

Historic Yorktown Design Committee

Minutes

March 16, 2022
East Room
York Hall
301 Main Street
Yorktown, Virginia

Members Attending: Carolyn Weekley, Chair
Robert Hodson, Vice Chair
Jose Longoria
Belinda Willis, alternate
Larry Raithel, alternate

Staff Attending: Earl W. Anderson, AICP

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the following statement:

Minutes

None

Old Business

None

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness

Application No. HYDC-215-22, 309 Water Street, Watermen's Museum

Mr. Anderson stated that this application, submitted by The Watermen's Museum, seeks approval for the design of a proposed detached shed located at 309 Water Street. The proposed shed would be approximately 216-square feet (12'x18'), and the applicant has indicated that shed would be located behind the main museum building and between the boat shop and log canoe structures. The applicant intends to use the shed for storage of various items associated with operation of the museum.

The proposed shed will be required to meet the accessory structure dimensional requirements specified for the YVA – Yorktown Village Activity district for the side and

rear yard of five feet (5'). According to the applicant's submittal the shed will meet these requirements.

In staff's opinion, the proposed shed with conditions is consistent with the Design Guidelines and with the character of surrounding structures and the Waterfront. Staff believes that the proposed construction will be visually appealing and that it merits approval. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Committee find the proposal consistent with the Guidelines and that the application be approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. The shed shall be constructed in accordance with the exterior features depicted on the photograph and with the supplementary information detailing proposed materials and colors presented with the application and received March 1, 2022.
2. The orientation of the shed shall have the door facing away from Water Street.
3. Trim should be made of trim-grade lumber, not to exceed 2 inches in actual thickness, 6 inches in width at corners and 4 inches around openings.

Mr. Anderson asked if there were any questions for him or the applicants.

Mr. Robert Hodson asked about condition number three.

Mr. Steve Ormsby stated the stipulations in number three are similar to what the main building has.

Mr. Hodson asked if the height will be similar to the other structures.

Mr. Ormsby stated that the height won't be identical. He clarified that the biggest reason for the gambrel roof is for storage, as they currently have very little storage.

Mr. Hodson stated that the Guidelines state, in general, alterations in additions and new construction on the waterfront should be designed to harmonize with the surroundings and maintain compatibility in terms of both style and materials. It further states that materials may not have to be exact, but the design should be compatible with and contribute to the character and architecture of the waterfront. So, he believes in terms of architecture the styles are compatible. There are no other gambrel roofs in the Watermens Museum compound. He also looked around Yorktown, and there are about 12 to 15 sheds that are visible from the street, with the vast majority of the sheds having a roof style that matches the structure. He understands that would restrict the ability for storage capacity by 50%, but this is a custom shed and should be able to accommodate a gable roof style like the other surrounding roof styles.

Mr. Ormsby stated that the only way to get the storage area he needs would be to make the structure taller and he did not want to do that as the taller structure would be out of place.

Mr. Hodson opined that matching the roof style was his interpretation of the Guidelines. The shed should match the architectural style of the roof, as well as, the doors. He is focused on the style, but he thinks that the size needed can be accommodated and make it compatible with adjacent buildings.

Mr. Ormsby stated that he is limited to 256 square feet.

Mr. Anderson agreed that a building permit would be required for anything over 256 square feet.

Mr. Hodson opined that it could be built taller to gain more storage.

Mr. Ormsby said that would be unreasonable compared to the other buildings, as it would tower over them. Additionally, having to get a building permit means it is a permanent structure, which has more liability.

Mr. Larry Raithel stated that the Watermens Museum is very eclectic right now. The important thing for the Committee is that the structure matches the buildings that are there.

Mr. Jose Longoria agreed with Mr. Hodson that the shed was not in keeping with what is already located at the Museum. He would suggest that if you wanted the square footage that you look at a permanent structure to support what you need for storage.

Mr. Ormsby stated that making it a permanent building requires a foundation and in the flood zone that would be problematic.

Mr. Longoria agreed that flooding would be a risk there.

Mr. Ormsby stated it would be an unnecessary risk, when the proposed shed would look fine.

Ms. Weekley opined that another way you can get some additional square footage, is to do a kick out in the front, about eight inches. This way you would have more floor space upstairs than downstairs.

Mr. Ormsby stated that a kick out would not be consistent with any of the other buildings. He said there are other gambrel roof styles in the village, so he didn't see the conflict.

Robert Hodson opined that the conflict happens when you have a facility with supporting structures and the structures should match each other in style. There should be consistent architectural styles within a compound.

Mr. Ormsby stated that the Watermens Museum is a commercial activity. It is the only place in the historic district that has a building that even comes close to being historical.

Mr. Hodson said that he has an appreciation for the history there; however, the Committee has to be consistent across the village in terms of architecture. He felt that the roof, doors, shingles, and windows should match the surrounding structures.

The Committee discussed surrounding structures' roof pitches, the variety of door panels and shingles, and windows.

