

# **CITY OF MANASSAS ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD AGENDA**

**City Hall – Room 204  
9027 Center Street  
March 8, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.**

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Tom Waters, Chairman  
William Rush, Vice-Chairman  
Debbie Haight

Nancy Hersch Ingram  
Fatima Pereira-Shepherd  
Jan Alten (ALTERNATE)

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2016 **and** February 9, 2016
4. New Business
  - **ARB #2016-23  
Weems LLC/Jim Downs  
9219 Center Street**
  - **ARB #2016-24  
F&F Properties/Jim Shull, Jr.  
9325 Maple Avenue**
5. Other Business
  - **Historic Overlay District Zoning Ordinance Update**
  - **Old Town Update(s)**
    - **City Memorandum dated February 22, 2016, concerning Operational Guidelines for City Boards, Committees, and Commissions**
    - **City Policy #P-2016-03 regarding Appointments to City Boards, Committees, and Commissions**
    - **Liberty Street Appeal Public Hearing – April 18, 2016**
    - **Historic Preservation Training – March 24, 2016**
6. Adjournment

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
CITY OF MANASSAS  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**

**January 12, 2016 – 7:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Tom Waters, Chairman  
Debbie Haight  
Nancy Hersch Ingram  
Fatima Pereira-Shepherd  
William Rush  
VACANT, (Alternate)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Elizabeth Via-Gossman, Director of Community Development  
Jamie S. Collins, Development Services Manager  
Allison Whitworth, Planner  
Donna J. Bellows, Boards and Commissions Clerk

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Clerk called the roll, and a quorum was determined.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 8, 2015**

**Ms. Haight motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Rush seconded the motion. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ARB #2016-16**

**Manassas Junction Bed and Breakfast  
9311 Prescott Avenue**

**Ms. Whitworth** stated that due to an update to the zoning ordinance which now allows bed and breakfasts to have either a shingle sign or wall sign not exceeding 4 square feet in the area, the applicants have proposed to remove the existing wall sign on the frieze above the front porch entry and install a new shingle sign. The sign measures 32" by 18" and will be made of sandblasted high density urethane to create a raised border and copy. The background of the sign will be a deep burgundy color to match the painted trim work on the home, and the border and copy will be a cream color. The sign will be installed on a black powder-coated steel bracket attached to a black 4x4 post. While the post has a height of

6.5', the top of the sign will be 5.3' above grade. The sign will be located in the front yard, approximately 15 feet from the front property line and 35 feet from the north (side) property line.

The applicable design guidelines for signage are found on pages 82-87 of the City of Manassas Historic District Handbook. The guidelines state that signs on residential buildings can be freestanding signs placed perpendicular to the house in a front yard. Freestanding signs in residential areas should not exceed 8 square feet in area and 8 feet in height. Overall, the sign design and graphics should be coordinated with the character of the building.

The proposed sign adheres to the size requirements of the zoning ordinance and the design guidelines and is appropriately sized for a residential neighborhood. The color palette proposed is compatible with the color palette of the residence, and the typeface is appropriate for both the house as well as the nature of the business. Overall, the proposed shingle sign is in keeping with the design guidelines. Due to the requirements of the zoning ordinance, only one sign is allowed for a bed and breakfast, and so installation of the shingle sign will require that the existing wall sign on the plain frieze above the porch be removed. The applicants should undertake any necessary maintenance or repair to ensure the frieze is returned to its prior condition following removal of the sign.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted with the condition that any necessary maintenance or repair will be performed following removal of the wall sign.

**Applicants, Mark and Ann Hempen**, had nothing further to add to the staff report.

#### **ARB Discussion**

- None

**Mr. Rush** motioned to approved ARB #2016-16 as submitted with the following recommended condition by staff:

- Any necessary maintenance or repair will be performed following the removal of the wall sign.

**Ms. Haight** seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Haight      | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **ARB #2016-19**

**Longevity Wellness Center & Spa**  
**9366 Main Street**

**Ms. Whitworth** presented a staff report proposing to install a double-sided projecting sign for the business which has relocated to the building, Longevity Wellness Center and Spa. The

sign measures 3' by 2'-8" and will be made of high density urethane. The background will be sandblasted wood grain painted white with a raised border and copy which will be painted green. The green and yellow logo of the business will also be raised and will be applied through digital printing. The sign will be installed on a new steel scroll bracket in the location of a previous sign bracket between the front entrance and window, just below the rusticated masonry string course.

The applicable design guidelines for signs are found on pages 82-87 of the City of Manassas Historic District Handbook. The guidelines state that projecting signs should be no larger than 12 square feet. Sign design and graphics should be coordinated with the nature of the business and the character of the building. Typical problems with signage include poor placement and over scaled signage.

The proposed sign is 8 square feet in area, within the size requirements of the zoning ordinance and the design guidelines. The sign is appropriately placed in regard to the architectural elements of the building. The color palette and materials are compatible with the structure. Overall, the sign is in keeping with the design guidelines.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

Applicant, Rob Anderson, had nothing further to add to the staff report.

#### **ARB Discussion**

- None

**Ms. Haight motioned to approve ARB #2016-19 as submitted. Ms. Shepherd seconded the motion.**

#### **Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Ms. Haight      | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |
| Mr. Rush        | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **ARB #2014-46 (Addendum)**

**Messenger Place  
9009 Church Street**

**Ms. Whitworth** presented a staff report seeking approval of the following design details which were either not presented for approval during the first review of the project or were deferred for further consideration:

- Black Atlantic Aluminum fencing with brick piers along the north and east property lines
- Homeland white PVC balcony railings

- Cream Therma-Tru fiberglass balcony door
- Kawnee 350 Stile aluminum entrance doors, green and cream
- Green Masa Alumiframe awnings at three residential building entrances
- Cream Masa Extrudeck over first floor retail and common space windows
- Progress ceiling mounted balcony light fixtures
- Freeport wall sconce entry lighting

The applicable guidelines for new construction are found throughout the City of Manassas Historic District Infill Development Guidelines and the Manassas Historic District Handbook. The guidelines state that new construction should complement and respect the character of the existing historic buildings. However, new buildings should not be a reproduction or copy of historic buildings which confuse the public as to what is historically significant and what is not.

#### Site Fencing (Design Guidelines, pg. 38-39)

The guidelines for fencing state that fence materials and design should relate to the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed fencing materials – masonry piers and aluminum railings—are compatible with the recommendations of the guidelines and the character of the surrounding historic district. In addition, the railings are similar to the black metal railings found throughout the downtown area.

#### Balcony Railings (Infill Design Guidelines, pg. 42)

At the ARB meeting for this project, the Board discussed the use of vinyl or PVC vs. aluminum railings. While aluminum is more appropriate for use in the historic district, the profile of vinyl railings is more comparable to the profile of wood railings. The precedent which might be set by approving vinyl was discussed, and the ARB asked the applicant to investigate other options. After further research, the applicant continues to propose the PVC railings as the best option. In regard to the materials of infill construction, the guidelines generally do not recommend the use of synthetic materials. Staff continues to recommend against the use of PVC railings.

#### Doors (Infill Design Guidelines, pg. 36)

In general, the guidelines state that new doors should be mostly glass and may be painted wood or metal. The proposed doors are in keeping with these recommendations and appropriate for commercial entrances and reflective of many of the storefront entrances in the historic district. The proposed cream and green colors are coordinated with the design of the building and used to differentiate between the commercial and residential entrances.

#### Awnings (Infill Design Guidelines, pgs. 49-50)

The infill design guidelines state that the inclusion of awnings can enhance the building and street-level design. Awnings should be carefully placed and sized to not obscure elements and the colors should be coordinated as part of the overall color scheme. Contemporary styles and materials may be appropriate for mixed-use buildings. The applicant has utilized two different styles and colors of awnings in order to differentiate the various areas of the building. The cream horizontal awnings adorn the first floor windows (both commercial and common area) while the green sloped awnings are used to designate the resident entrances. The color of the awnings has been coordinated with the overall color scheme for the building, matching the color of the doors or windows above which they are placed. The use of awnings

references traditional design details found throughout the historic district while the contemporary style and materials of the awnings distinguishes the building as new construction.

