

Historic integrity

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replicas, rebuilds or new houses built on historic structure footprints.”

“These houses may or may not have historic elements of the former structure,” Wardell said. “They may only have a plaque telling people that something historic used to stand on that spot or they may contain historic elements, for example floorboards that were torn from a demolished historic house used in an exhibit that explains an event from long ago.”

She said the city seems to be going in the direction of replicas and rebuilds.

Benton Avenue resident Jack Riehl, who has expressed his views on 901 Benton Ave. in a letter to the editor in this edition (Page A6), received a letter from City Manager Neil Young stating the home received Zoning Board and HPC approvals for the project “and at this point, the HPC is comfortable with the status of the project.”

Wardell said the home is listed as contributing to the historic district. She said the house was sold, stripped down to the

frame and is being rebuilt into a huge house, very different from the original. She said the rebuilt home does not respect the neighborhood’s character and the legacy of the previous owners.

Through an Open Public Records Act request, Wardell received building plans for the house. She said initial plans submitted for the project in August 2018 were rejected by the HPC but approved in October with the contingency the original nine windows be reviewed by the HPC.

Wardell asked whether the home would make the Frog Hollow section of the city more susceptible to flooding and whether the new structure would be removed from the HPC’s listings as a contributing structure.

“Will Cape May lose its status as a National Historic Landmark because of this continued loss of historic properties?” she asked.

HPC Chairman Warren Coupland confirmed initial plans were rejected by the commission and the owners returned with scaled-back plans that included raising the flood



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
901 Benton Ave., a contributing home to the Cape May Historic District, before construction began.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
901 Benton Ave. now. Neighbors question whether there is anything left of the historic home.

level of the house.

“On the HPC, we try to accommodate this blend between maintaining the National Historic Landmark status and accommodating necessary change and accommodating property owners,” he said.

Coupland said additions of this magnitude have been approved for other homes without issue. He said 901 Benton Ave. is located on a corner lot, which makes it look larger than if it were located on a closed lot.

The house across the street is about the same height and also has dormers, Coupland said, adding that the pitch of the roof of 901 Benton Ave. remains the same.

Coupland said the HPC unanimously approved the project. He said two HPC members visited the site and determined the nine windows were not original and could be replaced with nine wooden windows.

In addition, the aluminum siding is being re-

‘I still say that house was demolished. I know you have to strip it to raise it but they take whole houses on the back of a truck and it’s still the same structure when it goes back down.’

–James Hobden, of Jefferson Street

‘On the HPC, we try to accommodate this blend between maintaining the National Historic Landmark status and accommodating necessary change and accommodating property owners.’

–HPC Chairman Warren Coupland

Coupland said he visited the property and found the roof pitch and height as approved.

“There are people who are trying desperately to preserve what is historic in this town,” Roche said.

She said when she walks into the city’s Construction Office, she is obstructed and not able to speak with the persons with authority.

“We are your advocates. We’re the people who are trying to preserve these houses and live in them and keep them going,” Roche said.

HPC solicitor Robert Fineberg said the public may not understand the limitations of the commission, which operates under state land use law. Once the HPC grants an approval for a project, it ends the responsibility of the commission to that project.

“It has happened that there is deviations from that plan going forward, sometimes intentional, sometimes not intentionally. Sometimes problems occur in the course of construction or reconstruction that weren’t anticipated and so there are changes to the plans,” he said.

The process requires the applicant to return to the HPC if the changes affect the exterior appearance of the building. He said sometimes deviations from HPC approvals are discovered by commissioners walking past a structure and are brought to the attention of code enforcement.

“The members of the HPC aren’t charged with the responsibility of making sure that those plans are followed,” Fineberg said. “Just like members of the Zoning Board or Planning Board, once they do their job, they don’t go out and look at the projects and see whether it complies with their requirements.”

He said there are limitations as to what the HPC could do to follow up on its approvals. The commission has met with city officials to address enforcement, he said. Fineberg said drainage issues should be brought to the attention of the Construction Office.

“I think when the project is done, it will add to the community,” Coupland said.

