

LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Special Regular Meeting

September 26, 1995

Council Liaison: Gina Janett

Staff Liaison: Joe Frank

SUMMARY OF MEETING: The Commission reviewed a slide show on adaptive reuse of agricultural properties, heard a conceptual proposal for redevelopment of the Preston Farm, and took the Visual Preference Survey for the City Plan. The Commission designated and reviewed the design for a State Tax credit rehabilitation of the Howard House, 145 N. Loomis. Ms. Carpenter was elected chairperson and Ms. Weatherford vice-chairperson for the coming year.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Commission Chairman Jennifer Carpenter called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m., 281 N. College Avenue. Staff, Carol Tunner, called the roll. Commission members Jennifer Carpenter, Jean Kullman, Ruth Weatherford, Bud Frick, Jim Tanner, and Terence Hoaglund were present. Per Hogestad was absent. Joe Frank, Karen McWilliams and Carol Tunner represented staff.

GUESTS: Rheba Massey, Local History Coordinator; Eldon Ward of Cityscape, Inc.; Stan Whitaker of G. T. Land; and Mary Humstone and Jim Reidhead, Board of Directors of Historic Fort Collins Development Corporation.

AGENDA REVIEW: No changes to the agenda.

STAFF REPORT: Ms. Tunner announced that the Fort Collins Police Department was looking at 238 Walnut Street, the Old Firehouse, as new police quarters. Mrs. Massey announced that they were also considering putting a police museum in the lobby as part of a historical display that people will see coming into the building. Ms. McWilliams announced that the CBD Survey contract had been let to Jason Marmor, Retrospect, Inc.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORTS: There were none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: There were no corrections to the June 13, 1995 minutes so they were approved as presented.

SLIDE PRESENTATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE OF AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES:

Ms. Massey gave a slide presentation that she had put together on two concepts of adaptive reuse of agricultural properties. The first subject was Yountville, CA. where an old winery of vintage 1870 was changed by three developers in 1968 to an art complex, and when that failed, it was turned into a very successful retail complex. It has become a destination point which still has its agricultural feeling. The second subject was an entire town, Gruene, Texas. Founded in 1840/1850 as a German settlement, it has been adapted to an artist colony and maintains its agricultural resources despite the development that has occurred.

Ms. Carpenter appreciated the slide show and described the subjects as two entirely different buildings whose adaptive reuse was so successful. She said it was great information to have. The LPC has worked in Old Town so much but now this new development south of the city in the historic agricultural areas is a challenge.

Mr. Frick commented that he had visited Yountville, CA. five years ago and it has come a long way.

Ms. Massey announced that she is sponsoring a Hispanic Heritage Tour, Saturday October 7 at 10:00 a.m. at the Holy Family Church. It will be led by Lee Suniga who was born and raised in Fort Collins. In view of Mr. Suniga's advancing age, he wants to share what he knows about his heritage. After refreshments at the church, the tour will drive to Alta Vista. There is a maximum of 40 people on the tour so she encouraged the LPC to sign up right away.

PRESTON FARM - CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Mr. Hoaglund announced that due to a conflict of interest (his employment at Cityscape, Inc.) he would not be participating in this discussion.

Ms. Carpenter introduced Mr. Whitaker and Mr. Ward and described their appearance before the Commission as an informal exchange of ideas on how the Preston Farm corner could be developed.

Mr. Whitaker described the plan they presented as not a formal final plan. G. T. Land, the owner of the property, is a mutual fund holding company that works with land development. Their investors want to get their investment back out of the project with reasonable return. They would like to preserve history and the structures to the extent that they can. They are locally sympathetic but have the other financial side to consider. They are looking for suggestions.

Ms. Carpenter asked if a firm developer was buying the land. Mr. Whitaker said no, they are taking the current conceptual plan through the preliminary PUD process to ascertain the land uses possible. This will shorten the time frame when a developer is on board. Mr. Whitaker said that they feel their conceptual plan is consistent with the Harmony Corridor Plan, that this commercial corner has been designated as a neighborhood shopping center. They are proposing a community center with offices, a possible bed and breakfast, grocery store, etc. The shopping center has to translate to an economic benefit.

