

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES – MARCH 8, 2022

The regular meeting of the Historical Architectural Review Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on March 8, 2022. Mr. Heinz called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Those present:

Historical Architectural Review Board: Stephen Heinz, Chair
Jeff Hirko, Vice Chair (joined meeting in progress)
Jennifer Stark, Secretary
Michael Kirk, Member/Code Enforcement Officer
Liuba Lashchuk, Member

Absent: Daniel Grenier, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Stark moved, Ms. Lashchuk seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of February 8, 2022 as written.

Mr. Hirko joined the meeting at this time.

1648 LANGHORNE-YARDLEY ROAD DISCUSSION OF RENOVATION OF EXISTING BARN

Mr. Drew Dickinson and Mr. Eric Marseglia were present. Mr. Dickinson stated they are part of Milestone Behavioral Health and are under contract to purchase 1648 Langhorne-Yardley Road from Mr. Miller. Also present was Mr. Joel Petty, architect. Mr. Dickinson stated they want to try to get the barn to be usable office space. He stated that would like to know what the process is.

Mr. Petty stated they are in the early phase, and they will be back as the project develops. He stated they are looking to turn the building into usable office space, and they would like to keep it as much aesthetically in place as it can be. They would like to keep it feeling as much like a barn as possible although a lot of the interior will be modified. Mr. Petty stated they propose to replace the windows

with insulated glass windows, but aesthetically will be replaced like they are. Mr. Petty stated they would like to add a window to the rear elevation to match the one on the front.

Mr. Petty stated the exterior of the buildings would look very much the same other than the two front garage openings. He stated they are considering whether that would become “a more centralized glass covered barn door looking opening.” He stated the first floor large opening would become the main entrance to the barn, and whether that becomes a glass “office piece entry” or some version of entry door system where they could also have sliding barn doors over it or whether it is more of a desire to see it infilled with something else, they would look for direction or they could just present an option in the future. He stated the goal is that the building aesthetic would look very much the same as it does now - just preserved; and as it gets modified, the major piece on the front would be developed it into an office entry area.

Ms. Stark asked if they see any issues with ADA compliance entering into the building and if they are going to have to pour a floor. Mr. Petty stated they will need to pour a floor as well as a pad out front to allow access. He stated it may be bluestone or some other patio material out front or a concrete pad. He stated currently it is a dirt floor inside, and they will be pouring a concrete slab as a part of the project. Ms. Stark stated they would probably not need to do a ramp, and Mr. Petty agreed that there is enough grade out front with the driveway coming up to it that without much grade modification at all it would be ADA-compliant. Mr. Petty stated they would not need a ramp, and Ms. Stark stated that would be great aesthetically.

Mr. Petty stated they provided a packet of information including photos and describing what they were looking to do. Photos of the barn were shown. Mr. Dickinson noted the front of the barn with the two openings, and he stated they were not sure of the best way to close that in, and they are open to suggestions from HARB. A photo was shown of what is seen from Yardley-Langhorne Road. A photo was shown of the back of the building which faces Patterson Farm. There is a tree line between the barn and Patterson Farm. They are hoping to add a window to the back of the building on the second floor facing the Patterson Farm. A photo was shown of the side of the barn facing the house on the property. A photo was shown of the other side which faces the open lot with trees between Mr. Miller’s property and the area where the skateboard shop is located.

A slide was shown of a drawing done by Mr. Petty. Mr. Petty stated the larger opening on the left is the one that is currently open, and there is a garage door on the right. He stated the goal is to close it in, and there are options with the openings whether they continue with the asymmetry of the existing structure or the opening in the center is large enough that they could get access to the main part of the barn for the commercial entry part and make that more symmetrical if that was the desire.

Mr. Petty stated the rest of the barn would mostly stay as is other than the roof. He stated they have to insulate the roof system although Mr. Marseglia and Mr. Dickinson would like to keep the existing structure of the roof inside exposed so they are thinking of insulating this with a roof built up on the outside. He stated beyond that, the goal is to keep the building looking as much like it does as possible.

