

**West Whiteland Township
Historical Commission Agenda
August 12, 2019**

7:00 PM **Business Meeting**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes for July 8, 2019
- III. Public Comment
- IV. New Business
 - A. Applicant: Ashbridge at Main Street
Historic Site: Site 102, Class I – Richard Ashbridge House & Site 102c, Class I – Richard Ashbridge Tenant House
Site Address: 210 Main St. & 101 Woodcutter St.
Request: Recommendation for approval to receive building permits for the adaptive reuse of both historic structures of the Ashbridge at Main Street residential development
- V. Old Business
- VI. Historical Commission Concerns
- VII. Township update – Justin Smiley & Ali Cleveland
 - A. VPP Grant Status
 - B. Display Areas in the Township Building Lobby
 - C. Thomas Mill Status
 - D. Ashbridge Archives
- VIII. Adjournment

Next Meeting: September 9, 2019

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
July 8, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joshua Anderson, Roberta Eckman, John Kabli,
Joe McCormick, Frank King, Julie Bauer

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 6:55 p.m.

On behalf of the Historical Commission, Mr. Kabli welcomed Julie Bauer as the newest member to the Commission and thanked her for volunteering her service.

II. Approval of Minutes for June 10, 2019

Motion: To approve the minutes of June 10, 2019, as amended. (Anderson/King)

Vote: Passed, 5-0-1 (Bauer abstained)

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. New Business

- A. Applicant: Godaari Ruchulu (Indian Restaurant)
Historic Site: Site 36, Class I – Rodney’s Store
Site Address: 290 E. Lincoln Hwy.
Request: Recommendation for new restaurant sign**

Mr. Smiley provided an overview of the project for a new sign at the Indian restaurant located at 290 E. Lincoln Highway. Denis McLaughlin, contractor for the project, said the size and material for the sign is the same as previous signs, but merely reflects the name of the new owner, Godaari Ruchulu. The letters are smaller to accommodate the longer name.

Motion: To recommend approval of the new restaurant sign.

Vote: Passed 6-0 (Anderson/McCormick)

- B. Applicant: Bruce Jones
Historic Site: Site within 300 ft. - Site 054, Class II Historic Resources,
William Wells Farm
Address: 1298 Country Ln.
Request: Recommendation for ZHB approval to construct a building addition
at the above address**

Mr. Smiley introduced the application to construct a 400 square foot building addition with garage on the first floor and master suite on the second floor. Arnold Alleyne, contractor for the project, said the proposed

addition will blend in with the existing structure with the same siding on both the existing and proposed addition. Mr. Yocum said the proposed addition will have no impact on the neighboring historic structure due to evergreens along Boot Road that will provide screening.

Motion: To recommend Zoning Hearing Board approval to construct a building addition at 1298 Country Lane.

Vote: Passed 6-0 (McCormick/Anderson)

**C. Applicant: West Whiteland Township - Exton Park
Historic Site: Sites within 300 ft. - Site 325, Class I - Fox Chase Inn/Ship Rd.
Farm, Site 337, Class I - Pennypacker House and Class II - Crack O'Dawn
Historic Resources
Address: Swedesford and Ship Rds.
Request: Recommendation for approval to redevelop Exton Park**

Mr. Smiley gave an overview of the plan to redevelop Exton Park with construction of two parking lots, a dog park, disc golf, outbuildings, playgrounds, and multi-use trails. There are three historic structures within 300 feet of the project; the Pennypacker House, Crack O'Dawn, and the Fox Chase Inn.

Public Works Director, Ted Otteni, answered Commission members' questions. Mr. Anderson asked if there were any plans for the Pennypacker House, noting that it was in need of repairs. Mr. Otteni said the present project was Phase 1 of the park development and was focused only on the northwestern portion of the Park. Mr. Smiley added that the Historical Commission will be taking a closer look at all Township-owned historic resources in the near future and will look into the Pennypacker House at that time. Mr. Kabli asked how the dog park for little dogs will be separated from the dog park for bigger dogs and cautioned against conflict that could occur. Mr. Otteni said a four-foot high fence was proposed between the two but said there is a lot of flexibility in the layout and he will take that concern into consideration. There was then general discussion about possible adaptive reuse of the Witch's Cap.

