

Heritage Preservation Board
Regular Meeting
July 21, 2008

Miscellaneous Business

A. Call to Order

Chair Nancy Curley called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Chair Nancy Curley, Board Members Kathleen Kearley-Green, Helen Heitkamp, Sallyanne Wilson, Grayson Marshall, Jim Adams, Planner Kristin Teiche, Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Consulting Architect Historian Dan Peterson and Recording Secretary Nathalie Bamatter.

Absent: Board Member Marilyn River.

Miscellaneous Business Items:

- Staff Report – Kristin Teiche. Nothing new to report at this time
- Persons wishing to address the board on matters not on the agenda – none
- Presentation by City Manager Jean Bonander – Unfortunately Ms. Bonander was not able to attend the meeting to discuss the City's interest in purchasing 111 Lucky Drive for a possible Public Works/Corporation Yard.

Public Hearing Items

1. Amendment of Larkspur's Inventory of Historic Resources. The Board will consider the results of the completed historic evaluations for structures currently listed on, or proposed to be added to, Larkspur Historic Resources Inventory. The Board will provide a final recommendation to the City Council proposing to remove some structures, and to add new structures and features to the historic inventory.

Planner Teiche briefly read from her staff report clarifying that the Larkspur General Plan assigns the Heritage Preservation Board with the duty of establishing a list of resources that are historically significant to the City of Larkspur and to periodically re-review and update this inventory. The original 1979 inventory identified 67 residential structures.

The City of Larkspur contracted with Dan Peterson to act as the City's Historic Architect to reevaluate the existing inventory (Phase 1) and then to focus on evaluation of 149 additional structures as identified by the Heritage Board (Phase II). Mr. Peterson acted as the Architect

Historian in the initial 1979 survey. Of the 149 structures evaluated ultimately 62 were formally proposed and at this time, 19 have been removed from the list, leaving 43 proposed additions.

The Larkspur City Council and the Heritage Preservation Board held two joint meetings to discuss the preliminary finds of the Phase I and Phase II inventory evaluations. The City Council gave the Heritage Board permission to move forward with three public outreach meetings to formally notify all affected property owners.

The creation and updating of an Inventory is one way to comply with a CEQA directive to evaluate the historic integrity of any structure over 50 years old. The Heritage Board has chosen to evaluate and identify structures up front instead of waiting for a case-by-case scenario. The inventory allows a property owner or buyer to know in advance of purchase or remodel that the structure is historic

The properties were assigned a 1-7 (1 being the best) number as well as a letter designation of A-D. A is designated as Landmark and B as Heritage Property.

The purpose of the meeting tonight was to recommend a draft resolution to the City Council for the addition of 43 structures (8 rated an A and 35 rated a B) plus 6 public features. The Board will also propose to remove structures currently listed on the inventory that rate a "C" or lower.

Chair Curley then opened the meeting to public comment.

Doug Kerr, 19 Monte Vista:

- Valuable thing to do for the community
- Feels that he will make a buck
- Feels guilt about a 1920 house he had sold that was ultimately torn down
- 234 Hawthorne sold in 1993 for \$615,000 and sold again 7 years later for \$2,400,000 and feels that the historic designation didn't hurt the value
- Based on his research historic districts are good for your pocket as historic district houses go up in value
- Convinced is a good thing to do. Create a reputation as a community with these types of properties

Herbert Launer, #9 Boardwalk:

- Has lived there for 29 years
- Protests being on inventory
- Feels integrity of his ark has long since been lost as he has removed decks, outhouse and reduced eave size
- Said City required that he add square footage to the original ark almost doubling its size
- Has no intention of changing house and his kids will inherit it. The house is not a problem for him but may be for his children
- Hard to get a loan; house rotting due to wood foundation
- If he is added to Inventory will sue to fight it

James Holmes, Madrone Avenue:

- Thanked the Board for preserving 68 Madrone which might have otherwise been demolished
- Wanted to add to Mr. Kerr's comments
- Thinks that if 207 Madrone rates a "B" rating then so should numbers 217 and 205
- Mentioned a metal well tower that should be preserved

Cyndi Niven, 5 Baltimore:

- Wants to be removed from list
- Does not agree with Mr. Kerr or Mr. Holmes
- Thinks process will add additional heartache with the Planning Department
- This house is her grandparents and has not been updated since 1960
- Does not see monetary benefit nor any process streamlining
- If there is some value (on being on the Inventory) does not see it. The value is being in Larkspur

Marianne Rafter, 1 Echo – asked what it would mean to opt out of the historic designation.

