

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

The regular meeting of the Historical Architectural Review Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on September 13, 2022. Mr. Heinz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

Historical Architectural Review Board: Stephen Heinz, Chair
Jeff Hirko, Vice Chair
Jennifer Stark, Secretary
Michael Kirk, Member/Code Enforcement Officer
Liuba Lashchyk, Member

Others: James Majewski, Community Development Director
Daniel Grenier, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Heinz announced that while the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. there were technical issues. He stated during that time the Board voted to approve the Minutes of August 9, 2022.

PRICKETT PRESERVE BARN (Tax Parcel #20-016-040-001)
915 Antique Alley
Discussion of Building Renderings & Plans
Applicant: DeLuca Homes

Mr. Steve Harris, attorney, Mr. Paul Johnson, architect, Mr. Jeff Marshall, and Mr. Joe DeLuca were present. Mr. Harris stated tonight they are going to present a Plan that was revised in accordance with the discussion at the August HARB meeting.

Mr. Johnson stated the Pricketts have owned the site since the 1960's and lived on the property and operated an antique store out of the existing barn. He showed pictures of the barn as it exists today. He showed an aerial of the overall Prickett site showing the existing house and the existing barn which will remain after the Land Development. He showed an image of the proposal with the Wegmans to the north, Retail in orange surrounding the barn and the house, and the clubhouse and apartments. He showed the Landscape Plan.

Mr. Johnson stated the overall goal is to maintain an open public central space between the existing house and the existing barn within the Retail area that can be used by anyone. He showed an enlarged image of the connection between the barn and the existing house to be used as public open space. Aerial renderings were shown of the house, barn, and the public open space.

Mr. Johnson stated he will present two options for the barn, and they would like to discuss a preferred option. He stated they provided a section detail of the addition they are adding noting the materials and showing “the relation of keeping the structure separate from the existing barn” to try to minimize the tie-in of the addition to the existing barn.

Mr. Johnson stated he will first discuss the corner element of the barn, and he showed a rendering of Option 1 which is their preferred option. He stated this has already been seen by HARB, and brings the lantern on the southwest of the building with the “bump-up” for seating and terraced outside decks. Views from various locations were shown of this option.

Mr. Johnson showed a rendering of Option 2. He stated at the last meeting, the consensus was that the glass box was working better than something that was more solid. He stated they maintained the glass box idea but wanted to explore an alternate option of reducing the roof height to the same level as the rest of the addition to try to minimize the impact and the screening of the addition on the existing barn. He stated the Applicant’s preferred option has a higher roof and he showed the renderings of both for comparison.

Mr. Johnson stated one of the details that was discussed at the last meeting was the connection to the existing barn. He stated initially they had shown the 12 by 12 recess; and one of the comments was to expand that detail and incorporate the roof in that. He stated they took the service entry of the restaurant area and tried to expand it to create more of a recess at the connection point.

Mr. Johnson showed a rendering of their preferred option for the rear of the building. He stated they have incorporated more of the recessed area to try to create more of a visual break at the barn. He showed a rendering of Option 2 which would be to scale back the length of the southern face of the addition of the barn to try to expose some of the existing doors and expose some of the quoins on the corner of the barn to let people outside of the barn perceive a little bit more than what had previously been shown. Mr. Johnson stated the area to the left with the recessed door is the same in either option.

Mr. Johnson showed a rendering of the front entry on the north side of the building. He stated they had previously revised the renderings to have a more open railing. He stated there is a well to the side where the three stories of the barn are exposed. He showed a rendering which is an eye-level perspective of what that will look like from the main pedestrian circulation around the barn. He stated this was in the barn concept since day one, but they wanted to present a view of it tonight so it is more clear what will be going on in that area.

Mr. Johnson stated at the last meeting we also discussed the glazing to create more privacy at the table level of the restaurant, and eye-level perspectives were shown to demonstrate what the film would look like on the glazing maintaining the open concept of light being able to filter in and out and being able to see through the addition to the barn as the backdrop. He stated by adding a slight film to it, it creates a little bit of privacy for the people in the restaurant due to the relation of the floor height versus the eye level.

Mr. Johnson showed a rendering of the northeast side where the addition connected at the other end, and they have created a similar recess; and from this end they are entirely glazing it and they took the same recess of the roof and the glazing to try to create more of a visual break between the existing barn and the addition.