Motion: To recommend approval to redevelop Exton Park

Vote: Passed 6-0 (McCormick/Anderson)

**D. Applicant: Primrose Daycare (DKR4, LLC)
Historic Site: Sites within 300 ft. - Sites 207 & 208, Class I Historic Resources,
Oaklands Manor House and Gatehouse
Address: 353 W. Lincoln Hwy.
Request: Recommendation for approval to construct a daycare facility at the
above address**

Mr. Smiley gave an overview of the project to demolish the existing hair salon at 353 W. Lincoln Highway and construct a daycare facility. East of the site are historic structures within the McIlvaine compound.

Debra Shulski, attorney for the Applicant, introduced Rocco Varma, owner, developer and manager of the Primrose Daycare, and Chris Daly, project engineer. Mr. Varma presented elevations of the proposed building showing stonework and shingle roof. Mr. Varma noted that there are 400 Primrose locations nationwide, all of which have an identical exterior appearance. There will be no HVAC equipment on the roof. Sufficient landscaping is proposed at the property lines to the east and in the rear of the site. A vinyl fence will provide privacy and additional screening. When asked about the safety of the children with the close proximity of two busy roads, Mr. Varma said the entire building is fenced in for safety purposes. Mr. Yocum said the project has no negative impact to the surrounding historic structures.

Bert Bellano, adjoining property owner, expressed concerns about noise and lighting. Mr. Varma said the playground will be located closer to Whitford Road and all lighting will be within the perimeter and will have automatic sensors per Township's standards.

Motion: To recommend approval to construct a daycare facility at 353 W. Lincoln Highway.

Vote: Passed 6-0 (Anderson/McCormick)

E. Applicant: Johnson Matthey
Historic Site: Site within 300 ft. – Site 003, Class I – Morstein Station
Address: 401 King Rd.
Request: Recommendation for approval to construction building addition

Mr. Smiley introduced the project for an 1,100 square foot addition at 401 King Road. The historic Morstein Station is within 300 feet of the project. Sidney Biddle, applicant representative, presented the plan noting that the addition will match the existing structure. It was noted that the area is very well vegetated with a number of mature ornamental trees that will screen the site. Mr. Yocum said there was no adverse impact to Morstein Station.

Motion: To recommend approval to construct a building addition at 401 King Road

Vote: Passed 6-0 (McCormick/Anderson)

F. Applicant: Peirce Middle School
Historic Site: Sites within 300 ft. - Site 162 & 163, Class III and II – Hoffman Barn and House
Address: 1314 Burke Rd.
Request: Recommendation for approval to construction modular classroom

Ross Unruh, attorney for the Applicant, introduced, Mark Groves with the West Chester Area School District. Mr. Unruh said the increasing student population necessitates the addition of modular classrooms to be located behind the school. An aerial photograph was presented showing that the classrooms will be not visible from Burke Road or the historic structures across the street. The classrooms are expected to be in use for approximately four years

Motion: To recommend approval to construct modular classrooms at Peirce Middle School. a building addition at 401 King Road

Vote: Passed 6-0 (Bauer/King)

V. Old Business

Historical Awards – Ms. Eckman reviewed the process for presenting the Historic Awards, covering plaques, paper awards, framing, reimbursement, notices to award winners, and venue including a power point presentation and refreshments. Mr. Anderson volunteered to coordinate the process this year.

The Commission unanimously voted to present Historical Awards to Colebrook Manor, Ivy Cottage, and Grove Methodist Church. Mr. Anderson will check on pricing for plaques.

