

# Town of Strasburg

## **Architectural Review Board (ARB)**

Thursday, October 26, 2023

7 p.m.

### **ARB Members:**

Michael Ashby  
Craig Ernst, Chairperson  
Laura Johnson  
Bobbi Poling  
Linda Wheeler, Vice Chairperson

Staff Contact:  
Brian Otis, Planning & Zoning Administrator

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by 4:00 p.m., Thursday, October 26, 2023



# Agenda

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**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

**Action Items:**

**1.) Approval of Minutes, Thursday, April 27, 2023**

*Support Materials: Thursday, April 27, 2023, ARB Meeting Minutes*

**2.) Certificate of Appropriateness, 211 High Street**

*Description: Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a detached accessory structure at 211 High Street.*

*Staff Contact: Brian Otis, Planning & Zoning Administrator*

*Support Materials: Staff report*

**Non-agenda Discussion Items:**

**Adjournment**

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF STRASBURG'S ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL ON  
THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023 AT 7 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Ashby, Ernst, Johnson, Poling, and Wheeler. Absent:

STAFF PRESENT: Planning & Zoning Administrator Otis and Clerk of Council Keller.

***Call to Order:***

Since the election of officers was deferred at the last meeting, **Planning and Zoning Administrator Otis** called the meeting to order.

***Roll Call:***

**Clerk of Council Keller** called roll.

***Action Items:***

**1.) Election of Officers**

**Planning and Zoning Administrator Otis** opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chairperson.

**Board Member Wheeler** nominated **Board Member Ernst** for the office of Chairperson; second by **Board Member Johnson**.

With no other nominations, the nominations were closed, and **Board Member Ernst** was elected **Chairperson of the ARB**.

**Chairperson Ernst** opened the floor for nominations for the office of Vice Chair.

**Chairperson Ernst** nominated **Board Member Wheeler** for the office of Vice Chairperson; second by **Board Member Johnson**.

With no other nominations, the nominations were closed, and **Board Member Wheeler** was elected **Vice Chair of the ARB**.

**2.) Approval of Minutes, Thursday, February 23, 2023**

*Support Materials: February 23, 2023 ARB Meeting Minutes*

The minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously on a motion by Vice Chair Wheeler and the second being offered by Board Member Ashby. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

**3.) Certificate of Appropriateness, 324 W. Queen Street**

*Description: Certificate of Appropriateness for various improvements at 324 W. Queen Street.*

**P&Z Administrator Otis** listed what the applicant wants to do to the house:

- Replace siding with vinyl (gray or royal blue in color)
- Replace existing wood windows with vinyl of a similar style
- Replace soffit with white vinyl material
- Install aluminum gutters and downspouts

Pictures were shown of all the areas needing replacements. The wood pane windows have not been properly maintained and are in a state of major disrepair and in need of replacement. The soffit is rotten. Aluminum

gutters will be added. The siding will be blue or gray. The applicant will maintain the metal roof on the porch and the porch will be repaired.

**Vice Chair Wheeler** said she walks by the house many times. It has been empty for a long time and this seems like an improvement on what is there now.

**Chairperson Ernst** said he made several attempts to contact the owner of record by mail. He was interested in making improvements but never got any response from the owner. It was beginning to be demolition by neglect. Having it be a functioning house will be a great improvement.

**Board Member Poling** thinks it will look nice when it is done.

**Board Member Johnson** asked if anyone knew if there were any architectural features inside the house and **P&Z Administrator Otis** said they are hand carving and cutting to replace woodwork that is needed.

**Chairperson Ernst** said it has been in a terrible state of neglect.

**Board Member Poling moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 324 W. Queen St.; second by Vice Chair Wheeler. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

**4.) Certificate of Appropriateness, Major Modification, 170 S. Massanutten Street**

*Description: Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of existing wood windows with vinyl of a similar style.*

**P&Z Administrator Otis** said the homeowner was in attendance. He would like to replace the windows. Specifications of each window were shown. Like for like work has been done that did not need approval by the ARB, but **Mr. Vencil** is proposing to replace the wood windows with vinyl.

**Vice Chair Wheeler** asked what the house is made of. **Mr. Vencil** said the house is built out of Strasburg block with a stucco covering. It was constructed about 1910.