Mr. Johnson stated also discussed at the previous meeting was what could be done at the connection point of the barn to the new addition. He stated there was discussion about creating skylights around the building that would allow light to wash up the building. He stated while they looked into that, they do have some concerns about waterproofing/flashing at the barn. He stated to try to create that similar effect, they tried to highlight the barn further; and they would like to propose having uplighting to wash the wall above the roof of the addition so that at night the barn walls have more of a glow.

He showed a rendering of the rear addition of a third option with the addition being out to the corner. He stated if they were to scale this back, it would be a similar idea of washing it – just further back.

Mr. Johnson showed renderings of the sun studies which had been shown previously which show how the overhangs are covering the glazing at different times. He also showed renderings which had been shown previously with regard to the different materials that they are planning on for the barn.

Mr. Johnson stated at the last meeting they also discussed potentially lessening the thickness of the roof overhangs. He stated they initially showed them at 18", and they are now showing them as 12". He stated that is a number that works with the structure and the insulation that would be required. He stated this made the profile a little bit more slender.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels that the connection/gap that was shown was not quite what he thought Ms. Stark had suggested. Ms. Stark stated she stated what is being shown is not what she had described. She stated the solution does start to address what she wanted to have happen. She stated if this is as far they feel they can take it, she feels it is an improvement from what was seen previously; however, it is not exactly what she had described.

Mr. Heinz stated Ms. Lashchuk had also discussed the gap and the relationship of the glass box to the stone wall. Mr. Heinz stated he agrees with Ms. Stark that he felt that the gap was going to be at the roof level continuing down, and that the door that is there would be out even with the glass box wall, and there would be some kind of setback that would be a transition material; and even if it were aluminum, it would be a different colored aluminum or a fascia color to separate.

Ms. Lashchuk stated at the last meeting they had discussed the connection between the glass box and the existing barn; and it should be a definition, and not just a little setback horizontally. She stated it should read almost "like a shadow" with a different material. She stated she feels that what Mr. Heinz mentioned before about the clerestory running between the barn and the glass box was a good idea considering that the structure being proposed, the beam is not touching and it is a separate building, and that would not be too difficult to achieve.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels that what they are saying is where the roof is "banging up against the stone wall," there should be some kind of a relief. He stated he feels it would even help in separating the loads from the footings of the barn that are probably going to be stressed a little bit if they put a new footing down tight up against it. He stated when he did work with 1840's construction, he generally put the vertical structural members offset from the walls considerably and the beam as well set away from the wall at the roof level. He stated if they set it away 2' and made a clerestory that is 16" to 18" with a skylight that sits in there, he feels it would help the general concept of not having this roof really attached to the barn. He stated there would be some kind of gasket at the top

of the sloped glass perhaps and do it with a mechanical attachment. He stated he feels it would probably end up being “something of the roof material rolling right up the side of the barn.” He stated this would create something that if it was ever taken away, it would be “some surface indication that there was damage or impact of the new construction on the old.” Mr. Heinz stated he did a “sketch/ cross-section that said that.”

Mr. Heinz stated he thinks that the idea of the thinness of the cap does not necessarily have to take place at the inside where you need the insulation, but could transition at the face of the glass so that the top rail could be thick enough to accommodate the extra insulation; and what extends out could be even 4” or 6” thinner because it would not have to have the insulation as it is purely a structural overhang for shade.

Mr. Johnson stated he does not disagree with that detail adding that this section is at a schematic level. Mr. Heinz stated that is why we need to talk about it. Mr. Johnson stated what they are showing as far as the column and beam locations are assumptions at this point. He stated they have done exploratory digging at the barn to determine the existing foundations, and they are 3’ deep in some places which is not what they would have expected for a barn of this age. He stated the intent is to offset from the existing as they develop it further and the engineers start to “get on board,” and that is something that they will be investigating as well as the thickness of the roof as they move forward.

Mr. Johnson stated with regard to the point about having glazing or a skylight at the connection point, at some point they still have to flash at that point whether it is glass or solid roofing; and they have to run some kind of flashing up against the existing barn to protect it. He stated that is where it gets “tricky and costly” when you start introducing glazing.

Mr. Heinz stated while he understands the point that the Applicant has to deal with the cost, but HARB is suggesting the concept to enhance what Mr. Johnson said he wanted to do. Mr. Heinz stated he feels the setback that was done on Option 2 in the southeast corner with the setback of the box from the corner will do what Mr. Johnson said; and it will allow us to see the way the structure is put together there and the distinctive quoins that he discussed with Mr. DeLuca when they had the on-site walk.