VI. Historical Commission Concerns

Thomas Mill – Mr. Smiley reported that Codes Director, Mark Moses is reaching out to the structural engineer for an estimate on the cost to do a property survey. If the cost is \$500 or under, it could be done this year, but if the cost is more, it will need to be budgeted for next year.

Mr. Kabli asked about making the site accessible. Mr. Smiley said the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan does have proposed trails to the site and estimated that a 10-foot path could navigate through the area, taking care not to scratch nearby autos owned by Exton Nissan. Ms. Eckman reminded that all previous reports done on the Mill did not recommend opening the building to the general public. There was discussion about the disposition of equipment inside the Mill, but it was pointed out that the structural condition of the building must be determined first.

It was suggested that while waiting for this to be completed, the Commission do an assessment of the Pennypacker House. Mr. Smiley and Mr. Anderson will contact Ed Culp, Assistant Public Works Director, to set up a time when Commission members can visit the site. Mr. Yocum said the porch was not original to the house and may be detracting from the house as an historic structure but may be an asset depending on how the house is used. Mr. Kabli suggested that an assessment of Township-owned historic resources be an ongoing discussion for all future agendas to help determine what maintenance is necessary and suggest ultimate disposition of the properties – what does the Township want to do with the properties.

A. Township update – Justin Smiley

Mr. Smiley has compiled a list of Façade Agreements which include Kates Mansion, Zook House, Massey House, Ivy Cottage, Kinbawn, Arrandale, and Thomas Mill. He will be reviewing them to see what responsibilities are associated with each one.

Mr. Smiley expects to have news in August on the status of the Vision Partnership Grant for updating a History of West Whiteland Township.

Memorabilia from past post offices was given to the Township and will be placed in the historic files.

Mr. Smiley reported that George Ashbridge, as well as the Historical Society, have offered archive documents to the Township, but have not yet been received.

A You-Tube video made by R. Scott Miller of the historic Exton Drive-In site will be posted to the Township's Facebook page.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. (Eckman/Martin)

Vote: Passed, 6-0

Recording Secretary,

Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner



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August 5, 2019
WC-382

Mr. John Weller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning, and
West Whiteland Township Historical Commission
222 North Pottstown Pike
Exton, PA 19341

**RE: Building Permit Application
Richard Ashbridge House and Tennant House Renovations
Main Street at Exton
Exton, PA 19341**

Dear Mr. Weller,

On behalf of the Main Street Phase III, LP, Bernardon has submitted a Building Permit Application for construction of renovations to the historic Richard Ashbridge House and Tennant House at the Main Street at Exton development. In accordance with the West Whiteland Township Zoning Ordinance, Article XVI: Historic Preservation, Commonwealth Heritage Group (Commonwealth) has reviewed the proposed undertaking for potential impacts on the Township's designated historic resources.

Review Documents

For this review Commonwealth reviewed the following documents submitted to the Township:

- 1) Ashbridge Mansion Design Options Numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, dated July 17, 2019
- 2) Ashbridge Mansion Construction Drawings, dated July 19, 2019,
 - Drawings include: Cover Sheet; Code Sheets; Architectural Site Plan; Structural Plans, Details & Notes; Demolition Drawings & Notes; Architectural Floor Plans, Ceiling Plan, Roof Plan, Building Elevations, Sections, Details & Notes; Plumbing Dwgs.; Mechanical Dwgs.; and Electrical Dwgs.
- 3) Tennant House Construction Drawings, dated July 19, 2019
 - Drawings include: Cover Sheet; Code Sheet; Demolition Drawings & Notes; Architectural Floor Plan, Ceiling Plan, Building Elevations, Sections, Details & Notes; Plumbing Dwgs.; Mechanical Dwgs.; and Electrical Dwgs.
- 4) Commonwealth also referred to the previously submitted Historic Resource Impact Study (HRIS), prepared for the subject property by Barton Associates and submitted with the Conditional Use Application in 2015. The HRIS included the following documents as Appendices:
 - The Historic Structures Report for the Indian Run Farm, Exton, PA prepared by Jane Harrington, dated November 3, 1989.
 - The National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for the Richard Ashbridge House and associated Indian Run Farm structures prepared by M.L. Wolf and dated December 1981. The house and associated buildings were determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, but reportedly the owner at that time declined to have it listed.

