing. The BAR should ascertain from the Applicant:

1. The extent of the rot: Is it throughout the entire wood frame and flooring? and,
2. Is the wood frame and flooring beyond repair?

If it is determined that he rot is prevalent throughout the entire wood frame and floor and the only option is replacement of the element and not repair, Section A.4 provides guidance for the replacement of wood elements stipulating the following:

a. Match the original in material, texture, dimensions and design;
b. Base the design of reconstructed elements on physical evidence from the actual building rather than from similar buildings;
c. If the applicant sufficiently demonstrates that it is impractical to match the original in materials, texture, dimensions and design, then the BAR may consider an alternative material if the new material does not create a different historic appearance and the new replacement materials are consistent with the original in finish, quality, and appearance; and
d. Do not use cement fiberboard or other synthetic or alternative materials if it is architecturally incompatible with the historic structure.

Site Development/Zoning Issues: None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/DRAFT MOTION

(Based on the BAR's discussion at the meeting, any changes to the language of either part of the motion should be incorporated as necessary.)

Staff recommends **approval** of the door replacement presented in TLHP-2012-0075 in accordance with the descriptive narrative and photographs dated 12 July 2012 submitted with the application on July 16, 2012, and

Staff recommends **denial** of the porch replacement presented in TLHP-2012-0075 due to the findings that the proposal does not meet the standards for Guidelines for the Preservation and Modification of Existing Structures: Style and Design (Chapter V) and Materials (Chapter VI) as described below:

1. The Applicant has not provided evidence of the entire wood frame and floor of the porch as being in a state of rot that is beyond repair necessitating complete replacement of those elements of the front porch.
2. The H-1 Guidelines Chapter V Section G Porches and Doors calls for repair and replacement of damaged elements of porches with matching materials, methods of construction and details of the original and the Applicant proposes replacement with a concrete slab covered in a flagstone.
3. The Applicant has not provided evidence that the desired alteration, replacing wood frame and floor of the c. 1890's Cottage Gothic Revival style porch with concrete slab covered in flagstone, is appropriate to the architectural character of the structure. (Chapter VI Section A.4 pg. 68)

Staff instead suggests the BAR asks the Applicant to return with plans proposing that the porch be repaired if possible with, or replaced if necessary, by wood of the same material, texture, dimensions and design as the original and historic porch.

208 CORNWALL ST, NW
POST-PROJECT APPEARANCE
STERN/DUFFY
N.B. - IN REALITY, FULL VIEW of PORCH FLOOR OBSCURED BY FRONT FENCE & BUSHES
DISCUSS * EXISTING CONCRETE STOOP
EXISTING BRICK RUNNING BOND WD REMAIN
** DISCUSS FACING OF NEW CONCRETE SLAB
CONCRETE PIERS WD SUPPORT EACH LOAD-BEARING POST AND WD BE FLUSH WITH TOP OF SLAB
WHAT SIMPLE TRIM WD LK LIKE IF NEEDED TO CONCEAL POST ANCHORS
PIER DEPTH PER CODE
TBD ? 36" ? 24"

12 July 2012
Re: 208 Cornwall St, NW
David Stern / Bronwyn Duffy
703.777.1854
bronwynduffy@verizon.net

1. Replace existing front door with custom-built, solid wood, period-appropriate door.

Existing door is in significant disrepair and is not original to the house (per contractor who recalls having removed the 'old, plain door' and replaced it with the 'fancy door' sometime in the late 1980's). It is cracking and beginning to come apart.

We propose to replace front door with a custom-made, solid wood four-panel door that is period-appropriate. (While this proposal was being prepared, the existing door became impossible to lock, and so we obtained a temporary OK to install the new door, pending BAR approval, thus the photo showing new door already installed). Paint color BM Historical Collection 'New London Burgundy', HC 61. (Primer now on door is tinted this color; see photos)

2. Replace existing support structure and floor of front porch while retaining existing vertical parts (posts, rails, etc.) and roof.

Existing infrastructure under porch is giving way and shows signs of rot; existing porch flooring has come loose, rotted or broken, causing a safety hazard and an eyesore; existing posts do not appear to be anchored to anything -- they sit on top of the floorboards.

We propose to:

* **Preserve** 'white parts' – posts, railings, brackets, roof – jacking them up & supporting them

* **Demolish** rotting 'gray parts' – flooring and its understructure

* **Replace** wood floor with a **flagstone** floor (Pennsylvania bluestone) in a pattern like this

trimmed like this where it meets house

Construction Plan (to be submitted for permits once BAR/staff approve changes of materials & appearance; we include this because staff asked us to describe how new bits wd join to old):

- jack up roof/posts/rails; demolish floor and its understructure
- pour piers/footings (to code) under the load-bearing posts of the porch
- lay 4" of gravel
- set a rebar grid in a 16" by 24" pattern with the ends of the rebar penetrating into and anchored on the foundation of the house
- pour a 4" concrete slab to support the flagstone surface
- set stone – its edges will butt up close to the original clapboard of the house. (The existing aluminum siding would be cut away at this juncture to preserve the option of removing all aluminum siding at a later date.)
- set posts/rails/roof back down on new surface; anchor posts to stone/slab with Simpson adjustable post bases, 'standoff' variety, to protect the old wood from water infiltration. Simple trim, if needed to hide the metal post bases from view.