Mr. Ward discussed the project as one of mixed use activity. The corner is only one of two neighborhood shopping centers in the Harmony Corridor Plan where a grocery store can go. He also mentioned the Harmony School corner. There is also no developer on line here. Their plans are for more of a shopping center and the school house is shown as a pad site. It can be worked into the overall plan by adding on to the building. They have already had inquiries about the school being used for a church, brew-pub, bank, or arts/crafts center.

Ms. Carpenter asked if the design guidelines had been done yet for the Harmony Road centers.

Mr. Ward showed pictures of the outbuildings and farm house of the Preston Farm that had been identified by staff as significant. There are a number of adaptations possible for the house. The bigger puzzle is what to do with the outbuildings given the proposed urban context of the corner and small size of the buildings. Mr. Ward said that starting with the house, they wondered whether the site was significant for the house alone. Since this is early in the process, he wanted to avoid a rumor mill and emphasize what options might be possible. A problem is the remoteness of the turkey house and granary. They had looked at scale, porches, lap-siding for compatible architecture on the adjacent buildings in the nearby activity center. Their goals were: 1. To preserve through adaptive renovation in so far as possible, 2. Design the site to allow interpretive signage and "walking tours," 3. Consider relocation of some outbuildings on or off the site if no economically viable use was shown in the present location, 4. New buildings are to have compatible form, materials and character, 5. Create transitions and allow new building's construction to enhance the economic viability of the site, 6. Design site circulation and landscaping to work with the existing buildings while integrating the area into the larger activity center, 7. Determine applicable financial incentives (tax credits, property tax rebates, tax and/or development fee waivers, available loan pools, etc.) available to this property. Mr. Ward then described how they were months or years away from architectural discussions; they are concerned now with land uses and will be back when they have something more definite.

Ms. Carpenter said she appreciated G. T. Land's openness and starting the discussion at this early stage. She said this is the way the LPC likes to work with developers, at an early stage when they can be of help with their expertise. Mr. Whitaker said that they had started with the typical developer approach, to clear the land, and the Rotary club is enthused with moving the granary to Lee Martinez Park, but now G. T. Land has changed the drainage plan on their conceptual plan to leave the granary in the area. The question is how to maintain it if they were to dedicate the immediate land around the farm as an open area. Mr. Ward added the concern of potential vandalism to the buildings if they were unoccupied. Mr. Whitaker added that they must have a use, such as a bed and breakfast, which could take up a larger piece of land. One potential user was attracted to the house but not the outbuildings and was wary of the city and historic process.

After Ms. Carpenter opened the discussion to the Commission and guests, Mr. Frick expressed support for moving the granary closer to the rest of the buildings. It would still be in context but work better than being remote and associated with nothing.

Ms. McWilliams asked if the retail buildings could be flipped on the plan so the large grocery store was not so close. Mr. Whitaker said that they are close to having an office use for the building at Corbett and Harmony. Also this area is a mixed use area and they are not sure that a big box (48,000 sq. ft.) will go into the northwest. It can't be moved to the other side. The market place may prefer smaller uses. Mr. Ward recalled that City Council has decreed big boxes will go at corners of two

arterials. Ms. Carpenter was concerned about the intensity of use. Mr. Ward said that store uses near the farm would mean more people would see and appreciate it than office uses. Ms. Carpenter felt that moving the big box over would still be in the spirit of where uses can go; the corner of two arterials includes the whole piece of land and a big box on any part of it would meet the recommended corner use. Mr. Whitaker said that if the big box is not a grocery store, it is limited to 25,000 sq. ft., or at best two of these. This size and type of uses may be more creative in their ideas. He hopes to have retail spread throughout the corner. Mr. Ward noted that 150,000 square feet of secondary uses is allowed according to the Harmony Corridor Plan (restaurants/retail.) They are trying to live up to the mixed use credo of 120,000 sq. ft. retail in the neighborhood center and 20% in office park. He said they want to mix the retail throughout the center.

