

**Village of Pittsford**  
**Architectural and Preservation Review Board**  
**Special Meeting: Monday September 9, 2013 at 4:30 PM**

**PRESENT:**

Chairperson:	Paul Zachman
Members:	Cristina Lanahan
	William McBride
	Maria Huot
	Erin Daniele

Village Attorney:	Jeff Turner
Building Inspector:	John Limbeck
Recording Secretary:	Linda Habeeb

Chairperson Zachman called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Board members discussed the appropriateness of installing a non-wood fence, in excess of three feet in height, located closer to the street line than is allowed in the R-1 Zoning District. The front setback requirement is a pre-existing, non-conforming, situation, as the front plane of the house is only several feet from the Village sidewalk.

The observed cast-iron fence with stone columns recently installed at 73 South Main is about 54" high with associated stone columns proportionally taller than the fence panels. The fence is well forward of 70' front setback requirement for the district.

Chairperson Zachman reviewed the issues for discussion: (1) the installation of a 6-foot stockade fence from the 70-foot setback line to the rear of the property, (2) the installation of a 3-foot fence on the side of the house, (3) the installed wrought-iron fence in the front of the property, for recommendations to the Zoning Board.

Board members viewed the location of the 70' setback, which had been marked by a stake in the ground just behind rear edge of the house. Board members also discussed the installation of 3-foot fencing on the side of the house. Chairperson Zachman stated that a 3-foot stockade fence, with the unfinished side of the fence visible from the street, would not be appropriate for the setting of the house. Board members also discussed the appropriateness of having a third style of fencing that is visible from the street. Members suggested that the 3' fence for this location could tie in stylistically with the formal architecture of the house and work as a third style to bridge the estate style front and informal rear fencing

Rear Fence:

**Findings of fact:**

- ❖ The entire north property line from the rear of the house back is lined with existing stockade and stockade style fencing on neighboring properties.

- ❖ There are two existing rustic style agricultural barn structures in the rear of the property that differ significantly from the Greek Revival formal style of the main house in front.

**Motion:** Chairperson Zachman made a motion, seconded by Member Daniele, to approve the installation of a 6-foot stockade fence from the 70-foot setback in the rear of the property, as submitted.

**Vote:** McBride – yes; Zachman – yes; Lanahan – yes; Huot – yes; Daniele – yes. **Motion carried.** This decision was filed in the Office of the Village Clerk on September 9, 2013

#### Side Fence:

#### **Findings of Fact:**

- ◆ The house is a Greek Revival-style house.
- ◆ The fence will be installed on the side property line.
- ◆ The fence will tie into the style of the house, and won't connect to the front fence.
- ◆ The fence will be 3-feet high starting forward of the 70-foot setback line.

**Motion:** Chairperson Zachman made a motion, seconded by Member McBride, to approve the installation of a white wood 3-foot fence at the property line described as follows: 7" boxed posts to scale with the side porch columns on the house with formal post caps similar to porch newel post caps on the second floor balcony porch. 2"-3" spaced 2x2 square pointed balusters extending past a pair of 1x3 side rails approx 3" below the top of the balusters. A pair 1x5 vertical bottom rails at the base of the fence below the upper rails. The fence sections will be hung between the fence posts. A picture of this style fence was submitted for the record. Approval subject to the condition that the applicant submit the details of the fence for the record prior to issuance of a building permit for construction.

**Vote:** McBride – yes; Zachman – yes; Lanahan – yes; Huot – yes; Daniele – yes. **Motion carried.** This decision was filed in the Office of the Village Clerk on September 9, 2013

#### Front Fence:

#### **Findings of Fact:**

Board members discussed attributes of the fence and expressed concerns over some stylistic details. Overall, the board was in unanimous support of approving the size and location of the current fence subject to the following suggested changes:

- ❖ The applied mortar between the stone units should be increased to reduce the relief exposure of the stone components to effect an appearance more closely matching the foundation of the house.
- ❖ The 1-1/2" thick stone caps on top of the stone columns need to be replaced with a more appropriate style column cap. The board suggested a 4" thick stone or cast concrete column top cap with a reduced overhang on the sides. This would be similar to other stone column caps elsewhere in the village.

- ❖ The 4" steel line posts are capped with an unadorned beveled slip-over metal post cap and are not appropriate for the style of the cast iron fence panels. A more compatible style post top cap or ornamental finial should be explored for approval.
- ❖ Board members confirmed that the cast iron fence panels will be painted black.
- ❖ The applicant is proposing to install light fixtures on top of the two columns that flank the driveway entrance. The board was shown a sample light fixture and was in agreement with the style and size of the fixture for installation on the tops of the two columns.

The neighbor to the south at 75 South Main Street was invited to participate in the discussion and appeared to generally agree with the observations of the board and did not offer objections or alternative suggestions when prompted.

**In support of the APRB's recommendation that a fence of this height be permitted in this specific location inside of the 70' rear setback the board offers the following findings:**

- ❖ The house is pre-existing, non-conforming, and is situated just several feet off of the public sidewalk and is itself significantly encroaching on the front setback requirement.
- ❖ There are several pre-existing non-conforming houses in this area of the district, including houses on either side of the subject property, such that there is no distinct undisrupted visual alignment of the frontages at 70' or any increment. So the fence does not stand out in front of any perceived visual setback.
- ❖ The function and design of the fence is to delineate the side yard from the front yard, and placement of the fence just behind the front setback of the house serves this purpose. If the fence were placed at the limit of the 70' rear setback it would have no relationship with it's intended function.
- ❖ The board felt that the size and scale of the house and the property as it is being developed takes on the feeling of an "Estate" and in that context the fence contributes to that design philosophy. The "Estate" style of this fence is one that is visually inviting in to the property but functionally an effective deterrent to casual entry. This makes sense here given the expansive nature of the property and it's close proximity to a busy South Main Street. Examples of stone columns, walls, and metal fencing and gates are present in the block that is South Main Street- West Jefferson Road- Sutherland - and Lincoln Avenue. Other examples of stone and iron fencing appear at the Pittsford Dairy. The village is made up of a wide ranging eclectic mix of large and small, ornamental and utilitarian, new and old, all juxtaposed together and this fits with that.
- ❖ The cast iron fence is consistent in style and vintage with the Greek Revival architecture of the main house. Decorative architectural trim detailing as depicted in McAllister's Field Guide to American Houses shows styles and repeating geometric patterns not unlike the detailing on the proposed cast iron fence.

**APRB finding in support of the granting of a special permit required for a non-wood fence taller than 4':**

- ❖ The APRB's interpretation of the code that requires a special permit be granted for non-wood fences that are over 4' high is to regulate concern over solid masonry wall structures and tall cagey/utilitarian looking metal fencing that in any given setting would be obtrusive, out of scale, or contextually inappropriate. The actual fence panels proposed here are only a few inches above 48" and their mounting has them situated several more inches above the landscaped grade, which is a standard practice for fence installations. The taller associated columns are/will be in scale with the fence panels.
- ❖ The proposed cast iron fence panels afford generous visibility into the property and do not effect any sort of solid wall scenario.
- ❖ The size and scale of the property and the house support the proposed height of the fence exceeding 4'.