**Board Member Johnson** said she did not see the grill indicator in the proposal. Will the panes be removed? **Mr. Vencil** said the back half of the home has replacement windows. This would complete the windows. They would retain the same grill as is shown in the original home.

**Board Member Ashby moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 170 S. Massanutten Street; second by Board Member Johnson. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. Vencil** gave some additional information on other improvements he was making.

***Non-Agenda Discussion Items:***

**Vice Chair Wheeler** asked if there is any movement on identifying the boundaries of the Historic District. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said we are in a holding pattern due to the rewriting of the UDO. He had proposed to have curbs painted but it was thought it would be too much maintenance. He said he could work on making an appealing map of the district.

In May, there will be a joint meeting to start the discussion on the rewriting of the UDO. He was thinking of creating a residential and commercial historic district. He is looking to see if other localities have guidelines/regulations on new buildings. He is also thinking of having a color palette. He will be asking the question of how to better identify the district. The first meeting will be on May 17. Council is very eager to

have this move forward. This meeting will be a lesson on zoning and what you can and can't do as far as zoning. The second meeting will be more about questions and concerns.

**Chairperson Ernst** said he has followed up with the realtors about telling buyers about the historic district and it seems like they need more guidance from the ARB. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said he has had a lot of dealings with Sager and Presley Reality, but not other realtors.

**Vice Chair Wheeler** said **P&Z Administrator Otis** had come up with a suggestion to do this online so that an address could be entered, and it would tell if it were in the historic district. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said he is trying to get software that will allow anyone to search the database to see if they are in or out of the district.

**Chairperson Ernst** thinks it would be good to have information like this online and to have a better map.

**P&Z Administrator Otis** said he is looking to revamp the website so people will know what they need to do.

**Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. on a motion by Vice Chair Wheeler and Board Member Poling. The motion passed unanimously.**



# ARB Staff Report

Planning & Zoning Administration  
174 E. King Street, P.O. Box 351  
Strasburg, VA 22657  
(540) 465-9197 ext. 127

## Memorandum

To: Strasburg Architectural Review Board  
From: Brian Otis, Planning and Zoning Administrator  
Date: Thursday, October 26, 2023  
Re: **ARB2024-0001**  
211 High Street, Certificate of Appropriateness (Demolition)

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### Identification and Location Information

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Applicant	Adam Smith
Property Owner	Adam Smith
Location	211 High Queen Street, Tax Parcel # 025A3 A 221
Acreage	0.405 of an acre
Zoning	Low Density Residential (MDR)
Overlays	Historic District
Adjacent Zoning	Low Density Residential (MDR)
Adjacent Uses	Single Family Dwellings/Church

### Request

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Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of an accessory structure.

With the property being located within the Historic District Overlay District, ARB review and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

### Description of existing structure in relation to the request

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#### General

- The subject structure is the free-standing log structure in the rear yard.
- The structure is not original to the site.
- This structure was moved to the site. Per conversation with Bob Baker, the building was brought to the site by the owner prior to him, Leo Bernstein.
- The structure on this lot does not have any historical significance.
- The age and history of the structure itself is unknown.
- Structure was placed on a modern two-foot concrete slab.

## Current Condition

- The roof has collapsed.
- Wood rot has affected portions of the exterior walls.
- Items in acceptable condition will be salvaged for reuse in rehabilitation projects on this site or another.

## Timeline of when demolition will commence and be completed

- Upon approval, the process of removing structural debris will begin immediately and be completed before December 2023.

## Extent of the demolition

- The demolition will consist of all debris removal down to the concrete slab. The building footprint is 24'W x 24'L x 15'H. Closet shed on rear of structure is 10'W x 6'L x 10'H.

