

LARKSPUR HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 13, 2022

The Heritage Preservation Board was convened at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Culhane via teleconference due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Commissioners Present: Chair Hillary Culhane, Sonia Gallant, Carol Goldberg,
Leila Lanctot, Richard Storek

Staff Present: Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mr. David Gross stated he has plans to renovate his historic home and is asking for ideas about interior work. City Historical Architect Jerri Holan suggested a meeting with Mr. Gross, herself, and the Fire Chief.

Ms. Frank Capelletta thanked the Board for its work.

PLANNING STAFF'S ORAL REPORT

- Staff is taking a “wait and see” approach in terms of starting up in-person meetings.
- Mr. Daniel Hortert, Interim Planning Director, is in the office two days a week. He will be assisting primarily in housing matters related to new housing legislation. The City Council will vote to extend the Urgency Ordinance that was adopted in response to SB9. Historic properties are exempt from the provisions of SB9.
- Contract Planner Daniel Brennan will be assisting staff in the daily planning activities.
- The City Council has been discussing the future of the City Hall complex and the possibility of moving City services to the City owned parcel at Rose Lane.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **H #21-37, 20 Monte Vista (APN: 021-182-07); Polsky Perlstein Architects, Applicants; Spencer and Susie Doyle, Owners; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. The applicants are requesting the Heritage Preservation Board recommend the City Council remove (de-list) 20 Monte Vista Avenue from the Inventory of Historic Resources due to: 1) Damage from past neglect, leaks and rot, and the need to create a safer environment and replace the residence to accommodate their growing family; and 2) The architectural integrity of the home does not meet the minimum standards to support inclusion on the historic inventory. The applicant has submitted a historic evaluation prepared by Stacy DeShazo, Architectural Historian which supported this conclusion. The City's Historic Architect has evaluated the building and has also determined that it does not meet minimum standards to support its continued listing on Larkspur's Inventory of Historic Resources.**

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report. The applicant is no longer citing reason #1, the condition of the building, as a reason for the request.

Chair Culhane opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Jared Polsky, architect, made the following comments:

- This is not about the condition of the home but rather the scoring.
- It does not rise to the level of a house that needs to be preserved.
- He submitted letter of support from neighbors for the de-listing.

Mr. Riley Newman, Monte Vista, made the following comments:

- He lives across the street from the subject property.
- He supported the application and what they are proposing to build.
- It will be a great addition to the neighborhood.

Ms. Karen Gigi, Monte Vista, made the following comments:

- She is very excited about the plans.
- She supports any decision the Board makes to de-list.

Mr. James Holmes, Larkspur, made the following comments:

- The difference between demolition and preservation comes down to 20 points on three items.
- He appreciates the second evaluation but the original evaluation was correct.
- One survey item was missed- “Builder”.
- Vertical wooden vents in the gables are a trademark of a local builder named William Wegner. This would provide at least the lowest score in the “Builder” category.
- The second evaluation provided for five points in “significance” (from ten to five), ten points for “style” (from twenty to ten), and five points for “individual resource” (from ten to five).
- He discussed the explanations for the downgrades and why the original evaluations were warranted.
- The Bungalow is a significant resource.
- The rationale for a downgrade is debatable and should be resolved in favor of continuing to list the property.

Mr. Mason McMillan, Mr. Terry Sternberg, Mr. Justin Westley, Mr. Steve Taylor, Mr. Andy Bogardes, and Mr. Jay Sternberg, made the following comment:

- They support de-listing the property.

Mr. Larry Chu, Alexander Avenue, made the following comments:

- He supported the de-listing.
- He asked the Board to include in the findings the basis for the assessment in the context of how Larkspur Municipal Code Section 18.19.040 is written.
- The City Council will benefit from getting a clear and rationale basis on the record

Board member Lanctot asked if the Board’s recommendation goes to the Planning Commission. Senior Planner Teiche stated it goes directly to the City Council.

Chair Culhane closed the Public Hearing.

Board member Lanctot asked City Historic Architect Jerri Holan to distinguish the California Bungalow from the Craftsman. She is not sure where this house fit in. Historic Architect Holan stated this is one of the shortcomings of the DeShazo report. This house was classified as an “arts and craftsman bungalow”. The two styles are very distinct although they do have the same footprint and geometry. The California Bungalow is the “working class version” of the Craftsman Bungalow- it is simple and plain by its very nature. She was surprised that the house received fifty points in the first evaluation.

Chair Culhane asked if the builder, William Wegner, should be weighted and taken into account. Historic Architect Holan stated she would need to look at the other Wegner homes in the area and see if this property stands out.

Board member Storek provided the following comments:

- The point evaluation system is not scientific and subject to a lot of opinion.
- The difference between five points that could be attributed now and the fifty that would keep it listed is minimal.

Board member Lanctot provided the following comment:

- The point system is much more scientific than the original evaluations.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- This house is borderline in terms of whether it is a B or a C.
- She appreciated Historic Architect Holan's report and feels more comfortable understanding where this house stands.

Board member Goldberg provided the following comment:

- She agreed with Chair Culhane and appreciated the intense scrutiny.

Board member Gallant provided the following comments:

- She agreed with Board member Storek's comment about the subjectivity of the point system.
- There are few "workman" style homes on the list.
- She is not saying the scoring system is not valued.
- There would be a loss if this house were de-listed.

Historic Architect Holan noted the California Bungalow by its nature is "ordinary"- a working class style. A heritage resource is supposed to be something very special. This property is in good shape but does not have any special features (angled rafter tails, a more ornate gable vent, more dramatic bay windows).

Board member Goldberg provided the following comment:

- This property is not "historical" from a point system perspective but she was concerned about losing more of these California Bungalows.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- She would like to discuss the issue of preservation and what it means given the current pressures in development. This could be done at an upcoming meeting.

Board member Storek provided the following comments:

- He would like the Council to discuss the issues brought out tonight.

Board member Gallant provided the following comments:

- She is struggling with this decision.
- These proposals are not as rare as they were in the past.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- They have had a lot of discussion about the scoring and the points and they need to keep the integrity of this process.
- She regrets losing any house from the list.
- She is tending toward accepting the fact that they will have to lose this resource.

Board member Lanctot provided the following comments:

- She suggested scheduling a workshop to discuss these issues.
- They cannot hold up this application.

M/s, Culhane/Goldberg, motioned and the Commission voted 4-1 (Board member Storek voted no) to recommend to the City Council to de-list 20 Monte Vista Avenue from the Inventory of Historic Resources based on the evaluations provided by the applicant and the City's Historic Architect.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Board member reports

The Board discussed the next meeting date and decided on February 10th. They also decided to meet at 5:00 p.m.

2. Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair)

M/s, Lanctot/Storek, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 that the current Chair and Vice-Chair continue through the year.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 28, 2021

M/s, Storek/Gallant, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the October 28, 2021 minutes as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board on February 10, 2022.



Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner