



## DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

REPORT: 29 Mather Street, Hartford, CT 06120

For consideration: May 19, 2021

### STAFF REPORT

**TO:** HARTFORD PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
**FROM:** Paul Bengtson, Principal Planner  
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**PROJECT:** 29 Mather Street  
PARCEL ID: 242-240-020  
ENERGOV ID: COMM-2021-0395

**ZONE:** NX-1 **HISTORIC DISTRICT:** Clay Hill National Historic District

**TYPE:** ARTICLE XII HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Sec. 28-170 through 28-221

**APPLICANT:** Romaine Reid

**OWNER:** Romaine Reid



Location Map

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The residence at 29 Mather Street was built in 1897 in the Queen Anne style and contributes to the Clay Hill National Historic District.

Staff recently issued an administrative approval of a historic review (ADMIN-2021-1848 - April 28, 2021) to allow the replacement of existing vinyl windows in-kind. Previously, in 2016 staff approved an administrative approval of a historic review (ADMIN-2016-0155 – November 22, 2016) to allow the replacement of the asphalt roofing and existing vinyl windows in-kind.

**Proposed Project:** The applicant proposes to repair the front porch by replacing the plywood floor decking, rotted floor joists, concrete steps, cinder block footings, and replacing them with 1x6 pressure treated decking, 2x8 pressure treated floor joists and 2x12 pressure treated stringers, modern footings, and 2x4 pressure treated railings with 1x1 square balusters.

The applicant’s narrative also lists vinyl window replacement (approved administratively by ADMIN-2021-1848), and rear porch repairs that are not subject to historic review as they are not visible from the street.

**LEGAL STANDARD**

The Commission reviews and acts upon all applications for Document of Suitability. No person or entity may, without first applying and obtaining the approval of the Commission, file an application for a demolition permit, or for a building permit for any protected property as designated in the Historic Preservation Ordinance Sec. 28-219.

**STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE**

The commission shall adopt the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Hartford Guidelines for Renovations and Additions to Historic Buildings.

According to page 23- *“Designing for Missing Elements”* of the adopted ***Guidelines for Renovations and Additions to Historic Buildings***; *“Acceptable: If you do not know what elements looked like, replace them with elements that are compatible in scale, color, size and material with typical detailing used in the historical style of the building. Simplified or abstracted forms are preferable if no evidence of the actual detail exists.”*

According to page 23- *“Wood siding and trim”* *“Recommended: Repairing wood shingles and siding”*

**FINDING OF FACTS**

<b>CURRENT USE:</b>	Two-Family	<b>PROPOSED USE:</b>	Two-Family
<b>YEAR BUILT:</b>	1897	<b>STYLE:</b>	Queen Anne

**Particular Mention in historic nomination:** There is no specific mention of 29 Mather in the nomination, with the exception of its inclusion in the Inventory with the following: *“1897. Similar to 21-23.”* For 21-23 Mather the following is listed: *“2 1/2-story, 2-family, frame, Queen Anne house with central, 2-story bay.”*

**Current Conditions:** The exterior of the building has undergone recent repairs and renovations including the roof (2016) and windows (2016 & 2021) with mostly modern materials including vinyl siding and vinyl windows.



Fig. 1 - 29 Mather – Front (north) and Side (west) facades – taken 5/13/21



Fig. 2 - 29 Mather – Front Porch – Google Streetview, October 2020

**Condition of other properties in neighborhood:** Other properties on Mather Street are in good condition. The north side of Mather Street is a cemetery and the subject site has a church on the west side and a parking lot on the east side.

**COMMENTS RECEIVED** (None received from the HPA or NRZ as of May 14, 2020)

**ANALYSIS**

As previously mentioned, the applicant's narrative includes window replacement which was already approved administratively, and rear porch work that does not require historic review as it is not visible from the street.

The applicant's proposal to replace the structural members of the front porch, specifically the floor joists and cinder block footings are also replacements that will not be visible upon completion of the work and therefore the use of pressure treated lumber for the floor joists and stringer and the modern footings are considered acceptable by the historic guidelines as they will provide stability to the historic structure and meet building code requirements.

The applicant's proposal to replace the front porch floor decking, railings and balusters is supported by staff, as it is necessary to remove the materials to make structural repairs; however, the use of pressure-treated lumber is not supported by the guidelines as it is not the same material as what exists. The staff recommended conditions of approval require non-pressure treated lumber.

Staff would also recommend a condition of approval that the flooring be tongue and groove instead of decking; and that if the stairs are modified during this work that they provide full risers, square bullnose treads with 1 ¼ overhang, and be constructed of non-pressure treated lumber.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of this application with the following conditions:

1. The materials used for the front porch flooring shall be tongue and groove, non-pressure treated wood.
2. The materials used for the railings and balusters shall be non-pressure treated wood.
3. If the front stairs are modified; full risers shall be provided, the stair treads shall be square bullnose treads with a 1 ¼ inch overhang, and all visible materials shall be non-pressure treated lumber.

**A draft resolution follows.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Application Form
2. Applicant's Narrative
3. Applicant's Photographs

**REVIEWED,**

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Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION**  
**29 MATHER STREET**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROPOSAL**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the proposal to rehabilitate the front porch of an existing residential structure; and
- Whereas,** The property is located in the Clay Hills National Historic District; and
- Whereas,** The structure is a 2 ½ story wood frame of Queen Anne style; and
- Whereas,** All rehabilitation work can be done in a manner consistent with the historic character of the house; and
- Whereas,** The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the existing structure as indicated in the applicant's narrative;
- Whereas,** The proposed front porch repair work can be consistent with the City's Historic Design Principals, with the conditions of approval including below;

Now therefore Be It

- Resolved,** The City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission hereby approves the proposed work with the following conditions:
1. The materials used for the front porch flooring shall be tongue and groove, non-pressure treated wood.
  2. The materials used for the railings and balusters shall be non-pressure treated wood.
  3. If the front stairs are modified; full risers shall be provided, the stair treads shall be square bullnose treads with a 1 ¼ inch overhang, and all visible materials shall be non-pressure treated lumber.

Be It Further,

- Resolved,** This 19th day of May 2021.