

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES – DECEMBER 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Historical Architectural Review Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on December 17, 2020. Mr. Heinz called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Those present:

Historical Architectural Review Board:	Stephen Heinz, Chair Jennifer Stark, Secretary Jeff Hirko, Member (joined meeting in progress) Liuba Lashchuk, Member Kathleen Webber, Member
Others:	James Majewski, Director Planning & Zoning John B. Lewis, Supervisor Liaison (joined meeting in progress)
Absent:	Michael Kirk, Code Enforcement Officer/ HARB Member

TABLING OF MINUTES

Ms. Stark. moved, Ms. Lashchuk seconded and it was unanimously carried to Table the Minutes of July 14, 2020 and September 14, 2020 to the next meeting for discussion.

696 STONY HILL ROAD (Rite Aid, TP #20-16-62) – Replacement of Façade and Freestanding Signs
Applicant: CIMA Network

Mr. Mike Horvath, CIMA Network, stated they are representing Rite Aid Pharmacy. He stated they are the sign company that is branding over 400 locations in the Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey areas. He stated he is before HARB with two Applications. A slide was shown of the existing Rite Aid Pharmacy on Stony Hill Road, and they are proposing to remove the existing non-illuminated letters which are approximately 43 square feet. He stated they propose a new non-illuminated sign that is 60 square feet. He stated Rite Aid is undergoing a new branding change which is the reason why he is before HARB.

Mr. Heinz stated there will also be changes in the background. Mr. Horvath stated they are looking to refresh both Rite Aid locations. He stated they would paint the background a neutral color as noted on the Application. Mr. Heinz asked about the material of the background; and Mr. Horvath stated he believes that it is a wood vertical siding, and they will just paint it.

Mr. Majewski stated it will still retain the wood-like look, and Mr. Horvath agreed. Mr. Horvath stated they are not resurfacing it or overlaying it with any materials, and they will just paint it. He stated they will also paint the columns a neutral color.

Mr. Horvath stated the Application shows the size of the sign. He stated a detail was also shown of the letters which are quarter inch flat-cut letters. He stated they are aluminum or acrylic, and they will paint those letters. He stated they will be flush mounted to the newly-painted wall.

Ms. Stark stated she has seen these on a building. Ms. Webber stated she has seen it on Lincoln Highway, and it looks nice. Ms. Lashchyk stated she feels that what has been proposed looks great. Ms. Webber stated she likes the new paint color as well. Ms. Lashchyk stated she also feels the new logo is a nice design.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Hirko joined the meeting at this time. He stated he had reviewed the Sign Application, and is fine with it.

It was unanimously approved as presented.

657 HEACOCK ROAD (RITE AID, TP #20-16-68-003) – Replacement of Signs
Applicant: CIMA Network

Mr. Horvath stated this is similar to the prior Application. He stated this will also replace a non-illuminated sign. He stated this location has vertical, wooden siding, and they are proposing to paint it and refresh the colors. They will put up a new set of Rite Aid non-illuminated letters similar to the previous Application.

Mr. Heinz stated the siding was dealt with approximately two to three years ago, and the siding that is currently installed is an aluminum siding. He stated he is not sure what that does in terms of painting. Mr. Horvath stated aluminum can be painted as easily as wood.

Mr. Heinz asked if the Board has any concern about the fact that this will be about the same color scheme as the location around the corner in terms of the overall look of the shopping centers.

Mr. Hirko stated he has seen the paint for aluminum siding used several times; and even if it is prepared properly, it tends to start flaking off in about one year. Mr. Heinz stated he had that concern as well. Ms. Stark stated she has seen aluminum siding painted successfully and it does last, and it is just a matter of prepping it properly. Mr. Horvath stated they have professional painters, and they understand what needs to be done. He agreed the prep is most important. Ms. Stark stated it is a different type of paint, and Mr. Horvath agreed they will make sure that they use the right paint.