Mr. Heinz asked that Mr. Johnson take this one step further and take the area away what looks like a moat. He stated he had always suggested in talking with the developer from the beginning that they want this to “hit the ground.” He stated he thinks that the stone walls and the “areaway” could be all the way out at the edge of the curb. He stated they could do something that is done “at many ski resorts where they do not want to disturb the natural area and they put in a walkway that is made of steel grating.” He stated instead of concrete on grade, it would be a structure that would run along “as soon as you get out of your car and step across the curb, or even in the middle of the space that would be there to take pedestrian traffic, but it would not necessarily be a plaza that extends right up to the face of the door. He stated that same thing could happen on the south side as he had indicated in his memo, and the whole areaway could come out all the way to the face of the southernmost part of the addition and create a view that you could then look down into. He stated it could be made up of something that is not a stone wall, and it might be something more like “setback landscaping block that steps back on a 45 degree angle.” He stated that would let you look down into a space that allows appreciation of where the barn is. Mr. Heinz stated otherwise it seems that they end up with something that is “popping up out of the concrete landscape” that is just a stone wall. He stated this is a bank barn with one side ramped up to allow for access of hay wagons to the main floor while the bottom floor “was still available.” Mr. Heinz suggested they look at the landscaping around that corner and “go with the setbacks” so that you can see the doors one over the other and even down at the window below.

Mr. Grenier asked where the roof line hits the elevated access door to the second floor that is in the middle of the wall. Mr. Johnson stated the doors to the left would be the same proportions, but you cannot see beyond the roof. He added that while he understands it would be ideal to have it between the two doors and try to line it up there, with the existing heights they are dealing with at the barn, it would be difficult for a restaurant. Mr. Grenier stated he likes what they are showing now better than taking it all the way to the corner.

Mr. Grenier stated there is a lot of concrete, and visually it is a drastic change. He stated they are showing some trees, and he suggested connecting some of those instead of putting concrete between them. He stated that would break up the light color concrete. Mr. Johnson stated he would agree. He added from a Land Development perspective, they are showing what the landscape architect is working with, with the building going all the way out to the corner, and they have not been presented the opportunity to revise that. Mr. Grenier stated he feels adding some type of green space will change the look and feel of this corner and other areas since it is “parking lot, concrete, stone wall.”

Mr. Grenier stated this is a flat roof and he asked how they would get snow off the roof and drain it. He stated he would not want water ponding up against the barn itself. Mr. Johnson stated there would be an internal drain and they would taper the installation to the drains. He stated it is a standard flat roof with a 1/4" pitch. Mr. Grenier asked where they would drain to, and Mr. DeLuca stated the water will be piped to the underground storm basins.

Mr. Heinz stated he has difficulty granting a full approval of the concept. He stated he believes the Board is on "their side" with the concept of a glass box that does not relate in terms of materials, style, or age; and "as little as it can touch the barn, the better it is." He stated the same goes for the "ground surface." He stated if they could start to provide some more detailed information as to how "this kind of activity is supposed to take place – how they solve the plumbing problems, the drainage problems, the connection projects, and even the glass," the Board should be able to agree that this will work and be a real asset.

Mr. Heinz noted the place where the roof hits the wall just above the divider course of stone between the upper and lower doors. He stated that makes it a more simple project to connect it to the wall with the gasketing and flashing that has to go up against the stone work. He stated the door could be cut short and a real sill provided underneath so that the top rail of the skylight would be sitting almost midway up the door and allow for that to take place. He stated this would create the separation in terms of the section and the detailing so that the glass becomes "a thing of its own" and just uses the barn as a backdrop. Mr. Heinz stated he feels they are moving in the right direction, and he would ask that they "fix a few of the issues" and maybe in two months they will have some more exact representations of how they are going to build and make sure that they do not "injure" the barn.

Mr. Harris stated the Statute that creates HARB says "the governing body shall pass upon the appropriateness of the exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street or way only and shall consider the general design arrangement, texture, material, and color of the building and structure." Mr. Harris stated the Township Ordinance says that "HARB is to look at the nature, texture, finish, and color of the materials, products, and elements introduced or altered within the District." Mr. Harris stated as he noted previously, the developer cannot be designing these Plans and doing working drawings without knowing that the design is accepted.

