

**HPC Review**  
for 203 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

HPC2014-11-18-01

*Homeowner Eva Polston and architect Ralph Hurst attended HPC's monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 18 to discuss plans to construct a new residence. The homeowner, at the same time, submitted her request for an easement to govern the part of her proposed new structure that will be on Town property.*

**General Description:** Eva's home, which had been one of the original "tent cottages," was destroyed by fire in January 2014. A new residence is proposed to be constructed at 203 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

**Adequacy of the Documents Submitted:** The documents submitted were adequate for the HPC's review. They included a building permit application, house location sketch, floor plans and sketches of the front (south) and east elevations. Revised drawings that also included the rear (north) and west elevations were provided subsequent to the November 18 meeting.

Snider & Associates' survey (identified as "house location" survey) dated 10-29-2014 was also included.

**General Scope of the Project:** A new residence, on a slightly larger footprint than that of the destroyed house, is proposed to be constructed. In previous discussions with the HPC, the homeowner explained that neither the foundation nor the masonry fireplace and chimney of the original structure were deemed to be salvageable. The destroyed house consisted of a typical 1-1/2 story, 14'3" wide original tent cottage facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, with a 1-story kitchen addition, built at some later date, at the rear.

Proposed is a 1-1/2 story structure (14' x 29'3") with the same steeply pitched roof as the original house, to face 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; and a 2-story component (kitchen and master bedroom) at the rear, on a slightly larger footprint than that of the destroyed kitchen addition. The intention is to relocate the new residence approximately 10 feet equidistant from the east and west property lines. As the property lines are not parallel (they appear to "flare" towards the rear of the lot), the new construction would be correspondingly designed, i.e., angled, and wider at the back.

Both a front and a rear porch are included in the plan, and a modest balcony above the rear porch at the second level, off the master suite, is contemplated. The front porch, as depicted on the house location survey, measures 16'5" x 7'. The back porch measures 10' x 5' on the survey.

The front porch would be slightly wider than the house, as was the case with the original porch. A hipped roof is shown for the porch.

Windows are generally well distributed on all elevations. In form, they are sometimes small four-light windows in gangs of two or four (as on the west elevation) or double-hung four-over-ones, particularly on the east elevation. A fairly large triangular window is shown in the west elevation gable.

The double entrance doors facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue appear, from the drawing, to be full light.

There was discussion of materials during the meeting with the property owner and architect, and the following list was provided by the architect following the meeting:

- Certaineed Landmark or Tamko shingles (asphalt)
- TPO membrane roofing for flat roof areas and master bedroom porch (composite decking above membrane underlayment)
- Front porch, rear porch & steps – composite (Azek)
- Certaineed Monogram series vinyl siding

- Aluminum or vinyl clad windows, exterior; painted wood, interior
- Balcony railing – painted Azek
- Window & door trim – painted wood or PVC
- PVC rake boards & gutter boards – painted
- Half-round gutters, round downspout – prefinished

**Visibility from public ways:** 203 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue enjoys a prominent location in the historic center of Town. The new structure will stand on one side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue entrance to the most historic place in Washington Grove – The Circle. The proposed construction will be visible from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Grove Avenue, Locust Lane, the Circle, Miller Drive and (seasonally) from Acorn Lane.

**Contributing structure:** The destroyed house (ca. 1880-90s, per HPC’s list of contributing and non-contributing structures) was an early cottage built up from a tent platform, and was a contributing structure.

**Nearby Contributing Structures:** Nearby contributing structures include the residences at 313, 315 and 319 Grove Avenue; 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15 and 17 Circle; and the Woman’s Club at 316 Grove Avenue. The property is but one residence removed from The Circle, and the proposed relocated footprint will bring it yet closer to The Circle.

**Compatibility with the existing structure and/or the historic district:** The planned construction successfully follows the guidelines adopted by the HPC and is very compatible with the historic district.

The general form of the front component of the new residence, in its 1-1/2 story form with steeply pitched roof and its low-to-the-ground eave line, are a respectful gesture to the house that has been lost to fire. It was noted that the front entrance contemplates double doors, which were generally original to the cottages (though many have been lost through the years, having been replaced by a single entrance door flanked by a pair of sidelights). The rear of the house brings new design features, which will allow for comfortable modern living.

A variety of roof forms and planes are included and add visual interest, as does the pyramidal skylight included on the rear “tower.” The varied roof forms help to reduce the apparent scale or bulk of the house.