TIDES : July 24-31, 2019

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
24	1:23	2:03	7:29	8:03
25	2:12	2:55	8:14	9:04
26	3:08	3:50	9:03	10:05
27	4:08	4:46	9:57	11:05
28	5:10	5:41	10:52	
29	6:08	6:34	12:01	11:48
30	7:03	7:26	12:54	12:43
31	7:57	8:17	1:46	1:37

MOON PHASES

Last quarter, July 25 • first quarter, Aug. 7

LEGAL NOTICE

Treatments for control of nuisance aquatic vegetation may be conducted at the following lakes, ponds, or wetlands areas in the noted COUNTY:

Municipality - Lake or Wetland Site, between 08/01/19-08/31/19.

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Applications of one or more of the following herbicides/algaeicides will be made by ground equipment or boat:

Aquastrike (Endothal, diquat dibromide), AquaPro /Aquaneat/Rodeo (glyphosate), Aquathol (endothall), Depth Charge (flumioxazin, 2,4-D), Chinook (endothall/2,4-D), ProcellarCOR EC (florpyrauxifen-benzyl), Renovate/Garlon (triclopyr), Reward/ Tribune (diquat dibromide), Sculpin G/Weed 64/Navigate/Platoon (2,4-D), Sonar (fluridone), Clipper/Schooner/Propeller (flumioxazin), Cutrine Plus/Komeen/Captain/Captain XTR/Clearigate/ Nautique (copper), Copper Sulfate/SeClear/ Earthtec (CuSO4), Clearcast (imazamox), Polaris/Habitat (imazapyr), Tradewind (bispyribac sodium), Green Clean/Pak 27 (sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate). Work will be conducted by SOLitude Lake Management: NJ#99877A, 310 East Washington Ave, Suite C, Washington, NJ 07882, R. Schindler or NJ#91183B, PO 969, Virginia Beach, VA 23451, physical address: Oxford, PA, G. Ferris. SOLitude Lake Management phone: 888-480-5253. Upon request, the pesticide applicator or applicator business shall provide a resident with notification at least 12 hours prior to application, except for Quarantine and Disease Vector Control only, when conditions necessitate pesticide applications sooner than that time. For poison emergency info call 800-222-1222. For health inquiries, info about pesticide exposure signs/symptoms call 800-858-7378. For pesticide regulation information, pesticide complaints, and health referrals, contact NJDEP PCP at 609-984-6507.

placed with wood. He said the HPC is committed to Cape May keeping its National Historic Landmark status.

Benton Avenue resident Jim Brady said 901 Benton Ave. was designated as historic.

“Is it still historic?” he asked.

Coupland said the property is “on the cusp.”

“Perhaps the architectural historian would find it contributing. On the other hand, perhaps there has been enough alteration that it would not,” he said.

Had the property been evaluated recently with replacement windows and metal siding, it may have been challenged as being a contributing property, Coupland said. He said the home would remain a contributing structure until it is evaluated by an architectural historian and voted upon by City Council.

“It’s interesting to think it’s still considered contributing because it’s not the same house,” Brady said.

Jefferson Avenue resident Rose Ellen Roche said she was part of a group of about 25 concerned neighbors who have sent letters to the city manager and mayor. She

said the owners declared 901 Benton Ave. was infested with termites.

She said flooding of the neighborhood remains a concern. In a letter to homeowners in the neighborhood, Young stated the end results of any drainage issues will not be known until completion of the project, Roche said.

The city’s master plan re-examination of 2019 notes the state Department of Environmental Protection and the National Park Service recognize Frog Hollow as historic and an area that floods, she said.

Roche said 901 Benton Ave. is raising the grade, which would affect other properties. She said one licensed surveyor found the house was built over a stream, while another survey showed no stream. The previous owner, Ann Tourison, kept a mud basement for that reason, she said.

Roche said for weeks that stream was “pumped with concrete.”

“Mother Nature will find her way,” she said.

The stream may re-emerge under the house, make its way to her property behind 901 Benton Ave. or act as a dam and back up into other historic structures, Roche said.

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