## 2011 Historic District Guidelines Considerations

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The *Strasburg Historic District Design Guidelines* is an advisory document containing recommendations on a variety of historic preservation related issues, offering illustrated definitions, best practices, and descriptions of the various architectural styles found in Strasburg. The chapters that primarily apply to this case include the following. Also please note that the text includes excerpts only and additional information is found with each chapter and section below:

### Chapter 3, Architectural Styles

- Section B, Residential, #4, Early- to Mid-Nineteenth-Century Vernacular (page 3.5)

*"Simplified examples of the Federal style, these two-story, three-bay dwellings typically had gable roofs and were often clad in wooden clapboard siding. Interior-end chimneys and covered entrances, some supported on brackets, are features of this vernacular adaptation. In the Old Strasburg Historic District, both center and side passage frame examples are present. In addition to frame examples, there is also a two-story stone vernacular dwelling at 190 North Massanutten Street.."*

## Chapter 12, Demolition:

### 1. Criteria for Demolition

The ARB will use the criteria listed below in evaluating the appropriateness of requests for demolition of historic buildings and structures. An application for demolition will be approved unless the ARB finds:

- a) That the building or structure is of such historical, cultural, social, economic, political, artistic, architectural, or archaeological significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest, to the Historic Districts in whole or in part, or to the purposes of this ordinance;
- b) That the building or structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture, and material that it could not be effectively reproduced;
- c) That the building or structure would qualify as a national, state, or local historic landmark; and,
- d) That one of the above conditions is true and the property can be put to a reasonably beneficial use, and that preservation is physically and economically feasible.

## GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITION:

1. Demolish a historic structure only after all preferable alternatives have been exhausted.
2. Document the building thoroughly through photographs, sketch plans, and if possible measured drawings. File this information with the Town of Strasburg Department of Planning and Zoning and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
3. Maintain any empty lot appropriately so that it is free of hazards and trash and is well tended if the site is to remain vacant for any length of time.
4. Preserve significant details and ornament, good flooring, old brick and stone for architectural salvage and subsequent reuse.

## Staff Recommendation

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Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness based on the following.

- The structure is not original to the lot/dwelling.
- The structure does not appear to have historical significance to the lot or town.
- Neglect was not the fault of the current owner. The structure was beyond repair when the current owner obtained the property. Preservation of the structure is not economically feasible in relation to obtaining historically relevant materials.
- The reuse of materials is a benefit to the historic renovation industry.





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## Recommendation options

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1. "I move to approve the certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the free-standing log structure at 211 High Street."
2. "I move to approve the certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the free-standing log structure at 211 High Street, with the following conditions..."
3. "I move to deny the certificate of appropriateness, due to the recommendations within the Historic District Guidelines have not been met."

## Attachments

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- A. Applicable UDO sections
- B. Images;
  1. Aerial image
  2. Images of structure
  3. Images from right-of-way

## Staff Contact

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**Brian Otis**, Planning and Zoning Administrator  
**Phone:** 540-465-9197 x 127  
**Email:** [botis@strasburgva.com](mailto:botis@strasburgva.com)

## Applicable UDO Sections in ARB's Deliberations

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In conjunction with the Historic District Design Guidelines, the UDO provides additional authority in Section 2.32.

### 2.32.3 Criteria

#### E. Demolition

1. Approval required. No building or structure subject to the provisions of this Section shall be demolished, in whole or in part, unless a certificate of appropriateness has been issued by the ARB, with right of direct appeal from an adverse decision to the Town Council, as provided herein; provided, however, approval by the Town Council, after a recommendation by the ARB, shall be mandatory in the case of the demolition of a building or structure designated as a Strasburg landmark.
2. Criteria. The ARB shall consider the following criteria in determining whether or not to issue a certificate of appropriateness for demolition:
  - a. Whether or not the building or structure is of such historical, cultural, social, economic, political, artistic, architectural, or archaeological significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest, cultural heritage, the architectural history of the locality, to the historic districts in whole or in part, to the purposes of this UDO, or would cause a loss of a visual tangible demonstration of local history or the social and artistic pattern of community development and planning.
  - b. Whether or not the building or structure is of such interest or historic significance that it would qualify as a national, state, or local historic landmark or through individual listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register or National Register of Historic Places.
  - c. Whether or not the building or structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style, method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic values or represents a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction or whether the resource is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history or is associated with significant persons.
  - d. Whether or not retention of the building or structure would help to preserve and protect a historic or architecturally significant place, the quality of life

