

MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (HARB)
HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2021,
VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The meeting was called to order at 4:21 p.m. by the acting chair, Mrs. Gretchen Pawlowski.

Members present via Zoom: Mr. James Mohn, Mrs. Gretchen Pawlowski, Mrs. Belinda Thompson, Mr. Phil Hundley, Mr. Joe Zemba, Mrs. Elizabeth Sykes, Mr. Thomas McCargo, and Mr. John Nath. Also present were Mr. Nathan Briggs, Borough Manager/Secretary, Ms. Alyssa Golfieri, Assistant Borough Solicitor, Ms. Megan O'Hara, consultant with Urban Design Associates, and Ms. Lily Xing, consultant with Urban Design Associates

Others present via Zoom: Mr. Jack LaQuatra, Mr. Frank Cservak, 174 Barberry Road, Mr. Fritz Baehr, Kosta Bounos, Ms. Lisa Buchser, Ms. Melissa Marks, Mr. James Wilson, Mr. Simon Carey, General Manager of Allegheny Country Club, Mr. Bill Gridley, Ms. Heather Wildman, and Mr. Peter Ekama of Wildman Chalmers Design, LLC, Ms. Eleanore Hodzic, Mrs. Verna Corey, 889-895 Blackburn Road, Mr. Gary Smith, President of Allegheny Country Club, Mr. Jason Bell of Jason Bell Design, Ms. Mary Weber, Ms. Sara Moore of Moore Design

Mrs. Pawlowski, acting Chairman, made an announcement regarding the Borough's public meeting procedures during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Mrs. Pawlowski then opened the meeting for public comment on matters on the agenda.

There being none, Mrs. Pawlowski called for a motion to approve the October 14, 2021, meeting minutes. Mr. Zemba made a motion and Mr. Hundley seconded the motion to approve. The meeting minutes of the October 14, 2021, regular meeting were unanimously approved.

APPLICANTS

Buchser, 505 Scaife Road

Mr. LaQuatra presented an update of the landscape plan since the last HARB meeting, indicating a 24'x44' pool and a 14'x18' pavilion were proposed. He explained that the pool would be natural with sandstone boulders. He went on to describe the grading, stating that no slopes were steeper than a ratio of 3:1 and that the natural gavel paths were no steeper than a five percent grade. He further stated that the overall grading concept would have minimal grading impact, blending into the existing landscape. Mr. LaQuatra requested on behalf of the applicant to remove the three trees located in the pavilion footprint, according to the notes on the drawings.

Mrs. Pawlowski asked if the trees to be removed were maple trees.

Mr. LaQuatra stated that they were, and described the plan in more detail, including a concrete ledge with a pier near the end, a waterfall feature between the pool and deck, and a fence connected to the property line and tied to existing fencing on the north side. The septic field, indicated on the drawings, is located within the existing fence line and is not to be disturbed in the working area.

Mr. Hundley asked if there were two approaches to the pool.

Mr. LaQuatra stated that yes, there would be steppingstones from the patio north of the pool and through the fence in the existing gate.

Mrs. Sykes stated that the length of the dock to the pool appeared very long and asked why that would be.
Mr. LaQuatra stated that that was a request by the applicant related to the dock diving sport.
Ms. Bucsher agreed, stating that 40' was regulation for dock diving.

Ms. Thompson stated that she was unable to attend the walking tour but asked if topography is sloping down to the pool, what was the plan for stormwater management.

Mr. LaQuatra stated that there was positive drainage away from the pool, a swale north of the pool, and a low point where the waterfall feature would be located. The lower area would drain to the swale to direct drainage around the pool.

Mr. Zemba stated that he was also wondering about drainage.
Mr. LaQuatra stated that it would be very gentle.

Mr. Zemba asked if a rock sump would be draining the pool.
Mr. LaQuatra stated there would be at the lower elevation. Prior to getting a grading permit, the applicant would have the engineer calculate the runoff.

Mr. Zemba asked where the rock sump would be located.
Mr. LaQuatra indicated a likely location on the drawings.

Mr. Zemba asked if a landscape solution would be necessary.
Mr. LaQuatra stated that it would return to normal grade and would likely not be noticeable.

Mrs. Pawlowski asked if the fence located along Stonedale would be existing split rail fencing.
Mr. LaQuatra stated that it would match the existing fence, a four-foot-high split rail with a mesh on the exterior of the fence.

