

**Heritage Preservation Board**  
Special Meeting of the Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board  
Proposed Amendment of the Historic Resources Inventory

May 21, 2007

**Call to Order**

Co-Chair Nancy Curley called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Present: Boardmembers Sallyanne Wilson, Helen Heitkamp, Kathie Kearley-Green, Jim Adams. Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Planner Kristin Teiche and Recording Secretary Nathalie Bamatter.

Absent: Chair Grayson Marshall, Boardmember(s) Marilyn River. Consultant Dan Peterson was scheduled to appear but was not able to attend.

***This meeting was intended for homeowners who have property proposed for removal from the current Inventory. When the audience was polled all present were homeowners with property to be added with the exception of one member who was currently on the inventory and wanted to be removed. Therefore, it was decided to follow the format of the two previous meetings with the only substantive difference being Item 4, Open Forum.***

- 1. Chair Welcome – Nancy Curley.**
- 2. History of Larkspur’s Preservation Effort – Nancy Curley.**
- 3. Benefits and Restrictions of being listed on the Historic Inventory – Planning Staff.**
- 4. Power Point Presentation – Boardmember Jim Adams**
- 5. Open Forum – Q&A – Co-Chair Curley opened the meeting to the public.**

Planner Teiche asked that the comments from the public be limited to those who have not already spoken at earlier meetings as their previous comments had been duly noted and recorded.

Planner Teiche reiterated that Design Review is required on all homes that have substantial renovations. Reviews include zoning restrictions, lot coverage, floor area, and setbacks. It is only once all these items have been addressed that the historic aspect comes into play.

Lilli Heart, 259 Madrone, said she liked her home but cannot speak for future owners. She wanted to know what happens when the property is sold and someone wants to change the house.

Planning Director Kaufman said that her house already is determined eligible. CEQA requires review. The proposed Inventory is just a means to notify owners of designation.

Ms. Heart said that her property probably doesn't meet setbacks or parking. Planner Teiche said that the historic designation in her case probably would make it easier to obtain Variances.

Brian McLeran, 385 Elm, said he had no background on this process. He said he did not receive a notice rather was notified by a neighbor about tonight's meeting. While he thought the Heritage Board was doing important work he did not want his property on the Inventory.

Planner Teiche said that Heritage Preservation Board is a recommending body and the additions to the Inventory is considered a proposal at this time. If you protest you should do it in writing and if you have some history about the property that would impact the A or B designation please let the City know.

Mr. McLeran said that the City is making a zoning change to property that will impact him as he has two properties on the Inventory. He doesn't understand how the City can do this without the owner's permission.

Planner Teiche said that being listed on the Inventory does not result in a zoning change. Whatever your current zoning is will remain.

Frank Gold, 82 Madrone, asked if a letter is written what will the response be.

Planner Teiche said that if a property is currently rated a low B additional information may result in a lower grade which would remove it from consideration.

Mr. Gold asked which Board would make the final decision?

Planning Director Kaufman said it would be the City Council's determination

Planner Teiche cited an example of a historic home (68 Madrone) that was recently proposed for demolition. The applicant submitted plans that were incomplete based on regular zoning review. Consultant Dan Peterson prepared a report evaluating the house and what could be done while still preserving its historic character. The report allowed gutting the interior, adding a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and filling in the front/side porch. The report was very open-minded but did not recommend demolition. The lot was non-conforming with setback issues. Keeping the existing home allowed for a larger Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Keeping the home allowed the non-conformities to remain.

An audience member asked how being listed on the inventory would impact prospective buyers.

Planner Teiche said that past experience has proven that the homes sell.

Linda Rickley, 32 Boardwalk 1 (house is on Current Inventory), said she wrote a letter requesting removal. Her house was an old barge and had serious deterioration. The defining features of the barge are no longer there with the exception of the initials of the barge and the skeletal beams of the structure.

Ms. Rickley feels that this is a financial hardship and feels that her "hands are tied". Unfortunately she didn't realize her house was on the inventory all these years.

Leonard Valadez, 22 Sycamore, asked his rating. Planner Teiche said he was a "B". Mr. Valadez said his home, built in 1913, is only 550 square feet. What makes that historic?

Planner Teiche said she would have to go through the evaluation and noted he was welcome to come back to the Planning office and go through the material with her.

Mr. Valadez said that the porch had been changed. Planner Teiche said that if it was rebuilt in keeping with the integrity of the home then it wouldn't necessarily be a factor.

Planning Director Kaufman said that if anyone wanted a copy of their evaluation to make a notation next to their name on the sign-in sheet.

Lili Heart, asked if she wrote a letter would it make a difference. She was willing to preserve her home but wanted to do it on her terms and not be forced to.

Planning Director Kaufman said it was not an option and added if there is no new information provided from a current homeowner that would change the evaluation than the recommendation stands.

Herbert Lauer, 9 Boardwalk, bought his property in 1979. At the time it was a Belvedere Ark. He asked if the property is liened. Planner Teiche said no. She said that properties would be identified so that people are informed prior to purchasing. Mr. Lauer went on to say that his ark was condemned 32 years ago and was actually bought for a dollar. He says that it only looks the way it does because he extensively renovated it. He doubled the size. He is proud of his house and said it is even more authentic inside. He went on to say that he does not like the direction that Larkspur is going. He intends to leave his house to his children whom he anticipates will maintain it in as good as condition as he does. He intends to write a letter protesting and is furious about this process.

Planner Teiche said that if the Ark was indeed brought from elsewhere to make sure and mention it in his letter. Mr. Lauer said that the roof was actually cut so that it could be stored in Richmond. Planning Director Kaufman asked if he had any documentation. Mr. Lauer said he had pictures.

Greg Catoni, 134 Magnolia, said he wrote a letter but he didn't think that he needed a reason to not want to be on the inventory. He is concerned that this will decrease the value of this property. He is at the FAR limit and asked what would happen if he wanted solar panels. This was a no-win situation.

Planner Teiche said that it not the City's intention to freeze the properties in time. Larkspur does not want museum pieces but does want to preserve the primary façade. Also, solar panels are permissible.

Mr. McLeran said he recently renovated the house that his parent built 40 years ago and went the extra mile to install new windows that match what was there but that was his choice to do so. He doesn't want to be on the list and doesn't think he has to justify why. He is not saying that what the City is doing is necessarily wrong but feels it violates his rights. He said that he had not been notified of this process.

Planning Director Kaufman said all notices were mailed to the address of record with the County of Marin.

Mr. McLeran said he has a right to choose whether he wants to be on the list. Planning Director Kaufman said to write a letter. Mr. McLeran said that what he is hearing is that he has no rights.

Planning Director Kaufman said that the Heritage Board makes recommendations. CEQA, state law, requires the City to identify historic homes.

The owner of 121 Hawthorne said she had worked with the ladies of the Heritage Board and has known them for years. She wanted to know how the various Boards are elected. Planning Director Kaufman said that the City Council is elected and the other Boards of the City are appointed positions. The Council reviews all applicants and makes all appointments.

Frank Gold, 82 Madrone, wondered why owners are being told they are on the list and are not being invited to choose to be on the list.

Planner Teiche said that CEQA directs staff to evaluate home over 50 years old and identify if it is found to be historic. She said the Board is being pro-active in identifying homes up front so there are no surprises.

Lili Heart said that the City Council already makes bad choices and mentioned a proposed two story parking lot. Planning Director said that there are no two story parking lots proposed in Larkspur. Ms. Heart said that a second story was proposed for the Albertson site and asked how that was in keeping with a historic Larkspur.

Emagene Boero, 20 Loma Vista, wondered if all the audience was polled how many would actually want to be on the Inventory. She felt that being added was punitive. She asked how many individuals had objected. Planning Director Kaufman said she has received about 5-6 letters.

