

**Village of Skaneateles
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission
September 16, 2015**

Present: Chad Rogers, Chairman
Kathy Dyson, Member
Ted Kinder, Member
Lisa Riordan, Member

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Jennifer Ahrens, Bero Architecture, on behalf of the Applicant
Rev. Becky Coerper, Rector, Applicant
Rick Burton, Sr. Warden, Applicant
Jordan Bruna, on behalf of the Applicant
Ellen Kulik, on behalf of the Applicant

Kathy Kinder, Skaneateles

Absent: Dave Birchenough, Member

At 7:30 pm, Chairman Rogers announced the application of St. James Episcopal Church to incorporate existing stained glass lights into the previously-approved replacement front entry doors for 96 East Genesee Street. Chairman Rogers asked that the Board be presented with the changes from the previous application. Ms. Ahrens, "We are going to first have Becky talk about, from the church's perspective, the mission of the church and what the design of the doors mean, especially as we reexamined it. Then I'll talk more technically about how we are working through it." Rev. Coerper. "Thank you. You have all taken a lot of time over this and I really appreciate that. When I left the last time I was thinking about the fact that the history of this conversation is one that we have lived and breathed so long that I forgot to even talk about it. We, in January of 2012 at the start of the new vestry year, at the time it was Jordan Bruna, she was the senior warden of the vestry. The vestry is our governing board and the senior warden is the highest elected lay official in the church. I had been here a little over a year and it had become painfully clear to me that the roof needed to be replaced and also that there was a fair amount of deferred maintenance on the building. Bero had actually done a fairly extensive building survey for us and had listed all of that work that needed to be done. In addition, under the last rector the church had grown tremendously, and the building itself wasn't serving the current mission and the ministries that we were doing. In the church architecture world, when there's a war between what's going on in the room and the architecture, the architecture always wins. So we were finding things that we were doing that were the bread and butter of our life together, that were hampered by the fact that the building was designed the way it was. I sat down with the vestry and said to them that we have got to replace this roof. People have been talking about it for four years. It was clear from the work that was done under the previous rector that the intention of St. James was to replace it in kind. They wanted the original slate. We already had a grant from a New York landmark conservancy – the Sacred Sites program. I had a sense of the ballpark of what that was going to cost, which we knew was going to be at least \$500,000 if not more. I said to the vestry that I could not in any conscience raise that kind of money if we are just going to spend it on ourselves and it's not going to have an impact on our ability to serve in the community and to be the love of Christ in this place. So if we are going to talk about replacing the roof we have to talk about what other kinds of work need to be done on this building in order for us to do that."

Rev. Coerper continued, “So that was 3 ½ years ago and mission and outreach in service to the community has been at the forefront of everything that we have talked about. We had, early-on in the process, had an architect of sacred buildings and a historian for sacred architecture come and do two presentations for us using our own building as an example. He went through and took pictures and talked to us and helped us see what our building says by the way it is designed and the way it functions for us. And it really opened our eyes to some things that you get used to when you’re in a building; you don’t notice. We talked a lot at that point about what we wanted the building to say; how we wanted it to function in accomplishing our mission and ministry. I actually brought you a couple of things that I think are probably pretty significant. This is a copy of an actual thank-you letter that has gone to a donor (with the name and all removed). This letter has gone to all 132 donors, and it talks about the importance of mission to us. The one paragraph, I wrote this two years ago and it’s the one paragraph that hasn’t changed in this letter. I have never felt like I needed to update it. ‘I am more and more convinced that God is up to something here that will not only substantially contribute to the beauty and functionality of the building but will substantially contribute to the character and engagement of the people of St. James and God’s mission here. I believe that we are just starting to catch a glimpse of the radically outward-facing nature of this endeavor that will mold us as a congregation into a people who are deeply committed to reaching out into the community with the love of God.’ And in the last two weeks, what is going to be a year-long discernment process – discernment is a uniquely Christian way of making a decision where you seek the Holy Spirit and listen to each other – to ask the question if there is something more we need to be doing to serve this community and the surrounding area. So mission is really the heartbeat of what we have been doing.”