Commonwealth visited the site on August 1, 2019 to review the proposed project. The Ashbridge House and Tennant House exteriors were accessible to view, although obscured by heavy vegetation. The Ashbridge

House interior was largely hidden by plywood window coverings, although a limited view to the first floor interior was glimpsed at the northwest corner entrance porch. The Tennant House garage interior was visible but the rest of the interior was concealed from view.

Historic Resources Impacted by the Proposed Project

In accordance with Section 325-92.A of the Township Zoning Ordinance, Class I, II, or III historic resources located within the boundary of a proposed project site or within 300-feet of the boundary of a proposed project site shall be reviewed for potential adverse affect. Commonwealth's review of the submission has determined that the following designated historic resources are potentially impacted by the proposed undertaking:

Historic Resources within the proposed Project Site:

Site #100 – 200 South Pottstown Pike. Alleged site of the Thomas Family Homestead.

- Demolished, Site or Ruin

Site #101– 200 South Pottstown Pike. Woodcutter's Cottage at Indian Run Farm – Date stone etched "1707"... If built c. 1707, is the oldest structure in the Township, one of the oldest in Chester County.

- Class I Eligible for the National Register

Site #102– 200 South Pottstown Pike. Richard Ashbridge House at Indian Run Farm – Greek Revival Mansion built 1843-1846.

- Class I Eligible for the National Register

Commonwealth Note: The project site at the Main Street at Exton property includes the following three historic structures related to Indian Run Farm that are not formally designated as historic resources by the Township:

- The Ashbridge Barn (adaptively reused as Retail space).
- Located on Main Street near Woodcutter Street
- The Newlin Tenant House (currently Maggie Moo's Ice Cream Shop).
- Corner of Main and Woodcutter Streets
- The Newlin Garage (aka the Tenant house).
- Located southeast of the Richard Ashbridge House

Adjacent Historic Resources within 300 feet of the proposed Project Site:

None

Description of the Proposed Undertaking:

The owner proposes to rehabilitate and renovate two historic structures on the Main Street at Exton property, the Richard Ashbridge House and the related Tenant House, as support facilities for the new adjacent apartment complex currently under construction. The exteriors of both structures will be preserved to largely conform to their historic appearance. However, the interior space, fabric and finishes of both structures are proposed to be largely removed and replaced with modern construction.

Richard Ashbridge House

The Richard Ashbridge House is a significant Class 1 resource in West Whiteland Township, determined to be eligible for the National Register in 1983. Constructed c. 1843-1846, the large stone mansion was renovated in 1913 by Architect's McIlvain and Roberts as Richard Newlin's Indian Run Farm country estate. The Ashbridge House is one of the most important and visible historic resources in West Whiteland Township. The 1989 HSR indicates the building was subsequently subdivided into five apartments but mentions these changes could be easily reversed. The Ashbridge House includes a small complex of one story additions on

the east side, arranged around a garden space. The additions appear to be service and kitchen related structures. The furthest east section of the additions is a stone structure that may have originally been a freestanding summer kitchen, joined to the house during the 1913 renovations.

The work currently at the Richard Ashbridge House consists of three primary elements: 1) demolition of the one story service additions to the east; 2) preservation of the main structure's exterior fabric to restore its late nineteenth century appearance; and 3) complete demolition of the existing interior partitions, stairs, and second floor framing to create a completely open two story interior space to serve as a dramatic central gathering and work space for the apartment residents.