Planner Teiche said rating system is without bias. If someone has additional information staff will reexamine the property. Work on foundation and the interior does not detract from the historic designation. Only changes to the most significant façade will impact the evaluation.

Elise Semonian, 599 Magnolia

- Thinks this is a great thing to do. Establish some level of protection and would prefer adding more houses to the list
- Said 587 Magnolia had been removed but thought it should still be on list

Mark Zimmer, 207 Madrone, said he bought his house in August 2006 with the intention of raising the roof to add more space and wondered how a possible designation would impact that idea.

Planner Teiche said that regardless of any historic designation a project like that would require Design Review but that some proposed houses have had substantial additions primarily in the areas away from the primary view. Dormers are sometimes added in the roofline.

Planning Director Kaufman added that zoning regulations apply to all properties regardless of historic designation.

Christine Maine, 437 Holcomb, asked why couldn't being on the list be voluntary.

Planner Teiche said that state law requires cities to follow CEQA and evaluate any home over 50 years of age. The City's intention is to be proactive and let everyone know up front.

Mrs. Stewart, 116 William, asked why couldn't you choose to be on the list. Make it simple.

Planner Teiche states that if there is no list then everyone home 50 years or older will be scrutinized. She also said she had put a handout at the back table that went over some of the benefits with the primary one being that the Planning Department could be more flexible with zoning rules and the use of the historic building code. She cited the example of 55 Laurel and how Heritage Building code allowed flexibility in designing a 2nd means of egress from 4th story bedrooms in the attic.

Boardmember Heitkamp said that a lot of older homes don't meet setbacks or height limits and that staff can use historic designation to allow for findings for a variance.

Robert Stewart, 116 William

- Mr. Kerr can make his own opinion but he doesn't agree
- Buyers acquire homes on its own merits
- His next door neighbor would have nothing banning them from building a larger house
- Said cap on Mills Act is \$10,000 and there are already two homes taking the lion share of the limit

- Original evaluation of his house says it is a kit house. Now evaluation has been revised to read, “may have been” or “reports”. He has done his own research and there is nothing that resembles his home. There are no stamps to indicate a kit home
- Working with an Historic Architect will not make the process cheaper
- He loves his home and has owned it 44 years but does not think it is historic
- He wants off the list
- Let his home stand on its own merits – it’s a great looking house
- Thinks the City Council should drop the whole idea
- Should raise limit on Mills Act to a million so that every property eligible can apply. Fees should be waived. Show us the money
- Should drop whole idea

Jan Hobel, 20 Elm:

- His home is proposed under Phase II and is rated a B
- Kristin was helpful in helping him understand the process
- Feels his house is marginal
- Appreciates Mr. Kerr’s comments but his home is 900 sf on a 5,000 sf lot and that rich people with money to burn won’t buy it
- Will have to spend more money and jump through more hoops
- Said last year was told to just write a letter and it would be taken into consideration
- Doesn’t see value of designation
- Updated report did not address his letter
- Bought his house 9 years ago with the intent to raise his kids here and thinks being placed on an historic list will limit growth of house.
- Moved to Larkspur for schools
- House is only 900 sf and is falling off the foundation
- Wants to be taken off the list

Mr. Launer asked Planning Director Kaufman for clarification regarding CEQA.

Planning Director Kaufman stated that the Planning Department is regulated by the State and Federal rules in respect to historic properties. Any home over 50 years old is required to be studied. Regardless of this the majority of renovations to homes at the very least require Design Review.

