

**Town of Pound Ridge
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 7pm**

Attendees:

Board Members: Michele Rudolph, AIA, Chairperson
John Bria
David Dow
Gail Jankus
Rob Knorr
Jonathan Stein
Rebecca Wing

Advisors: John Loveless, Counsel
Jason Pitingaro, Town Engineer
Jim Perry, Building Inspector

Staff: Christeen CB Dür, Administrator

Called to Order: Ms. Rudolph called the meeting to order at 7:04pm and noted that it was being recorded.

Old Business:

Rosanna Bressler (draft resolution)

27 Nancy's Lane, Block 9827, Lot 13

Application to build a one-story addition.

Zoning District: R-3A, Acres: 2.195

Other Boards: Water Control Commission and Zoning Board Approved

Ms. Rudolph reviewed the draft resolution and noted that this is a non-confirming lot. Mr. Ken Okamoto, architect, confirmed they already have received approvals from the Water Control Commission and the Zoning Board. He confirmed he will address any remaining items described in the Town Engineer's memo.

Mr. Bria made a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Wing seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor. The application is approved.

Ivanhoe Robin Hood, LLC (draft resolution)

34 & 34A Robin Hood Road, Block 9031, Lot 61

Application to rebuild an existing main house, and remove guest house, accessory structure and associated hardscape.

Zoning District: R-2A, Acres: 5.4

Ms. Rudolph reviewed the application and thanked the applicant for being responsive to the Planning Board's concerns by reducing coverage and working with the challenging topography. She added that she is very pleased with the progress and the resolution.

Ms. Jankus made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Stein seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor. The application is approved.

Herbert Chou (draft resolution)

95 Conant Valley Road, Block 9827, Lot 32

Application to build a 18' x 41' pool, fence and spa with stone terrace, expand parking court, new front entry steps, new level lawn, expand wooden deck, create a landing and staircase from parking court to pool terrace,

create a storage/pool equipment room below pool terrace, install driveway gates, pave portions of the driveway, relocate septic, site drainage modifications and plantings.

Zoning District: R-3A, Acres: 8.9

Other Boards: Water Control Commission Approved

Ms. Rudolph noted that a resolution was prepared but the Planning Board is waiting to receive additional materials that need to be reviewed. She asked the applicant to coordinate with the Town Engineer to respond to items described in the Town Engineer's memo. Ms. Tara Vincenta, landscape architect, explained Mr. Chou's interest in extending the modern look of the home to the gate and pillars at the driveway. Ms. Rudolph asked if the existing stone walls could be incorporated into the plan since the stone walls are a defining character of our Town. Ms. Vincenta said she is trying to respond to Mr. Chou's goals but will review with him. She said she will also review reducing the lighting and will submit updated photometrics. Mr. Dave Sessions, engineer, said they are awaiting WCDOH approval. He reviewed the grading and septic plans. Mr. Sessions noted they have the SWPP to submit. Mr. Pitingaro said he reviewed the plan with Mr. Sessions and it looks good and satisfactory. Mr. Pitingaro said they accepted the soil test results conducted recently. Ms. Rudolph said the Planning Board is looking to protect the semi-rural character of our Town. Ms. Vincenta said they appreciate the guidance on lighting and will review with a lighting consultant. Mr. Jim Perry noted there needs to be 16' in between the pillars with or without a gate. Ms. Rudolph said they will review the updated information on the lighting and gate once it is submitted and postpone the vote on the resolution until next month.

26 Pound Ridge Road LLC, Deborah Schmidt- member

26 Pound Ridge Road, Block 9818, Lot 16

Application to demolish existing wooden structure and build a new home on the existing foundation/footprint.

Zoning District: R-2A, Acres: 2.57

Other Boards: Water Control Commission Approved

Ms. Rudolph said the proposed work was easy to understand on their site walk and noted the applicant has already received approval from the Water Control Commission. Ms. Jankus agreed and said this was a straight forward application. Ms. Rudolph asked why so many trees needed to be removed if the house is being rebuilt on the existing footprint. Mr. Julian Staller, associate designer, said it is congested area and they do not want moss to develop on the roof. Ms. Rudolph noted that one large tree is not near the house and asked they revisit which trees need to be removed. Mr. Staller said he will review the tree removal plan. Mr. Pitingaro said if you decide to save the trees then the stormwater plan needs to be adjusted. Ms. Rudolph reviewed the Code Conformance Worksheet and the lighting. Ms. Wing noted there is no change to the coverage numbers. Ms. Rudolph asked for a draft resolution to be prepared for the next meeting.