Ms. O'Hara encouraged the use of the square mesh indicated in the pattern book, which would blend into the background more.

Mr. LaQuatra stated that yes, that would be more appealing. He further stated that they wanted to match the existing fence, but that a finer gauge would be more transparent and that he would ensure it was part of the final selection.

Mr. Bounos described the plant materials selected by the applicant, indicating that they would be native plants of various sizes and were indicated on the drawings. He went on to describe landscape material selections, including a natural flagstone for the siting area, various size boulders, a flagstone walkway, natural sandstone steps, and a natural pea gravel walkway, indicated by photos.

Mrs. Pawlowski asked what the railing material would be.
Mr. Baehr, the architect for the pavilion, stated that there would be no railing on the pavilion.

Mrs. Pawloski and Mr. Zemba asked about the posts making up the pavilion
Mr. Baehr stated that the posts would be seven-inch square posts with three on each corner.

Mr. Zemba asked about the material of the posts.
Mr. Baehr stated that they would likely be white-washed wood to match most of the structure but might be a composite material.
Mr. Zemba stated that that would be good, and requested that PVC not be used.

Ms. O'Hara stated that if the applicant had a COA and engineering needed to change the aesthetics of the structure, that the applicant can return for an amendment. She further requested that the applicant add a note about the square mesh for the fencing.

Mr. Zemba stated that the application had come a long way and looked good. Mrs. Pawloski agreed.

Mr. McCargo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Zemba to recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for historical purposes only subject to the following conditions: (i) the applicant must submit a proposed fencing detail with less visible wire mesh to follow the standard in the Sewickley Heights Pattern Book, and add a note to the plans regarding the square mesh for the proposed fencing; (ii) if any changes are made to the proposal, the applicant must return to HARB for an amendment to the COA, and (iii) necessary engineering and stormwater management plans being submitted to and found acceptable by the Borough Engineer, was unanimously approved.

Mrs. Pawloski indicated that the applicant would receive follow-up from Ms. O'Hara regarding any necessary notes required on the plans.

McMullen, 505 Spanish Tract Road

Mr. Ekama presented a refined presentation since the last HARB meeting, focusing on matching the detailing and look of the primary residence.

Ms. Moore presented a refined landscape plan, indicating that the proposed structure was fifteen feet from the primary residence and twenty feet from the 100-foot setback. She further indicated that the landscaping would match the existing, with a significant amount of lawn transitioning to the forest floor. She further indicated that several trees would need to be removed for the foundation, indicated by an orange ribbon, and that there would be new site walls, matching the palette of the new construction. The paths would be gravel, and the surface of the firepit would be white pavers. The seat walls would be granite, and the intention would be to save as many trees as possible, and to complement existing landscaping by balancing evergreen and deciduous plantings.

Mr. Ekama elaborated on the presentation for the accessory structure, stating that the roof may be visible from the motor court, that proposed steps would be the full width of the proposed French doors, and that mirror retaining walls would extend to the recreation cottage.

Mrs. Pawloski stated that she liked following the original architecture and landscaping and requested clarification on which trees would be removed.

Ms. Moore stated that all the trees to be removed would be oak trees and that she had tree removal drawings being prepared for the Borough and Borough Engineer.

Mr. Briggs stated that the drawings had not yet been reviewed.

Mr. Zemba stated that he also had questions regarding tree removal and that a removal plan would be necessary for approval.

Ms. Moore stated that the removal plan was not included in the submitted materials but that it was prepared and ready to share. She further mentioned working with the Borough engineer on possible alternatives to tree removal. She further stated that 3 additional, newer sycamore trees may need to be removed by the fire pit area.

Mr. McCargo stated that he thought the applicant had done a good job of minimizing potential damage.

Ms. O'Hara stated that the applicant would need to show which trees were to be removed and protected on the plans.

Ms. Moore stated that tree protection fencing and contractor access were shown.

Mr. Zemba asked if the gravel walkway would be limestone.

Ms. Moore stated that yes, it would be crushed limestone.

Mr. Zemba asked if the window would be visible over the garage roof.

Mr. Ekama stated that no, only the top ridge portion would be visible.

Mrs. Pawlowski stated that she would be open to approval, subject to submission and review of the tree removal plan.

Mr. Zemba made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Thompson to recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for historical purposes only subject to the following conditions: (i) submittal and review of a tree removal plan by Manager Briggs, and (ii) necessary engineering and stormwater management plans being submitted to and found acceptable by the Borough Engineer, was unanimously approved.