He stated they have tried to address the design elements of what is happening, and he understands the request for additional landscaping rather than just having just concrete; however, the connections to the barn, the stormwater controls on the roof, etc. he believes are beyond the HARB's authority.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels that since the proposal from the architect and the design team is that this be a "crystal you can look through to see the barn and not get in the way of that appreciation inside, they have made it a part of the exterior appreciation as well." Mr. Heinz stated they stated that you have to look through this and see the barn; and in "terms of opening the door, this is one of the things that they have done." Mr. Heinz stated they are not going to talk about the ceiling or floor finishes on the inside, but they will talk about the thickness of the fascia and the connection point where the roof goes up against the wall. Mr. Harris stated while that is fair, when they talk about how they are going to be connecting, how they are going to do piping, and stormwater control, he suggests that is beyond the scope of the HARB's review. He added that he does not feel that they typically require that kind of detail. He stated they are here to talk about the design aspect.

Mr. Johnson noted the alternate end of the building, and he showed the rendering of the west elevation – Option 2, and asked if they could come to a resolution with regard to the lantern; and he asked if the Board is in favor of one option versus another. Option 1 was shown as well. Mr. Grenier asked how much higher Option 1 is, and Mr. Johnson stated it is 3'. Mr. Hirko stated he is leaning toward Option 2 which gives more visual of the barn, and there is less blocking of the sight lines.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels that having any kind of solid roof over that especially since it extends 3' in almost every direction "makes it a big deal and instead it became more like a greenhouse with a glass roof that did not extend over the edges and lets you appreciate the connection of the rest of it with a flat roof."

Mr. Grenier asked what is the material that will be on the underside of the roof, and he asked if it is a "cedar slat sort of look;" and Mr. Johnson agreed. Mr. Johnson stated that would carry through the building. Mr. Grenier stated it would look like the interior ceiling, and Mr. Johnson agreed. Mr. Grenier stated it might soften up the look a little from what they are seeing where it is darker/grayish. Mr. Grenier asked if it would be wood, and Mr. Johnson agreed.

Ms. Lashchuk noted the rendering of the southeast elevation – Option 2, and she stated she prefers Option 2 with the setback shown in terms of setting back the glass box. She stated with regard to the lantern, she would be in favor of one height throughout. She also stated she feels that the stone base in the glass box really detracts from what she feels should be the lightness of the box. She stated she would suggest having more of a platform look with a concrete slab that would overhang over a base.

Ms. Lashchuk stated with regard to the well, she appreciates the architect wanting to present the strength of the barn, but the well looks very narrow and rigid. She stated maybe that could be “grades going down over a French drain, and the parapet would be as low as possible with the sidewalk,” and the railing could be similar to the airy railing that they have in the other parts of the building. She stated they may also have boulders that are original from the site, and instead of a vertical heavy retaining wall having that filled with boulders on a 45 degree slope so that it would almost look like an archeological dig where you see how the barn used to be. She stated that could be interspersed with ground cover that would be permanent and not have to be mowed but would add some greenery.

Mr. Grenier noted the rendering looking down into the well. He stated they are showing grass, and he does not see stairs or a ladder down to get into this area. He stated he does generally like the look. He also asked what would happen if something got dropped in there or a “little kid fell in.”

Mr. Majewski stated he would be concerned with the maintenance of it and how they get down there, and he asked that to be clarified.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels the moat could be widened by another 5’ and then having it sloped from the side where they currently have the clapboard and slope down to the back corner where the back side could open up 30’ from the building and start where the trees are planted, and the trees could be planted at the edge of the green and then it goes down “in a general meeting of both slopes” at the existing back wall where it meets the existing grade. He stated that might make more sense since right now it looks like a place that would be a maintenance concern.

Mr. Johnson stated they could look into this further since at this point it is conceptual, and they will work out the ingress and egress of this well.

Mr. DeLuca stated the bottom could be Astroturf, and they will work out the ingress/egress and maintenance as well as making sure that the railing is high enough so that someone would not fall over, and they would follow the Code for that. He stated they could change the façade and will consider maintenance and safety.

Mr. Hirko asked the depth of the well, and Mr. Johnson stated it will vary from a couple feet to seven feet at the end closer to the south.

Mr. DeLuca stated they want the pedestrian traffic to be able to cross throughout the development. He stated while they are looking at just the barn, looking at the triangular shape on the easterly side, they need to consider the pedestrian traffic that is going to walk throughout this community.

