



CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF CLARKSTON

Historic District Commission

Memorandum of Administrative Approval

October 21, 2019

Plans for: 37 East Church Street
Applicant/Building Representative: Richard Bisio – owner

On Thursday, October 17, I noticed work under way at this location in the Historic District. It appeared to be prep work prior to repainting the home. On Friday, October 18, I noticed that railings, posts and two of the historic porch columns had been removed. In addition, framing (bottom plate, top plate and studs) had been erected at the east end of the porch.

The City offices were closed on that day, and, I assumed, the Building Department as well. Another Historic District Commissioner, Melissa Luginiski, visited the site and reported via text message: “Closing one side. Posts don’t look like replacement but framing? I’d doubt a like for like repair. Yes agreed it needs to be addressed.”

I contacted Eric Haven and Jonathan Smith, asking for their intervention. With the assistance of the City Clerk, the site was visited by Mike Speagle of the DPW for verification, then Craig Strong was alerted. He assigned inspector Jeff Shafer to evaluate the work for compliance with the Clarkston Historic District ordinance, and Jeff issue a Stop Work order.

Susan Bisio did not have my contact information, so she called Cory Johnston, who called me. I asked Cory to encourage one of the Bisos to contact me directly, which he did.

Richard Bisio called and we discussed the following:

- He was under the impression that, since this was a repair, he did not have to file an Application for Work Permit within the Clarkston Historic District. I explained that this was true as long as the work was limited to repainting. But, once the rotted columns were discovered, the project became a repair/restoration project and was subject to the criteria of the ordinance.
- He stated that the goal was to repair/restore the columns to be exactly the same as the original profiles. I offered my assistance to accomplish that, as well as the assistance of other HDC commissioners as required. He pointed out that his contractor was well-qualified to do this well. This claim was borne out later that day when I visited the site and discovered that the contractor had located exact duplicates of the rotted balusters.

- I asked that he file an Application online as soon as possible, and promised that the HDC would assist him in lifting the Stop Work order so his crew could resume their work before the weather changed. Mr. Bisio did this, and the HDC received the application on Saturday, October 19.
- Upon examination of the Application, it became clear that the project objectives needed to be more specific. I redlined the Application and sent a scanned copy to Mr. Bisio. He approved adoption of my wording, initialed the changes, and returned the file to me.
- Around noon on Saturday, I vacated the Stop Work order via email. The homeowner removed the sticker and returned it to Craig Strong.

The Historic District Commission will prepare a Certificate of Appropriateness for review at the November 6 monthly meeting, at which time a motion will be made and a vote will be taken on this matter.

Jim Meloche

Chair

Clarkston Historic District Commission