Allegheny Country Club

Mr. Carey reviewed the process of the proposal, including a walking tour with HARB. He also reviewed 17 months of usage analytics. He further stated the need to respect the history of the building while addressing current needs and past mistakes.

Mr. Carey presented the existing conditions and a proposal for an addition to the Allegheny Country Clubhouse. He indicated permanent awning structures at the dining entrance, and a three-foot wall that separates the upper and lower terrace, which has an approximately one-foot variation in elevation. He spoke about the challenges of conditioning the living room space, as well as looking for a new mechanical system and a way to enhance natural light, stating that the existing loggia is not conducive for day-to-day use, and that it is currently primarily used by the staff. The design proposal would be to combine the loggia/upper dining terrace into a conservatory, possibly with operable glass walls to allow for indoor/outdoor space, with the ability to close for colder weather, as well as new skylights in the living room. He stated that no exterior access would be impacted by the proposal.

Mrs. Pawlowski stated that she thought the proposal was off to a good start.

Mr. Mohn stated that the proposal had evolved beautifully and emphasized that the biggest design challenge would be to successfully integrate the addition. He further stated that it was headed in the right direction based on the drawings and that the existing entrance has beautiful details. Mr. Mohn recommended removing the aluminum siding from the historic portico, restoring those details, and incorporating them into the addition design.

Mr. Carey stated that they were actively uncovering those details currently.

Ms. O'Hara reminded HARB that several years ago the club had looked at additions that extended toward the pool, and stated that the current proposal is more respectful of the historic building than the previous approach.

Mrs. Thompson stated that she felt that the proposal was both marvelous and very thoughtful and liked how the history would be incorporated. She asked if the vaulted skylights would be visible from the exterior.

Mr. Carey stated that he hoped the light would reach the living room, but that the team is also proposing several skylights with low profiles. The ACC team will test whether the skylights would be seen from the exterior and would minimize visibility.

Mr. Zemba stated that the elevations provided are not consistent in that the fenestration is vertical in some and horizontal in others. He went on to state that that would be a very important component when designing the operable glass walls to look like the existing divided lites.

Ms. O'Hara stated that that would be a good transition to talk about the second phase of the HARB process and explained what would be needed for the design development phase.

Mr. Mohn stated that he would have no objection to the applicant presenting alternatives.

Mr. Bell asked if there was a preference as to the time frame of different areas of the building to be studied and presented. Regarding the window fenestration he stated that the formal entrance has vertically proportioned rectangular windows that were added over time, but that the ballroom has more horizontally proportioned windows. He stated that larger glass would be preferred from the interior and asked if HARB had a preference.

Mr. Gridley stated that it was important to acknowledge that both vertically and horizontally proportioned windows exist in the structure currently, and that the intent would be to integrate both types subtly while respecting historic details and looking to HARB for guidance.

Mr. Mohn stated that he appreciated that, and that as a preservation project, this would be a challenge. He further stated that it would be great to see multiple alternatives in future meetings.

Mr. Zemba stated that he could see an expansion with no divided lites but would need to see a couple of options.

Mr. Gridley stated that it felt like the room almost designed itself.

Mr. Mohn stated that skylights likely wouldn't be an issue, even if seen from the outside.

Mr. Gridley stated that it was unlikely that they would be seen from the outside, particularly up close.

Mrs. Thompson stated that if it was like a conservatory it would feel like part of the building, which she appreciated.

Mr. Mohn stated that currently the building didn't have a space that felt like a conservatory and that such an addition would be nice. Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Pawlowski agreed. Mr. Mohn also stated that he is looking forward to more information, such as the detailing of entablature, fenestration, material specs, etc.

Ms. O'Hara reminded the applicant that they were welcome to present updates each month.

Ratification of COAs Issued by Administrative Review (no applicant attendance)

- B&B Trust, 475 Scaife Road

Motion by Mr. Mohn seconded by Mr. Zemba to recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for historical purposes for the listed projects above, subject to necessary engineering and stormwater management plans being submitted to and found acceptable by the Borough Engineer, was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pawlowski then opened the floor for public comment on matters not on the agenda. There being none, the HARB meeting adjourned into executive session to seek the advice of the Borough's Assistant Solicitor.

HARB Meeting Adjourns at 6:46 p.m.

DRAFT