

Planners OK two houses next to Physick Estate

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

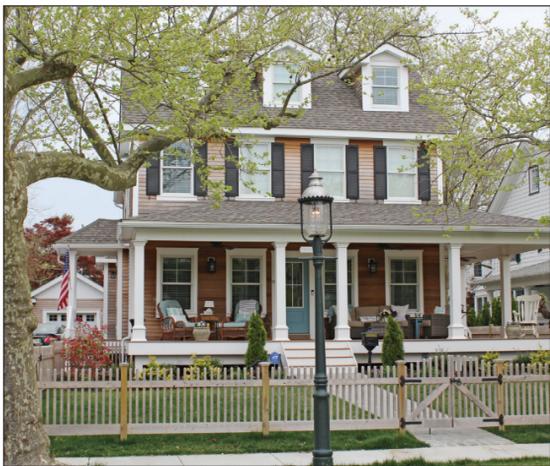
CAPE MAY — The city's Planning Board approved a minor subdivision to create two lots for two new homes between the Emlen Physick Estate and Cape May Tennis Club in a 6-3 vote.

At an April 9 Planning Board meeting, attorney Ron Gelzunas represented Cape Real Estate Developers LLC principle Scott Peter, contract purchaser of 1024 Washington St. Gelzunas noted the property was located in the historic district in a very visible area of Cape May.

The property is currently developed with a 1960s vintage home he termed a "Brady Bunch"-style house. "I don't believe this structure fits in with the historic structure of Cape May in its past, present or into the future either," Gelzunas said. The applicant proposed to subdivide the lot to construct two single-family homes. The project received conceptual approval from Cape May's Historic Preservation Commission.

Peter said he built a home at 1035 Washington St. with a design that those passing by the home cannot discern whether the home is historic or new. He said he was proposing to construct two houses at 1024 Washington St.

The house closest to the Physick Estate will be the larger of the two new homes to be constructed, Peter said. He said it would be of Colonial design similar to 1035 Washington St., across the street. The home



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
The home at 1024 Washington St., above, will be torn down and two homes similar to the one at 1035 Washington St., left, will be built in its place.

will have a full front porch, shutters, cedar siding, dormers and a reverse gable roof.

The larger of the two homes would be 2,400 square feet, Peter said. The second home would be more of a craftsman design with tapered columns and gables, two and a half stories totaling 2,250 square feet, he said.

Planning Board engineer Craig Hurlless said submitted plans showed the smaller home at 2,489 square feet and the larger house at 2,744 square feet. Peter said he was only taking into account living space.

On plans, lot 12, which is the smaller lot, shows 2,489 square feet with lot 12.01 showing 2,744 square feet, Hurlless said. Peter concurred with Hurlless on the size of the homes.

Gelzunas said the project complied with all of the city's bulk regulations.

Engineer and planner Vince Orlando, of Engineering Design Associates, said the current house on the property had pre-existing, nonconforming setbacks. He said the rear setback was only 3.5 feet from the property line.

Orlando said the new lots would conform with every aspect of R-2 zoning with the exception of lot area coverage. While the requirement is 7,500 square feet, the applicant by subdividing provides 7,285 square feet, or 215 square feet less than the requirement for each lot.

He said many lots in the immediate area are existing, nonconforming lots. Orlando said a C-2 variance would be appropriate since a nonconforming, nonhistoric structure would be replaced with homes of a more appropriate architectural style.

Hurlless said one the neg-

ative impacts of the project could be stormwater runoff. He said the architect provided a very rudimentary drainage design. He asked Orlando if a stormwater system could be developed for both lots that would address the required standards.

Orlando confirmed he was confident that he could design such a system. Board member Scott Maslow said the Cape May Tennis Club had concerns about drainage from the new homes. He asked the stormwater system be subject to a review from the tennis club. Planning Board solicitor Richard King said it was not appropriate for a third party to review the plans.

Hurlless said he needed to see the elevation of the tennis courts as part of the stormwater system plans. Board member Harley Shuler noted both houses on the plans have swim-

ming pools. Peter said he was not proposing to build pools but wanted to have it on the plans as an option for a potential buyer.

Hurlless said the pools would not meet the required 10-foot setbacks and the board was not offering approval. He said the project would require a variance for lot size.

During public comment, Washington Street resident Robert Boyd asked what Peter intended to do with the new homes. Peter said he would sell the homes. He noted there was a 50 percent chance the properties would become summer rental homes. Peter said about 95 percent of his projects did not become rental homes.

Boyd expressed concern about street flooding in the block exacerbated by the two new homes.

"I think this development is going to cause far less runoff than what's there today," Peter said.

Jill Bremer, owner of 1035 Washington St., said she lives in the home she purchased from Peter full time and planned to keep it in the family for generations. She said the house was included on the Mid-

Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities (MAC) candlelight tour.

"They asked who did the renovation because they could not believe it was new construction," Bremer said.

Washington Street resident Carol Boyd said she had concerns with increasing density in Cape May.

"Now, we're tearing down houses and putting up two where one was," she said.

Board member Bob Elwell said he favored just one house being constructed on the property.

Deputy City Manager Jerry Inderwies complimented the design of 1035 Washington St. He said, however, he liked the property better when it was a vacant lot with a large tree that was removed which provided uniqueness to the neighborhood.

Inderwies said adding two homes to the lot at 1024 Washington St. would increase the density of the neighborhood. He asked if the new homes would be added to the MAC tour and attract hundreds of persons to the neighborhood.

Maslow said he was not in favor of the proposed swimming pools.

"You're asking for a variance and then on top of that, you'll be putting in probably two pools behind there, which increases the density of the lots even more and creates a lot of noise in the back section," he said.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said the current house at 1024 Washington St. fit into the neighborhood in the past. She said she wished the proposed project had been a little smaller or just one house.

Peter agreed to eliminate swimming pools from the design of both homes. Board members Inderwies, Elwell and Shuler voted against the approval in the final vote.

TIDES : May 1-8, 2019

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	6:27	6:54	12:06	12:24
2	7:09	7:32	12:50	1:00
3	7:49	8:08	1:32	1:35
4	8:27	8:44	2:12	2:11
5	9:06	9:20	2:52	2:47
6	9:45	9:58	3:34	3:25
7	10:27	10:40	4:18	4:07
8	11:13	11:27	5:05	4:53

MOON PHASES

New moon, May 4 • first quarter, May 11

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