Rev. Coerper continued. “This is our campaign brochure; if you open it up to the first page, this inset here talks about some of the changes that have happened to the building over its history. The bottom paragraph says ‘the St. James legacy is one of adaptation, commitment and great accomplishment in service to the mission of God. But it is a story unfinished. There are still words to be written and blank pages to be filled with the achievements and success of our generation and many more to come.’ If you turn the page again there is a letter from me and in the middle paragraph that begins ‘Throughout two centuries it has been part of St. James’ identity to enhance and add to our historic buildings. From beautifying and ex[anding our worship space to building and improving the gathering and education areas there’s been a constant commitment to continual enrichment of the mission of St. James.’ On the facing page it talks about our mission that we are mission driven. And then if you turn to the page that looks like this where we talk about the actual projects, there’s that paragraph in the call-out box at the top again talks about the purpose of these projects is ‘to address the glaring needs of our facility to ensure its longevity and enhance [unintelligible] the mission of St. James now and in the future.’ You will see there a picture. Kathy mentioned that last time. We do have another project that’s part of our master plan, whether or not we are able to do something remotely like that is going to depend on our future fundraising but it is in our master plan. The last page I think is the most significant one because it talks about; it lists in these bullet points what our design goals were when we began the master planning process when talking with Bero Architecture. These came out of conversations in the congregation; we had an evening where we sat down with Bero and 50 people from the congregation and talked about what works and doesn’t work, what are our dreams, what do we feel like we would like to have come out of this master planning process. This is the list ‘create a more welcoming facility while making essential renovations; remove barriers to entrance, both physical and visual; and create warm and welcoming entrances.’ Jordan actually headed up that discussion and what the group reported out at the end of the conversation was that there is nothing good to say about the entrances to our building. At every single one we feel like we have stepped into a broom closet. We have added a lot of storage so what happens when you walk into the building is you feel this beautiful sense of welcome and you don’t run into shovels and brooms. ‘Provide space for our mission and outreach programs including children and youth music and adult ministries; develop multi-use spaces that will enable us to expand our community outreach and open up our facility for more community purposes; make our building handicap accessible; enhance the worship experience,

both traditional and contemporary while respecting the beauty and sanctity of our most sacred spaces; and be good stewards of our historic and architectural significance.’ Interestingly enough, this picture to the left was the original building. The lore at St. James is that it burned down; we took it down. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall to learn why they decided to take one building down and build another. Whether that’s accurate or not it demonstrates to me that we have always had a heart for creating a space that will work for the church. So that’s pretty much what I wanted to say but just to give you the back story, that didn’t just want; I realized you did not have any context for why we are making the changes we are making and what they mean to us and what we hope to accomplish. I did also; I happened to bump into Lisa this afternoon who caught me stepping out of the construction zone where I had been taking pictures. You asked me to bring a post card of Ripping Cathedral which I did. Because you were interested in that I went ahead and; this is the national cathedral in this country and they have replaced their front doors with all glass.”

Member Dyson, “Interestingly enough, some of these cathedrals in Europe are replaced with clear glass not for beauty but because they were destroyed in the war. And I have a feeling this was one of them.” Rev. Coerper, “Well I brought also a couple of paragraphs off of a web site from the Anglican diocese of London. This web page that they have is ‘How to install glass doors on your church’; I gave you the web site at the top. What this web site says in the second paragraph under 1 ‘the door to your church is its main point of contact with the outside world. What a church door communicates can be very different from what is communicated by any other building the members of the public regularly encounter. There are more people for whom churches are now unfamiliar places which they may not be comfortable about entering and where they may not immediately feel at ease. So parishes often concerned that the entrance to a church does not actively draw people into the building.’ This has been done on plenty of churches across the country. That’s about what I wanted to say. Thank you for letting me take all that time.”

Ms. Ahrens, “Actually I didn’t know the way background story, so that was very interesting. I got involved about 1/3 of the way through the master planning process. We included in the submission that you received, a letter that Becky had written just to sort of explain what the front doors mean to their mission. I wanted to reiterate what the goals were of this project and how we are going to try to meet it for your community. Our mission is to break down every possible barrier between church and world so that we have the opportunity to share what we have received ourselves. We believe that there is a way to do that through the design of the front doors and at the same time protect and even enhance the unique beauty of the building. What we did after the meeting was we met on site with Jerome Durr, a craftsman with Durr Studios and his wife Debbie, and we looked very carefully and closely at the doors and the existing leaded panels. On the east door, the east door is this door here; just to give you some lingo there’s the bracing bars that are integral to the structure. This is a quarry – the diamond pattern that sort of sets the armature of the stained glass itself, and these pieces that look like – they are supposed to give you a medieval look – they are called accidentals. In the past when larger panes of glass were broken that’s how they did repairs in medieval times. So we talked with Jerome and Becky explained the symbolism that is in each of the panels. The door itself is a memorial, so there would be the option of taking the leaded panel and hanging it within the entryway, but because of the response that we received from you we’d like to try to work with you in terms of expanding the panel in size to keep with the armature of the quarry, by expanding one width of the diamond pattern down – keeping the symbol in the center, matching the glass coloration of the border that wraps around, and the painted-on. But one thing that we are interested in doing is putting in translucent glass and clear glass in certain areas within the panel itself. Right now we’d like to talk to Jerome about having him put together more in an artistic way in execution; he’s very skilled. He did provide a portfolio. He’s very skilled at understanding both how these things get put together and he’s very artistic as well. I think it would be very professional; the outcome. But we are interested in looking at glass that would have a clear appearance, yet have some coloration that would be in matching with the existing stained glass within the structure and also clear itself in the accidentals and potentially in a quarry.”