Light Fixtures (Infill Design Guidelines, pg. 52)

The infill design guidelines state that lighting fixtures should be understated and compatible with the character of the surrounding area and the building. The proposed light fixtures are appropriately scaled for the location. The flush-mount fixtures proposed for the balcony are minimal and unobtrusive. While the proposed sconces are more modern in style, they are appropriate for in-fill construction and compatible with the character of the building and will not detract from the surrounding area.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed fencing, doors, awnings, and light fixtures. Staff recommends denial of PVC balcony railings.

**Applicant, Coleman Rector**, presented a sample of aluminum and PVC railings to the Board.

**Applicant, Grant Kersey**, stated that aluminum has more of a sturdy feel and would be significantly more expensive but would prefer approval of the PVC.

**Chairman Waters** clarified that the applicant was proposing the aluminum as an alternative to the PVC, and both **Mr. Coleman** and **Mr. Kersey** agreed.

**ARB Discussion**

- Material of the awnings
- Location of the lighting fixtures on buildings

**Ms. Haight** motioned to approve **ARB #2014-46** as modified by the applicant:

- Change the railing material from PVC to aluminum

**Mr. Rush** seconded the motion.

**Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Ms. Haight      | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |
| Mr. Rush        | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ARB #2016-17**

**James Downey**

**9514 Liberty Street**

**Ms. Collins:** The applicant is proposing to demolish the vacant house due to the deteriorated state. The long term goal of the trust would be to replace the structure with one

that would be harmonious and compatible with the neighborhood and the Historic Overlay District.

The guidelines for demolition are found beginning on page 114 of the Historic District Guidebook, as well as in Section 130-406 (e) of the Zoning Ordinance. Specific guidelines for demolition apply to contributing structures only.

The ARB shall issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to raze or demolish a contributing or historic structure if the ARB finds that the structure meets at least two of the following criteria:

1. The structure is not of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be a significant detriment to the public interest.
2. The structure is not of such significance that it would qualify on its own merit as a national, state landmark or local historic structure.
3. The structure is not of such old and uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
4. The structure is not preserving or protecting an area of historic interest in the City.

Staff would suggest that the structure meets all four of the criteria. The original elements of the house are no longer intact due to the deterioration over the years. The house has been vacant with no utility service for over four years. The Colonial Revival Style of this house can be found in many other locations within the historic district that are better, more preserved examples of this type and style of housing. The City's property maintenance staff has been working with the property owner since September of last year to abate property maintenance code violations at the structure. Of the twenty improved properties in the surrounding neighborhood, eleven were constructed after 1940. The owner has come forward to voluntarily demolish the structure.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted with the stipulation that a photographic survey of both the interior and exterior and measured sketch drawings be provided prior to the issuance of a building permit for the demolition of the structure. The construction of any future structure on the site would be required to come before the Architectural Review Board for approval.

**Ms. Via-Gossman:** I just wanted to let the Chairman and the Board members know that a member of the public has asked to address the Board at the end of applicant's presentation. Ms. EJ Scott is here and this is not a public hearing, I'm checking the procedures and I believe that the public can be recognized at the will of the chairman.

**Chairman Waters:** Would the applicants like to add anything further to the staff report?

**Applicant**

**James Downey**

**Downey & Mayhugh, P.C.**

**82 Main Street, Warrenton, VA**

**Mr. Downey:** Nothing of great substance. The only solution to us is to tear the building down. What could go there could very well replicate that style. You see a lot of homes built

these days which are kind of like that. A brand new structure could be very compatible in terms of the aesthetics and would completely solve the deterioration situation. This building is so far gone that trying to rehab it is just out of the question. We concur with the staff report, with all respects.

**Mr. Rush:** Has anyone done a study on the structure of it to know that it is about to fall? It's almost demolition by neglect.

**Co-trustee/Owner**

**Stephen Fox, PC**

**10511 Judicial Dr, Fairfax, VA**

**Mr. Fox:** They were condemned by the building department as being unsafe and uninhabitable.

**Ms. Collins:** That is not correct for the property at 9514. And again, I think that the staff report zeroed in on the four criteria which are in the design guidelines for approval of demolition.

**Mr. Rush:** I know, but I still think about the Prescott House and how that came out. Has anybody done an evaluation on the structure to know that it is not saleable?

**Mr. Fox:** My co-trustee, Mr. Malloy, is a trained carpenter and has been involved in the carpenter industries here in town. Ms. Smith was his cousin and he was helping her to the best of his ability to maintain those properties and has give me a kind of horse-back estimate and thinks that everything needs to be replaced – the wiring, the plumbing, no insulation. He thinks it would cost about \$250,000 to rehab each of those buildings to restore them to decent shape.

**Mr. Rush:** How much would it cost to build a new house on the site?

**Mr. Fox:** We did not estimate that.

**Mr. Rush:** It would be the same thing or more.

**Mr. Fox:** Let me be candid with this committee. Ms. Smith inherited these houses from her father and uncle. I don't think she ever put any money into them within the last forty years and they reflect that. She passed away in April 2012, I believe, and has one heir, Charles Smith. He grew up here in Manassas and has had severe disabilities all of his adult life. We provide for him under the special needs trust. Along with that is a trust that operates to own the various properties that she owned – a property on Lucasville Road which we sold several years ago to Northern Virginia Builders, and she owned the three properties at 9510, 9512 and 9514 Liberty Street. We have been obligated to keep 9510 Liberty in some inhabitable shape because Charles is in and out of it. I don't think he's currently residing there. He is now in some kind of psychiatric institutional setting. We reached the conclusion early on that this trust wasn't flushed with cash, and we didn't have the funds to maintain and rehab these facilities. We looked around the neighborhood and there were a couple of houses across the street that laid on the market for months and months and month at prices like \$99,000; they were not doing anything. We reached the general conclusion that the highest and best use



of this land ultimately would be for redevelopment. We've been on record, on that according, with Ms. Via-Gossman. We submitted this package to her and essentially, the cornerstone of that was that Ms. Smith owned 9510, 9512 and 9514. She had previously owned a lot on Grant Avenue but had to sell that during her lifetime to raise cash for her sustenance. She sold that to her cousin, Mr. Malloy who lives at 9503 Grant Avenue and he and his wife own a couple of lots going south of there and his sister owns the corner lot at Prince William and Grant Avenue. The shaded area (document presented in packet) shows what we believe we had under control for potential redevelopment. The substance of it was that we lacked this gap (all white and down at the corner). It is clear to everybody that the community is in transition.

**Mr. Rush:** What was the redevelopment you think proposed to be there?

**Mr. Fox:** This was a suggestion for townhouses or senior living facility.

**Mr. Rush:** The zoning is all wrong for that.

**Mr. Fox:** The zoning is wrong but it doesn't mean that it can't be rezoned, if Council believes it to be appropriate. That is the background and we don't have the money to rehab these houses.

**Mr. Rush:** Why not put them on the market for sale and see how that goes?

**Mr. Fox:** We had an example of that, Mr. Rush, from the house across the street. And, to piecemeal them like that, I don't believe it to be in the best interest of the trust purposes.

**Mr. Rush:** I just don't see you gaining anything by tearing them down because they will be worth less money torn down. The lot value is right at \$100,000. The City has been carrying it for something plus that. So, at least they have a little more value if left standing.

**Mr. Fox:** I don't see it that way; that's speculative.

**Mr. Rush:** Looks like someone should appeal to City Council to reduce the taxes to \$30,000. I don't understand why you would want to just tear them down. What is the future of just tearing them down – a vacant lot?

**Mr. Fox:** Well, we think that a vacant lot is better than a dilapidated building.

**Mr. Rush:** I obviously disagree.

**Ms. Haight:** I appreciate the honesty of what you just presented to us. I know that you had said that you had an individual who is a carpenter. Would you say in your opinion that he qualifies as a professional structural engineer? One of the guidelines in here is that there is a feasibility study conducted that is both economic and structural.

**Mr. Fox:** Well, he has commented on one element of the structure and believes that it is right for termite damage.

**Mr. Rush:** The answer would be yes or no?

**Mr. Fox:** The answer would be a hybrid answer. If you are asking whether he is a structural engineer, the answer is no, but he is an experienced carpenter and he knows that if you don't have a substantial foundation that has been undermined by termite damage, you have a problem.