Planning Director Kaufman also noted that those who didn't object did not necessarily come to the meeting.

Planner Teiche said that everyone has to look at the big picture. If a home is deemed historic many non-conformities can remain and Variances may be more supported by staff. It is not the City's intent to freeze a structure and prohibit all possible changes. Many types of improvements can be permitted.

Boardmember Wilson said that the original inventory back in the 1970s' had 68 properties and does not recall hearing too many complaints at that time.

Boardmember Kearley-Green said that in 1993 she purchased 234 Hawthorne, which is an A-rated house, listed on the original inventory. She said she knew upfront of its status and that did not raise any concerns. At the time she moved from San Francisco and worked with the Planning Department to get approvals for foundation work and to renovate the downstairs. She said at the time she had been so impressed with the Planning Department and the Heritage Board and had such a positive experience that she applied to become a Heritage Board member.

She sold the property in 2000 and purchased 21 Hawthorne a home built in 1905 and is being proposed for addition to the inventory. She said that being added to the inventory did not concern her and she did not feel it would de-value her property. She said that because of the slope on her property if she tore down her house she would not be able to rebuild it to the same size. She said that the Board is willing to work with homeowners to allow changes to the property that might not otherwise be allowed. She added that not everyone buys a house with the intention of tearing it down.

Pat Kaiser, 134 Madrone, has lived in her home 39 years and is somewhat reassured by Boardmember Kearley-Greens comments but is upset by the lack of choice and the loss of sovereignty over her property.

Planning Director Kaufman said to write a letter. Ms. Kaiser said she already did.

Christine Main, 437 Holcomb, asked who provided the numbers for the scoring.

Planner Teiche said Consultant Dan Peterson. The original inventory was compiled by volunteers and evaluated at the time by Mr. Peterson. Mr. Peterson then as part of this expanded inventory reevaluated all the properties listed in 1979. The numerical scoring is based on the NHRP rating system. The letter grade is a more localized rating system.

Planning Director Kaufman said that staff understands your feelings but to remember what you love about Larkspur and what makes Larkspur Larkspur.

Ms. Heart said she wants to keep that but doesn't want to be forced.

As there were no additional questions or comments Co-Chair Curley thanked the participants and closed the open forum meeting at 7:50 p.m. Break taken – meeting resumed at 8:00 pm.

1. Regular Business Items:

- Cost estimates and options for repair of historic banner. Boardmember Curley asked where the money would come from. Planning Director Kaufman said to forward the proposal to the City Manager to see how much money the council would be willing to allocate.
- Progress report on Book Committee re-write of Larkspur Past and Present. Boardmember Heitkamp displayed some preliminary layouts proposed for the book. Boardmember Adams asked if color would be used. Boardmember Heitkamp said that as most of the original photos are Black and White there did not appear to be a need for color and that adding color would be a budgeting consideration. Boardmember Heitkamp said that Deanna VanderVeere offered to do the layouts for free but she thought that the work was so time consuming she offered to pay Deanna for her work.

2. Announcement and Attachments:

- Boardmember Wilson asked if anyone from the Heritage Board was interested in participating in a Fourth of July float. Most of the Boardmembers anticipated being out of town during that time but Boardmember Wilson said she would check Chair Marshall would be available.
- Secretary Bamatter mentioned that the City Clerk was pursuing having all documents scanned and asked what items would be priority for the Board. The Board said the minute book would be first priority but would prefer to have all the photos digitally scanned. Planner Teiche to organize what should be scanned with a boardmember.
- Boardmember Kearley-Green passed around a flyer she had received from the Mains and Stewarts regarding the proposed Inventory list (she received the notice as her house is proposed for addition). The parties

who created the flyer had attended both previous meeting but ignored Planner Teiche's comments and responses and provided mis-information.

3. Approval of Minutes.

- As the May 5<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> minutes were labeled incorrectly on the agenda approval has been moved to the next regular meeting.

4. Next meeting: June 18, 2007

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Bamatter  
Recording Secretary