

LaMott Historic District, Township of Cheltenham
Board of Historical Architectural Review
Meeting Minutes of
February 1, 2010

Issue Date: February 2, 2010

Time: 8:19 p.m.

Location: 8230 Old York Road, Elkins Park, 1st Floor, Board Room

Present: Ms. Darlene Melton, Vice-Chairperson
Ms. Patricia Gerrity, Member
Mr. Timothy Hinchcliff, Member
Mr. David Lynch, Member, Director of Engineering, Zoning and Inspections
Mr. Carmen Reitano, Assistant to the Director of Engineering, Zoning and Inspections
Ms. Lisa McConahy, BHAR Consultant

Absent: Mr. Reynold Greenberg, Chairperson
Ms. Zilan Munas-Bass, Member
Ms. Genevieve Christopher, Member
Ms. Emma Trusty, Member

1. Meeting Commencement

The meeting was called to order at 8:19 p.m. by Mr. Lynch. A quorum was not present so an informal meeting was conducted.

2. Re-Organization

The LaMott BHAR was not re-organized as no quorum was present.

3. Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Ms. Patricia Gerrity, and seconded by Ms. Melton, it was recommended that the minutes of the December 7, 2009 LaMott BHAR meeting be informally accepted. All voted in favor.

4. Applications

Application L-860
Marjorie C. Hutchins

**7404 Cedar Lane
LaMott, PA**

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to replace the existing faux brick siding on the rear shed-roof addition with vinyl siding, to replace three (3) basement windows with glass block windows and to replace the back kitchen window with a double-hung window.

The BHAR Consultant stated that it was her opinion that the basement windows along the side elevation should not be replaced with glass block. Glass block is an inappropriate building material for the building and it is proposed for an elevation that is visible from the street. A more suitable option would be to repair the existing windows or replace in kind.

Mr. Lynch stated that he has no issue with the installation of glass block in the basement windows or the replacement of the rear window, but does not think that new vinyl siding is an appropriate treatment for the rear addition of the building.

Ms. Melton stated that since the BHAR Consultant does not find it appropriate, then she does not think it is an appropriate treatment.

Mr. Reitano stated that the three (3) proposed basement glass block windows could present a safety concern as there would be no alternative means of egress from the basement if the interior stairway were blocked.

Mr. Lynch noted that the basement is not a habitable space and there is no code requirement for any of the basement windows to serve as an emergency accessway.

Mr. Lynch made a motion to accept the application as submitted because it is a minimal intervention. Ms. Melton seconded that vote. All voted in favor. The BHAR informally recommended to the Public Works Committee that it recommend to the Board of Commissioners that a COA be issued for Application L-860.

**Application L-861
Mr. Farrokh Force and Mr. Farhad Force
7318 Keenan Street
LaMott, PA**

The Applicants seeks a retroactive Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the installation of vinyl siding, replacement windows, and the removal and reconstruction of the front porch. The work has already been completed, so this is a retroactive approval.

Quoting the proceedings of the December 7, 2009 LaMott BHAR Meeting:

Mr. Lynch opened the discussion by summarizing the application. The property owner's contractor obtained a permit for replacing the vinyl siding on the house. Through a clerical error, the permit was issued without a COA from the BHAR. The contractor removed the enclosed porch because they perceived that it was in danger of imminent collapse, but made no effort to contact Building and Zoning. No permit was obtained for removing the porch or reconstructing the new, open

porch. No permit was obtained and no COA was obtained for other exterior work—including, but not limited to—window and door replacements.

Joyce Werkman presented a board with photographs of the properties along Keenan Street, including an image of 7318 Keenan Street prior to the removal of the porch. The porch on 7318 Keenan Street retained the Doric Columns, but was infilled with Colonial Revival windows, creating an enclosed porch.

Mr. Lynch noted that this house represents one of the six original homes purportedly built from timbers salvaged from Camp William Penn and that this was one of the lots purchases by Keenan and built as a speculative property.

Mr. Lynch made a motion to table a vote on the COA for 7318 Keenan Street until next month. He also noted that he wanted the BHAR to have the consultant research the original appearance of the Keenan Street houses and to contact Michel Lefevre from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) for a clear direction in how to properly address the period of restoration for the Keenan Street houses. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hinchcliff. All voted in favor.