Rafael Mayer

39 Bender Way, Block 9822, Lot 11

Application to reconfigure & expand an existing driveway & paved motor court, replace an in-ground pool & other minor site improvements such as walkways, stairs, & a deck.

Zoning District:R-2A, Acres: 3.352

Ms. Rudolph reviewed the proposed plan and site walk. Mr. Stein noted that the proposed work is on a hidden lot but it does involve a lot of coverage so he asked the applicant to review to see if coverage can be reduced. Ms. Wing agreed with Mr. Stein and added that the proposed work does not meet increased minimum setbacks. She noted they are asking to add coverage to an already well-developed site. Ms. Rudolph noted that the owner said on the site walk that he would review how to reduce the walkways. Mr. Andrew Kuzmich, engineer, noted that this is a non-compliant existing house and will review the terrace and walkways with the owner. He asked if there was a percentage target they should work towards in regards to coverage. Ms. Wing explained that this application is above the R-3A threshold and this is in a R-2A zone. Ms. Tara Vicenta, landscape architect, said the applicant is a 1st responder and that mindset added to his very thoughtful plans for the walkways. Ms. Vincenta

reviewed the lighting plan and said she will submit more details in her next lighting submission. Mr. Pitingaro said he will meet with the applicant's team to discuss stormwater management per his memo. He added when they review coverage, they should look at being in the lower range provided on the Code Conformance Worksheet. Ms. Rudolph appreciated the applicant's team discussing how they can reduce lot coverage and asked for a draft resolution to be prepared for the next meeting.

Pound Ridge Fire District

80 Westchester Avenue, Block 9320, Lots 55, 56, 57, 58

Application to expand the existing fire department headquarters including relocating the driveway and site improvements.

Zoning District: PB-A, R-2A Acres: 10.4

Mr. Jan Johannessen, engineer, reviewed updates to the site plan including an ADA compliant ramp and relocating 2 parking spots. He also reviewed the landscaping plan that includes 2 landscaping islands and adding a sugar maple tree. He noted that they are looking for tree advice to determine if the sugar maple is appropriate or some other species of tree. Ms. Rudolph acknowledged the Planning Board did receive a letter of concern about the mature elm tree being removed by resident Ms. Gina Federico (letter attached). Mr. Johannessen explained they tried to develop a plan that allowed them to save the elm tree but it can not be saved due to its location and the root system being under Westchester Avenue. He added that there was no way to expand on the other side of the firehouse due to the property line. Mr. Johannessen said they will mitigate by replacing it with another larger tree. Ms. Rudolph said it is good that the large transformer will be relocated. Mr. Peter Gallagher, Chair of the Board of Fire Commissioners, confirmed they will review tree suggestions. Mr. Walter Hauser, architect, said he will provide photometrics and cut sheets for dark sky compliant fixtures in the next submission. The Planning Board discussed sidewalk and driveway materials and signage. Ms. Rudolph noted she understands residents' concerns over the elm tree but acknowledged the need for this fire house expansion and that this is a much-improved plan.

Mr. Johannessen explained they will be submitting a subdivision application in order to merge 2 existing lots currently owned by the Pound Ridge Fire District. Ms. Rudolph said the next Planning Board meeting will also be a public hearing for the Subdivision/Lot Merger Application for the Pound Ridge Fire District.

Ms. Rudolph made a motion that the November 16th Planning Board meeting begin with a public hearing for the PR Fire District's Subdivision/Lot Merger Application, Ms. Wing seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the public hearing for November 16th at 7pm. There will be a public hearing on November 16th at 7pm and a public notice will be sent to The Record Review and posted on the Town's website.

Pound Ridge Tennis Club, Inc.

2 Major Lockwood Lane, Block 9816, Lot 100

Application to build 4 pickleball courts, 1 new paddleball court and deck, expand the parking lots and build an addition to the existing clubhouse.