- and pride of place or area of historic interest in the locality and promotes the purposes and intent of historic district zoning including tourism.
- e. Whether or not the building or structure has retained integrity or authenticity of its historic identity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, association and whether its unusual design, quality and workmanship of traditional materials and details of character-defining features could be easily reproduced.
  - f. Whether the proposed demolition will affect the archaeological potential to yield information important to prehistory or history at this site.
  - g. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a resource because of its texture, design, material or detail.
  - h. The proposed replacement structure and the future utilization of the site.
3. Offer for sale. In addition to seeking the right of demolition through application, the owner of a building or structure, the demolition of which is subject to the provisions of this UDO, shall as a matter of right be entitled to demolish such buildings or structures provided that:
- a. They have applied to the Town Council for such right;
  - b. The owner has for the period of time set forth in the same schedule hereinafter contained and at a price reasonably related to its fair market value, made a bona fide offer to sell the building or structure, and the land pertaining thereto, to the locality or to any person, firm, corporation, government or agency thereof, or political subdivision or agency thereof, which gives reasonable assurance that it is willing to preserve and restore the landmark, building or structure and the land pertaining thereto; and
  - c. No bona fide contract, binding upon all parties thereto, shall have been executed for the sale of any such building or structure, and the land pertaining thereto, prior to the expiration of the applicable time period set forth in the time schedule hereinafter contained.
4. During the demolition delay period, the Board may negotiate with the owner and with other entities in an effort to preserve, acquire, or relocate the buildings or structures. Negotiation steps may include, but shall not be limited to:
- a. Consultations with civic groups, public agencies, and interested citizens;
  - b. Recommendations for acquisition of the building or structure by public or private entities;
  - c. Exploration of the possibility of moving the building or structure; and
  - d. Options to salvage significant elements of the building or structure.



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### F. Demolition Delay Period.

Offering Price	Delay Period
\$0 - \$24,999	3 months
\$25,000 - \$39,999	4 months
\$40,000 - 54,999	5 months
\$55,000 - \$74,999	6 months
\$75,000 - \$89,999	7 months
\$90,000 or greater	12 months

#### 2.32.4 Decision

The ARB shall take action on an application no later than seven (7) days after the conclusion of the regular meeting on the application. The Board may vote to extend the time if it is decided that additional information or a professional consultant's services is required.

- A. The ARB shall serve as a review body with the power to make recommendations on applications for certificates of appropriateness, and if granted, what conditions, if any, should be provided in such certificate.
- B. In making determinations, evaluations, and decisions under this Section, the ARB shall seek to accomplish the purposes of this Section; in particular, to preserve and protect the architectural and historic integrity and character of any landmark site, landmark, or historic district.
- C. All decisions of the ARB shall be in writing and shall state the findings of the ARB and the reasons thereof.
- D. The ARB shall not disapprove of any plans without giving its recommendations for changes to be made before such plans may be reconsidered. These recommendations may be in general terms, and compliance therewith shall not by itself qualify such plans for approval--only for reconsideration by the ARB.
- E. Upon approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Applicant will receive a Zoning Permit from the Zoning Administrator.



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### 2.32.5 Appeal

- A. From ARB to Town Council. The owner or Applicant may appeal a final decision of the Board to the Town Council by filing a written notice in the form of a letter to the Town Council within 30 days of the date of the Board decision. The Town Council may affirm, reverse, or modify, in whole or in part, the decision of the Board. In so doing, the Council shall give due consideration to the recommendations of the ARB along with other evidence as it deems necessary for the proper review of the application. Upon appeal, the final decision of the ARB shall be stayed pending the decision of the Town Council; provided, however, that the Applicant is prohibited from taking any action for which approval is sought during the pendency of such appeal. The Town Council shall conduct a full and impartial public hearing on the matter in compliance with Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2204, before rendering any decision.
- B. From Town Council to Circuit Court. In accordance with Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2306(A) (3), decisions made by the Town Council on any application submitted in accordance with this UDO may be appealed to the Circuit Court. Such an appeal shall be filed by the affected Applicant within 30 days after the final decision is rendered by the Town Council.

### Attachments (4)

Plat of Property

Aerial image of property

Images of the subject structure

Images of the lot from the right-of-way

