The inclusion of porches is commended. They reinforce our homes’ connection with the natural world, which is an important legacy in Washington Grove. Front porches, in particular, foster social interaction and are integral to the fabric of our streetscape, especially in the vicinity of The Circle.

#### **HPC Recommendations:**

**The HPC wishes to document in this review that, in order to build the home—and in particular the front porch—on the footprint depicted in the provided plans, the Town of Washington Grove must grant an easement. To this end, the property owner must demonstrate and adhere to the intent to maintain the architectural integrity of the Town, and the construction must be compatible with neighboring residences.**

**The HPC cautions that the overall height of the proposed construction (shown as 24’ for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue elevation, and rising to 28’ at the rear of the house) and resulting proportions and scale of the new construction may not reflect those of the destroyed house. As one of the original cottages, it had conformed to the common heights and proportions of the surrounding original cottages. Generally, the original cottages, such as closely adjacent 315 Grove Avenue, average roughly 20’ from grade to peak at the front facade. HPC recommends that the architect draw the adjacent house, 315 Grove Avenue, at the same scale and proposed distance, to be able to determine their relationship, and as the design is refined, adjust the height as needed to reflect the original scale of the house to the neighborhood.**

**HPC feels that the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue elevation should represent the utmost compatibility with the historic district. The relationship of the porch to the gable end is the most significant character-defining feature of the typical original cottages and gives the Town its most recognizable form.**

The proposed plan for the hip-roofed porch and front elevation are very compatible with the original and neighboring structures. The original porch roof was supported by square wooden posts tapering upward, with decorative sawn brackets at the top. Rafter tails were visible at the edge of the original porch roof. The original porch footprint was approximately a foot wider on either side of the main house, for a total of 16'4".

The original front gable roofline extended over the porch and was trimmed by a typical Grove barge board with a diamond-and-dot slitted design. The gable end had a single decorative arched window.

**These original elements on the front elevation and porch are character-defining features of the rustic Carpenter Gothic cottages of Washington Grove and should serve to inspire and guide further development of the design.**

In discussion with the homeowner and architect, HPC had expressed its concern about the large triangular window (depicted on the drawings dated 11-18-2014) that filled the gable above the shed roof on the front (2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) elevation. HPC noted that the revised drawings dated 11-19-2014 have amended this feature. A pair of square four-light windows surmounted by a smaller triangular window are now included on the plan for the front gable.

Still, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue façade could more accurately reflect the heritage of its location by use of one of the gable window forms common to the original cottages. A gallery of sample photographs of such windows was previously supplied to the property owner.


During the November 18 meeting, HPC suggested, in order to provide some relief to the single, flat plane of the west elevation, that the gable feature be bumped out, even by a minimal 6", in order to provide a visual interruption. The suggestion was well received.

Concerning the double-hung windows, the property owner may wish to consider using simple two-over-two windows, which were typical in the original cottages.

As always, HPC encourages the use of natural materials, or materials which can receive paint to maintain the appearance of painted wood, throughout the project. **In particular, HPC strongly recommends that the front porch be constructed of natural materials, as was the case with the original porch.**

  
Emilia A. Styles

for the Historic Preservation Commission

  
Date: December 3, 2014

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| cc: | Applicant           | HPC members              |
|     | HPC Binder          | Planning Commission      |
|     | Web site, Bill Saar | Mayor Joli McCathran     |
|     |                     | Town Clerk, Kathy Lehman |

*Please note that the Historic Preservation Commission acts only in an advisory capacity to both applicants and the Planning Commission. The reviews undertaken are designed to assist homeowners in their projects, to provide input to deliberations of the Planning Commission and, more generally, to contribute to historic preservation in Washington Grove.*

*Further information regarding the scope, powers, duties, and structure of the Historic Preservation Commission may be found in Article XV of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Washington Grove. Section 5 (a) of Article XV describes the powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission in the building permit process. This section reads as follows:*

*The Commission shall review all applications for building permits filed with the Town Planning Commission which would involve any change to a structure or site visible from any public way for historical accuracy, integrity, or compatibility with the neighborhood and improvements therein. The Commission may recommend to an applicant alternative historical designs, materials and sources for the same which may be more historically compatible. The Commission shall forward its recommendations regarding the same, if any, in an advisory capacity, to the Planning Commission for consideration by the Planning Commission within thirty (30) days from the Commission's receipt of the application from the Planning Commission.*