**Ms. Shepherd:** Are you supposed to put this on the market for a year?

**Ms. Collins:** That is one of the outcomes after it comes before the ARB. The first step is to come before the ARB for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish. If that application is not successful, then they have two options – appeal to City Council (just like any other Certificate of Appropriateness) or they can have the right to demolish by putting it on the market. So, in terms of the first step, it's to come before this board for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Mr. Rush:** So, they can demolish it after putting it on the market and the sale fails?

**Ms. Collins:** Yes, if it doesn't sell after a certain period of time. It's a process that includes appraisals and depending on the price of the appraisal, then it is a certain time period.

**Mr. Fox:** Over the last year and a half, we have marketed privately. The idea is to consolidate the properties to numerous developers, including Van Metre, who built the Quarry Street property. We've had several meetings with Mr. Ghadban who is interested in the property and further development along Grant Avenue properties owned by Holmes Smith. We have not had any real offers. I have shown it to about eight builders and developers.

**Mr. Rush:** But, have you put it on the market?

**Mr. Fox:** I am an attorney, I do land use, and I have contact with builders and developers throughout northern Virginia. You've failed to understand that I went directly to them with my engineering data attempting to offer for sale to Harry Ghadban and Northern Virginia Properties, K. Hovnanian, and Van Metre (they passed on it because their portfolio was full). You may not call that marketing, but under the Virginia code, I am entitled to do, precisely as a lawyer, what a real estate broker does. And, I would say, yes, it has been on the market.

**Ms. Shepherd:** When you're saying that you have this plan that you've developed and you took it to the City of Manassas, who were you targeting? So, you just answered it by Van Metre and the builders. So you want to tear down the land for now and hopefully with the rest of the family that seems to be....

**Mr. Fox:** Frankly, we were hoping to pass the demolition on to the developer.

**Ms. Shepherd:** You are trying to sell the property and have the developer take on that?

**Mr. Fox:** Yes, but in the interim, we would demolish it.

**Ms. Shepherd:** So, in order for you to have that plan of selling to a developer, you don't have everything in line and in place with all the other properties to do that.

**Mr. Fox:** No. The developer, Mr. Ghadban, has a real estate guy that he is working with and he has somebody trying to acquire the properties.

**Ms. Ingram:** This is a true conundrum and I do sympathize with your predicament. I do have a lot of experience with old houses. I did redo the first old historic house in Manassas and I was told by the powers that be to rehab it with a match...that was in 1981. My concern is that we get this information on a Friday afternoon and years have gone into this. I have a photograph that was taken today and a photograph that was taken in 2014 and absolutely nothing has happened to this house. Not even the plastic chair on the porch has been moved. I have a concern that this has been allowed to happen. Is there no enforcement about property being literally neglected to the point of demolition...demolition by neglect?

**Ms. Collins:** Our property code enforcement staff has been in contact with the property owners in terms of getting voluntary compliance. There is a process that you need to go through and in response to that process and nothing is happening from the owner's standpoint, reviewing the property maintenance code and the historic overlay district; we have stronger language in the historic overlay district in terms of deterioration by neglect.

**Ms. Ingram:** Is this in the historic overlay district?

**Ms. Collins:** Yes, that is the reason why it's before you this evening because it is in the historic overlay district.

**Ms. Ingram:** In other words, the house has just been allowed to deteriorate. The reason why I have a lot of concerns about this is because I was here when we were concerned about the Prescott Avenue house and the same thing was being said. The ARB was being told that we could not even inspect the house because it was so dangerous. My concern is that we have no way to verify what is actually hear-say evidence by the carpenter. I am very interested in the character of Manassas. I have dear friends on Liberty Street who are very concerned. I had a long conversation with one of the residents today who I have known for 50 years. Their concern is that the place is allowed to be dilapidated without any enforcement. I am in such a quandary and I don't see how I can vote on this tonight. I don't have enough information to convince me that this is the only resolution. It seems to me that the real aim is to knock the houses down as an overall redevelopment plan, and that is not what the ARB is here for...that is not our job. Personally, I don't think I can vote to demolish these houses tonight with the information I was given on last Friday.

**Mr. Downey:** The criteria are the criteria given and the staff has accurately pointed out that the facts in front of you satisfy these criteria, plus Ms. Collins has been out to the site and can give you first hand information if you just ask any questions you need to ask about what is the status of the buildings. If I can just turn this around a little bit, the conundrum really lies in the fact that it is not practicable to do anything else but demolish these buildings at this point and time. Everything else runs the owners into a dead end. So, we are not left with much alternative but to come here and see if it satisfies these four criteria, which it does, and that's your job which is simply to apply those.

**Ms. Ingram:** The reason why I have the conundrum with the information given is because I was told the same thing regarding the Prescott Avenue house which is now spectacularly beautiful. I was told that it was so dangerous that the members of the ARB could not even go in and inspect it. I have a letter here from Mr. Ickrath who in fact did save that house.

**Mr. Fox:** I'm not your typical owner. I'm a lawyer who became a trustee by default. Mr. Malloy is a cousin of Ms. Smith and the beneficiaries of the trust are Jenny Dean Foundation, First Baptist Church of Vienna, and the Virginia Tech Foundation. So, my job as trustee is to make sure that the property is handled in the way that brings the greatest return to those foundations, which are charitable trusts. It is not to spend half a million dollars, which we do not have. The trust does not even have enough to put a heating system in either of the houses. So, if they are not demolished, in all practical standpoints, they will remain as they are unless some fair prince/princess comes in and wants to invest and rehab them. I don't see it happening because it didn't happen with the ones across the street. It is a conundrum and I would argue that these houses are not even fairly comparable to the Prescott House. I am familiar with the Prescott House, but maybe not as intimate as you are, but it was a formidable structure. These houses were cheap when they were built and have remained cheaply constructed. That is the conundrum. They have some finishes and swirls on them that make them appear as though they are historic but that is in the mind and just over the time period. They hardly have any historical significance of merit because they met the criteria. That's what I would say justifies your vote to demolish the structures. What Steve Fox is going to do is retire and resign from the trust and the City is going to be left with it. This is not going to be my life's work, I can tell you that. I'm going to take my social security and 401K and I'm going to the beach.

**Ms. Ingram:** The other thing about the demolition is that it is noted that one of them has asbestos and even with demolition, you would have to have hazmat. If there is no money for a heating system, even the demolition will be very costly.

**Mr. Fox:** We have an estimate of the demolition of about \$28,000 total for the two houses.

**Mr. Rush:** You need to talk to some more people.

**Chairman Waters:** Is this or is this not a contributing structure?

**Ms. Collins:** It is a contributing structure.

**Chairman Waters:** So, that would not fail criteria #4 – the structure is not preserving or protecting an area of historic interest in the City – it's a part of it. Then you go on to criteria #1 - the structure is not of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be a significant detriment to the public interest – that is just about any contributing structure because they are contributing and by definition they are somewhat significant because they are contributing. Are there any alterations that have been done through the years?

**Ms. Collins:** There is an addition to the back of the house. I don't have any photographs prior to 1990 but the mid 1990's shows a consistent front porch.

**Chairman Waters:** I am not clear about the frame. Have you deconstructed the walls to look at the frame?

**Mr. Fox:** No, only the flooring.

**Chairman Waters:** You said that it has termites or are you suspecting it has termites?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Malloy told me that it has termites.

**Chairman Waters:** Thank you for knowing about the Prescott House because that was a long and tortured process. It is a different house and a most spectacular house on a prominent corner, and there is no doubt about that. It is kind of a replay from that because we were told that it was about to fall in. In fact, we were in court one time when the City was beginning to demolish it itself. Things turned around and the house was saved. I hear the conundrum and I do understand the predicament that you are in.

**Ms. Haight:** Mr. Fox, you had mentioned that these are the only four criteria that we have to pick but that is not the case. Within our guidelines there are additional things that we have to take a look at and one of them is the feasibility study, both economic and structural. I don't know if you have a copy of that information or not.

**Mr. Fox:** I do.

**Chairman Waters:** Are you speaking for or against the demolition (referring to EJ Scott)?

**Ms. Scott:** I'm speaking against the demolition.

**Chairman Waters:** Our rules say that the person opposed to granting the application shall present the arguments against the application. We have had some communication against the demolition and our rules allow that. For the applicant that is advocating, I will allow this but for the record, I would like to know whether you object to this the citizen's comment?

