



Historic District Commission

Old Business –Certificate of Appropriateness 707 Gimghoul Road (Project #19-123)

Summary Report

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
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Applicant	Filing Date	Meeting Date(s)	Historic District
Will Johnson Building Company	8/14/2020	11/12/2019, 12/10/2019, 7/14/2020, 9/23/2020	Gimghoul

Project Description

The applicant proposes amendments to an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application to modify the location of an HVAC compressor, changes to the landscape plan, removal of an existing exterior stair, and conversion of an existing porch to a closet.

Proposed Findings of Fact

1. The applicant had proposed four HVAC condenser units on the north (rear) elevation, to the east of the circular bay window. The applicant proposes to relocate two of the four condensers to the west side of the circular bay window, adjacent to the turret.
2. There is an existing porch between the turret and the circular bay window on the north (rear) elevation. The applicant proposes to remove the porch and fill it in. The porch elements will be removed, including the railings and exterior staircase, and replaced with a double-hung window matching those proposed on the rest of the house.
3. The applicant is also proposing modifications to the exterior hardscapes. The applicant will replace the existing driveway with a patterned brick-paved motor court of traditional brick pavers in a herringbone pattern. The front walkway will consist of a new basketweave brick pattern. The proposed stone patio will between the house and the garage will be replaced a circular patio area of Chatham Stone and bluestone connecting to a bluestone paved courtyard space. A new raised planter bed of large boulders will be constructed on the northwest corner of the site. The covered breezeway will be modified to a basket weave brick paver with bluestone border.

Applicable Design Guidelines

Site Features & Plantings (page 11):

8. Introduce compatible, new site features or plantings with care so that the overall historic character of the site and district is not diminished or compromised. It is not appropriate to introduce incompatible site features or equipment—including raised planting beds, landscape timbers and other contemporary edging materials, swimming pools, satellite dishes, solar collectors, mechanical equipment, transformers, or “hot boxes”—in locations that compromise the overall historic character of the building, site, or surrounding landscape.

Walls & Fences (page 17):

7. Introduce compatible new walls and fences, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district. Site new fences and walls in configurations and locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district.
8. Construct new walls in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, height, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district.
9. Introduce contemporary utilitarian walls and fences, if necessary, in rear and side yard locations only and where they do not compromise the historic character of the building, site, or district. It is not appropriate to introduce contemporary vinyl or metal chain link fences in locations that are visible from the street.

Walkways, Driveways, & Offstreet Parking (page 19):

4. Replace in kind historic walkways, driveways, and offstreet parking areas that are too deteriorated to repair, matching the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern. Consider a compatible substitute material only if it is not feasible to replace in kind.
7. Introduce compatible new walls and fences, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district. Site new walkways, driveways, and offstreet parking areas in locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district and locate them so the general topography of the site and mature trees and other significant site features are not altered, damaged, or lost.
8. In residential sections of the districts, it is not appropriate to locate offstreet parking areas in locations that are visible from the street, where the paving will abut the principal building, or where the paved area will substantially alter the proportion of the site that is paved versus landscaped.
9. Construct new walkways, driveways, and offstreet parking areas in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district.
10. Screen new offstreet parking areas visually from the street and buffer adjacent properties from their visual impact through the use of perimeter plantings, fences, walls, or hedges. Reduce the visual impact of large parking areas by subdividing them with interior planting medians.

Porches, Entrances, & Balconies (page 43):

9. It is not appropriate to enclose a front porch, entrance, or balcony on a character-defining elevation. Consider enclosing a porch or balcony on a side or rear elevation only if the design will preserve the historic character of the porch or balcony.

Utilities & Energy Retrofit (page 49):

8. Install mechanical equipment in areas and spaces that require the least amount of alteration to the appearance and historic fabric of the building.
9. Minimize the visual impact of new mechanical and communication equipment and utilities by installing them in inconspicuous locations that are not visible from the street and by screening them from view. It is not appropriate to install condensers, skylights, ventilators, solar collectors, and mechanical or communication equipment on roof slopes or building elevations that are visible from the street or in locations that visually compromise the architectural character of the historic building.

Additions (page 55):

1. Introduce additions in locations that are not visible from the street—usually on rear elevations, inset from either rear building corner. Locate additions carefully so they do not damage or conceal significant building features or details. It is not appropriate to introduce an addition if it requires the loss of a character-defining building or site feature, such as a porch or mature tree.
3. Limit the size and scale of an addition to minimize its visual impact. It's not appropriate to introduce an addition if it will visually overpower the building or site or substantially alter the proportion of constructed area to unbuilt area on the site.
4. Design an addition so it is compatible with the historic building in roof form, massing, and overall proportion.
5. Design an addition and its features so they are compatible in scale, materials, proportions, and details with the historic building. Select exterior surface materials that are compatible with those of the historic building in terms of module, composition, texture, pattern, color, and detail.
6. Design an addition so it is compatible with yet discernible from the historic building.
7. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

Congruity Findings

Based on the Findings of Facts and the relevant Design Guidelines referenced above, the HDC proposes congruity findings for the following Criteria as specified per LUMO Section 3.6.2(e):

Criterion C: Proposed exterior construction materials, including texture and pattern, are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the historic house and those found on historic houses within the historic district.

Criterion D: The architectural detailing, such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials, are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the historic house and those found on historic houses within the historic district.

Criterion F: The proportion, shape, positioning and location, pattern and size of any elements of fenestration are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the historic house and those found on historic buildings within the historic district.

Criterion G: The general form and proportions of the new addition and garage are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the historic house and those found on historic buildings within the historic district.

Criterion J: The architectural scale of the new addition, walkways, retaining walls, and their architectural detailing are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the historic house and those found on historic buildings within the historic district.

Decision

Based on the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions of law, the Historic District Commission ***approves/denies*** the modification to the Certificate of Appropriateness as referenced above on the basis that it ***would/would not be incongruous*** with the special character of the district.

Exhibits

1. [November 12, 2019 Historic District Commission Meeting Materials](#)¹
2. [July 14, 2020 Historic District Commission Meeting Materials](#)²

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4208491&GUID=DD726C1A-D80B-4528-913B-2DABCDD0CD31&Options=&Search=>

² <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4581416&GUID=922C0679-E807-4805-BEBF-E6D8CCB2B968>