Four options are presented for the treatment of the exterior with the intention of soliciting input from the Township Historical Commission:

- Option 1 – Exposed stone and brick exterior with a standing seam metal roof system
- Option 2 – Exposed stone and brick exterior with a wood cedar shake roof system
- Option 3 – Smooth stucco exterior finish with a standing seam metal roof system
- Option 4 – Smooth stucco exterior finish with a wood cedar shake roof system

Exterior Treatment - The Ashbridge House exterior will be preserved and repaired, as stated in the construction documents. Existing windows, doors and trim materials are indicated to be retained and repaired where possible. Deteriorated elements such as the north entrance porch, roof dormers, and wood shutters will be reconstructed to match the original design and materials. Exterior alterations include removal of an enclosed west entrance porch at the north elevation and replacing that exterior door with a new first floor window. A small addition will be constructed at the southeast corner of the south porch to accommodate a new men's restroom.

Interior Treatment - The Ashbridge House interior is indicated to be largely demolished. The perimeter plaster walls and wood detailing will be preserved. A limited view of the building's interior appears to confirm the building retains much original fabric. The drawings indicate exposed steel columns will be located along the outside walls to stabilize the building. Exposed new wood timber framing will span between the steel columns at the second floor level to support the unique gambrel style roof and attic level. The drawings indicate the original fireplaces were previously removed, with the notable exception of a large first floor fireplace at the east exterior wall. That fireplace is now proposed to be removed and replaced with a modern gas fireplace. A new gas fireplace is shown to be installed at the opposite west exterior wall in the new open space. A new second floor mezzanine is proposed to be built along the south side of the space, open to the large main space. The flat ceiling of the two story space will be finished with wood shiplap material. Mechanical equipment will be housed in the attic above.

Tennant House

The Tennant House is not listed on West Whiteland Township's inventory of historic resources. Constructed as part of the 1913 estate renovations, the fieldstone structure was designed by Architects McIlvain and Roberts. The Tennant House is one of the remaining components of the property's Indian Run Farm period.

The proposed work at the Tennant House consists of: 1) minor exterior demolition of concrete pads, a lean-to infill addition on the south side, and removal of a roof dormer; 2) preservation of the structure's exterior fabric to restore its c. 1913 appearance, installation of new replacement doors and windows, and a new cedar shake roof; and 3) complete demolition of the first and second floor interior partitions, and stairs to create an open first floor office space and open attic space.

Exterior Treatment - The Tennant House is in generally good condition and will be retain its current appearance. The building exterior appears to retain much of its original fabric. The drawings indicate the existing trim and finish materials will be retained and repaired, or replaced with matching materials. New aluminum clad wood casement windows are specified to replace the existing wood casement windows. New solid wood exterior doors are specified. The proposed garage door is an upward acting garage door with a

residential appearance, in contrast to the existing traditional-style hinged wood garage door. The stone wall and brick work will be retained and repaired. A new wood cedar shake roof will be installed.

Interior Treatment - The proposed interior renovations will create a large open first floor maintenance office with a single rest room. The existing Tennant House interior was concealed from view but is assumed to have a residential character. The renovated attic will be one large space with new casement windows at each gable end, although the design removes the stairs so the attic appears to be inaccessible.

Review of the Design and Potential Effects on Historic Resources:

Richard Ashbridge House

The Richard Ashbridge House is a very significant Class 1 resource in West Whiteland Township, originally determined to be eligible for the National Register. The building retains a high level of original and early architectural fabric. The existing building has been protected with a plastic fabric wrap, so that much of the original material is still in generally repairable condition.

