

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of February 11, 2021

Special Meeting for 30 W. Highland

Members Present

<u>✓</u>	Jean McCoubrey, Co-chair	<u>✓</u>	Larry McEwen
<u>✓</u>	Steve Gendler	<u>✓</u>	Ned Mitinger
<u>✓</u>	John Landis	<u>✓</u>	Andrew Moroz
<u>✓</u>	Joyce Lenhardt	<u>✓</u>	Bradley Wells, Co-chair
<u>✓</u>	Chris Linn	<u>✓</u>	Kathi Clayton, Pres, CHCA (ex-officio)
		<u>✓</u>	Tony Banks, VP Physical

Others Attending:

Henry O'Reilly, owner 30 W. Highland Ave
Larry McEwen, architect 30 W. Highland Ave.
Stacy Ulrich, assistant L McEwen
Carl Primavera, attorney for 30 W. Highland Ave.
Neighbors of 30 W. Highland
Community Members
Patricia Cove, HDAC
Lori Salgonicoff, CH Conservancy
Randy Williams, HDAC
Melissa Degenhardt, community members
Sam Blake
Diane Fisk, *Inquirer/CH Local*
Anne Mc Niff, Executive Director CHCA
Celeste Hardester, Development Facilitator
Melissa Nash, recorder

The meeting was opened at 8:06 pm by Jean McCoubrey, co-chair. This meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom. The only action item was 30 West Highland Avenue. Although Larry McEwen is a committee member, he has recused himself as he is the architect for 30 West Highland.

30 West Highland Avenue

•Presentation: The project was presented by Henry O'Reilly and Larry McEwen. H O'Reilly stated his business has been located in Chestnut Hill since 1954 and at 30 W Highland since 1971. He has strong ties to Chestnut Hill. L McEwen presented the project via screen share on Zoom. The project includes 8 townhouses with a tree-lined central walk. The lot is L-shaped. Zoning is CA-1 with some CMX-1. Proposed remapping would result in CA-1. Residential use is not allowed in CA-1, but the residents surrounding this property makes a residential use consistent with the neighborhood. More residences are needed in the area. The project will provide more trees and other plantings. Runoff would be improved. Mass transit is available: 23 and L busses and CH West line very close and CH East line a bit further away. There will be eyes on the street. The refusal is based on two issues: residential use is not allowed and there would be 2 buildings on the property. If this property were zoned for residential use, it could have 8.3 units by area. Fire access needs a 14' alley. There are problems with using the existing building. The existing parking will be moved to the community parking lot side and the garden walk will be against the existing twins. The existing buildings stone will be salvaged and used on the new building. Paving will be reduced. Units 1-6 would have a double garages on the first (ground) floor and

an office space. The second floor would have the living/dining/kitchen spaces. The third floor would hold the master suite. The top floor would have 2 bedrooms and an open room. There are roof decks, which will include the mechanical equipment, for all. Units 7 and 8 have accessible parking in the garage. All units have elevators and outdoor spaces. There is no storm sewer line on West Highland, just sanitary sewer. The City requires a storm sewer line be installed and connected to the storm sewer on Germantown. The existing houses adjacent to the site are 34'+ tall. The proposed buildings are 38'. The materials are Roman brick, metal clad windows, metal wall panels and the re-used schist. Walkways and driveways will be permeable. A ghost of the existing building's roofline is shown on the roof of the new. The pilot houses on the roof would be difficult to see from across the street. There could be a small pocket park on the street. The walkways to the units would include gardens.

•Committee Comments: Ned Mitinger stated that he approves of the project and that it is a terrific step as it adds green space and trees. H O'Reilly noted that mature trees will be added J McCoubrey noted that pervious pavement requires maintenance. L McEwen noted that they have a robust plan for maintenance. H O'Reilly is familiar with this maintenance. John Landis asked about the changes in the Highland façade. That façade was changed to provide more of a front on the street than an end. The façade steps away from the street on the upper level and recreates the arched opening on the current building. The rear façades have been adjusted also. The entries are improved also. Steve Gendler asked about the size of the units. Units are 3100-3200 sq ft plus garages. First floor height is 9'-0" with clear height of 8'-0". Second and third floor heights are 10'-2' with 9'-0" clear. Fourth floor height is 8'-6" with 8'-0" clear. Compact construction will be used. S Gendler noted that site was changing from low intensity to much higher. It was noted that corners are not turned well. It was suggested that glass could help turn the corners. Andrew Moroz stated that this would be a good design for a vacant lot and asked if the project replaces an adaptable building. Knit the old with the new by expanding up and to the rear. H O'Reilly noted that they did explore re-use for the old building. It is too close to the property line to add windows and that pedestrians would need to cross two driveways. Carl Primavera noted that H O'Reilly could sell the property to a speculator who could put up schlock. This is an opportunity to solve property problems. Tony Banks noted that additional retail is not needed. The project solves a problem of needing more residential property. A Moroz repeated that demolition of historical is not the highest bar. It was asked how much of the stone will be re-used. L McEwen estimated that 75-80%. J McCoubrey noted that properties like this that are not on the City register have few protections. H O'Reilly noted the building is contributing and is not high style but utilitarian. Brad Wells asked about plans for fence lines. It could be an estate type fence. There is a stone base on the wall. It was asked if the code requires special treatment for this situation. It does not.