Ms. Weatherford noted Bill Neal's development at Horsetooth and Shields and asked if it is possible to do that. Mr. Whitaker said they had seen it and had discussed if that concept would work. Mr. Ward said that they don't think a grocery store is likely for Preston Corner but it could happen. He reminded the Commission that they still needed enough activity and intensity of use to keep the farm site alive.

Mr. Tanner brought up that the LPC was arguing for maintaining the integrity of the site, not a sea of parking lots. They are trying to hold on to the typical farm and create an enclave, as much as can be managed to tell of the farm's history. The odd outbuildings could be moved in where people can look at them and pictures/displays can tell how it was. Mr. Frick asked for the developer to leave as much farmland around the farm as possible. Mr. Whitaker likes moving the granary over to the farm if there is a use for it there. He has had one retail use inquiry that could use the granary. Mr. Reidhead sadly agreed with the concern of the granary's current isolation, but he noted it isn't the original site. Ms. McWilliams stated that it had been there since the 1920s. Mr. Reidhead said that it had been moved and it is in jeopardy where it is. He related his similar experience with the Hover Farm in Longmont. From a retailing point of view the activity center should be close in. He asked about putting the house at the center of a 1/4 mile radius - people would walk that far. He also felt that maintenance was an important issue.

Mr. Ward made another point that they had tried with this plan to set up vistas of the farm using a central spine circulation so pedestrians and drivers could see there was something of interest down that way. They would save as many trees and buildings to invite people there.

Mr. Reidhead asked if G. T. Land could use tax exemptions. Mr. Whitaker said, they are landowners not developers but they need to understand incentives in order to market to prospective buyers. Ms. Humstone passed out a fact sheet on incentives. She suggested the donation of an easement on the farmstead so it would only be developed at the present intensity and the developer could take a charitable deduction. Ms. Carpenter asked if the farm was broken out now, couldn't G. T. Land take the 1 1/2 acre credit now. Mr. Whitaker replied that someone has to end up owning it. He said that they would have to evaluate whether the tax break was higher that way or if an owner buys it and

takes the credit. The game plan is to look for a user for a five acre parcel.

Ms. Humstone asked about the surrounding pad uses. Ms. Massey asked why the buildings couldn't be moved closer to the road and put the parking areas in the rear. Mr. Whitaker said that the Harmony Road Plan requires 80 foot landscape buffers on Harmony but none are required on College. People who develop these buildings want store and parking visibility to get people to their front door. Ms. Massey said that she hoped G. T. Land was relating to potential developers how exciting this site could be. Several Commission members echoed her comment.

Mr. Whitaker said they had considered creating a round-about or circle in Timberwood Drive with the house in the center but that wasn't acceptable. They even changed the name from Wildwood to Preston Center. Ms. Humstone stated that to her, if the buildings are moved, they have completely lost their significance. She thanked Mr. Whitaker and Mr. Ward for presenting this design with all the buildings retained.

Mr. Reidhead asked if a concession could be made within the PUD process to allow this farm to be incorporated into a green area for open space requirements. He said that to make this work, they would be doing something out of the ordinary, but there could be some benefit to the open space concession. Mr. Ward said the city needs some development incentives for historic sites like a rebate on street oversizing fees in order to redevelop the old farm.

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY:

The Commission proceeded to take the Visual Preference Survey as part of the preparation for the new City Plan Process.

LOCAL DESIGNATION AND CURRENT DESIGN REVIEW - 145 N. Loomis, the Howard House:

Ms. Tunner gave an introduction to John and Betty Morley's rehabilitation of their home at 145 N. Loomis. She showed slides of the work in progress including an addition on the rear of the house that will include bedrooms and a garage. The house had been converted to a duplex in the 1920s and the Morleys are converting it back to a single-family home.