Zoning District: R-2A, Acres: 6.97

Other Boards: Water Control Commission

Mr. Keith Betensky, counsel, said they will address the Town Engineer's memo. He explained they have reviewed the letter received by neighbor Christopher London that focuses on issues that the applicant takes very seriously- noise and lighting. Mr. Betensky said the applicant is addressing noise by having the sound study conducted and adding improvements to mitigate noise. He explained there will only be one additional court with lighting and that all external lights are already LED and on timers. Ms. Jankus, as Board Chair for this application, said timing of the lighting is a concern. Mr. Betensky asked that the timing of the lighting that is allowed be specified and a condition of the approval. He added that a complete lighting and landscaping plan will be

submitted after the parking expansion is finalized. Ms. Dawn McKenzie, engineer, said they have met with the Water Control Commission and making revisions based on their feedback in regards to parking. She noted they will also need a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. McKenzie asked for feedback from the Planning Board in regards to 2 parking options. She reviewed potential parking lot locations, traffic safety, and lot coverage. Mr. Russell Hampton, property manager, explained they are working on maintaining the buffer and the berm. He said the white pines have died from the bottom and they are working to do the clean-up, replant and develop a full landscaping plan. Mr. Betensky said the applicant is happy to have a maintenance plan as part of their approval. Mr. Pitingaro suggested a location for the ADA compliant parking spots and how to move away from the pond. He suggested grass pavers could be used closer to the pond since they help with drainage. Ms. Jankus said it would be good to see a concept plan that includes a landscaping plan with a possible 52 parking spots. Ms. Wing said she would be interested in seeing a plan with 60 spots considering the traffic and entrance concerns. She suggested they work on getting out of the wetlands area and review the setbacks. Mr. Perry said the applicant does need to return to Water Control Commission and needs to address their concerns about cars contributing to the degradation of the pond and they need to consider an oil/water separator.

Ms. Danna Cuneo, environmental consultant/principal scientist, said she has reviewed the Town Code and explained the details of her detailed noise analysis. She said she will address the Town Engineer's memo and provide even more detail on various scenarios in the next submission. Ms. Cuneo reviewed proposed barriers to be added and the existing berm. She noted the noise on Pound Ridge Road is higher than pickleball. Ms. Jankus said cars have a lower level pitch and pickleball is a higher pitch sound with fast repetition. Ms. Wing asked what does the noise analysis tell us how it will impact neighbors. Ms. Cuneo said with mitigation and sound barriers added they expect the sound to be equal or less than the sound that exists today. She noted that the study was done considering what is expected with the Tennis Club as maximum capacity on the courts. Ms. Cuneo discussing wavelengths and various screening options including materials on the courts. She will do more analysis on the Eastern border of the property.

Mr. Hayes, PR Tennis Club board member, said they have researched various fabrics and found one developed by a NASA engineer that is used by other municipalities. Mr. Betensky said they expect ambient noise as it exists today without an increase. Mr. Knorr noted that some increase must be expected since they are proposing to take down 13 trees. Mr. Betensky said trees will be added and placed strategically. Ms. Cuneo noted that they will be adding a dense berm that is a more efficient barrier than linear, vertical barrier that provides less reduction in noise. Mr. Knorr asked that in the next submission they show on the plan what is being removed and what is being added. Mr. Jaime Spillane, counsel for a neighbor, said his client has concerns about traffic and noise as well so they will be submitting their own letter of concern with a breakdown of concerns and their own report to the Planning Board. Ms. Jankus asked the applicant to return to the Water Control Commission and the Zoning Board before returning to the Planning Board with all the updates discussed. Mr. Betensky acknowledged next steps for this application.

New Business:

Abby R. Simpson

125 Eastwoods Road, Block 9822, Lot 20

Application to demolish & rebuild a house in the existing footprint.

Zoning District: R-2A & R-3A, Acres: 68.15

Other Boards: Water Control Commission

Mr. Jim Taylor, architect, reviewed the history of the existing house designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes. He explained in detail how Mr. Barnes used a grid system with care to respect the site and topography. In August of 2020, 3 wings of the home were severely damaged during a storm. In 2021 they tried to do a renovation and the proposed work was approved by the Water Control Commission. Once they began the renovation, they realized the foundation and slabs were compromised and they had sagging frames all throughout the house. They also

discovered the walls and roof were too thin to remediate and make energy efficient. The crawl spaces were exposed and the windows were antiquated and could not be replaced. The renovation did not allow for an effective new HVAC system. There was terrible drainage damage due to the flat roof in addition to the storm damage. Therefore, it was determined the restoration was not feasible. The applicant's goal is to age in place in a safe and comfortable house. Mr. Taylor said they have taken what they have learned through their effort to renovate the house and will respect Mr. Barnes by using his grid system for the structure. He noted they will change the flat roof to a pitched roof to improve storm water drainage and they will remove the cantilever and allow the new foundation to match the first floor. Mr. Taylor said they will add an elevator and reviewed all materials to be used.