Mr. Longoria opined that the roof should match what is there and there are options on sizing it for you needs, even if it is higher.

Mr. Ormsby stated that he understood the point. However, he is opposed to losing the gambrel roof and its storage capacity.

Mr. Longoria moved approval of the application to find the proposal consistent with the Guidelines and that the application be approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. The shed shall be constructed in accordance with the exterior features depicted on the photograph and with the supplementary information detailing proposed materials and colors presented with the application and received March 1, 2022, unless herein modified.
2. The orientation of the shed shall have the door facing away from Water Street.
3. Trim should be made of trim-grade lumber, not to exceed 2 inches in actual thickness, 6 inches in width at corners and 4 inches around openings.
4. The doors for the structure shall be of similar style to the doors on the Boat Shed.
5. The roof shall be a gable roof with a pitch similar to the surrounding structures.
6. Windows shall be trimmed similar to those of the surrounding structures.

By voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Application No. HYDC-216-22, 540 Water Street, G-Square, Inc.

Mr. Anderson stated that this application, submitted by G-Square, Inc. (The Yorktown Pub), seeks approval for the installation of wooden posts along the front sidewalk with ropes stretched between and a proposed detached tent located at 528 and 540 Water Street. The approximate 14 three-foot wooden posts delineate the sidewalk from the parking area

with white marine rope stretched between the posts. Additionally, two two-foot posts mark off the entryway into the main doors of the restaurant. The tent is 600-square feet (20'x30') and is located over the brownstone aggregate pad to the northwest of the building at 528 Water Street. The applicant intends to use the tent for outdoor dining.

The proposed tent will be required to meet the accessory structure dimensional requirements specified for the YVA – Yorktown Village Activity district for the side and rear yard of five feet (5') and must be located behind the existing front of The Yorktown Pub building. If approval is granted from the HYDC for the tent, the applicant will need to submit for approval through the YVA process for the twenty-five percent increase in lot coverage and floor expansion.

In staff's opinion, the proposed wooden posts and ropes are consistent with the Design Guidelines and with the character of surrounding structures and the Waterfront. Staff believes that these will be visually appealing and merit approval.

The Design Guidelines do not appropriately address the continuous use of a tent in the Waterfront area of Yorktown and many of the recommendations do not accommodate the style and design of a tent. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Committee not find the tent consistent with the Guidelines and that the application be denied.

Mr. Anderson asked if there were any questions for him or the applicants.

Mr. Rick Tanner stated that he humbly apologized for having put the posts and ropes up without first submitting an applications. He has always tried to keep the best interests Yorktown in mind and has tried to do that with the tent and the restaurant. He felt like that the posts are consistent with the style of the restaurant. With the posts and rope, he wanted to use something that was aesthetically pleasing and would also help with crowd control. They make sure that people don't wander out into the parking area or the road.

Mr. Tanner continued that he recognized that the tent is not a permanent structure. It can be taken up and down. He stated that if the Committee wouldn't approve of keeping it up for an extended period of time, he would ask that he be allowed to keep it up through October or November of this year. He wants to make sure his customers have the best possible experience. People like coming down to the Pub and they like eating outside. His philosophy is to make people happy and in the process add revenue for the County. He would note that they received approval for pouring brownstone concrete foundation in the parking area under the tent. Previously, the parking lot were the tent is now located had just been gravel and dirt. It offers a cleaner area for patron that sent under the tent. However, it can be turned back into parking. In the process for pouring that new concrete they fixed the retaining wall behind it and added a French drain. He would like to have the

Committee consider allowing the tent to continue to be used and would accept a certain timeframe for removal in the future.

Ms. Weekley asked if there were any comments.

Mr. Ormsby noted that the Watermens Museum used the same type of rope around its dock area, so he felt it was consistent with what has been used in Yorktown.

Mr. Longoria questioned whether the rope was used in other places. The waterfront area already seems to have a style, which is posts with the chains. He sees how using pilings and rope fit in with a waterfront, but the existing docks and pier don't have that style. The proposed is more like what you would see on a wharf. He is also concerned about how the pilings are not even and have an unfinished look. The proposed pilings and roping do not match what is already used throughout the waterfront.

Ms. Weekley asked if a parking space was sacrificed to add this entryway.

Mr. Tanner stated that yes, it was to help with crowd control. People can now come in and out in an organized manner.

Ms. Weekly stated that parking is horrendous at the beach and she was surprised that they would sacrifice even one spot.

Mr. Hodson said it would have been nice to see it before it was installed as the Committee could have offered some suggestions for improvement, but he does not dislike the proposal.

Mr. Larry Raithel asked if it would help if the rope was not bright white.

Mr. Longoria said that it will get darker as it is weathered.

Mr. Tanner stated they selected this type of rope to make sure no one got any splinters.

Mr. Hodson opined that over time the posts will weather and be more rustic looking.

Mr. Tanner agreed that choosing this style was part of the reason that they felt it was appropriate for the Pub, as it already has a rustic look. Though the Pub is part of the waterfront, it is located away from the center of the Riverwalk.