Ms. Stark asked about the original framing for the openings on the façade, and Mr. Petty stated as you look at the garage door on the right that looks to be what was a carriage/tractor bay. He stated there is a row of columns that goes between the two doors, and there is a timber-frame wall that goes between the garage doors front to back. He stated that could be a bay of the barn that gets utilized for the bathroom area on the first floor. He stated the main area to the left is open from the middle of the two doors to the left side of the building.

Ms. Lashchuk asked if there is a loft, and Mr. Petty stated there is a usable second floor the whole width of the building, and it is bigger than a loft.

Mr. Heinz stated even though they have seen the photographic images, it is not clear what is in the opening on the left, and he asked if there is any closure on it; and Mr. Petty stated it is an open garage bay at this time, and there is no door on it.

Ms. Lashchuk stated if this is going to be developed as an office it would also need another exit to the outside, and Mr. Petty agreed. He stated it would need to be to the rear or the side facing away from the house. Ms. Lashchuk stated they would want to see sketches of what the design will be. Mr. Petty stated at this point they were looking for general feedback or any input. Ms. Lashchuk stated she would also want to see the access drive and the parking area in a sketch. Ms. Lashchuk asked if there would be a chimney, and Mr. Dickinson stated they were not proposing a chimney.

Mr. Heinz asked about heating and cooling, and Mr. Petty stated it would more than likely be electric.

Mr. Heinz suggested that they look at some studies on other types of projects that have been done locally or in Bucks County to adapt this kind of structure. He stated an egress stair might take place in an addition to the space, and that kind of addition could be something that is compatible that would typically happen in a barn such as a shed-type addition or it could be something that is completely modern. He stated it could be an enclosure that is steel or a structure that is completely glassed in and it could then house a stairwell. He stated these are decisions that the architect would normally make and should have some kind of justification when they come back to HARB to present them including bringing in documentation about similar types of installations that could be used as examples. Mr. Heinz suggested they refer to the Guidelines for Alterations under the National Guidelines.

Mr. Hirko stated he was trying to figure out a way for them to close the front of the building in and still keep it aesthetically in character with the building. He stated he does not have a suggestion at this point. Mr. Heinz stated he has seen taking an opening like this and taking a “step back a space” that would also act as a “rain-covered area” that does not really have any connection with the façade. He stated they would lose some interior space, but that might help in maintaining what the current appearance is. Mr. Petty stated they do want to maintain the character, and he feels the asymmetry is interesting. He stated they will come up with a couple of options. Mr. Heinz stated if they did some kind of inset, they could do it out of heavy timber construction and do an entire framing, and have a modern door as part of the opening that is in the center.

Ms. Stark asked about it being all glass, and Mr. Petty stated that is what he thinks would work the best. He stated the asymmetry of the framing inside also plays into that. He stated if there was a mix of that and timbers, he feels that would work nicely with the structure. He stated this could also be connected to a patio/ADA-compliant entry.

Mr. Hirko asked if it would be a store-front entry since they would then have to have an automatic door for ADA. Mr. Petty stated he would see it more as a timber and glass structure more than a store-front. Mr. Hirko stated he does not feel it would look right with a store-front on it, and Mr. Petty agreed.

Mr. Heinz stated it seems that they are trying to create an adaptation, and HARB will be happy to review it in the future as he understands that they are not looking for Board action tonight; and Mr. Petty agreed. Mr. Petty stated they were interested in knowing if there was anything that HARB would be opposed to as they move forward. He stated they will provide options as the interior of the building gets laid out. He stated that will also determine where there could be a secondary exit door, and they will present that moving forward.

Mr. Heinz stated with regard to the glass window being proposed for the rear similar to what is on the front, it would depend on where they end up putting the shed addition or some kind of exit stair and how that would work with regard to the façade. Mr. Heinz stated it appears that the design project is just beginning.

The Applicants thanked the Board for their time. Mr. Heinz stated they appreciate their presentation and their interest in the Village and being sensitive to that space.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Heinz stated there was nothing on the Agenda about HARB considering a response to what was seen from the Ad Hoc Property Committee. He asked that it be added to a future meeting for discussion.

There being no further business, Ms. Stark moved, Mr. Hirko seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Stark, Secretary