**Mr. Fox:** I think it fair to let everyone speak their mind. I did want to say that we held extensive meetings with Ms. Via-Gossman and another gentleman about a year and a half ago regarding this proposal. We were not discouraged or overly encouraged about this. It is apparent that this triangle located right downtown and is subjected to the same influences of the railroad that this building is subjected to. It's a downtown property and is operated in a very low density level which really is not in keeping with its location in the center of the City. There was a lot of discussion about whether or not the Planning Department would encourage some redevelopment of that entire triangle section. We went before the Land Use Committee and they did not disabuse us of that concept either.

**Chairman Waters:** There is definitely some room for improvement in the area, and I don't think you will get any argument from anyone in the City about that. I didn't finish my thought about the frame. My experience has been on these houses, you might find a frame in that house to be better than anything constructed today. That is the way it is on my old house...it's hard to destroy that really old 2x4 wood. You might want to consider that. Ma'am would you like to step forward to speak?

**Citizen's Comment**

**EJ Scott, Chairperson for the Virginia Department of Environmental Equalities Waste Management Board**

**Ms. Scott:** It has been really disturbing to me about a lot of the demolition that has been going on around our City because we have landfills and they are filling up and we need to be conservative about how we manage the properties, construction and demolition that goes into those. Having said that, I am very concerned about what is happening to Liberty Street. As an African American, I know the history of that area and I think that it is important that we preserve that. We have the Manassas Museum, an organization that manages the history and preservation of a number of buildings throughout our City. I think that it is important to have some of those buildings in an area that houses the history of African Americans in Manassas, as well, and I would truly like to see that happen.

Tearing down these buildings would be a disservice. We have already lost 9500 Liberty Street and to continue to demolish more diminishes our history at a time people are trying to rewrite history. I think we need to try and preserve it.

**Chairman Waters:** You have eluded a couple of time to the relationship of the African American History and Liberty Street. Would you explain this?

**Ms. Scott:** As you know, that was one of the few areas where African Americans were allowed to live in Manassas and that is why most of those homes are owned by African Americans. I would like to thank the Board because I really appreciate the comments that you all have made after the presentation. I can see that you are just as concerned about preserving the beauty in the houses here. I was here when they were trying to get rid of the Prescott House and I am a fierce rehab addict myself. I really appreciate what they did with that house and that you all recognized what was done with that house. Thank you.

**Chairman Waters:** Thank you for your presentation, Ma'am. Gentleman, do you have anything to add?

**Mr. Fox:** No money to rehab them and wouldn't spend it if I had it, probably. It is just sort of empathetically to what I see as the best use of that property. I wouldn't want my service as a trustee to be criticized on that basis. It is a lot of similar mentality in preserving, rehabbing and putting good money after the bad, but it's just not there.

**Chairman Waters:** I understand what you are saying. You are absolutely right about the market that you went to. I would say that it was very logical. Like the Prescott House, the example is the person who lives here in the historic district. Single homeowners who love these houses pour their heart and souls into them. I think the Prescott House had only a couple of owners, but there was basically restored by one individual who lived two doors down who had affection for preservation. So,

**Ms. Ingram:** What remedy does the City have for demolition by neglect on purpose? It seems to me that what has happened to this house need not have happened. Was there any muscle in the ordinances?

**Ms. Collins:** We are in the process this evening in terms of bringing the demolition by neglect to the property owner so that they would investigate their options. One of their options may have been, if this structure was not in the historic overlay district, to board up the house and put it in limbo until something could be arranged to take care of it. That option is not appropriate in the historic overlay district because it would not deter further compromise of the exterior features. So, in terms of the process, that brought us to this evening meeting.

**Ms. Ingram:** Is there anything we can do to stop what is happening?

**Mr. Rush:** So, are you saying that this is the first step in the process that your office can take in stopping demolition by neglect?

**Ms. Collins:** We have been in the process for about four months, in terms of last fall when we contacted the owner on 9514 in terms of addressing the property maintenance issues.

**Mr. Rush:** He admitted freely that nothing has been touched for four years.

**Mr. Fox:** I said forty years.

**Mr. Rush:** Oh, okay. Looks to me like, if we have people riding around and the zoning inspectors looking at things, a flag ought to go up on that kind of property.

**Ms. Collins:** We do proactive enforcement. We do have limited staffing resources.

**Ms. Ingram:** That's what we hear all the time. Limited staffing seems to be the answer to a lot of stuff that's happening.

**Chairman Waters:** Do you mind if Ms. Via-Gossman speaks again?

**Mr. Fox:** No.

**Ms. Via-Gossman:** Just to address the issue about enforcement and to use the Prescott House as an example, the enforcement is done, a letter of violation is sent and court dates are set. To use the Prescott House as an example, we will take a property owner to court; the courts will order the property owner to maintain the property or to fix the property up. As in the case of the Prescott House, if the property owner does not have the financial wherewithal, the City's only recourse would be to do the rehab work themselves and place a lien on the property to recoup the cost of that. We found that out with the Prescott House. As you know, with the Prescott House, the Council determined that they would spend \$90,000 fix the property and put the lien on and then they reversed themselves and determined that they did not want to spend tax payer money on private property. So, the policy direction that staff has had is to go as far as you can with the code, to work with the property owner for mediation in whichever way that we can but ultimately the Council at the time was not interested in putting, again, general tax payer dollars into private property.

As of these last few months, the Council has been asked by the Georgetown South Homeowners/Community Association to consider eminent domain on two townhouses that are blighted and in desperate shape – to acquire those by eminent domain and then sell them to be rehabbed by the City. The Council is going through that process and we do not have an answer yet and I do not know if we will get direction from the Council to actually file suit if the owner will not sell the properties. But, it is potentially a change from the Council on their policy, but at this time, there is not a lot of recourse with demolition by neglect, deterioration by neglect or property code. If it is determined that there is not the financial resources, the City's only ability is to do the work themselves and put the lien on the properties or acquire the properties themselves by eminent domain, not under historic overlay district, but under a different code spot blight.

**Chairman Waters:** When the City Council reversed them, a private party stepped forward to rescue the house. So, a private party, besides a developer, may be something to think about. You clearly know your business, and this is a friendly suggestion...someone whose heart is in historic preservation.

**Ms. Haight:** It was not just the Prescott House, but there were two other buildings right in the heart of Gateway downtown on Grant and Center that were leaning and pretty much the foundation was ruined. Those have been sold and now they are two beautiful buildings. Obviously, the purchaser invested a lot of money in them but instead of having a vacant lot, now these buildings are back to their glory. Maybe offering these for sell is the best way to go.

**Ms. Shepherd:** Can the Board recommend putting the properties on the market for one year and are there any specifications as to whether it has to be done by a brokerage or owner?

**Chairman Waters:** It should be all the above.



**Ms. Via-Gossman:** While Ms. Collins is looking up the exact code, I would like to clarify that the Board has the option to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the demolition or to deny it and that is the only action before the Board tonight. Then, the applicant has two options – to appeal the decision to City Council (if it is not favorable to them) and have a public hearing at City Council, or the applicant goes through a year long process offering the property for sale under certain conditions, certain appraisals and very detailed and at the end of this process and after they have completed all their steps, they have the ability to demolish the building regardless of the ARB decision. When they follow all the steps prescribed by state law, they have the ability to demolish that building.

As for Ms. Haight's example of the ones on Center Street, they had initiated that process and found someone to purchase the building and that is how those were saved.

**Mr. Fox:** I would like to say a couple of concluding things and I really don't want this to be interpreted in a "gotcha" context, but I have already told you that we don't have the money to rehab them. It is a trust and we have the obligation to realize the best value that we can get from this property. Mr. Malloy and I have no personal pecuniary interest in that. We are more interested in discharging our trust obligations and protecting ourselves. To the extent that you all say no, that is one nail in the coffin that says what we are doing is what we can do. We want to demolish and redevelop, but at every turn, we were meeting resistance. It is a conundrum in a sense that the regulatory process itself is going to determine what the highest and best use of the property is. If in fact, someone comes in and offers us a pittance for the properties for the opportunities to rehab them, we may have discharged our trust obligation.