Mr. Heinz stated he assumes that the finish at the Stony Hill Road location will be “eggshell.” Mr. Horvath stated it will probably be a matte finish, and they do not want to go with glossy paints. He stated it could be a matte or semi-gloss, but it would not be a glossy paint as they show a lot of imperfections.

Mr. Heinz stated the mounting may be different for this sign as opposed to the prior Application. Mr. Horvath described the process for installation if this has aluminum siding. He stated they will be stud mounted. Mr. Heinz stated given the fact that the aluminum is a board and batten finish, there will be gaps in back of this so there would be a shadow line consideration since this is on the east side. Mr. Horvath stated they will go out and survey the location and determine where all the voids are and make sure that they strategically place the studs where they will not hit any of the voids. He stated they will also not over-do the studs. He stated you can add some adhesive in the back which helps hold it on as well.

Ms. Stark moved and Ms. Webber seconded to accept the sign as presented.

There was no public comment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Heinz stated he understands that there will be a presentation to the Board of Supervisors and they will have the HARB approval on the Record. Mr. Heinz suggested that Mr. Horvath consider the mounting and the impact that will have on the signs.

1700 YARDLEY-LANGHORNE ROAD (TP #20-21-02) New Sign Installation

Owner: Bennett, Christopher

Mr. Richard VanHorn stated he represents his family and Dogwood Skate Shop. Mr. VanHorn stated he has an existing store in Langhorne Borough that they will be moving from. A slide was shown of the two existing signs which they plan to keep. The one that is flat faced on the building is 102 by 24, and the corner hanging sign is 31 by 40.

Mr. Heinz stated the elongated sign will be attached to the porch railing, and Mr. VanHorn stated it will be professionally mounted. It will be pre-drilled and held in with lock tight bolts. It will be mounted centered on the porch railing. He stated the other sign would be on the right-hand side of the building as shown on the slide. Mr. Heinz asked if that would be extending toward the street, and Mr. VanHorn agreed it would stand out toward the street so that it can be seen from the street whichever way you are driving.

A slide was shown of the full street frontage of the building. Mr. Majewski stated the longer sign would be on the porch rail, and the other sign would be mounted on the right side of the building on the post; and Mr. VanHorn agreed.

Ms. Stark asked if he will be re-using the existing signs, and Mr. VanHorn stated he will as they are still in good condition.

Mr. Heinz asked Mr. VanHorn if he has given any consideration to ramp access for handicap accessibility, and Mr. VanHorn stated he is considering that. Mr. VanHorn noted the customers would park on the right-hand side of the home/business at a location he showed on the slide. He stated there is existing gravel there now. He stated he would like to put in a handicap ramp, and a decision needs to be made if he would have to remove spindles on the right-hand side or if there is enough space between the road and the house to put in a handicap ramp to come in at the original front porch steps on the corner. Mr. Heinz stated it seems that would be a separate Application/presentation before HARB, and Mr. Majewski agreed. Mr. VanHorn stated he did assume that he would have to do that; however, he asked if that is something he would have to have done before he can open up for business. Ms. Stark stated that is not part of HARB's purview other than the aesthetics of it, but per Building Code, it would have to be accessible.

Mr. Heinz asked the Board for suggestions as to where to locate that ramp so it would not detract from the historic impact. Ms. Stark stated there are Design Guidelines that would help with that. Mr. Heinz stated they would have to be made available to the Applicant. Mr. Heinz asked the Board if they have suggestions that would help him. Ms. Lashchuk stated she is not familiar with the floorplan and how the store works inside. She asked if the store would only have an access from the front entrance or will there be one from the back where they could consider having the ramp in the back.

Mr. Heinz stated if the railing that is perpendicular to the house were to stay in place, the hanging sign could be in the way of the clearances for the ramp. Mr. VanHorn stated he may have to widen the ramp so that it is not so close. Ms. Stark stated the ramp could come into the railing system. Ms. Stark stated she feels Mr. VanHorn should have the opportunity to read the Design Guidelines. Ms. Stark stated they try to avoid impacts to the front façade of the house.

Mr. VanHorn stated he could come in from the left-hand side of the porch just for handicap access, and they would not therefore be disturbing the railing. He showed the proposed location on the slide. He stated the lattice would be removed on the front, and the handicap access could be on the left side by the red shutter and they would go across the front porch into the business. Mr. VanHorn stated the business will all be on the first floor, and he and his family will live upstairs.

Mr. Heinz asked that he consider the impact of the elongated sign on the railing which is an architectural feature. He stated putting it on the lattice work might be more appropriate as opposed to attaching it to the railing. Ms. Stark stated once a sign is put on the railing, it would change the whole look of the building. She added that the lattice is not a historic element. She stated she does not feel the existing long sign will fit on the lattice so it would have to be a new sign. Ms. Lashchuk stated the height would also be more appropriate and reasonable if it were on the lattice. Mr. VanHorn agreed that his existing sign is longer than the lattice. Ms. Stark stated she does not feel he could re-purpose his existing long sign.

Mr. Majewski asked if the sign could go underneath the eaves and hang down from above. Mr. VanHorn stated he could do that. Ms. Stark stated they would have to consider the head room at that location. Mr. VanHorn stated it would not come out as far as the steps. He stated the door at that location is the door

to his home, and all the non-handicapped customers would use the far right-hand door. He stated the handicap ramp would go all the way to the door. Mr. Heinz stated he feels that having that sign hang underneath the eaves may also provide an opportunity to install some lighting that would shine down on the sign which would provide night-time visibility that he might not have otherwise.

Ms. Webber asked how wide the space is near the lattice. Mr. VanHorn stated he feels it would be close to the width of the sign, and he would have to measure that.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels Mr. VanHorn should look further into the impact of the suggestions that have been made, and he may want to do a more complete presentation which would photoshop the signs on the elevation so that the Board could make a decision. Mr. Heinz asked Mr. VanHorn if he is under any time constraints. Mr. VanHorn stated he hoped to be living there and opening the business as of April 1. Ms. Stark stated he could do a mock up since he has the signs and the building. She stated in this way he could see if the sign fits and how it would be hung so he could understand what it would look like.

Mr. Heinz stated he can also consider how he wants to do the handicap ramp and then have one presentation so he can be ready to be open within his timeframe.

Mr. Hirko stated he likes the idea of the handicap ramp coming off the end of the porch going down along side of the home.

Ms. Stark asked Mr. Majewski to send the link for the Design Guidelines, and Mr. Majewski stated he will as well as hand deliver a physical copy to the property.

Mr. VanHorn agreed to come back to a future HARB meeting.

Mr. VanHorn stated he does have some information on doing doors on a historic home. He stated the doors are very old; and while he wants to keep the same look and size, for the security of his family and the business, he feels the doors need to be replaced. Mr. Heinz stated the Design Guidelines discuss this. He stated if he were to include a storm door that would not impact the visual effect of the doors. He stated if it was done with plexi-glass infill, he would have a more significant amount of security. He stated storm doors and windows are a traditional add-on and have been readily accepted.

Ms. Stark asked if the doors themselves are beyond repair. Mr. VanHorn stated he could restore and fix the hinges on the storm doors. He stated it is the main door behind the storm door that is very old. He stated the glass on the main doors would be easy to break, and he is looking for a safer door. Mr. Heinz stated that was the reason he was suggesting a plexi-glass or composite infill and he could make it a full glass storm door configuration. Mr. VanHorn stated they could keep the exterior doors. Ms. Webber stated he is asking if he can replace the wood door, and Mr. VanHorn agreed. Ms. Stark stated he needs to have an accessible entry, and she has never seen that done with a storm door. Mr. Heinz stated he agrees that for accessibility, that would be a concern. Mr. Majewski stated an accessible entry will be needed.

Mr. Majewski stated with regard to the lighting of the sign, Mr. VanHorn could look at what was done across the street at DeLorenzo's and the other stores.

Mr. VanHorn noted the stores across the street do not have storm doors, and he asked if they would be missed if he took out the storm doors. Mr. Heinz stated he may need to work with an architect to come up with an appropriate resolution to that. Mr. Heinz stated if he keeps the historic door open during business hours and just uses the exterior door as the access to the space, it would be an out-swinging door which would be appropriate provided the floor levels are appropriately adjusted. Mr. Heinz stated he feels this will have to be looked at by a professional.

Ms. Webber stated Mr. VanHorn has been given a lot of information, and she asked if there would be a punch list for him to consider before he comes back before HARB. She stated this should include a picture of the sign that he has in Langhorne and how it will look near the lattice work. She asked what else he needs to consider; and Mr. Heinz stated it will be listed in the Minutes, and those could be provided to him. Mr. Heinz stated he should also follow the Design Guidelines and the IBC. Mr. Majewski stated the meeting is also available for replay on Facebook and YouTube so Mr. VanHorn could review it.

Mr. VanHorn thanked everyone for their help. Ms. Stark stated they are excited for his shop and his idea to live in the Village. Ms. Lashchuk asked about the origin of the name of the business. Mr. VanHorn stated it is after the dogwood tree which is Bucks County's original tree, and they use the dogwood in many of their graphics including on the boards and apparel. Ms. Lashchuk asked about the business, and Mr. VanHorn stated they are a skate boarding store, and they also sell Vans skate shoes and some other apparel.

1674 EDGEWOOD ROAD (TP #20-021-003)

Sketch of Proposed Plan

Owner: Cameron C. & Olga Jean Troilo

Mr. C. T. Troilo was present and showed a slide of Edgewood Point. He stated what he is showing is Drawing #6 which follows previous discussions with HARB. He stated no engineering has been done, and the Code has not been checked. This is just a conceptual idea to get feedback from the Board. He stated what they are proposing is keeping both of the buildings, re-hab the Point building into the ice cream store which was discussed previously, and re-hab the Quill House, which is currently a duplex, into a new duplex. He stated they would then build two more buildings with six apartments in each following the Historic Guidelines. He stated they would be proposing some sheds for the tenants to use for storage, possibly decks out the back, and green areas. Mr. Troilo stated they would need twenty-two parking spaces. He stated they looked at orientating the buildings along Yardley-Langhorne Road at one of the earlier versions; however, with the existing Quill House where it is located, they could not get as many parking spaces as needed, and that is the reason it is orientated the way it is shown. He asked for feedback from HARB on this option.

Mr. Heinz stated Ms. Lashchuk had made a proposal for this tract and he asked for her opinion. Ms. Lashchuk stated she appreciates Mr. Troilo proposing to keep both buildings and restoring them. She stated she understands the proposal about re-routing Edgewood was too ambitious, adding she does not know if the Township looked into that option. Ms. Lashchuk stated she still feels the intersection should be addressed at some point because it is very dangerous. Ms. Lashchuk stated she feels the proposal being shown looks a little too dense to have twelve units in addition to the existing buildings. Ms. Lashchuk stated she understands that the number of parking spaces would be difficult to provide given the location of the existing buildings. She stated if there were to be less units, she feels he might be able to orient them so that they would follow the street so they would provide the visual Village streetscape. She stated making the new structure would be infill between the two existing buildings. She stated while he could not get as many units, it would still create something that would resemble a traditional Village from the pedestrian and driving point-of-view with the buildings facing one of the roads. She stated the way it is shown currently, they are “out on their own.” She stated she feels this is a great first step.

Ms. Stark stated she is thinking about the streetscape as well. She asked if he explored the streetscape on either of the other two perimeters.

Mr. Lewis joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Troilo stated they looked at it more along Yardley-Langhorne, and did not look at it along Edgewood since there is not as much space there. He stated if the feeling is they need to look at the streetscape aspect again, they could do that. Ms. Stark stated she feels they have the count based on the “ROI” which she understands; however, there could be two clusters – one on Yardley-Langhorne and one in between the two existing houses. Ms. Lashchik agreed. Mr. Troilo stated they could look into that.

Mr. Heinz stated he would agree with having a “progress into the Village” adding that this is one of the first points of density that might be established. He stated it would be more of a Village atmosphere if buildings occupied the streetscape. He stated Mr. Troilo should look into the impact on the Village that this space will have.

Ms. Webber asked Ms. Stark for more of an explanation with regard to breaking up the clusters. Ms. Stark stated Ms. Lashchik had mentioned putting infill between the two existing houses, and that would be one cluster. Ms. Stark stated the other would be along Yardley-Langhorne Road at whatever portion would be best, and there would be parking pockets possibly with green space in between. She stated she is looking for a way to get Mr. Troilo all the units that he is looking for, provide streetscape on both frontages, and populate the site. Ms. Lashchik agreed.

Mr. Troilo stated he understands what they are looking for.

Ms. Stark stated it would be phenomenal if it could be done, and Ms. Lashchik agreed.

Mr. Heinz stated hopefully this has given Mr. Troilo insight as to where he could make adjustments. He stated they are “thrilled” by his willingness to preserve the houses which are the anchor for this corner of the Village. He stated he hopes that Mr. Troilo can come up with something that will provide what he needs in terms of units for rental, and HARB will work with him in accommodating the parking concerns.

OTHER BUSINESS

Bile's Corner

Mr. Majewski stated this was not on the Agenda so it should be considered as Other Business. He stated Mr. Troilo submitted some ideas for the house at the corner of Stony Hill Road and Yardley-Langhorne Road, which is the Bile's Corner house. Mr. Majewski stated this is across the street from Edgewood Café. A slide of the existing house was shown.

Mr. Majewski asked Mr. Troilo where he proposing to add onto the building, and Mr. Troilo stated it is on the west side going out into the vacant area.

Mr. Troilo stated the house is part of the Flowers Field Development. He stated on the Site Plan it is shown as a restaurant with a 5,000 square foot addition on it and an outside patio area. He stated the concept is to build a restaurant there; and since his company does not run restaurants, they would develop it in partnership with someone who knows how to run a restaurant. He stated they would like to add an addition onto the existing building. He stated one section of the existing one-story section would have to be reconfigured, but they would keep the two-story stone structure and the two porches. He stated it would essentially be a new building added onto the existing building. He stated the new building would be where the dining area would be with a cathedral ceiling. He stated the heights are very similar to the existing building, and they would keep the size and the proportions. He stated they are also proposing an outside area with a stone wall around it which would include an outside bar area that will be stylized to look like a blacksmith's shop. He stated the outside restroom would look like a "cold house."

Mr. Troilo stated they are just in the early stages, and no engineering has been done. He stated this is the direction they are heading, and they wanted to show it to the Board early on to get feedback.

Ms. Webber stated she feels what has been proposed is "very pretty."

Mr. Heinz stated they are proposing to extend it by about the same width as the existing frontage of the house to the left as you face the front porch, and Mr. Troilo agreed.

Ms. Webber asked what would the existing house be used for, and Mr. Troilo stated inside the part where the porch is that can be seen, there are a small rooms of approximately 10' by 12'. He stated they would be private dining rooms/meeting rooms or small, intimate seating rooms. He stated the part predominantly facing Stony Hill Road would be the kitchen. Mr. Troilo stated the addition that is seen is proposed to have a cathedral ceiling open all the way to the top, and there would be a bar/seating area and restrooms. He stated the "Retail/front of the house" would be in the new section plus the section next to the porch, and the rest of the old building would be kitchen/storage/office, etc. Ms. Webber stated she feels this is a nice design.

Mr. Heinz stated he feels the entire first-floor level should be continuous with the existing first-floor level which would be at the porch height; and it could all be raised with a raised patio outside on the west side so that you could get up to that level and "then migrate around and differentiate it from the grade elevation using the stone there," and concentrate on doing vertical wood siding or something similar. He stated he saw some renderings which attempted to create historicity to show stone and stucco on the same elevation. Mr. Troilo stated while that is shown on the drawing, they are not at the point where they are considering the fit and finishes and whether they would be a mixture of clapboard and stone or whether they would strip the stucco from the original building and make it all stone, and the new one stucco. Mr. Heinz stated the reason for stucco in most old stone houses was to protect the stonework from deterioration, and the stucco was really a rain shield. He stated the reason this held up so long is because it is an effective rain shield and takes away the need to rely on cement pointing which would be a lot different from the mortar which was used historically; and it could be a disservice to the structure.

Ms. Stark stated what Mr. Heinz has indicated is accurate, and she feels that having a stone structure next to a stucco structure would be "great," and they would not have to do the artifice on the building. Mr. Troilo stated they would be fine with that; however, they are not at the point to ask about any of that yet, and it was just something that the architect drew in.

Mr. Troilo stated with regard to Mr. Heinz's point about raising the new addition, one of their thoughts was to lower the floors inside the old addition so that they would not have to worry about ADA outside access, etc. He stated they wanted to keep the illusion of the old building floor heights, but when you actually go in, it would "not be that way." Mr. Heinz agreed that is a technique to handle this, and possibly they could "split the difference" to get a little bit more ceiling height but to allow for some differentiation from the street level

since that is something that they would have looked for in the Village. He stated across the street there is a little bit of an elevation to have a differentiation of ground planes. Mr. Heinz stated he also feels the idea of a barn-type sheltered area in the back in the open air addresses COVID issues. He stated having the framing that looks like a barn is pleasant to look at.

Mr. Troilo stated given the current situation, this was something they had to consider.

Ms. Lashchuk stated she is very excited about this project and feels it is great. She stated it meets the proportions of the Village, and the vista with the stone retaining wall is “charming.” She stated she is very happy that they are considering doing this kind of work, and it will be great for the Township. Ms. Lashchuk stated the existing building and the addition would not have to be the same material, and the use of stone, stucco, and clapboard would bring in the look of all the different Village dwellings. She stated the barn in the back is very nice.

Mr. Heinz stated the concept is exciting, and he appreciates that Mr. Troilo brought in this preview.

Mr. Heinz stated that Dr. Heinz did mention that according to the Overlay and the original concept there was a limitation as to the amount of space that you could add to an existing structure, and he believes that what is proposed would exceed that considerably. Mr. Heinz stated since it might be in a good cause, they should keep those lines of discussion open. Dr. Heinz stated she feels what is proposed is great.

Dr. Heinz asked if HARB could see if they could get PennDOT to change the traffic signal device that is in the middle of Edgewood Village. She stated it should have been given special attention before it was installed. She suggested that what was installed near the Keswick Theater in Glenside would be more suitable for a Historic District. Mr. Heinz stated he has brought up previously that there is a huge, “industrial-sized refrigerator” diagonally across the street at the edge of the park as well which could have easily been put in underground instead of sticking up at the intersection. He stated he feels the traffic engineers should look into this. He asked Mr. Lewis to consider this in the future.

Ms. Webber stated she feels what is proposed looks beautiful, and she hopes the residents of Flowers Field will feel the same way. She stated she feels it will be a great addition.

Mr. Lewis stated there would be the ability to walk there for dinner, a drink, etc. Mr. Lewis asked what would be north of the building where there is open space that has not yet been developed. Mr. Troilo stated there is a row of shops proposed that would head up toward the overpass. He stated they are hoping to get something going since activity follows activity.

Ms. Lashchuk stated she feels this will be “the jewel of Edgewood Village.” Mr. Hirko stated he feels this will be a welcome addition to the Village, and he would hope to see other shops follow suit.

Mr. Heinz asked Mr. Lewis to report on this to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Majewski stated they are trying to schedule meetings for January and February, and he will send out possible dates. He stated the Township is trying to hold meetings that coincide with other meetings to keep expenses down.

There being no further business, Ms. Stark moved, Ms. Webber seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Stark, Secretary

