

**RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Town Hall, 400 Main Street**  
**Ridgefield, CT 06877**  
**May 11, 2023**

**Policy: Historic District Commission meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.**

**APPROVED SITE VISIT MINUTES**

A Site Visit of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held at St. Stephen’s Rectory, located at 355 Main St, Ridgefield, CT 06877, on Thursday, May 11, 2023 and beginning at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair  
Sean O’Kane  
Kam Daughters  
Sara Kaplan (alternate for Harriet Hanlon)

**AGENDA**

**355 Main Street** – Wrap Around Porch Repair and Restoration

The site visit was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 6:01 p.m. Mr. Bill Murrell, Property Committee Chair at St. Stephen’s Rectory was present, along with Mr. Randy Baldwin who assists with property maintenance.

Mr. Murrell showed the HDC Commissioners the north porch, where he pointed out the columns decking and railing that were in need of repair or replace. Mr. O’Brien asked about the wood staircase in back. Mr. Murrell said that was also included in the plan to repair. Mr. O’Kane noted that there were different railing spindles in the southwest railing, than what was on the northeast railing. Mr. Murrell agreed they were different.

Thereafter, Mr. Murrell brought the HDC Commissioners to the South porch. He pointed out the column and fir flooring that had been damaged by fire. Mr. Baldwin said that any wood flooring that was still good would remain. Walking further west to the corner, there was a section comprised of Trex material. Mr. Baldwin said that the Trex portion would be replaced. They were looking to replace it with a composite due to the elements. He pointed out that the wood spindles would also be replaced by composite. Mr. O’Kane pointed out that the original flooring appeared to be made of fir. If they would like to replace any flooring in need, like the Trek portion, why not use fir to match the flooring throughout the porch. Mr. Baldwin said that due to the elements, they thought the composite would last longer.

All walked to the East side of the wrap around porch. Ms. Daughters asked how many columns were compromised. Mr. Murrell said there were about 28 columns. He said all of them have been damaged or compromised. Mr. O’Kane pointed out that there were original and composite columns. The original columns were identified by the delicacy of the neck at the top and the tapering beginning at a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> from the bottom. He said there were companies like Chatsworth and many more other manufacturers of classical posts which were worth exploring. They would be able to create visually and architecturally accurate classical posts. He further encouraged them to try to match the traditional posts, which tapered at the top. He said to change about 30 posts would change the look of the porch significantly if they were to change to regular posts. Ms. Kaplan said it appeared that several were in good shape. Mr. Baldwin said he found you could easily stick a hole in them.

Mr. O'Brien said they should look to restore instead of replace. Mr. O'Kane agreed. He said he preferred them to replace the flooring with fir, a natural material, as per the National Park Service historical guidelines. Mr. Baldwin said they were looking at composite due to the heavy sun exposure on that one porch area not covered by overhang. Mr. O'Kane agreed there was quite a bit of maintenance required, but that maintenance would be key towards combating any damage.

Mr. O'Kane mentioned that it appeared there was a mixture of railing spindles. Mr. Baldwin said that none of them were original. Mr. O'Kane suggested they check with the Ridgefield Historical Society for pictures. This would be photographic evidence which they could use to restore the porch. Ms. Daughters mentioned that the moldings around the East windows were spectacular.

All walked from the Southeast side to North, which led to a set of stairs going down to the grass. Mr. O'Brien asked if these stairs would be replaced. Mr. Baldwin said stair treads would be replaced.

Mr. Murrell asked Mr. O'Brien about the timeline. Mr. O'Brien told him about the guidelines. But that research was the key. Once they had updated their plans, to contact him to appear before the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields  
Recording Secretary