•Neighbor Comments: Neighbors and others who wish to comment or ask questions should indicate this by sending a chat message to Celeste Hardester. Beth Wright asked how the project contributes to the community. The garden walkway seems like a high end gated community. The Highland area needs to be enhanced more. She also asked if this were to be built piecemeal or all at once. She was also concerned about parking on the Highland. The response was that currently there are trucks moving in and out throughout the day. The project is to be built all at once. There will be an HOA. There will be preconstruction sale and control of the planted. There are no remote garages. This is not a gated community. Tim Breslin noted that it looks gated. The project looks like apartments. Craig Schelter noted that the project needs to fit in the historic district. The street unit needs to be smaller to harmonize with the street. T Breslin asked why not make the project less dense and include adaptive re-use. The project seems to be driven by cost and profit. He suggested constructing 4 units rather than 8. H O'Reilly noted that some aspects of the project increase costs, especially the need to connect to storm sewers. A Moroz noted that it is sad to see the scale and age of the existing taken away Caroline Simons asked what was contributing about the existing other than stone and its age. Richard Snowden noted that 80% of the district was composed of contributing and significant. He noted that as the owner of

many structures, 5 or 6 which are contributing, that he is mindful of the conditions. Removing the building speaks to who we are as a community. The building was built in 1903 by Frank Mayo; it was colonialized in the 1950s. Cathy Rooney noted that the project is impressive but, unlike neighbors, there is no setback and no front porches. Jeff Krieger, owner of 14, 16 and 18 West Highland and doing business in 14, asked about traffic in the alley. C Primavera noted that access in the alley needs to work for all. It needs to be cleaned up. The current building is in a sea of paved parking. The context has been eroded. It was noted that the alley has bad sight lines. It is hard to see pedestrians. L McEwen stated that units 1-6 would enter and exit using the same driveway; only units 7 and 8 would use the alley for exit only. J Krieger suggested memorializing maintenance of the alley. H O'Reilly noted that the HOA would cover this. J McCoubrey asked about trash storage for the units. Trash will be placed on the curb. Denis Lucey added some comments. The HOA would be useful for maintaining the uniformity in landscaping and should take care of the trash. He noted that the Weavers Way side of the project was more appealing. There should be a greater setback from the street. Borings are needed for the site as there has been some subsidence possibly from an unfilled cellar and well. L McEwen stated that soil borings are planned. J Krieger noted that this project would bring long, noisy construction. Units 7 and 8 are in his backyard. The 38' height and the pilot houses create a concern for daylight. He would like to get a better understanding of the effect on his light. L McEwen will consider stepping unit 7 back and has done some sunlight studies which he will share with J Krieger. Don Ratchford asked about zoning equivalency. This is designed to fit RSA-3 zoning, which allows pilot houses. He further asked about side yards and setbacks for RSA-3. The rear yard should be OK. He asked about preserving the tree canopy. At present there are no trees. Native species are envisioned. T Breslin noted that trees in the drawings block the view of the building. L McEwen noted that the new project is only 39' tall, only a few inches taller than adjacent buildings. It was noted that there were nice old buildings across the street.

•Committee Action: J McCoubrey asked if there were any on other questions and called for a motion. H O'Reilly noted that there were snarky comments. He will continue to live In Chestnut Hill J Landis stated he will make a motion after making some comments. He feels the project would improve the neighborhood with its handsome design, graceful density and will add value to the people and the neighborhood. There-use of the schist is good and the mews arrangement is also good and is popular in the marketplace. He made 2 suggestions: move back the top floor of the Highland façade and make rear units lower so they do not overpower the town houses. It was moved that the LUPZC support the project in its configuration with the top floor of the Highland facade moved back and units 7 and 8 reduced top floor. It was asked if the variance need to be restated it was also asked if changed could be explored by the DRC meeting. The motion was restated:

It was moved that the LUPZC support the request for variances for 30 West Highland as it is currently configured with the provisos that the configuration of the top floor of the Highland façade be investigated to push it back from the current plane and that attention be paid to the massing of the top floor of unit 8 on the Highland to provide relief to the houses on West Highland.

The motion was seconded. The vote was 4 in favor and one against. The project will move to the DRC then to the Board meeting.

Adjournment

• The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 PM.