**Chairman Waters:** Mr. Downey, do you have anything to say before moving forward?

**Mr. Downey:** I think that everything has been said and I think you've heard me once and I don't have anything more to say.

**Chairman Waters:** I appreciate that.

**Mr. Rush:** I would like to make a motion that we deny the request for demolition for ARB #2016-17.

**Ms. Ingram:** I second the motion.

**Chairman Waters:** Mr. Rush, do you want to talk about your reasoning for denial?

**Mr. Rush:** Yes. I would like to state that the #1 in the criteria is not met and #4 is not met. I would also like to add that the people requesting demolition have not done a proper study of the property to determine that they are not habitable.

**Ms. Collins:** According to the criteria, if the structure meets at least two, you approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish. So, as Chairman Waters asked, we need to have only one that it meets.

**Mr. Rush:** Okay, I'll make an amendment to say that it failed all four.

**Ms. Collins:** Okay.

**Chairman Waters:** Are there any questions about the amended motion? (None commented)

**Ms. Ingram:** I second the motion to amend.

**Chairman Waters:** To vote no is against the motion and yes is for the motion to deny.

#### **Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Haight      | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ARB #2016-18**  
**James Downey**  
**9512 Liberty Street**

**Ms. Collins:** The applicant is proposing to demolish the vacant house due to the deteriorated state. The long term goal of the trust would be to replace the structure with one that would be harmonious and compatible with the neighborhood and the Historic Overlay District.

The guidelines for demolition are found beginning on page 114 of the Historic District Guidebook, as well as in Section 130-406 (e) of the Zoning Ordinance. Specific guidelines for demolition apply to contributing structures only. The ARB shall issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to raze or demolish a contributing or historic structure if the ARB finds that the structure meets at least two of the following criteria:

1. The structure is not of such architectural or historic interest that its removal would be a significant detriment to the public interest.
2. The structure is not of such significance that it would qualify on its own merit as a national, state landmark or local historic structure.

3. The structure is not of such old and uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
4. The structure is not preserving or protecting an area of historic interest in the City.

Staff would suggest that the structure meets all four of the criteria. The original elements of the house are no longer intact due to the deterioration over the years. The Queen Anne Style of this house can be found in many other locations within the historic district that are better, more preserved examples of this type and style of housing. The house has been vacant with no utility service for just under two years. The City's property maintenance staff has been working with the property owner since February of 2014 to abate property maintenance code violations at the structure. The structure was placarded unsafe for human habitation by the office of the Fire Marshal in February of 2014. Of the twenty improved properties in the surrounding neighborhood, eleven were constructed after 1940. The owner has come forward to voluntarily demolish the structure.

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted with the stipulation that a photographic survey of both the interior and exterior and measured sketch drawings be provided prior to the issuance of a building permit for the demolition of the structure. The construction of any future structure on the site would be required to come before the Architectural Review Board for approval.

**Chairman Waters:** Gentleman?

**Mr. Downey:** Same situation. I think I hear the echo from the prior case and I can tell where you all are likely to go with it. But will that be laboring the point from our side of this? I think that the fact is that the owner has not been able to keep up with the accelerating deterioration of this property just as with the previous case. Tearing it down is going to enhance and accelerate the rehabilitation of the entire neighborhood because it will enable them to move forward with getting something done here in the name of pushing them harder which is really what you are doing. You are saying, "We hear your case but we choose to push you harder to try and get it sold to somebody who will see the wisdom of rehabbing this property." We see that as extremely unlikely and pushing them harder will not accomplish that. It will probably just make the property just sit there a lot longer in a very unsafe condition. When I went out there to look at the other house, I must say that you could almost tell that there had been very sordid activity conducted inside that house – evidence on the front porch and the inside. You are looking at blighted structures that are a hazard to the community, and you are going to perpetuate that by a ruling that says that they can't demolish it. I know where you are going with it, and I know when it is probably time to stop arguing, but that is our point, just as it was in the other case.

**Mr. Fox:** The argument on the 9514 would also be incorporated here. I don't think anything herculean will happen on either of these properties. I'm not saying that I'm resigning tomorrow, but it's been my goal from a land use standpoint to try and shepherd the properties through to be of some value to the community and to the beneficiaries of the trust, and I just don't see maintaining them and this quasi historical context to be invaluable to either the trust or to the community. The whole community is transitioning, and while that may have been the only place that African Americans could find land to build on in some

earlier historical period, it has now become prime downtown property and that is where its value is. I've seen time and time again the undue deference to the minority communities which has just ripped the real value out of the properties, such as the one in Fairfax behind Dewberry and Davis on Route 50 called the Williams Neighborhood. This property is sandwiched between the Dewberry buildings at 50 and Gallows Road and INOVA Hospital. In an inordinate desire to protect the African American community, they comprehensive planned those properties low-low density, and all it ended up doing with the transition of people dying and moving away in our mobile society, and all it did was create a cheap-buy for the developer. And, that is what's going to happen here, unless we move forward on today's highest and best use of those properties.

**Ms. Ingram:** There is no need to mourn the fact that this was allowed to happen, and this has been concerning me for a very long time. This is the upshot of it and makes our job extremely difficult.

**Mr. Rush:** I understand that you want to get the largest amount of what you can get out of the property by trying to put the whole thing together and getting some developer to come in and do something. When I was on the Board several years ago, churches wanted to tear down two or three houses behind to make a parking lot. Once the fabric of Old Town is gone, it's gone. So, what do we do? The streets around here are already super crowded. Why do we want 50 townhouses there to dump 100 cars on the street? We live here.

**Mr. Fox:** It's too late. The locomotive has already left the station.

**Mr. Rush:** But, you want to add to it. My opinion is protecting every structure that is a part of the fabric of Old Town, the slogan of the City which is "Rich in Historic Interest." If we tear down houses left and right, we may as well "X" through the slogan of the City. So, I cannot agree with what you are asking for.

**Chairman Waters:** Referring to the picture, is that the original design of the house?

**Ms. Collins:** The 1980s survey indicated that it was intact, with the exception of the rear addition.

**Chairman Waters:** If there is no further discussion, would someone like to make a motion?

**Mr. Rush:** I motioned to deny ARB #2016-18 with the reasoning that it is on the list of the City's contributing historic properties and it qualifies as a local historic structure. The structure is old and of uncommon design but new building material would not replicate what is there, if it is possible to save it because it has not been proven yes or no. The structure is not preserving or protecting an area of the City. Well, it has already been pointed out that it is a very important area for African Americans in the City and has its own value.

**Ms. Ingram:** I second the motion.

**Chairman Waters:** Again, to vote no is against the motion and yes is for the motion to deny.

**Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Haight      | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**OTHER BUSINESS****Old Town Update – City Hall Plaza Reservation**

**Ms. Via-Gossman** informed the Board that the Council approved money to update the plaza as well as other areas in downtown.

**Historic Overlay District Zoning Ordinance**

**Ms. Whitworth** informed the Board that the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee will be meeting in February regarding updates, and Chairman Waters will be representing the ARB at that meeting.

**Elections**

**Mr. Rush** motioned to nominate **Tom Waters** as **Chairman**. There were no other nominations. **Ms. Haight** seconded the motion. **The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

**Ms. Haight** motioned to nominate **Mr. Rush** as **Vice-Chairman**. There were no other nominations. **Ms. Shepherd** seconded the motion. **The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Haight** moved to adjourn the meeting. **Ms. Shepherd** seconded the motion. **The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.** The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

---

J. Thomas Waters, Chairman

---

Date

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
CITY OF MANASSAS  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**

**February 9, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Tom Waters, Chairman  
William Rush, Vice-Chairman  
Nancy Hersch Ingram  
Fatima Pereira-Shepherd  
VACANT, (Alternate)

Members Absent: Ms. Haight

Staff Present: Jamie S. Collins, Development Services Manager  
Allison Whitworth, Planner  
Donna J. Bellows, Boards and Commissions Clerk

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Clerk called the roll, and a quorum was determined.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ARB #2016-22**  
**Travel Place**  
**9121 Center Street**

**Ms. Whitworth** presented the staff report stating that the applicant is requesting approval to relocate their existing projecting sign and bracket, which was previously approved by the ARB, to the new location as well. The sign, measuring 30" x 16", is made of sandblasted high density urethane with a white wood grain background. The sign features a red border and copy with a blue logo. The sign will be installed on the Center Street elevation of the building at the west corner and aligned with the height of the Ameriprise Financial sign on the eastern corner. Because the entrance to their space is actually located in the alleyway, the applicant also requested approval for a small wall sign to identify their entrance. The sign measures 18" x 12" and will be made of adhesive vinyl applied to Dibond with a custom metal frame. The sign will have a

black background with all copy and logo in white. The sign will be installed just to the left of the door.

