



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

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November 21, 2012

Heather Arcos
Town Manager, Cape Charles
2 Plum Street
Cape Charles, Virginia ~ 23310

Re: Cape Charles School ~ Cape Charles
Part 2 Response
DHR # 2012-148

Ms. Arcos ~

Thank you for submitting the State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Application, Part 2, "Description of Rehabilitation", for the Cape Charles School located at 423 Plum Street in Cape Charles. We are also in receipt of the necessary State application fee and appreciate its timely submission. Unfortunately, based on the materials submitted and the description of the proposed scope of work provided by the application, we cannot approve the project for the reasons explained below. Should you choose to pursue rehabilitation tax credits we would welcome the opportunity to help you arrive at a more sensitive solution for the rehabilitation of the Cape Charles School.

Alterations to the Exterior ~ The application notes that the existing aluminum windows will be replaced with new windows to match the few existing historic windows. In order to consider this work, we would need to know when the exterior stucco was covered with Permastone because if the historic windows and the Permastone did not exist on the building at that same time this work would give the building an appearance it did not have historically and conflict with *Standard 3*, below. Past yearbooks may provide a pictorial account of the school's appearance. If the date of the Permastone installation remains unknown, than it would need to be removed and the stucco reinstalled if the existing windows are replaced with a style that matches the historic windows.

Standard 3 ~ Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

Infill of the Former Auditorium ~ Although it has been altered over time, the auditorium is one of the school's few remaining original features and it should remain as an open volume. The plans and interior elevation drawings indicate that the proposed living units will span the width of this space and therefore erase the historically open nature of this room. This work, therefore, conflicts with *Standard 2*, below:

Administrative Services
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Standard 2 ~ The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Significant Changes to the Plan ~

According to the submitted materials the project proposes significant changes to the plan that do not meet *Standard 2*, noted above. For example, all of the entries into the former auditorium will be closed therefore changing the historic circulation pattern within the building. In addition, according to the demolition plan nearly all of the interior walls are slated for removal even though the photos suggest that they may be original. Furthermore, several of the proposed units propose a design that does not reflect the open, simple organization of the former classrooms either by the placement of walls as shown in units 2 & 16 or by intersecting an expanse of windows with a doorway as shown in the majority of the proposed units.

We would be happy to work with you to develop a more sensitive design should you decide to pursue the rehabilitation tax credits. In the meantime, we have forwarded your application to the National Park Service and you will receive their response in a separate letter. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 804/482-6457 or Suzanne. Tripp@dhr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Tripp
Historical Architect
Office of Preservation Incentives

C: Paige Pollard

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