

HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD

March 12, 2015

ROLL CALL

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Board Members: Vice Chair Hillary Culhane, Sallyanne Wilson, Lelia Lanctot, Chair Richard Cunningham, Council Liaison Catherine Way, Dirk Mueller (arrived at 8:05 pm),

Absent: Board Members: Scott Morgan

Staff: Planner/Recording Secretary Kristin Teiche, Jerri Holan Consulting Historic Architect

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

PLANNING STAFF'S ORAL REPORT

Staff Planner Teiche informed the Board of the following:

- 480/482 Magnolia Ave. Planner Teiche noted that the building permits are ready to be issued for this property, pending a pre-demolition site meeting with the contractor, City staff and the historic architect on Wednesday March 18, 2015.
- Lark Creek Inn Property. Chair Cunningham requested information on the status of this property and the site work under construction. Staff noted the building inspector visited the site and stopped the work pending more information regarding compliance with current handicapped parking and accessibility standards. Chair Cunningham noted that the workers were beginning to cut into the 1930 green concrete, and this was a concern. He asked staff to follow up on this matter.
- Vacant Board Seat. Chair Cunningham announced that the City Clerk has received three applications to fill the vacant seat on the Board. They include John Knorpp, Herb Isenberg and Architect Brock Wagstaff. The interview and appointment will be up to the City Council.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Volunteer Awards. Board to honor Mrs. Susan Cunningham for extraordinary volunteer service.

Chair Cunningham introduced the historic volunteer award program and turned this item over to Board Member Lelia Lanctot as Board Member Lanctot was Chair when historic volunteer Sue Cunningham was selected by the Board for this award.

Board Member Lanctot introduced Sue Cunningham and described her involvement with organizing and leading historic walking tours on behalf of the Board for over 12 years. She presented Mrs. Cunningham with a framed certificate of appreciation. The Board adjourned for ten minutes to celebrate with Ms. Cunningham.

2. DR/H 15-04; 95 Laurel Ave.; APN: 020-232-20; Ken Linsteadt Architects; Applicant; John and Sasha Larson, Owner; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicant is proposing minor modification of the southerly basement level elevation of a historic residence. Modifications include excavation of soils to lower the finished floor and increase the basement ceiling height, new doors and windows.

Staff Planner Teiche provided a staff report.

Board Member Wilson noted she remembered the basement level of this home and fully understands the reasoning for this proposal. She finds the design to be acceptable.

Board Member Lanctot referenced the conditions of approval, and the requirement to comply with the demolition plan. Staff explained that the demolition was limited to the basement interior and the exterior basement windows.

Chair Cunningham invited the project architect to comment. Mr. Babac Doane, Ken Linsteadt Architects explained the project in greater detail and answered questions from the Board.

Sasha Larson, property owner, stated her goal is to better unify the house interior with the basement level.

Keith Fontana, 134 Madrone Avenue, asked how tall the existing ceiling heights were in the basement. Mr. Doane, noted that it currently varies from 7 ft. to approximately 7 ft., 8 inches.

Chair Cunningham closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board:

Board Member Lanctot stated she found the proposal will make the basement more livable and it will be completed in a very tasteful way.

Board Member Wilson agreed and noted she appreciated the owners care for the home, and their interest in modernizing it in an appropriate way.

Chair Cunningham noted that it was a pleasure to receive a package that reflected a great amount of detail, planning, and attention to the historic character.

M/s Culhane/Lanctot and moved to recommend approval 4-2-0 (Morgan and Mueller absent) of the project subject to the staff report and conditions of approval.

3. DR/H 14-50; 143 Madrone Ave.; APN: 021-082-10; Applicant/Owner; Keith Fontana; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicant is requesting permits to move the structure to correct an encroachment on the neighbors lot, rehabilitate the historic residence, add an approximately 60 sq. ft. second floor addition at the south (rear) elevation, and add a new westerly facing roof dormer to allow conversion of the attic to a bedroom.

Staff Planner Teiche distributed copies of Late Mail filed in support of the project and placed copies at the public table for interested persons to review.

Chair Cunningham introduced the project and Planner Teiche provided a staff report.

Board Member Lanctot asked if the home would lose its historic integrity if moved. Historic Architect Holan stated she believed it would if moved substantially across the lot as recommended by the Department of Public Works. She preferred that the engineer provide an on-site solution to support the home if the bank erodes.

Chair Cunningham reviewed the plans and noted that the proposal was to move the house 6.75 feet to the east. Ms. Holan indicated that she preferred it not be moved at all, but the proposal was acceptable as it appeared to be necessary to move the home off the neighbor's lot.

Staff noted that the rear corner of the home currently encroached approximately 1 foot onto the neighbor's lot to the rear as depicted on the site survey within the plans. It was explained that the rear lot line is at an angle and shifting of the house forward and 6.75 feet east would remove the encroachment and provide approximately 1.5 feet at the rear corner to allow the property owner to maintain the home.

Mr. Keith Fontana, 143 Madrone Avenue offered that he is open to changing the amount that the building moves to the east, but this may require shifting it closer to the sidewalk.

Chair Cunningham invited the applicant to provide comment.