Staff recommended approval of the application as submitted.

**Applicant, Niki Yianilos**, had nothing further to add to the staff report.

#### **ARB Discussion**

- None

**Mr. Rush** motioned to approve ARB #2016-22 as submitted. **Ms. Shepherd** seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **ARB #2016-20**

**Bassam Residence  
9255 Bennett Drive**

**Ms. Whitworth** presented the staff report stating that the applicant is proposing the construction of an 18' x 36' post and beam pavilion in the rear yard of the home, to be located in line with the swimming pool. The pavilion is composed of a hipped standing seam metal roof (to match the roof of the home) supported by eight posts clad with composite trim lumber which will be painted to match the home. While structural in nature, curved bracing spanning from the posts to the roof provides simple detailing. The overall height of the structure is 15'-2".

To the west of the pavilion, the applicant is proposing an outdoor fireplace. The fireplace is 14' tall and will be clad with a stone veneer selected to coordinate with the stone foundation of the original block of the home. A decorative brick medallion feature above the mantle will coordinate with the brick foundation on the addition to the home and existing garage. The mantle, chimney and hearth will be finished with precast or natural stone caps.

The applicant is also proposing to complete the fencing for the site and fully enclose the rear yard. A section of fencing will be added between the east elevation of the home and the existing wood privacy fence, and from the west side of the home to the garage. The applicant has proposed a 6' decorative iron fence.

Staff recommended approval as submitted.

**Applicant, Deeni Bassam**, had nothing further to add to the staff report.

**ARB Discussion**

- Elevation of fence was shown to be different on the west side, which looked to have brick piers (the applicant stated that they should both elevations should match)
- Size of the pickets
- Requirements for the pool fence

**Mr. Rush motioned to approve ARB #2016-20 as submitted with the caveat that both sections of the fence should match the fence specifications.**

**Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ARB #2016-21****Battle & Church LLC****9403 Battle Street**

**Ms. Whitworth** presented the staff report stating that the applicant is seeking approval for the wall and ramp which were installed to provide access and screening for the dumpster and utility area of the restaurants occupying the adjacent building. The project originally came before the ARB for approval and the project has been completed, however, the construction of the ramp and walls did not comply with the Certificate of Appropriateness and approved design. The original approved design for the ramp was a concrete wall, approximately 8' in height, which was required to be clad with red brick on the north side, which faced the home.

As constructed, an approximately 25' section of the wall extending from Battle Street consists of a 6' cream colored brick fence with columns, topped with decorative ironwork, and includes a metal gate for access. Extending back from that point along the southern property line is a 9' concrete wall with three small windows. At the point where the brick fencing transitions to the concrete wall, a 10' pointed concrete arch with decorative metal gate has been added across the newly created alleyway to screen the trash and utility area. The applicant has proposed to paint the wall and concrete arch a cream color to match the brick.

The applicant is also now requesting approval to continue the brick and ironwork fence along the west and north property lines, replacing the existing green wood fence.



Staff recommended deferral of the application and the investigation of solutions for addressing the concrete wall and modification of the fence design for compatibility with the character of the home.

**Property Owner, Alice Perez**, stated that she was willing to compromise by taking part of the brick out and use more of the wrought iron fence. She explained why the wall was built over the height initially agreed upon.

**Applicant, Tim Donlon of Schools & Townsend**, stated that there were no real barrier at the back by the gate and people often drive into her backyard thinking that it is part of the church and then have to turn around.

#### **ARB Discussion**

- Questioned the reason why the previous COA was not in compliance
- Though the current fence needs repairs, the style fits the house nicely
- Brick and metal fencing being proposed is too massive for the house
- Recommended deferring the application

**Mr. Rush** motioned to defer ARB #2016-21 and asked the applicant to come back before the Board with what they feel is a more delicate design and in keeping with the property. **Ms. Shepherd** seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. Rush        | Y |
| Ms. Shepherd    | Y |
| Chairman Waters | Y |
| Ms. Ingram      | Y |

**The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Chairman Waters** commended Ms. Collins on her choice of slides for ARB annual report presentation which he presented to City Council on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Ms. Collins** informed the Board that the two properties on Liberty Street that came before the ARB last month are up for appeal to City Council on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Rush** moved to adjourn the meeting. **Ms. Ingram** seconded the motion. **The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.** The meeting ended at 8:37 p.m.

---

J. Thomas Waters, Chairman

---

Date

# ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

## No. 16-40000023



Applicant(s): **Weems LLC / Jim Downs**

Site Owner(s): **Weems LLC**

Site Address: **9219 Center Street**

Tax Map No.: **101-01-00-225A**

Site Location: **Southeast corner of the intersection of Center St. and Grant Ave.**

Current Zoning: **B-3**

Parcel Size: **0.17 acres**

Age of Structure: **120 years**

Type of Structure: **Commercial**

Summary of  
Request: **Signage**

Date Accepted for Review: **February 19, 2016**

Date of ARB Meeting: **March 8, 2016**



# CITY OF MANASSAS

Department of Community Development  
Elizabeth S. Via-Gossman, AICP, Director

## STAFF REPORT

**ARB Case:** #2016-40000023  
**Applicant:** Weems LLC / Jim Downs  
**Address:** 9219 Center Street



### REQUEST

The applicant is requesting approval for the installation of signage.

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Location** – The site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Center Street and Grant Avenue. The structures are located at the “gateway” to the downtown area of the historic district.

**Historical Significance** – 9219 Center Street was originally constructed c. 1895 as two residences sharing a common wall. The former two-story residences have since been converted to commercial use. The structures exhibit a vernacular version of the American Foursquare style and recently underwent a full renovation. Both buildings are ranked contributing to the Local Historic District and are rare examples remaining in downtown Manassas of a vernacular version of the American Foursquare style.

**Surrounding Properties** – The buildings are located within a strip of masonry commercial buildings largely constructed between 1950 and 1976. Most of the properties are ranked non-contributing. However, 9215 to the east was also originally constructed as a residence c. 1895. The building has undergone significant façade changes as it has been converted to a commercial use and is now ranked non-contributing.

### APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to install a 120” x 32” wall sign on the west side of the building, centered between the first and second story windows. The sign will be made of PVC with ¼” PVC letters welded to the sign face. The sign has a white background with red and blue text and a black border. The applicant is also proposing an 18” x 24” double-sided projecting sign to be installed above the west door. The sign will be installed on a new black metal bracket. The sign is made of PVC in the shape of the RE/MAX hot air balloon logo.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicable design guidelines for signage are found on pages 82-87 of the City of Manassas Historic District Handbook. The guidelines state that signage should fit the architecture and placement should be based upon visibility and compatibility with the building.

The size of the proposed signage is in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines and the requirements of the zoning ordinance. The signage has been placed where it is not obstructing any significant architectural features. Overall the signage is compatible with the structure and the surrounding historic overlay district.

### Review Criteria

Pursuant to Section 130-406 (b), prior to approval of any certificate of appropriateness, the ARB shall determine if the following conditions have been adequately addressed:

| CRITERIA  | APPLICATION  |
|---|--|
| Activity Proposed:  | Installation of wall sign and projecting sign.   |
| (1) Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.  | Not applicable.  |
| (2) Being architecturally compatible with the historical, cultural and/or architectural aspects of the HOD, structure and its surroundings.                               | Proposed signage is compatible with the architectural character of the structure.                                    |
| (3) The visual impact of the proposed exterior architectural features, including all signs.   | Proposed signage is appropriately scaled and placed where it does not obstruct any important architectural features. |
| (4) The general design, scale and arrangement of new construction and additions.  | In keeping with the design guidelines.   |
| (5) The texture, material and color of new construction, unless otherwise exempt from review.   | In keeping with the design guidelines.   |
| (6) The relationship of features (2) (3) and (4) above to similar features of the buildings and structures immediately adjacent to or visible from the proposed activity. | Proposed signage is compatible with the surrounding historic overlay district.                                       |
| (7) The extent to which the building or structure would be harmonious with, or incompatible with the historic aspects of its surroundings.                                | Proposed signage is compatible with the surrounding historic overlay district.                                       |

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the application as submitted.