Mr. Stewart asked for a straw vote of audience members as to who wanted to be on list. Planning Director Kaufman said that it would not serve any purpose, as a large majority of people notified did not attend the meeting.

Ms. Niven asked if being on the list would prevent a home from being torn down. Planner Teiche said it could. She however stated that there were tangible benefits of keeping a house. She cited the example of the second public hearing

item and recommended those interested in observing a portion of the process to stay for the next public hearing item.

Chris Paretich, 1 Redwood:

- Want to be taken off the list
- Personally loves old stuff
- His home was converted to a duplex in 1930
- Wondered about the 50 year old criteria as it would mean that homes built in the '60s would be considered heritage
- Home has been heavily changed

Planner Teiche said the consultant would take another look.

Public Hearing closed at 7:25pm.

Boardmember Heitkamp:

- As Larkspur is celebrating its historic past part of that is preservation. Some of the greenest buildings are the ones that are already built. A quote from Donald Trump said that it is cheaper to use existing structure than to start from scratch
- The city only wants to preserve the front facades so if an applicant wants to add a stainless steel addition at the rear of the property they potentially could. CEQA requires that if your home is 50 years or older than you have to be assessed.
- The benefit of an historic home is the use of historic building codes and variance for findings.
- Her own home today would not meet setbacks or height limitations. She could not replicate the current square footage if her home was torn down.

Kathie Kearley-Green:

- Her home was built in 1907 and is proposed for historic designation. In the '30s the porches were enclosed. Three dormers were added to the attic plus a large addition was done.
- Believes strongly that having a historic designation adds to the value of the house.
- She sees financial value.
- Current square footage could not be replicated. House is on a slope. The old footprint has value due to size of lot.

Sallyanne Wilson:

- Her own home was built in 1904 and has had changes, which does not make it eligible for the inventory although she wishes it could.
- Echoes colleagues about value.
- Recommends people observe the process or talk to those who have gone through the process. It does work.

Grayson Marshall:

- Qualify motion to cover errors of fact. Add or detract from list based on additional information.

Motion/Second Adams/Wilson to adopt draft resolution and make recommendations to the Council. Include additional consideration of the following homes: 1 Redwood, 207 Madrone, 9 Boardwalk, 20 Elm, 116 William, 5 Baltimore and 232 W. Baltimore. All in favor. Motion carries.

2. DR/H/HT/V/SUP/EXCEPT 08-04; Jeff Kroot Architect, applicant; Gary Dowd, owner; 607 Magnolia and 146 Locust Avenue; APN 20-252-03; R-1 Zoning District. Applicant is requesting Heritage Preservation Board review for the substantial repair, reconstruction and remodeling of two existing nonconforming single-family residences, and a minor addition to 146 Locust Avenue. Both residences are in poor condition and are located on a single parcel that runs street to street from Magnolia to Locust Avenues. Both structures are listed on Larkspur's 1979 Inventory of Historic Resources:

Planner Teiche presented the project and said that the only concern that Dan Peterson, Historic Architect consultant to the city, had was in reference to the dormers on the South elevation as they appeared out of scale.

Jeff Kroot, Architect:

- Home is approximately 100 years old and in terrible condition, no foundation, windows falling out, can see through house but has some wonderful historic qualities. Will be re-shingling following the existing pattern.
- Dormers a major issue, as they will make the upper floor more habitable for two bedrooms.
- Dormers are in character of similar houses (he passed out photos of some examples).

A letter from neighbor Harry Neidzwetzki and Katherine Thompson of 603 Magnolia was presented as late mail.

Jeff Kroot, Architect, addressed some of the concerns raised in the letter:

- House is not expanding and square footage will decrease slightly.
- He said that there actually was not a huge amount of dirt to be removed for the foundation but the dirt would be sent down a chute straight to Magnolia and they will protect existing landscaping.
- In terms of privacy the dormer on the upper floor would have no impact, as they have been placed high on the wall to provide light and ventilation.
- The plan was to replicate some of the style of the house in the new four car parking deck.