Applicant Keith Fontanna, 143 Madrone Ave. introduced his project and described his goals in remodeling the historic home. He thought the attic was a logical location of an addition as it partially counts as floor area already, and it would have a minimal impact on the historic character, compared to other expansion options. He further described his attempts to work with the neighbor at 147 Madrone Avenue and the various changes he made to the original design to attempt to reduce potential impacts on this home. He noted he preferred the shed dormer design instead of a gable ended design, as the shed dormer provides for a modest bedroom with more standard head height than the gable ended dormer. He noted the shed dormer design is part of the Madrone Canyon vernacular that has been used on a range of different architectural styles. He provided pictures taken of homes in the canyon that have used a shed dormer for their attic additions and a petition signed by 43 neighbors who support his project.

With regard to the comments from the City Engineer who recommends moving the home further to the east than proposed, Mr. Fontanna would prefer to propose an on-site engineering solution. He provided the Board with a preliminary solution prepared by his geotechnical expert.

Mr. Gabriel Canara, 147 Madrone Avenue provided the following comments:

- The proposed plans will significantly change the site, and the new additions will have an impact on his property.
- He was concerned that the noise from the residents, who will live in this enlarged home, will negatively impact him.
- Mr. Canara also noted that he was concerned about the height of the second floor additions in relation to his home. He preferred the suggestion by the City Engineer that the house be moved to the east as this would reduce some of the impacts.

Chair Cunningham asked Mr. Canara if he knew the distance between his home and the structure at 143 Madrone Ave. Mr. Canara estimated it is 30-40 feet away.

Pat Kaiser, 134 Madrone Avenue provided the following comments:

- She lives across the street from the structure and is anxious to see this home repaired and remodeled.
- The nature of the canyon is that residential noise travels easily and impacts everyone.
- She believes that the Board must be willing to make some concessions to save this home and the shed dormer should be approved as proposed.
- She stressed the need to move on this project and get it done.

Susan Carp, 115 Madrone Avenue provided the following comments:

- She is very concerned with the condition of the home.
- She supports Mr. Fontana and his efforts to restore the home.
- She believes the home should be preserved but also be improved so it is livable.

Chair Cunningham close the public hearing and brought the discussion to the Board.

Board Member Culhane stated there seems to be two primary issues.

- Should the building be moved and to what extent;
- Shape of the proposed dormer – gable or shed.

She asked Ms. Holan if shifting the home makes much difference to its historic character. Ms. Holan stated she finds that the amount of movement proposed by the applicant is acceptable.

Chair Cunningham agreed with this determination. He noted the appearance from the road would only suffer a modest change.

Board Member Wilson concurred with the other Board Members. She finds that preserving the home is the primary goal. She noted that the Board's mandate is to preserve the public view of the historic character to the extent practicable. The primary views will not be altered in a material manner. The stand of redwood to the west will obscure the dormer addition, and the closest addition will not be visible from the road. She thinks that maximizing the size of the room is important. Since this dormer is on a secondary elevation, she is supportive of the shed design.

Chair Cunningham asked the Board if they had any concerns with the small balcony and solid railing off the shed roof dormer. He suggested that the solid railing be an open railing with pickets.

The Historic Architect agreed that this would be more appropriate for the historic character.

Board Member Lanctot agreed that moving the home slightly is appropriate if it does not impact its historic status. She noted that she loves the front gate and hopes it will be retained. Although she loves the idea of a gable ended dormer, she supports the applicants need for more head height and usable space.

Ms. Holan stated she believes a gable ended dormer could be designed to provide a modest, usable bedroom. She noted that the dormer, as designed, is slightly out of scale and the railing design is not appropriate. The only reason this could be accepted is because it is on a secondary elevation.

Chair Cunningham noted that perhaps they should support the project but express to the Commission that the Board retains some concern over the scale and design of the dormer.

Board Member Wilson stated that the primary objective is saving the house. She wanted to be sure the Board sent a clear recommendation to the Planning Commission. If the public view is the most important and the applicant is restoring the primary front and street side elevations, which are most visible, then they are meeting this goal. She would be very sad if the Planning Commission did not approve a dormer because the Board did not take a stand.

Board Member Culhane agreed and stated she understands the practical need for having more head height in the attic bedroom. She suggested the Board allow the shed dormer but require the open railing as suggested by Chair Cunningham.

After further discussion the Board generally concluded that some concessions were necessary to insure the home is rehabilitated.

M/s Lanctot/Wilson moved to recommend approval 5-1-0 (Morgan absent) of the project plans as proposed with the requirement that the dormer balcony railing be altered to a picket railing as discussed. Additionally, moving the home on the lot should not be greater than that depicted on the plans.

ONGOING BUSINESS ITEMS

4. Update of Larkspur's Historic Resources Inventory. Board to continue discussing the process and work program necessary to implement a future update of Larkspur's Historic Resources Inventory.

Chair Cunningham asked Planner Teiche if she will be able to produce the data base of home over 50 years in age as previously discussed. Planner Teiche noted she believes she will be able to create this from Marin Map. She hopes to provide this to the Board for the next meeting.

5. Board Member Reports. Board members to share and discuss information and attachments related to historic preservation.
 - Chair Cunningham passed out a flyer announcing the 100 year anniversary of the San Anselmo library.
 - Board Member Lanctot passed out an e-mail based upon a conversation with Council member Hillmer discussing possible design aspects that could be incorporated into the Community Facilities building to reflect Larkspur history.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

M/s Wilson/Culhane moved, and the Board approved 4-1-0 (Lanctot abstain) to approve the February 12, 2015 minutes as amended.

Adjourn

Meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner
Acting Recording Secretary