Date of ARB Meeting: **March 8, 2016**



**CITY OF MANASSAS**  
Department of Community Development  
Elizabeth S. Via-Gossman, AICP, Director

---

## STAFF REPORT

**ARB Case:** #2016-40000024  
**Applicant:** F&F Properties USA, Inc.  
**Address:** 9325 Maple Street

### REQUEST

The applicant is seeking approval for the construction of a new single family dwelling.

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Location** – The property is located on the east side of Maple Street between Quarry Road and Center Street. The lot is located in the Quarry Road and Prescott Avenue sub-area of the historic district. This neighborhood consists of mainly historic residences dating from the turn of the century. Many of the structures are 2 to 2 ½ stories with gable roofs and are sited on medium sized lots. The subarea contains a variety of styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and vernacular Victorian.

**Historical Significance** – 9325 Maple Street is currently a vacant lot. The lot was previously part of the rear yard of 8902 Center Street (former Whitmore-Elliot house) and the remnants of a former alleyway. Other than some small outbuildings, no significant historic structures are known to have been located on this lot.

**Surrounding Properties** –

On the south, 9325 Maple Street is adjacent to 8902 Center Street, the former Whitmore-Elliot house, a contributing structure constructed c. 1895. To the north is 8905 Quarry Road, the former Lewis house, a contributing structure constructed c. 1903. Across Maple Street to the west is the Seton School complex, a modern non-contributing building constructed c. 2005.

### APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to construct a new single family dwelling on a vacant lot. The home is 2 stories (above grade) with a walk-out basement. The footprint of the home is approximately 55' in width by 42' deep with an overall height of 28'. The front elevation includes a small porch and two-car garage. The first floor of the front elevation is clad with brick veneer, with Hardie-plank fiber cement siding on the second story and side and rear elevations. Additional design features and materials are discussed in the following staff analysis.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicable guidelines for new construction are found throughout the City of Manassas Historic District Infill Development Guidelines, as well as the Manassas Historic District Handbook. The guidelines state that new construction should complement and respect the character of the existing historic buildings. However, new buildings should not be a reproduction or copy of historic buildings which confuse the public as to what is historically significant and what is not. Overall, new infill structures should relate to traditional patterns of development and maintain the integrity of the district. Setback, spacing, and general massing of the new dwelling are the most important criteria and should relate to the existing traditional structures, as well as residential roof and porch forms.

### A. Site

*Building placement and setbacks, orientation, parking, fencing and any decorative site features. The applicable design guidelines are found on pages 31-41 of the Historic District Handbook.*

The proposed home is oriented towards Maple Street and is sited in conformance with the setback requirements of the zoning ordinance: 35' from the front property line, 25' from the rear, and 10' minimum on each side with the total of both side yards no less than 25'. While other residences in the neighborhood are generally located closer to the street or side lot lines, the zoning ordinance setback requirements and the irregular shape of the lot do not allow for any other location. The house proposes an attached 2-car garage on the front elevation. All other garages in the surrounding neighborhood are detached structures located in the rear yard. The location of the garage on the front elevation is inconsistent with the traditional pattern of development in the neighborhood. No other site features, such as fencing, are proposed at this time.

### B. Building Mass

*Size, shape, directional expression, complexity of form, facade organization, roof shapes and exposures. The applicable design guidelines are found on pages 43-54 of the Historic District Handbook.*

The design guidelines state that new buildings should relate to existing conditions on the street in terms of complexity of form, roof shape, and directional expression. While the overall scale of the home is compatible with the surrounding historic structures, the existing dwellings in the neighborhood are generally more simplistic in form as viewed from the front elevation. In addition, the majority of the structures, except for several Queen Anne style homes, have relatively simple roof forms and generally more vertical directional expression.

### C. Fenestration and Openings

*Window and door placement and detailing of the window and door design. The applicable design guidelines are found on pages 55-70 of the Historic District Handbook.*

The design guidelines state that windows are one of the major character defining features on residential buildings. The ratio of solid to void and the rhythm and placement of windows on new facades should relate to historic buildings. Most homes in the surrounding neighborhood demonstrate symmetrical window placement and consistent window style, particularly on the front elevation. The fenestration of the proposed home is more functionally organized rather than symmetrical and proposes a variety of window configurations and styles, which does not relate to the surrounding historic buildings.

### D. Decorative Features

*Porches, cornices and paint colors. The applicable design guidelines are found on pages 71-90 of the Historic District Handbook.*

The guidelines state that new residential structures should include porches if the surrounding area has historic buildings with porches. New porches should reflect the size, height, and materials of porches of existing historic buildings found along the street. Porches are a prevalent design feature in the neighborhood. While the majority of historic homes in the area include a full-width or wrap-around porch, the proposed design includes only a small front porch.

The guidelines state that color selections should complement the overall color schemes that exist on the street and should relate to those found in nature. The color palette for the proposed home includes red brick, Woodstock Brown siding, Rustic Black shingles and Mountain Sage trim. No colors have been specified for the doors. The proposed color palette is in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines. Color samples will be available at the meeting.

## **E. Materials**

*The applicable design guidelines are found on pages 91-110 of the Historic District Handbook.*

The design guidelines state that materials for new buildings do not have to directly relate to adjacent buildings since there is so much variety and textures among Manassas' houses. They should, however, be similar to existing materials in the historic neighborhood. Masonry should be used for new construction where brick is the common wall material. Synthetic materials are generally not recommended for use. The materials for the proposed home include:

- Virginia Highlands brick veneer (on the first story front elevation)
- Textured hardie-plank siding
- Plygem pro series 1/1 vinyl windows
- Rustic black Tamko architectural asphalt shingles
- Haas Carriage style steel garage door
- Plastro 6 panel fiberglass doors

While the Seton School complex across Maple Street is masonry, the homes in the surrounding area are predominantly clad with siding rather than brick. The use of fiber cement siding rather than brick veneer on the first floor would help to make the dwelling more compatible with the materials of the surrounding historic district. In addition, smooth fiber-cement siding is recommended rather than textured.



### **Review Criteria**

Pursuant to Section 130-406 (b), prior to approval of any certificate of appropriateness, the ARB shall determine if the following conditions have been adequately addressed:

| <b>CRITERIA</b>   | <b>APPLICATION</b>  |
|---|---|
| Activity Proposed:  | Construction of new single family dwelling.   |
| (1) Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.  | Not applicable.   |
| (2) Being architecturally compatible with the historical, cultural and/or architectural aspects of the HOD, structure and its surroundings.                               | The complexity of the form and massing of the structure does not relate to the historic structures in the surrounding historic district.  |
| (3) The visual impact of the proposed exterior architectural features, including all signs.   | Attached front-load garages are not consistent with the historic pattern of development in the surrounding historic district.   |
| (4) The general design, scale and arrangement of new construction and additions.  | The proposed design does not relate to the traditional complexity of form, directional expression, roof complexity, and window placement and styles found in the surrounding historic district. |
| (5) The texture, material and color of new construction, unless otherwise exempt from review.   | The proposed color palette is in keeping with the recommendations of the design guidelines. However, masonry is not a common building material in the surrounding historic district.            |
| (6) The relationship of features (2) (3) and (4) above to similar features of the buildings and structures immediately adjacent to or visible from the proposed activity. | The proposed structure is incompatible with the surrounding historic district in terms of massing, complexity of form and garage location.  |
| (7) The extent to which the building or structure would be harmonious with, or incompatible with the historic aspects of its surroundings.                                | The proposed structure is incompatible with the surrounding historic district in terms of massing, complexity of form and garage location.  |

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **DEFERRAL** of the application and modification structure's massing, complexity of form, garage location and fenestration patterns for greater compatibility with the surrounding historic district.