Exterior –The design documents indicate the existing fabric will be repaired where possible or replaced with matching materials. The proposed demolition of the east additions will return the building to its pre-1913 appearance. This is an appropriate approach. The proposed exterior preservation treatment is appropriate and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Interior – The proposal to completely demolish the original interior and replace it with a new modern open interior is unfortunate. The owner’s desire is to create a dynamic new open interior within the historic structure. Although Commonwealth did not have access to the interior, the original interior fabric is believed to be largely intact. The design approach to install a clearly modern structural steel frame will insure that the building will not be misread as an older timber frame structure. Unfortunately, demolition of the existing interior fabric will definitely eliminate the National Register eligibility of the Ashbridge House.

The Richard Ashbridge House is a significant and visible Township historic resource that has languished in disrepair for many years. The proposed interior renovation is not the preferred approach. However the careful preservation of the building’s exterior is a somewhat mitigating factor. The West Whiteland community will be pleased to see the structure restored to its former grandeur. Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. Commonwealth’s preference for the proposed exterior treatment is Option 4; smooth stucco exterior finish with a wood cedar shake roof, to match early photographs. Due to their low pitch the dormers should be finished with standing seam metal roofing.
2. The proposed rear southeast corner men’s room addition projects beyond the existing adjacent women’s room bump-out. It fills the porch so that it is too narrow for a person to pass. The addition should be revised to match the existing adjacent women’s room projection. It appears that demolition of the existing masonry wall in this area, similar to the adjacent women’s room, would provide adequate space for the men’s room.
3. The northwest door at the enclosed porch scheduled for demolition is proposed to be replaced with a window. A review of the first floor and basement demolition plans suggest the house may have been built in two sections, possibly at different times. A 2-bay eastern section, and A 5-bay western section. It is likely they each had entrance doors into their individual stair halls. Therefore it may be more architecturally accurate to retain the northwest door and construct a new open exterior entrance porch to match the rebuilt porch at the northeastern entrance door.
4. Ideally, the small stone structure at the east end of the service addition would be evaluated to determine if it was originally a freestanding summer kitchen, worthy of retention and preservation. The building could provide storage for the Ashbridge House event center.

Tennant House

The proposed renovations and repairs to the Tennant House will generally preserve the historic appearance of the structure's exterior. The proposed exterior treatment is appropriate and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The building's interior will be totally revised but will not affect the structure's exterior appearance. Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. The drawings specify Anderson E-Series aluminum clad wood windows. The selected window style should utilize exterior (and interior) surface mounted divided light grilles (SDL's) with a raised profile similar to the existing windows (not flat muntins or muntins within the insulated glass).
2. The new upward acting type garage door is appropriate, but the exterior style of the selected door should match the visual appearance of the existing pair of wood framed swinging garage doors.

General Recommendations

1. A report should be provided to the Township documenting the existing condition of the Ashbridge House and Tennant House before renovations begin. The report would include existing plan drawings, elevation drawings, interior and exterior photographs. Photographs should be taken after the vegetation and plywood wall coverings have been removed.
2. At a previous meeting the owner confirmed the 1989 HSR statement that the original 1913 McIlvain and Roberts architectural drawings from the Indian Run Farm renovations were located in the Ashbridge House. This would be a valuable historic resource. Those complete drawings should be scanned and a digital file provided to the Township for the historic Commission files.
3. Historic information panels should be erected at the resources to illustrate their history.

Conclusions:

Commonwealth's review is limited to the effect of the proposed undertaking on the historic resources listed above. The proposed exterior renovations to both the Richard Ashbridge House and the Tennant House are appropriate, with the recommendations provided above. The proposed interior renovations at the Richard Ashbridge House will have a serious adverse on the historic structure and probably eliminate its eligibility for listing on the National Register.

The proposed exterior renovations of the Richard Ashbridge House and Tennant House will have no adverse affect on the adjacent historic resources at Main Street at Exton: Site#100-the alleged site of the Thomas Family Homestead; Site #102-the Woodcutter's Cottage; the Ashbridge Barn; and the Newlin Tennant House (Maggie Moos).

Should you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,



Candice Strawley
Regional Director/Architectural Historian

cc: Justin Smiley, WWT
Philip Yocum, CHG