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Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 46
Meeting Minutes, September 19, 2013 Final

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Meeting called to order at 8:00 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Anita Rogers (AR). Priscilla Dallmus and Vera Godley attended as citizens.

David Shoemaker, Ron Regan, and Mike Gowing (BofS) were not present.

8:00 PM – 12 Concord Road: Acton Congregational Church steps

Kathy Acerbo-Bachman began the public hearing by reading the public notice published in the Acton Beacon Thursday, September 12th and Thursday, September 19th.

During the hearing the HDC and applicant referred to Application 1336, the documentation submitted previously as Application 1325, including a letter from Greg Waters dated August 13, 2013 and drawings of the altered railings signed and dated August 13, 2013.

After apologizing to both the citizens and the applicant and explaining how an administrative error occurred overlooking a request for a public hearing, KAB provided a brief overview of the project and application.

DH, the liaison assigned to the application, summarized the changes to the project from the initial proposal. The stairs will remain granite with several changes including the hand railings shall return down rather than be attached to the wall. The stone wall continues with a planter. When first heard the HDC had minor concerns about the design of the ends of the railings and simplified they are now simplified. The materials are granite, stairs and platform and side is stucco which will be obscured with the plantings.

Priscilla Dallmus asked about why there are four railings rather than two. DH explained it is required by code. The landing is 6 feet and the railings reflect the swing of the doors. It will be wrought iron, not painted, with a lamb's tongue ending. The applicant Greg Waters explained the details of the stairs, plantings and wall. KAB reiterated that the HDC's intention was to make the railing simple and appropriate.

The Caledonia granite is medium grey. GW explained that it is lighter than the existing bluestone. The steps will be narrower than those currently in place.

KAB closed the public hearing in order for the HDC to deliberate.

DH moved that we approve Application 1336 for replacement steps and handrails at the ACC

Findings:

Concord Road is the governing public way for review of the project.
The existing steps and railings will be removed in their entirety.
The railings and steps shall be installed to meet the Massachusetts State Building Code, the Massachusetts State Accessibility Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The work shall be as depicted on the documents dated 2 August 2013.

On Condition:

The handrails shall return to the paved terrace surface as annotated on sheets L-1 and L-2 in lieu of attachment to the building.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the stucco surface depicted on the side elevation be hidden by plantings. Alternatively, the concrete substrate could be tinted and tooled to match the foundation on the building avoiding potential future spalling of the stucco.

AR seconded noting that the plan is as simple as allowed by code.
KAB added the design has improved from that initially proposed.

The Certificate of Appropriateness was accepted unanimously.

DH will try to issue the certificate the next day.

KAB moved that the HDC adjourn at 8:30; seconded.

Respectfully submitted
Pamela Lynn, HDC Secretary

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