Mr. Morley explained that when the house became a duplex, it underwent major changes. The interior stairway to the second floor was altered to turn out to a window that became a door, and the stairway then accessed the second floor unit. He can tell this by the dry wall used around the southwest first floor porch. The original door to the house on the northeast corner then accessed the first floor unit only. He needs to rebuild the stairway the way they think it probably was originally and close in that altered window/door with brick. That is necessary because the new stairway will be behind it. The new interior stairway needs to be wider because of current building codes based on safety regulations. Mr. Morley believes the house was stuccoed in the 1950s and may have been built in stages.

Mr. Morley said that a window on the south side of the house was previously reduced to a 2 foot x 2 foot window for an added bathroom, and he will restore it. All kitchen windows on the back of the original house are round top wood windows. He would match these windows with the replacement.

The original front door on the first floor northeast porch will remain, but his plans include removing the front stairs and decking in order to reconstruct the original front porch.

Ms. Tunner explained that a recently discovered historical picture shows that original porch in a close-up view. She said that the architectural drawings that were presented for this design review were done before the picture surfaced and Mr. Morley decided to reconstruct the porch. Details of the porch will come back at a later date. The porch is scheduled to be reconstructed in the spring.

Ms. Kullman asked if the lintels of the house will be matched on the addition. Mr. Morley said that he didn't know. Ms. Kullman said that she knew the house and didn't believe the addition looked like the lintels would be the same. Mr. Hoaglund stated that if the addition is to be stucco, then the sills and lintels have to be done together with the stucco work. Mr. Morley said that he is undecided on the finish for the addition. Brick is only \$2 a square foot more so he may use brick. Mr. Tanner said that it would be a brick veneer and needed a brick ledge. Mr. Morley said that they had originally intended to have eave returns on the addition but they were eliminated in order to have larger rooms inside. Mr. Tanner said that he did not feel stone lintels on the addition should be used because they would be too imitative. Ms. Massey agreed by saying one should not do an exact replica, but the roof lines, windows, eaves should be similar. Mr. Hoaglund said that he felt additions to houses should match as much as possible.

Mr. Tanner said that he was having a problem with the addition meeting Secretary Standard #9. The main view of the house is from Laporte Avenue and he believes that the addition is 2/3's the mass of the main house. Mr. Hoaglund said that despite this, the old house's history is still there. Ms. Weatherford said that part of the problem is that the house sits on a corner lot. Mr. Morley explained that he could have gotten the needed space a lot cheaper by ripping off the back (kitchen) of the house and going up in an ugly way. It has been a greater expense to bring back the structure like he is doing with an obvious addition. Ms. Massey suggested opening the connector area on the first floor so as to be less solid and actually look like a connector. Mr. Morley explained that this could not be done because of the interior use.

Ms. Carpenter asked about Mr. Morley's plans for the stucco removal. Ms. Tunner expressed concern about using sandblasting in the process. Mr. Morley said that he intends to take it off himself and that pieces have already come off fairly nicely so he doesn't anticipate sandblasting. Ms. Massey said that it is important for the commission to consider a category where someone is going to restore a building to its former appearance.

Ms. Weatherford moved that 145 N. Loomis be approved for local designation. Ms. Kullman

seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Ms. Weatherford moved that they approve the applicant's submittal for design review at 145 N. Loomis. Ms. Kullman seconded the motion. Mr. Tanner asked about missing pieces such as the window replacement or porch reconstruction plans. Ms. Carpenter asked if they could approve the application but have the applicant bring back window plans or a picture for administrative staff review and the front porch plans to the LPC when they are ready. Ms. Tunner said that the LPC could amend the motion to include Ms. Carpenter's statement. Ms. Weatherford and Ms. Kullman agreed. Ms. Weatherford said "we so amend." Ms. Carpenter called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commission proceeded with the election of officers for the 1995-1996 year. Ms. Weatherford nominated Ms. Carpenter for chairperson and Ms. Kullman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Carpenter nominated Ms. Weatherford for the vice-chairperson position and Ms. Kullman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

In the absence of a secretary, the minutes were taken by Carol Tunner, staff.