The BHAR Consultant's Memorandum on this issue is attached. In summary it concludes that the porch should be restored to its original appearance during the earliest period of historical significance, 1871-1868, which would be open porch.

Mr. Lynch made a motion to table the application because there was not a quorum present.

Ms. Melton presented a book with a summary of the history of the area, including a map that shows the six Keenan Street houses.

Mr. Lynch stated that the concern for the Keenan Street properties was not whether or not they are historic. The designation of the houses and the whole LaMott Historic District has been established. Ms. Melton noted that the book has a photograph of the house with an enclosed porch. Mr. Lynch stated that it has already been established that the house did have an enclosed porch. The issue at hand is the error in issuing a permit, and that the BHAR needs to establish what is the appropriate treatment for 7318 Keenan Street to either issue retroactive approval of the permit and COA Application or to require the owner to rebuild what was extant.

Mr. Lynch and Ms. Melton again suggested that the application be tabled until a quorum was present.

Mr. Lynch noted that there is no doubt that the porches were enclosed. However, if we are looking at the period of significance of the property, the porches were not enclosed.

Ms. Melton made a motion that this application be tabled until a quorum was present. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The BHAR informally recommended to the Public Works Committee that it recommend to the Board of Commissioners that a COA Application for L-861 be tabled until the March 2010 meeting.

Application L-862

**John Mays, Representative of property owner Maurizio Albala
23 Latham Parkway
LaMott, PA**

The Applicant proposes to remove four existing wood casement windows and to replace them with modern, "Fibrex" casement windows to match the existing windows in size, color and muntin profiles. The windows that are being replaced are deteriorated and actively allowing for water infiltration. Two of the windows are on the back of the building, and one window is on the side of the building.

The Consultant said that the repair of these windows should be a first choice, but if the windows are too deteriorated for repair, then the application can be approved as submitted.

Mr. Lynch asked the contractor if he planned on removing the wood casements and window frames.

The Applicants stated that replacement windows will be constructed of a mix of fiberglass and wood. They further stated that the replacement windows would match the color of the existing windows and sash and that they are replacing four windows total.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Hinchcliff, and seconded by Mr. Lynch, the BHAR informally recommended to the Public Works Committee that it recommend to the Board of Commissioners that a COA be issued for Application L-862.

5. New Business

Mr. Lynch brought up the issue that they are holding the Applicants' hands too much through the COA Application process, resulting in delays in getting notice letters out and information to the BHAR members. He feels that neighbors should be given more time to be able to rearrange their schedule if they want to go to a meeting over a controversial Application. He said that the notifications for the February meeting were sent out on January 29, 2010 for the February 1, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Lynch stated that he would like the process to be the following:

- Give the applicant a letter acknowledging the receipt of application which would state if the Application is complete, or if not, what additional items are required.
- If the Application is complete, it would be scheduled for the next BHAR meeting.
- If the Application is incomplete, it would not be scheduled for a BHAR meeting until the missing documentation is submitted.

The sense of the BHAR members present was that this would be appropriate.

Mr. Lynch said he would prepare the BHAR Application Acknowledgment Letter for review and comment by both BHARS.

Utility Boxes

Mr. Lynch noted that he had circulated an email about utility boxes and the installation of utility boxes at the curb line. He noted that they are a necessity and they can not be eliminated, but they can be painted in order to reduce the visual impact. PECO has the authority to put their boxes in the locations that they deem necessary. Ms. Vallerio asked if PECO would consider using different colors for boxes. Mr. Lynch stated that he had no particular concern, but just wanted to bring the topic up for discussion.

New Property – “Sand House”

A discussion began regarding what Ms. Melton referred to as the “Sand House” at the Butcher Street Water Tank property. Members of the audience voiced concern over the property because someone was accessing the property and it had a new lock. Mr. Lynch stated that Mr. Reitano would go to the property and investigate the lock and see who was controlling it, under Homeland Security regulations. Mr. Lynch noted, however, that the property owners do not have to notify Building and Zoning if the work being performed falls under maintenance but has been doing so as a courtesy.

Mr. Hinchcliff presented a draft copy of the new Pennsylvania Agreement to Purchase Real Estate form, including Section 9 (D), discussing historic preservation designation and noted that the form was near approval.

6. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

7. Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Ms. Melton, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

David G. Kraynik
Township Manager

Per: Lisa McConahy and
Christine Miller Cruie
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