Member Dyson, "Did he suggest that? I have been to his studio and he does wonderful work." Member Kinder, "I am a little bit confused. This is the existing window and you want to change it what you have shown in the drawing here?" Ms. Ahrens, "Yes. Here is the existing and the center piece is here." Member Kinder, "Oh, it's longer. I see." Ms. Ahrens, "We are lengthening the door and these are sort of the replacement glazing. So he'd have new lead canes that would hold in the new glass. The glass would be in keeping in terms of coloration and texture, but there would be more translucent panels. The existing building code will allow for non-tempered glazing in this particular application, so it would be a door that we would recommend to not have protective glazing over the top – so that people would be able to come up to the door and look through a quarry – and at night the light from inside the church coming out and spilling onto the sidewalk."

Chairman Rogers, "Jennifer, do you have a rough idea of what percentage of the diamond-shaped sections would go to the clear? We want Jerome to do it artistically but are you Talking a quarter of them? Half of them? Less than that?" Ms. Ahrens, "So it has to be in keeping with the transom above and sort of be looking at what's there existing, I would say that the church would prefer the maximum that would be allowed, that would be compatible with the existing. I don't know that I have a percentage." Member Dyson, "The way you've got it now, you have got just one or two and they look not transparent. You can't tell." Ms. Ahrens, "But when you are there you can tell." Rev. Coerper, "That's a good question. I didn't have a percentage in mind. I guess what I was thinking was that when you glanced at the door the impression would be that it was stained glass. So half sounds to me like too much probably. I would have hoped that someone who walks by the church every day would say 'isn't that nice' and not really even notice that much in the way of change, You'd have to stand and study it and wonder did that have clear glass in it before?"

Member Dyson, "Would it be clear with a cloudiness that you get with..." Ms. Ahrens, "Some would be the clear glass, some would be this." Member Dyson, "So it would have some color to it?" Ms. Ahrens, "But we would ask for some clear, clear as well, in say the accidentals." Rev. Coerper, "These actually currently do vary in texture quite a bit. Some of them you can't see through at all, some of them I don't know what you call it; it has sort of a texture to it and some of them you can actually see a couple of them that are very transparent." Member Dyson, "I've worked with stained glass." Ms. Ahrens, "So the surround would mimic; any replacement of the surround would be an exact replica. These clovers would match exactly. We only have to add one more each side for each leaf so 4 total. One thing he can do is take a glass from up here and move it down here, putting a new one at the top. He can move those glass pieces around. So it would not be all new at the base. The picture just illustrated where the new pieces were to enlarge the opening. That's probably something we would ask Jerome to do as well as looking at the translucency of the glass itself."

Member Riordan, "You mentioned earlier that any stained glass would be painted?" Ms. Ahrens, "I believe; on the transom a lot of the pieces the quarrels are actually hand painted. He's painting on a pattern that you can barely see in the background. And he is doing the upper dormers. The dormers on the east side are the ones that were fully restored. They were taken out, brought back to his shop and reled. And then the panel was put back in. He had to restore one on the west side, since they had been done more recently. For him to take the time to paint a piece of glass where nobody will ever see it, just shows the level of care he is bringing to this project in terms of making it compatible; making it disappear within the other historic details."

Member Riordan, "Did he restore the dormers on the west side?" Ms. Ahrens, "Just one." Member Riordan, "They look great. From the ground, they look perfect." Ms. Ahrens, "The one farthest to the south he took out. Actually, he just restored the interior doors into the church a couple of years back. So he's done a survey on this building; he's been working on this building for a while." Rev. Coerper, "We

have a pretty big file on him. I can't say this for sure, but I feel like he has done work on some of the other windows. And he was the person who has given us an initial board description of what he feels need to be done. There are some places where the paint is flaking off and some of the leading is in poor shape. So he knows what needs to be done on the building."

Chairman Rogers opened the public comment portion of the hearing. There was no one present who desired to be heard in favor of the project or in opposition to the project. **Member Dyson, "I move we close the Public Hearing."** **Member Riordan seconded the motion.** Upon the unanimous vote of the members present in favor of the motion, the Public Hearing was closed.

Member Kinder, "I make a motion that we approve the alterations to the stained glass panels as proposed in the application drawings dated 9/9/15 to enable the reuse of the existing panels in the new doors that were approved last month."

Member Riordan, "I'd like a little more detail. I understand the concept, but I can't visualize it." Member Dyson, "I think that if the overall look is of stained glass; that's what you see and you don't see a lot of clear ones with a modern look – if it looks like a stained glass I'd be OK with it. You are concerned whether it will look like that or not, correct?" Member Riordan, "I am. You've said you want to emulate the one above it in the transom, but there is no clear above it in the transom." Ms. Ahrens, "It has to tie in with the ones above it, meaning it has to appear to be compatible." Member Riordan, "My fear is too much clear and that it would stand out harshly." Ms. Ahrens, "I don't think the intention would be for too much clear." Member Riordan, "And the interior doors, will they remain the same?" Ms. Ahrens, "No the interior doors and unfortunately I don't have a rendering of those, but they are building built-in cabinetry that you walk through that have glass doors that Jerome will be building, with a very similar armature with clear glass all of it. Just picture this as a door, all clear glass that will have this with clear and then very simple hardware. In part of the side lights they are going to have quatrefoils that are taken from the transom of the interior set of doors. So the interior set of doors are not original; the whole church is chestnut, the pews, the chancel paneling. When they built that in the 20s it is actually white oak. The surround is stained, the doors will be salvaged and turned over to the owners. So allow a larger vestibule as you walk in that built-in cabinetry is going to allow more space between these exterior doors and the new doors that Jerome built. So there's going to be some continuity from the street as you walk though and in because the two doors have a very similar proportions of the detailing of the leaded panels. I hear your concerns and I just want to reiterate that Jerome will be taking pieces and all the replacement won't be coming in to this area. So you won't be getting clear, pink, clear, blue; that sort of look." Member Riordan, "Will he use all of these pieces?" Ms. Ahrens, "I would imagine that he will use all of those pieces and then..." Member Dyson, "He would have to pull in more stained glass, which he has in his studio."

Ms. Ahrens, "So we could be very specific to say 10% of the quarrels to be a translucent diamond; I'd prefer 20%." Member Riordan, "And the translucent as an example, would be more of this?" Ms. Ahrens, "It has some coloration but you can see through it." [Multiple conversations] Ms. Ahrens, "One way to move forward; instead of having to do a rendering of where specifically we want to put; it is never going to look like what it is until it's done. You almost need like a mock-up." Member Dyson, "I think that he is such an artist that he would not come up with a window that looks ridiculous. I kind of would have trust that he would do a good job." Ms. Ahrens, "It's one of those things that you can reglaze if it is unacceptable." Member Riordan, "It would be nice to see a glow through the windows." Ms. Ahrens, "They are putting a light in the vestibule that will be on and there are lights under the new built-ins." **Member Dyson, "I second the motion."** Member Kinder, "Will this exterior light stay?" Ms. Ahrens, "Yes." Upon the unanimous vote of the members present in favor of the motion, the Certificate of Approval was granted.

Chairman Rogers asked for clarification for the minutes that “no more than 20% of the quarrels would be translucent and if that would be a combination of clear and colored?” Ms. Ahrens, “It will be a combination.”

Member Riordan, “I’m just curious. When you put it in what do you have to cover it with?” Ms. Ahrens, “It’s typical to put protective panels over and that’s to stop vandalism; to protect the glass. But now with building science they have seen that sometimes it causes more harm. The heat builds up in between the panels if the sun shines on it and the lead canes get softened and can actually deteriorate and wear quicker. So in a lot of churches that we work on, we recommend removal of protective panels. Or if you put them on have a mechanism to allow space for ventilation and a way for water to wick out.” Rev. Coerper, “We have removed the plexiglass on the dormers.” Member Riordan, “And it really shows. I live next door to the Presbyterian Church and I look at the stained glass windows day and night; they have a protective cover and it’s dirty inside. They glow at night, but the covering hinders the beauty of them. Mr. Burton, “How do you like the new roof?” Mr. Kinder, “It’s unbelievable. I was on the lake yesterday looking at it. It’s amazing.” Member Riordan, “I was on the jetty today and I was up close today; they are just doing a perfect job. Ms. Ahrens, “What you should really notice is all the detail. They have struggled with this because it has been so hard to do the right detailing on it. It is really paying off.” The applicants thanked the Board. This matter was concluded at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

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Absent: Dave Birchenough, Member

At 8:12 pm the Board continued in informal session to discuss the topic of recommending that the Trustees consider Zoning code changes to allow hanging business signage within the historic district. Member Dyson said that she has put together some information to support this position. She has included many illustrative photographs and some research into code language used in other communities. The Board discussed the possibility of having a conversation with Doug Sutherland, a Planning Board member who served on the Comprehensive Plan special committee. Member Dyson characterized the work as “food for thought and some resources where you can see what other communities that have done this.” Mr. Dundon pointed out that Trustee Lanning is the Board’s liaison to the Village Board.

The Board discussed the next steps which is probably some informal conversations. The Board mused about why such signs were prohibited. Mr. Dundon suggested that Jorge Batlle, as Village Historian and former code officer, might have a unique perspective. Chairman Rogers suggested it was important to start building consensus. Member Dyson said that she had spoken with Tara Lynn from the Chamber who was encouraging. This could be positioned as an option.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