Boardmember Marshall asked about maintaining trees on the site.

Architect Kroot said that the plan was to maintain as many trees as possible as it served no benefit to remove them.

James Holmes, Madrone Avenue

- Thought the owner was doing a terrific job and was truly inspirational taking to heart the historic standards and implementing them.
- Had a question about the existing dormers in respect that half was shingled and the other half was some other material. He said a photo from as far back as 1909 shows the dormers that way too.

Ron Radke, 148 Locust

- Concerned with size of dormers and scale of restored house
- Confused about living space versus floor space

Elise Semonian, 599 Magnolia

- Thinks plan looks great
- Is picky about historic details and thought the car deck should not be in keeping with the historic house as proposed by the architect
- Even the lower level windows should maybe look different as they are not historic
- Concerned with tree protection as the Oak and Buckeye trees are magnificent and should be protected with fencing during construction
- It will be great to have neighbors living there after all these years

Gary Dowd, owner:

- Was born and raised in Larkspur
- Saw this property about 8-9 months ago and since he has remodeled many homes wanted to take on this project
- This property can be great and livable for a family
- To make the project feasible economically he had to use the attic and basement spaces
- Most people would have just torn down the houses.
- The dormers were key to making the house livable and doesn't want to reduce them
- Ask for Board's support and wants to work with the neighbors
- Wants to build a good project and do it right

Jeff Kroot, Architect:

- Said variety of materials were used in the existing dormers but doesn't necessarily want to use the stucco which was probably added later and thought the shingle style and pattern is what is more unique.

- The dormer size was key to developing attic space but could make the windows on the side slightly smaller if privacy was an issue.
- Said the windows were in keeping with original and was uncomfortable with using a different style.
- Takes the point regarding carport.
- Will provide tree protection.

Public comment closed.

Boardmember Adams

- Had visited property and had been shocked at the condition
- Thrilled that the owner is taking on this project and is an example of what the Board had been discussing earlier
- Thought the dormers on the south east and south west elevation were most valuable

Planner Teiche said that Consultant Peterson recommended the dormers on the South side be brought down about 30% which would decrease the width volume.

Boardmember Heitkamp:

- Delighted that the houses were going to be fixed as they are the gateway of Larkspur and sets the tone of the town
- Envelope of the home is being kept and has no problem with the square footage
- Regarding the dormers she would go with Consultant Peterson's recommendations
- Liked railing replication on parking deck as it allows views through it from Locust.
- Feels strongly about preserving Buckeye tree

Boardmember Adams asked how visible were the south dormers. Planner Teiche confirmed they were visible.

Boardmember Wilson:

- Excited the owner saw the potential of the property
- Agreed that south dormers should be reduced
- Agreed Buckeye is special

Boardmembers Adams and Marshall move to recommend approval of the project, per the findings provided on page 10 of the staff report, and taking into consideration the recommendations provided by the Historic Architectural Consultant, Dan Peterson. All in favor (Heitkamp abstaining).

Regular Business Items

3. Items for Board Review and/or Comment: None
4. Announcements and Attachments: Boardmember Heitkamp presented a mock up of the proposed Past and Present book cover.

Boardmember Wilson said that Dick Cunningham had looked through the minutes from 1925 and discovered the Council had approved the replacement of the rustic bridge on Bridge Avenue with a concrete bridge.

5. Approval of Minutes:
Board Member Heitkamp moved, seconded by Board Member Kearley-Green to approve the minutes from meeting of the Heritage Preservation Board as amended. Board Members unanimously approved this motion (Boardmember Wilson abstaining).
6. Next Meeting: August 18, 2008

Adjournment

Board Member Wilson moved, seconded by Board Member Heitkamp, to adjourn the July 21, 2008 meeting of the Heritage Preservation Board at 8:30pm. Board Members unanimously approved this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Bamatter
Recording Secretary