Mr. Hodson moved approval of the application to find the proposal for the 14 three-foot wooden posts placed to delineate the sidewalk from the parking area with white marine rope stretched between the posts and the two two-foot posts used to mark off the entryway into the main doors of the restaurant.

By voice vote, the motion was approved two to one with Mr. Longoria voting in opposition.

Ms. Weekley opened up discussion on the tent and asked if there were any comments.

Mrs. Beverly Krams opined that she and Mr. Tanner are in an unusual position. Where the Pub is located used to be family property. It was divided by her father and his sister and she opened the restaurant. Currently, she shares about 175 feet of her front yard with his backyard. There have been times when they have had a difference of opinion, because of her viewscape of the beach and noise. So they are all very much interconnected. She stated that anyone living or doing business in Yorktown needs to read the Design Guidelines and work within them, because this is a special village. It is up to those living and working in the village to decide if it is going to be preserved and keep its charm. She thought that Yorktown probably has much more history than Jamestown as it has never been fully explored. Nothing should be put in that takes away from the character of this village.

Mrs. Krams continued that the tent currently flutters in the breeze and with Larry's Lemonade being painted white and their tent being white and then the Pub's white tent, all she sees is a row of white. Additionally, she feels Larry's Lemonade was painted illegally with the white paint. When she looks over the York River it is all very distracting. She understands that everyone had a tough time with COVID and the Pub is trying to make a living. She has made a big investment in her property and it seems that the Pub is only concerned with making a profit. The tents don't belong in Yorktown, especially on the waterfront. They have served a purpose, but it needs to go back to parking.

Mr. Tanner stated that he has worked hard to fit in on the waterfront. This is his 22nd year there and there has not been that many problems. They have done a good job handling and taking care of their County patrons in a way that is growing the business. He understands that there is more traffic. The restaurant has a good rating not only for the food, but in general. If you look at the number of reviews, it's rated 4.4 out of five and he would say that is doing something right. So he feels they are trying to do best for the County and the waterfront. The outside dining area is something that it helps patrons and lets them come in with their dogs and have a place to eat even if they are still concerned about COVID. He realizes that the emergency has been declared over but there are still a lot of people with concerns that are wearing masks and want to sit outside. He wants to make sure that his customers are taken care of. For two years, he feels they have done a pretty good job of keeping it clean and neat and presentable. He realizes it does not meet the Guidelines, but the patrons like it and they appreciate it and still want it and he feels that it is reasonable for them to request keeping it.

Mr. Hodson questioned that Mr. Tanner mentioned the pandemic twice and stating that he knew this was a temporary facility. He was curious if Mr. Tanner had the intention to take down the tent when the pandemic was over.

Mr. Tanner stated that if the Committee decides to allow it through November, he would be fine taking it down after that.

Mr. Hodson opined that the Committee has expressed concerns about the tent behind the Freight Shed, which is a County operation. However in his mind, a tent is a tent. Now there are two on Water Street and one at Riverwalk and they are not attractive. They do not look temporary, as they are meant to be. They do not have a place as a permanent structure on Water Street.

Mr. Raithel thanked Mr. Tanner for his letter which include their efforts to maintain the tent. He lives two doors away from Mrs. Krams and he frequents the Pub and enjoys the outdoor area, as someone with hearing aids, it's too loud inside for him. However, the job of this Committee is to maintain Yorktown's historic look and feel. So he agrees with Mr. Hodson that the tents do not fit into the historic area, whether they are permanent or temporary. He also offered that Larry's Lemonade should be told not to apply, because the Committee will not approve their tent, either. He appreciated Mr. Tanner's opinion, but his opinion is similar to that of a former member of the HYDC, Mr. Bill Cole, who opined that a temporary tent in a 1690s village is egregious.

Mr. Longoria opined that he appreciated what the Pub has done to maintain its business and keeping folks safe. However, the tent should have only been a temporary facility. He agrees with the staff recommendation. He sees the use of the tent as a business expansion and that the Pub has basically been permanently expanded. No one wants to have to plan for what has been going on for the last two years, but he wanted to say thank you for what you have done for your patrons and for using the temporary tent to keep everybody safe and keep your business going at the same time.

Mr. Tanner appreciated his comment.

Mrs. Weekley seconded Mr. Longoria. She is not in favor of leaving the tent up permanently.

Mr. Hodson seconded what has been said and his appreciation for providing a safe environment during the pandemic; however it is time to take the tent down.

Mr. Longoria suggested that Mr. Tanner look at creating a way to provide for outdoor seating through the normal process.

Mr. Tanner said if the County and the Committee are open to doing something like that he is happy to pursue it.

Mr. Longoria moved to deny the application proposal for the detached tent.

By voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

The Committee members encouraged Mr. Tanner to bring forward an expansion of the building on the property that would allow for additional outdoor dining and they would be happy to review it.

New Business

None

Staff Reports

None

Committee Requests

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Earl W. Anderson, Secretary

Approved by HYDC: 