## MEMORANDUM

### *Manassas City Council – Personnel Committee*

9027 Center Street, Suite 101, Manassas, VA 20110

Telephone: (703) 257-8211

Fax: (703) 365-2060

---

TO: Manassas City Boards, Committees and Commissions  
FROM: Manassas City Council – Personnel Committee  
DATE: February 22, 2016  
RE: Operational Guidelines

---

The City of Manassas values the service of the many dedicated volunteers who serve the community and provide guidance to staff and the Mayor and City Council. In recent months, the Personnel Committee has worked to develop policies to encourage citizen participation and improve internal processes. During a recent review and the eventual adoption of a formal policy that details the appointment process and establishes terms of office for appointees, the Personnel Committee agreed to develop guidelines to help Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) manage meetings and better define the responsibilities of members.

The following guidelines shall apply to all City Boards, Committees and Commissions, with the expectation that the identified responsibilities and standards of conduct will promote efficiencies and address any uncertainties that may exist within any Board, Committee or Commission.

#### **LEGAL**

- Every Board, Committee and Commission shall adopt by-laws that are consistent with State law and comply with City Council approved policies and practices. Minutes are to be taken for all meetings and available for inspection.
- Robert's Rules of Order is the established method for meeting management. As such, members will be afforded the opportunity to debate main and secondary motions prior to the vote.
- Meetings are to be scheduled and held on a routine basis as set forth in the by-laws and with appropriate public notice, including a published agenda that details the order of business, given for all meetings.
  - Regular meetings shall occur unless a majority of members belonging to the body agree to a cancellation or deferral of a particular meeting.
  - Special meetings shall not be used as a substitute for regular meetings.
  - Proxy voting and absentee voting is prohibited unless and until the City Council adopts the requisite protocol for off-site participation in meetings.
  - Quorum requirements apply to regular and special meetings.
  - Amendments to the by-laws of all Boards, Committees and Commission are subject to approval by the City Council.

- Prior to any binding commitment by a Board, Committee or Commission, all contracts and legal obligations shall be reviewed by the appropriate member of staff and the City Attorney.
- Failure to follow or abide by the legal requirements or the City Council's approved policies and practices, may result in a member's removal from the BCC.
- Members shall be made aware on an annual basis of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) requirements and if necessary, submit the appropriate financial disclosure forms to the City Clerk.

## **FINANCIAL**

- Boards, Committees and Commissions that have fiduciary responsibilities must produce an annual budget and provide an audited account of funds for which it is responsible.
- Financial controls must be in place to ensure adherence to State law, generally accepted accounting practices and the City's adopted financial policies.
- Financial support will be provided by the City Finance Department to include payment of obligations, production of financial statements and processing of revenue.
- Financial action, such as budget amendments or banking relationships, must be approved by majority vote at an official meeting before actions can be taken.
- Expenditures of public funds must adhere to State law and all financial and purchasing policies approved by the City Council.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

- All City Boards, Committees and Commissions will be supported by assigned City staff.
- A Council Liaison will be appointed to the Boards, Committees and Commissions for which Council has delegated significant responsibility for policy or financial recommendations or that have independent fiduciary responsibilities.
- Official records, including approved Minutes, and corporate seals shall be kept in municipal offices to ensure the records are available for inspection by the public, as required by law. Official records include all business correspondence, financial statements, and financial transactions.
- All Boards, Committees and Commissions members shall be updated annually on their roles and responsibilities; appropriate or required training to fulfill such duties will be made available.
- Members of all Boards, Committees and Commissions must be willing to meet the obligations of their appointment, including regular attendance at meetings/events and a willingness to work with other appointees to further the objectives of the BCC as established by the City Council.

The contribution of each Board, Committee and Commission is appreciated and adds to the character of the community. The City Council looks forward to continuing the cooperative relationships that aid in making the City of Manassas a great place to live, work, play, and conduct business.

# POLICY STATEMENT #P-2016-03

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 8, 2016

RE: Appointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions

## I. PURPOSE

Policy Statement #P-2016-03 shall establish a policy and process regarding appointments to the many City Boards, Committees and Commissions.

## II. BACKGROUND

The City of Manassas has approximately forty Boards, Committees and Commissions, including multi-jurisdictional boards and authorities, which provide technical, advisory and administrative services to the City and its residents. The City Council recognizes that Boards, Committees and Commissions are an integral and important component of local government and citizens provide the City with a vast resource of talent and expertise.

## III. POLICY

The City Council is responsible for appointing citizens to the various Boards, Committees and Commissions and intends to encourage interested citizens to serve and participate in their community. All appointments and removals are made at the discretion of the City Council.

## IV. CRITERIA

The Code of Virginia, City of Manassas Code of Ordinances and adopted by-laws shall determine eligibility of individuals applying to serve on Boards, Committees and Commission. Applicants shall not be delinquent in any taxes, fees or fines due to the City.

In making appointments, the City Council shall consider interest, diversity of background, relevant experience and expertise, and any unique qualifications of the applicant.

## V. PROCESS

The following process shall be followed to recommend and ultimately approve appointments:

- A. **NOTIFICATION** – Sufficient notice shall be given to the individual whose term is expiring; if he or she wishes to serve another term, a letter expressing this interest to the City Clerk is required.
- B. **ADVERTISING** – Openings on the City's Boards, Committees and Commissions will be advertised on the website and on the government access channel.

- C. **APPLICATION** – Applications are available on the City’s website and may be completed and submitted to the City Clerk’s Office electronically. In addition, applications are available in the City Clerk’s Office and can be mailed, faxed or hand delivered once completed.

Applications received for a Board, Committee or Commission that does not have a vacancy will be kept on file for one year or until a vacancy occurs. The applicant will then be contacted to determine if he or she remains interested in the position.

- D. **INTERVIEW** – The City Clerk’s Office will process all applications in a timely manner and will contact the applicant to schedule an interview with the Personnel Committee. Interviews are generally brief, but provide an opportunity for the Personnel Committee to ask questions and discuss an applicant’s experience and interest in serving on a Board, Committee or Commission. The Personnel Committee may make a recommendation to the City Council at a future Regular Meeting.
- E. **APPOINTMENT / REAPPOINTMENT** – The City Council may discuss appointments and any recommendations of the Personnel Committee during a closed session at a Regular Meeting. A motion, a second, and a majority vote of the Council are required to approve appointments and reappointments. The City Clerk’s Office will notify individuals appointed or reappointed by mail and will share contact information with the Staff Liaison or Chairman of the Board, Committee or Commission. The term of office and other relevant information will be provided to the new or reappointed member prior to or during the first meeting.

## **VI. TERMS**

- A. The standard term for each appointment is four years unless another term is established by State Code or another jurisdiction (multi-jurisdictional appointments). Terms of office shall begin on July 1 of each year.
- B. Members shall serve staggered terms to promote continuity and preserve institutional history.
- C. To promote broad participation, new ideas and perspectives, and to provide an opportunity for the Board, Committee or Commission to represent the community, interviews will be conducted for all available positions. Individuals who wish to serve another term on a Board, Committee or Commission, shall submit a letter of interest and interview with the Personnel Committee.

## VII. ATTENDANCE

Section 2-301, paragraph (b), of the Manassas City Code of Ordinances:

*If any member of a board, commission, committee or authority shall be absent from three regular meetings consecutively, except under emergency circumstances approved by the City Council, or shall be absent from 50 percent of the meetings held during any six-month period for any reason, that member's seat may be deemed vacant by resolution of the City Council, and thereupon the unexpired term shall be filled according to law.*

## VIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. Appointed members of the City's Boards, Committees and Commissions are expected to fulfill their responsibilities and duties and comply with all requirement and applicable laws.
- B. Members of the Economic Development Authority, the Planning Commission, the Boards of Zoning Appeals, and the Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority (UOSA) are required by the Code of Virginia to submit Financial and Real Estate disclosure forms to the City Clerk on an annual basis.
- C. Boards, Committees and Commissions with by-laws that contradict Policy #P-2016-03 shall amend such by-laws to ensure compliance.
- D. The City Council may amend Policy #P-2016-03 as it deems necessary.



Harry J. Parrish II Mayor  
On behalf of the City Council  
of Manassas, Virginia

ATTEST:



Andrea P. Madden City Clerk