

LARKSPUR HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2022

The Heritage Preservation Board was convened at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Culhane via teleconference due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

Staff Present: Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ms. Kate Lynch, representing Spyglass Condominiums, stated she submitted a petition in opposition to a permit request for cutting down a grove of Redwood trees on the property. Senior Planner Teiche stated Heritage Tree Removal Permits are reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

PLANNING STAFF'S ORAL REPORT

There was no report.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. H/DR/V/HT #21-35, 9 Murray Lane (APN: 020-031-012); Polsky Perlstein Architects, Applicants; Amy and Wayne Wu, Owners; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicant proposes to remodel and expand an existing 2,361 sq. ft. historic residence, demolish an existing 409 square foot historic cottage (second unit) and maintain the existing nonconforming 233 square foot carport. Improvements would total 5,666 square feet on the 18,548 square foot lot with a 0.36 FAR where 0.40 is permitted by code. Additional site improvements include a new circular entry driveway running between the residence and stand of heritage redwood trees, grading and construction of a rear yard pool and bocce court, a pool equipment enclosure, storage shed, and landscaping. Required permits include: 1) Historic review; 2) Design Review; 3) Variance to maintain a nonconforming carport with an 11-foot interior width where 12 feet is required by code; 4) Heritage Tree Removal Permits to allow removal of two, 60-inch circumference, Coast Live Oaks.**

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report. Staff received some late mail.

Board member Storek asked about the staff reference to a history of multiple reviews. Senior Planner Teiche explained the timeline of the completeness review which occurred before the project was scheduled for hearing.

Board member Lanctot asked if anything has been done to the house by the new owners. Senior Planner Teiche stated she has not signed off on any permits for remodeling.

Chair Culhane asked if there was a denial in 2019. Senior Planner Teiche stated there was no application submitted in 2019- the prior property owners asked for the evaluation.

Chair Culhane opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Wayne Wu, owner, made the following comments:

- They want to invest in the house to bring it back to where it should be.
- The left side is the historic front of the home

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

- His firm has remodeled many historic homes in Larkspur.
- He discussed the history of the house.
- The west wing is clearly cobbled together.
- The rear west wing and the rear cottage are in terrible condition and have not been maintained.
- It will be difficult to make the findings that these elements need protection.
- They plan to preserve the historic front of the house as it is now.
- The old building needs a new foundation, new exterior walls, a new roof, proper drainage, new electric and plumbing, and more.
- They ask for flexibility with respect to the east facing porch which has a tar papered shed roof, the rear cottage, and the west gable façade.
- He displayed the alternate roof plan.
- They were not able to get a contractor to install story poles in time for this meeting.

Senior Planner Teiche played the video presented by the applicants.

Mr. and Mrs. Wu made the following comments:

- The family needs more space.
- The project needs to be financially viable.
- The roofline of the west wing is uneven, and the foundation is dilapidated.
- It does not make sense to allocate money to the detached cottage.
- They are not asking for any Variances.

Chair Culhane asked Mr. Polsky if the Board has the most recent drawings. Mr. Polsky stated “no”. the plans have since been revised to address comments of the historic architect. There is a reduced entry to the new part of the building which pushed the stairway into the main body of the house.

Chair Culhane asked about the reduced height. Mr. Polsky stated the main ridge of the new addition will be 28 feet above grade.

Board member Lanctot asked if the City’s Architectural Historian Jeri Holan has seen the new design. Senior Planner Teiche stated “no”.

Board member Gallant asked if reconstructing the east portion would include dismantling something that currently exists. Mr. Polsky stated “yes”.

Board member Goldberg asked if the proposed porch would be deeper than what currently exists. Mr. Polsky stated “yes”.

Chair Culhane stated there is more to designating historic structures than the person who lived there. This house meets other criteria. Board member Goldberg agreed.

Board member Gallant referred to the evaluation from Dan Peterson done in 2003. She noted this structure had significant adjusted scores over time.

Board member Storek asked Mr. Polsky to explain his misinterpretation of the comments in the City Architect’s report.

Ms. Amara Morrison made the following comments:

- She is an attorney representing the owners of 39 Rancheria Road.

- It is inappropriate for the City to rely on a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption in connection with the project.
- An exemption is only appropriate if the construction and alteration of the historic resource is undertaken in conformance with the Secretary of Interior standards.
- The alterations to the primary residence and demolition of the cottage do not meet these standards
- Cost is not a consideration under CEQA.
- This matter should be continued to allow for an appropriate level of environmental review.

Mr. Chad Solter, Murray Lane, made the following comments:

- The owners have showed him all the plans. This is a beautiful preservation.
- He supports the project.