Mr. Grenier stated the corner where they have pulled back the addition is one of the main pedestrian intersections to go to different parts of the site, and Mr. DeLuca agreed. Mr. DeLuca noted the whole open space area which is the connectivity between the house and the barn and the pedestrian walkways that go back and forth to the various buildings. He stated he does not want them to lose focus on the overall connectivity when they are looking at the barn.

Mr. Grenier stated he feels the corner where they are talking about pulling back so that you can see parts of the barn is probably going to be one of the busiest corners from a pedestrian perspective. He stated that puts even more importance on making sure we get it right in terms of the visual aspects. He stated the well is there also, and we want to make sure that is correct. He stated they want to make sure that this corner looks “really good and is super safe.”

Mr. Heinz stated he agrees with Mr. Grenier which is one of the reasons why he put such emphasis on it in his memo. He stated he believes that the suggestion he made earlier that in places where there is some consideration of the impact on the land in developments of historic sites or other locations “that have that kind of concern for how does the slope exist now and let’s not get in the way – a raised walkway, a plank walkway, a grate walkway of metal grating would be the kind of thing that would be installed.” He stated if the space that is in that corner is left at existing grade or some close approximation, it would give the concept of the barn that exists and the sloped landscape which makes it a bank barn and will enhance the comprehension by the public of that whole concept.

Mr. DeLuca stated with regard to Ms. Lashchuk's comment about the wall if it were squared off with the sidewalk so the symmetry and the dimension between the back wall and the sidewalk at a certain dimension was held, he does not know exactly what that is and whether it is 5' or 6' for the pedestrian traffic. He stated to do some type of sloped retaining wall to open up that wall might not work.

Mr. Majewski stated it looks to be about a 10' wide sidewalk in that area. Mr. DeLuca stated to get enough slope and grade at 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 to make it gradual, they need to look at that. Mr. Grenier noted the existing conditions photos where you can see the existing slope.

Ms. Helen Heinz, 1355 Edgewood Road, stated while she is a member of the Historic Commission, she is speaking for herself, not the Historic Commission. She stated she is a "little sad" that they are still not using the beautiful spaces inside the barn to their advantage. She stated the view of the barn is still obscured by the sculpting that is going on around the site. She stated she is getting a lot of comments from people about the sculpting of the land. Ms. Heinz stated she "gets the idea of a new, little box which looks like a larger version glass box bus stop which is okay."

Ms. Heinz stated people are complaining about the movement of soil which will occur, and she is getting lots of calls from people about how they are damaging the trees, etc. She stated she trusts that the arborist is trying his best to preserve the drip edge of the oak; but she thinks it is close, and she asked that they be careful. She stated she is also upset that with the interior they are not using some of the spaces in the downstairs and the first and second floors of the structure itself.

Ms. Heinz stated she is upset that they have not adapted or "torn off the 20th Century intrusion from the Prickett family at the front, and it would look a lot better if that were addressed." Ms. Heinz stated "she envisions alligators with the moat like at the CVS." She stated while they are moving in the right direction, she would be in favor of anything they can do to lighten it. She stated she is happy with what the architect has done so far and moving in the right direction making it as light as possible and looking like it is something that is attached to an older structure which is the way the National Registry suggests.

There was no Motion at this point from the Board.

Mr. Heinz asked the Applicant to proceed with addressing some of the comments made this evening especially with regard to the corner, the fascia still being a little on the thick side which could be smaller because they do not need insulation in the overhang. He also asked that they see what could be done at the corner reveal/setback at the elevation level as well as the roof level to enhance the connection and leave it as light as possible. He noted the interior that is visible through the glass was a major design consideration so that they are able to see the wall. He stated in doing so, the representation of the interior space needs to be addressed via the Plan since the Plan shows a sizable bar up against the wall. He stated as he previously noted in the Minutes from the last meeting, the idea of having a back bar with display of liquors, etc. is something that does affect the view of the wall; and how it is addressed is a consideration that the Board should take under advisement.

Mr. Heinz stated given there is no Motion to proceed with a recommendation for a Certificate of Appropriateness, he asked the Applicant to come back with some further adjustments in accordance with the comments from all of the meetings particularly the ones made this evening. He stated he feels that what has been done is a major accomplishment, and the way the architect has approached the setback and reveal of the corner is an advancement in the process. He stated he believes the Board has a general understanding of the concept of one flat roof that minimizes the impact compared to what was shown before.

There being no further business, Mr. Hirko moved, Ms. Stark seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Stark, Secretary