ITEMS TO DISCUSS:

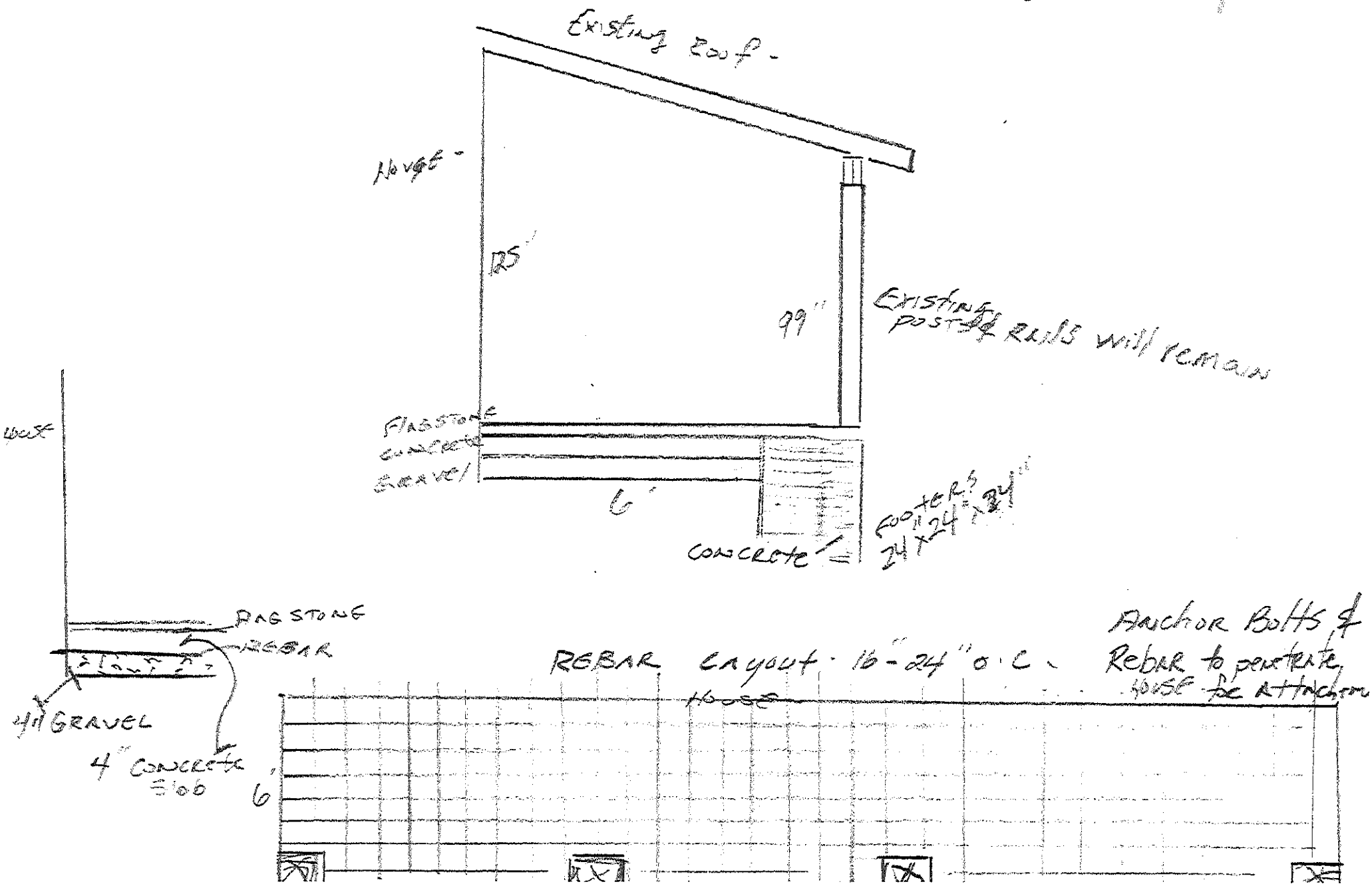
*Existing stoop is gray concrete and will be left intact if possible – to be determined in field. If it cannot be saved, it will be rebuilt in kind.

here is the existing concrete stoop

**The 'face,' or riser, of the four-inch slab will show just above ground level. We would prefer to leave that slab-face AS concrete, dyed or painted gray, if acceptable. We believe that this would leave a clean set of lines and would allow the slab to meld, visually, with the existing gray concrete stoop and its riser. If this is not acceptable, we would consider facing it with mixed, irregular brown stones, so that it would resemble the existing (although completely hidden-from-view) foundation of the old part of the house. Please advise.

here is a glimpse of the stone foundation of house

existing 'face' of wood sill which wd become concrete 'face' of slab

Prepared by Jamid Borzynski
of Brooklyn Design + Construction

208 [illegible] St. NW
Porch [illegible]
Stern [illegible]