Mr. Tim Beal, Tulane Avenue, made the following comment:

- He supports the project

Ms. Fran Capeletti made the following comment:

- The history should be thoroughly researched.

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

- The cottage should be retained if possible: it relates to a particular period of the Murray ownership, it is the last reminder of that period, and there should be hesitancy in eliminating second units.
- An argument can be made that an addition is consistent with the evolution of this house.

Mr. John Weinberg made the following comments:

- The history of Larkspur is rich and ever-changing.
- The plans attempt to preserve the historic nature of the home while improving it for the family's needs.

Mr. Richard Cunningham made the following comments:

- There are only three houses in Larkspur that share a similar history. He discussed their history.
- He is glad the owners are taking on this project.

Mr. Bill Kruger made the following comment:

- He supports the project.

Ms. Amy Kruger made the following comments:

- The home is in disrepair and collapsing.
- The side wing is unattractive and unlivable.

Chair Culhane closed the Public Hearing.

Board member Lanctot provided the following comments:

- She appreciated the neighbor's endorsements.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- She appreciated the owners intention of bring the structure into the 21st Century.
- The Board needs to make sure the plans meet the standards.
- She was disappointed the Board was not able to review the revised ridgeline.

Board member Storek provided the following comments:

- He appreciated the owners taking on this project and making it their home.

- This renovation project can comply with the Secretary of Interior standards.
- The applicants should resubmit so the project is in compliance.

Board member Gallant provided the following comment:

- The Board does not know what the revision looks like- perhaps it complies with the Secretary of Interior standards.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- Conditions need to be met to qualify with the Department of Interior's Standards and CEQA.
- The north view is part of the west wing (logging cabin). Perhaps they can extend an overhang.
- They need to revisit the west porch.
- They have come up with a creative solution to the cottage but she is not sure it would satisfy the standards.
- The elevation of the driveway is not clear.
- She is not sure about the height of the retaining wall.
- They need to install story poles.
- They are very close.

Board member Goldberg provided the following comments:

- She agreed that four items need to be addressed.
- They are close.
- Accommodations could be made for the porch.
- The revisions should be submitted for the Board to review.
- They have been clever in handling the cottage. She is not sure if it complies.

Chair Culhane asked staff for some guidance. Senior Planner Teiche stated the Board could continue the item to allow the applicant to submit revisions that are more in keeping with the standards. The City is allowed to apply a CEQA Categorical Exemption if the improvements meet the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Mr. Polsky made the following comments:

- He asked if the request was: 1) Enlarge the east porch to match historic pictures; 2) Keep the tar papered roof on the north side; 3) Maintain the façade of the cottage; 4) Submit drawings depicting lowering the roof.

Chair Culhane provided the following comment:

- She stated "yes".
- She suggested retaining the porch on the northwest corner. The Board agreed.
- All original materials should be preserved as much as possible and specified on the plans along with any new materials.

Board member Gallant provided the following comments:

- She stated "yes" to Mr. Polsky's question about the request.
- She agreed with the applicants concerns about the porch- undoing and then reconstructing something to look old was an odd idea.

Board member Storek provided the following comments:

- It was dangerous for the Board to be specifically prescribing what should and should not be done. This is up to the owner and applicant.
- There should be compliance.

Mr. Wu made the following comments:

- He asked if they wanted them to recreate the original (east) front porch based on the pictures.
- They would be happy to do that.
- They want to comply and find a balance.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- She referred to the carport and asked if they plan to put in a garage. Mr. Wu stated “no”.
- She asked about the color scheme.

Board member Lanctot provided the following comments:

- Her main concern was the massing of the old design and perhaps it is addressed in the new design.

Chair Culhane provided the following comments:

- These are the priorities: 1) Massing; 2) East porch; 3) Incorporating the cottage.

M/s, Culhane/Lanctot, motioned and the Board voted 5-0 to continue H/DR/V/HT #21-35, 9 Murray Lane to a date uncertain to allow the applicants to address the following issues: 1) The massing of the two-story new addition needs to be reduced in order not to overwhelm the historic front house; 2) Restoration of the historic east porch; 3) Incorporation of the cottage; 4) The west porch needs to be preserved and not removed.

Senior Planner Teiche asked the Board to decide on a meeting date. It was the consensus of the board to hold a Special Meeting on Monday, February 28th starting at 5:00 p.m.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Board member reports

Board member Storek would like Ms. Capeletti to make a presentation about historic preservation.

3. Approval of Minutes- January 13, 2022

M/s, Culhane/Storek, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 13, 2022 as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 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 28, 2022.



Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner