

## Lower Makefield Township Historical Commission Meeting

April 13, 2022

### Attendees:

- Joe Camaratta, Historical Commission
- Helen Heinz, Historical Commission
- Chris Greeley, Historical Commission
- James Nycz, Historical Commission
- Thomas Argentieri, Historical Commission
- Daniel Grenier, Board of Supervisors
- Victor Fiori, Historical Commission

Joe opens the meeting with an introduction.

Guest: CT Troilo of Troilo Developers joined the meeting to present his revised plan for development of Edgewood Village

Dan Grenier – Last night CT gave a presentation to HARB (“Historical Architectural Review Board”) and gave feedback and recommendations. There may be some additional changes. This is still an organic process.

Joe opened up the files for presentation and shared for discussion.

Troilo: This is the proposal that was brought before the HARB last night. I’ll go through what we were proposing and then talk about what HARB brought up. We can go from there. The number of building units have been cut down – there were three buildings in the last go around – 17 units. We cut a four unit building out and reduced it to the two pods of buildings with an addition on to the Quill house – down to 14 units. What that accomplished in addition to reducing density is it allowed us to meet parking requirements to not do off-street parking.

We added porched roofs fronting on Langhorne-Yardley Road and staggered building fronts. We had looked at moving the parking lot – there was a suggestion to move it to Langhorne-Yardley Road – didn’t work. From the street it appears not as wide. We were still asking about not having sidewalks on Langhorne-Yardley Road and asked about removing the Quill house with a reconstruction of it. That sums up the site plan and the changes to the previous site plan. We’ve prepared some drawings showing the relations of the buildings to each other and to the existing buildings.

Page 2/8: Looking over Langhorne-Yardley Road – stone house on the point is on the right. 6 unit one is in the middle, 4 unit on the left. Parking is down on the left.

Page 3/8: Looking over Langhorne-Yardley Road – closer to the CVS looking back up towards the point. You can see the stone house on the point, then the 6 and 4 unit.

Page 4/8 – This is from the neighbor’s property looking over the parking lot. The left is the addition to the Quill House. Middle is the end of the 6 unit.

Page 5/8 – This is over by Edgewood close to the Pizza entrance – on the right house is the Quill house, the end of the 6 unit and the renovated stone house on the point.

Page 6/8 – This is closer to the intersection – left is the edge of the stone house on the point, the 6 unit and the reconstructed Quill House on the left side sticking out.

Page 7/8 – Langhorne-Yardley Road with the end of the stone house on the right, 6 unit in the middle, 4 on the left.

HARB Comments (according to Troilo) –

- First off, they were talking about porches themselves – they aren’t adequate. Even if they had stoops matching the overhang, they aren’t big enough. If you staggered the houses more, you could put a full porch across the front of it. On the backside you could do the same to the stone part. They want us to create porches. We’re looking at repositioning the pods.
- The sidewalk along Langhorne-Yardley Road – besides economics – we don’t want to do that because we don’t want to deal with PenDot. We might be able to shift the houses to do the sidewalk and not be in the PenDot right of way.
- One thing that Mr. Heinz suggested – showed some double windows on the stone house – they’d want the original window sizing kept (singles). Shows up on page 5/8.
- Breakup the 6 unit and going to a 4 and a 2 and repositioning that. The 6 unit might be a little too big for the setting. They mentioned maybe a steeper pitch on the roof and more differentiation between the buildings (dormers on one, not on another).
- Not disposed to removing the Quill House and replacing it – want it renovated or parts of it saved. Keep some of the exterior walls and build new around it. Troilo is looking at that.

Dan – noted that the landscape buffer between the two properties

Troilo – We’d do whatever is required.

Tom – I am seeing 6 over 6 windows – is it supposed to be 6 over 9?

Helen: The architecture is something that is slightly addressed and that is reserved for the HARB. I think they’re too wide and should resemble the older buildings. TND (“Traditional Neighborhood Overlay”) is our goal – we want to salvage the historic houses. Starting with taking down the Quill House is a non-starter. We have to preserve the rest of the houses to maintain our historic designation. Make the attempt to conform to that and the Ishmail House – it is against National Register Standards - you can’t change the openings. Maybe you have a casement that looks like an overhung window – but the openings – you can’t change the stone. The porch is larger than it was ever pictured. There was originally a porch on the Quill House – extending that around would be interesting.

I checked the TND on the 6 unit – it specifically says it is a townhouse development (these are apartments) – you are going to rent these?

Troilo – Yes

Helen – The way the TND was set up – we wanted the apartments above the commercial use below – turning the center unit so it was on the street edge would make more sense – maybe they would want a commercial use below. This is advertised as dwelling units – I couldn't find anything in the TND that approves 6 units. There are no units, even in Floral Veil, that are bigger than 4. Also, I would have preferred to see cut-out parking along the street – more on the Langhorne-Yardley Road and would help calm traffic. That is my input.

Joe – My comments are along the same lines – both properties contribute to the historic district. The Department of Interior has four categories for historic properties – preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction<sup>1</sup> – these don't seem to fit into any of these designations?

Troilo - Quill – we were looking at reconstructing the modern version of it (20 years ago?) – if there are pictures of it in a different time period, we would look at that. If we do a renovation on that. If there is a bigger porch and it is nicer and makes sense, we'd look at that.

Helen – You have an addition on the back of it – it can't be more than 10% of the original structure – that looks a lot bigger. We have already conceded on this development that legally it should be 12 dwelling units, because you want to save the two structures, we will live with the 14 – more than that is really pushing it and if you take down another unit, you'll have more space. I would urge you to push PenDOT to have more on-street parking. To walk from the parking lot to the point house would be crazy – you want street parking.

Township made a decision in the early 2000s, we'd see this as a Peddler's Village type area for a commercial space with housing, especially lower end for younger people. Right across this – it is connected to Pricketts – this should be the expensive housing because it has the ambiance of the historic district. That makes it a great sales point.

Dan – The only thing I'll reiterate from what Dr. Heinz was saying – the one sidewalk that isn't there – in terms of this district, you are the one that knows more about the market – it creates a full village feel that you can walk or ride your bike through those paths – it has a knock-on effect of slowing people down.

Helen – They should change the lighting around the area.

Chris – What are the plans for the Ishmael house?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

Troilo – It will be renovated into residential units. The structure would be kept as is.

[Troilo leaves the call with this agenda item now complete]

Joe - Moving over to Patterson Farm – Dendrochronology Survey. Donna is going to join us.

Donna Doan joins the call.

Doan – provides dendrochronology background.

We really want to take a look at the cottage on the farm (back to 1600s) and the Satterthwaite House. I talked to the head of the historic preservation program at BCCC - Matt Metcalf – would be a hands-on project for the students. The samples would go to the Oxford Dendrochronology lab in England. Takes 2-3 months. It is a good opportunity for the students and communities to get involved.

The samples taken from Patterson Farm would become part of the database at Oxford – builds the history of Bucks County and Patterson Farm specifically.

Joe – The proposal calls for 4 samples – what are they?

Doan – It would depend what areas of interest there are. The cottage is one. Michael said he wants more than one sample from each building – he'll take a look through the buildings to make sure the quality of the wood is there and the rings he's looking for is there. He would send 2 for the cottage and 2 for Satterthwaite – maybe the back section.

Helen – Tom and I were looking at the fireplace – there should be an interior fire break – we are going to have to scout around for something in the ceiling or side wall. We'd need permission from the township – building and public works take a lot of the heavy lifting for the farm. Tom discovered a covered staircase that comes into the other room at the base – went up to the second floor for the Bailey Section of the house – might be timber in that wall against the base – that would be one of the oldest timbers in the building. The 1730s section – there'd be plenty of timbers for that.

Joe – Is 2 enough at Satterthwaite?

Helen – I hope we can even find 2 sections. The other issue is that the timbers at the little cabin – the artist cabin – they are covered in bark. If they are 1690 – you are looking at – we have to find 1630 and 1720 samples. That is going to be a hard one too. The original Pennsbury Manor was demolished. The only other house in that township – Tristram's House, Hough House on Moyer Road and a few others – CT's own house which is the original William Yardley House – I've never been in the basement – but might have timbers. They had a fire early on. We'd have to scrounge very quickly for homeowners that would let us do that. Can we negotiate? I'd like to send Oxford a good representation – recently a tree was taken down from Debra's house from

1720s – gigantic living Black Oak tree. That was one of the older trees in the area. He has samples of that available.

James – When I was researching this company, most reports were in England. There is a database – I am curious if they have anything from SE PA that they could compare to, or how much we'll have to provide.

Helen – Maybe you could check?

Joe – There are 300 regional and local databases – not sure if they share databases. It would help to have information on what databases they'd be using.

Donna – Michael does have some Bucks County samples and NJ samples that could be used for comparison. This is the lab used by the Queen

Joe – England samples aren't going to help us.

Donna – They wouldn't be comparing with English samples.

Helen – Do we send 4 samples and have them check it and then we can take other samples and check if they match up?

Donna – That is a question for Michael. They do fill the hole and match the stain.

Helen – I know another person who does this and can take samples, but he'd be doing it as a volunteer. We should go with things that are documented that we can check against samples we take later.

Donna – He wrote the proposal for 4 . If there is good public interest and we can run more with fund raisers, that'd be great.

Joe – There were no challenges with the dating on any of the buildings in the national register applications

Helen – Dan, do we have budget for this?

Dan – I think – in terms of starting the conversation with them. It would go through our Township Manager – he would bring it to the Board of Supervisors and ask them for – he'd have some preliminary conversations – then develop an RFP based on the cost. It isn't in the budget this year – there may be some funding available if it isn't too expensive. We'd like to get some guidance – as a board member, I'd like some guidance from this group – how many samples we should get, how much they are, etc.

Helen – Patterson Farm Group may have a donation with matching funds from the township.

Dan – There are rules around donations and matching funds – we need to check the boxes.

Joe – We need to be clear about what we want to achieve with the project. If we just care about the date, we have a solid proposal. If we need to look at other structures, we should be as clear around what we want to accomplish as possible.

Helen – Motion to explore Dendrochronology proposal with the Township Manager and report back at the next meeting and get it through the municipal system to start the process

James – Second

Vote passes.

Dan – before we bring it to the Board of Supervisors, we need a pretty clearly laid out plan, guidance on how it needs to be done, where it is going to be done, what information we are going to get out of it and why. Maybe between this meeting and next meeting we can work that out and we can review that plan at the next meeting and vote on it to bring to the Township Manager and the Board of Supervisors. **[ACTION ITEM]**

Helen – Move to table this to the next meeting. James, Donna and I will get together and put it together. It is necessary for the National Register application – we want to be clearer about the dating of the structures there and connect to the development of the village. It contributes heavily to dating of the farm.

James – It makes the case for significance.

Helen – If it is earlier than 1690, it is Janney's property. The other pieces I expect to be in the 1730s.

Donna – While I have you all - I had a resident inquire about doing a clean-up around the Octagonal School House site.

Dan – It is on privately owned land. We don't have rights to do that per se. Maybe on the roadway.

Donna – There has been some dumping of construction items – TV and window frames – can public works pick that up?

Dan – Send an email. Some of the township – to my knowledge – there was an issue with the township server today. Easier if someone on the outside sends it.

Helen – Other issue –We have to get a camera on it and secure it.

Dan – The Board of Supervisors Meeting – the regency folks were looking at new pedestrian connections between Regency North and South – Oxford Valley Road which is adjacent. We are looking to turning it into a walkway. I mentioned doing something with that – it is privately owned – that is going on. We are looking at doing other crossings in that same stretch. That may be an opportunity for us to address that.

Helen – In terms of acquisition – is the township supervisors open to it – tax valuation is \$400. They have been paying \$18 per year in taxes for 70 years. Barbara is talking to the daughter who is a lawyer.

Daniel – Acquisitions are hard to come by. I'm interested in it – I would welcome the conversation. If they want to gift it to us, that'd be great. Any information on the owner and contact info – I'd be happy to look into it.

[Donna leaves the meeting with her agenda item complete]

[James leaves the meeting]

[Victor joins the meeting]

[Dr. Ernest Cimino, 1666 Edgewood Road] – public comment

I was listening in to the HARB meeting – Mr. Grenier and Mr. Troilo did a good job of going over the pertinent points. I think the density of the project is still too great. I want Dr. Heinz to correct me if I'm wrong – it should be only 9 units without a variance. The original plan of 18 was twice as big. Now it is 55% over.

Without a variance it should be 9 units for 3/4 of an acre. I would like Dr. Heinz to comment on the correct number of units.

Dan – The Zoning Hearing Board has the final say on variances on density. I adamantly pushed for declining the variance around density. We ended up with a rare 3-2 vote to oppose that variance request. I want that to be clear. In terms of process – there is the HARB v. the Historic Commission v. Zoning Hearing Board – I am the liaison for 3/4 of those. Mr. Heinz was attempting to – I let him address the density issue – including the very large 6 unit building – no one liked. He took the lead in providing guidance on breaking up the larger building. Mr. Heinz talked about the limit on the addition which would bring down the units further. Breaking out the 6 unit would also bring down density. Last night when Mr. Heinz at the HARB talked about the massing of the building – we were talking about density then. The developer is asking for more than is allowed under the zoning and is asking for a variance for that. He'll get push back from that from the Board of Supervisors, HARB and the Zoning Hearing Board.

Dr. Cimino - I was concerned when I heard Dr. Helen Heinz say we're allowing 14.

Helen – This has been a 30 year project for us. The issue is that it is demolition by neglect. He has every legal right to take down any historic structure with very little negative impact from our zoning in LMT. We have to save as many of the buildings on the National Historic Register and not have them suddenly destroyed by an Act of God or a truck ramming into one of them. We want to see the neighborhood developed too. We want to maintain a balance that'll keep him interested enough to take care of the buildings and provide a residential and commercial space. I have been yelled at constantly for trying to save these structures. I don't have much patience. For 30 years of neglect, of course they're not structurally sound.

Dan – To answer your question – the site plan has the zoning requirements – I believe it is 12 units per acre. I think you are correct.

Ernest – 12 is a compromise above 9 and so is 14. I want to have a voice that I would prefer 12 units.

Helen – We are working on that and want to be reasonable. You can't prevent a developer to do his best to make it the most profitable for his investors. This is the delicate dance we do. It is frustrating – you think you have an arrangement and you get stabbed in the back.

Dan – Your comments have been well spoken and received. Please continue to attend – especially the HARB meetings and Zoning Hearing Board and Board of Supervisors meetings.

[Public Comment Ends]

Joe – Approval of the March 2022 Minutes. Any questions or comments?

[None]

Tom – Motion to Approve

Helen – Second

All approve.

Joe: I want to capture the action items – just wanted to go through them and get status

1. Reviewing Ad Hoc Report and highlighting further areas of consideration
2. Send out previous historic register submissions
3. Review historic register submissions and additional information
4. Dan – Goals for 2022 and 2023 preservation
5. Tom – Tried to set up a meeting with the program coordinator at [\_\_\_\_] Farm to see some of the programs they have there
  - Tom – the program coordinator doesn't live in the area – he lives in North Jersey – comes down once a month for a board meeting. He wants to meet with us at one of their meetings and then spend some time with us. That



was the idea. I can see if he is amenable with meeting with us individually or at the farm. Or get the next meeting date.

6. Send recommended goals and objectives for approval by Board of Supervisors
  - Dan – They were provided to the Board of Supervisors. I haven't seen them put on the agenda yet. What I can do at the next board meeting and ask if we have to put them on the agenda. Since I am the secretary, I have no say in the matter on putting them on the agenda. It may be that I read it into the record. If we don't need to vote on it, I can just read it into the record. If we have to vote on it, it has to be on the agenda. I can't force that.

Joe - One of the agenda items is a discussion of the ad hoc committee report. Can you update us on the Board of Supervisors status?

Dan – Not much to update – if you haven't, you should review the report and the presentation. The chair gave a presentation – well received. It is on the township website. At this point we haven't as a board taken any formal steps forward with the recommendations just yet. A lot of it will have to do with funding and the budget process. It starts in Sept/Oct for 2023. That is how a lot of these things get implemented – they get funded. The Phase 0 plan was to do assessments of the properties (environmental, structural, etc) – get all of that done and updates – so we have baseline information for the structures and the grounds.

Joe – proposal – a small group of us look at ad hoc property committee (what is our position or response) and the National Register submission (what is being requested and how to be complete).

Helen – I'll head up the National Register Piece if you do the other one. We also have to look at the connection to Edgewood Village. Hardest part is the dating. If we can stick that in their preliminary planning schedule, that would be better than not.

Joe – There were some other requests on historic significance and comparisons.

Tom – I'll help Helen with that.

Joe – Who wants to work with me on the ad hoc committee.

Victor – I'll help with that.

Joe - We'll put something together and push back to the commission.

Helen – Is someone planting seeds?

Dan – Farming has not stopped at the site.

Helen – I'm concerned about the database.

Tom – Motion to Adjourn

Helen – Second

**Post Meeting Action Items** (as captured by Joe):

Here is a quick summary of the action items from our discussion:

- Develop a plan for dendrochronology project at Patterson Farm, including: objectives for the project, which structures need to be included, information to be collected, and how the information will be used to support our preservation efforts (comments from Dan Grenier at 1:03 in video).
  - Present the plan at the May 11 meeting of the Historical Commission.
  - After approval by the Commission, the plan will be forwarded to the Township Manager to determine if the project needs to go to RFP, and if can be funded by the township's 2022 budget.
  - Helen (lead), James and Donna Doan (Patterson Farm Preservation).
- Develop a response from the Historical Commission to the Ad Hoc Property Committee report.
  - Present to the Historical Commission for discussion and approval.
  - Joe (lead) and Victor.
- Summarize the information required for resubmission of Patterson Farm to the National Register.
  - Helen (lead) and Tom.