Mr. Tim Allen, engineer, said the applicant has been very thoughtful throughout this process to respect the history of the house and property. He reviewed lot and building coverage, the setbacks and noted he will be submitting a stormwater management plan. Mr. Allen said the WCDOH is reviewing their application to retrofit and repair the existing septic and the bedroom count will remain the same at 5. Mr. Louis Fusco, landscape architect, said the applicant has a soft approach and will be adding rain gardens with all native plantings and will restore the existing stepping stones. They will restore the garden space in the inner court yard and maintain the buffer of evergreens. Mr. Fusco said they will keep the existing garage and possibly add a gate. He added they will be reducing the roof line and courtyard. Mr. Perry noted they are not reducing lot coverage. Mr. Taylor said he will submit a lighting plan with photometrics and they will have new soft lights under handrails.

Ms. Rudolph thanked the applicant's team for explaining their thinking and process behind this application. She acknowledged the passionate letters of concern received from Ms. Gina Federico, Mr. Ed Forbes, Ms. Nancy Geary, and Mr. Robert Siegel (letters attached). Mr. Bria said it was an informative presentation. Mr. Ed Forbes, the Board Chair of the Landmarks Commission, said he was concerned about demolishing the existing house and would welcome a conversation with the applicant about landmarking the existing house. He said the Landmarks Commission's goal is to create a historic district on Eastwoods Road. Ms. Rudolph noted the Planning Board takes the land use process seriously but the Planning Board is not an Architectural Review Board. Mr. Tom Andersen, resident, said the existing house owned by the Straus' designed by Mr. Barnes was a centerpiece of the Pound Ridge Historical Society's exhibit of 47 mid-century modern homes. Ms. Rudolph thanked the residents for expressing their concern and explained the next step is for the Planning Board to go on a site walk as they do with every application.

Cell Tower Modification- Reports by Doug Fishman- Town's Cell Tower Consultant

Verizon Modification

29 Adams Lane, Block 9817, Lot 41.9-5

Verizon would like to remove 3 antennas, 9 RRHs, and 3 OVPs and install a new mount for 4 antennas, 8 RRHs, 3 diplexers, 4 OVPs and 1 1-5/8" hybrid cables. All other equipment will remain.

Doug Fishman, our cell tower consultant, requested an FCC Compliance Assessment and Report to comply with our Town Code and other clarifying information in his first report. Verizon submitted the requested Report and information. Mr. Fishman has completed his review. He has confirmed the proposed changes will increase capacity and performance for Town residents and this application is ready for referral back to the Town Board for approval.

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve the cell tower modification application by Verizon for 29 Adams Lane and refer it back to the Town Board for their Special Use Permit process, Mr. Bria seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor. The application is approved and referred back to the Town Board.

Minutes Approval:

Adoption of the Minutes from the September 28, 2023 Meetings

Ms. Jankus made a motion to approve the Minutes from September 28, 2023, Mr. Bria seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The Minutes from September 28, 2023 are approved as distributed.

Executive Session: Legal Matter

Mr. Dow made a motion to move into Executive Session, Mr. Stein seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor. The Planning Board met in Executive Session.

Ms. Rudolph returned from Executive Session and adjourned the public meeting at 11:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Christeen CB Dür



Robert Siegel Architects
131 Katonah Avenue, Katonah, NY 10536 (212) 921-5600 robertsiegelarchitects.com

October 26, 2023

Ms. Christeen Dur
Town of Pound Ridge Planning Board
179 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, NY 10576

Re: Demolition at 125 Eastwoods Road, Block 9822, Lot 20

Dear Ms. Dur,

I have just learned that the Pound Ridge Planning Board is going to consider demolition of Edward Larrabee Barnes' Straus House at 125 Eastwoods Road, originally built in 1958. I am writing to ask that you either reject this outright, or at least delay approval, and get options to prevent irrevocable cultural damage.

I specialize in the restoration and additions to mid century modern architecture and have completed renovations to three of Edward Larrabee Barnes' buildings in our area, including:

- Righter House in Bedford, NY (1972)
- SUNY Purchase Music Building in Purchase, NY (1970)
- O'Connell House in Alpine, NJ (1952)

Edward Larrabee Barnes was an architect whose work defined an era. He has inspired generations of architects and owners, who are stewards of his architecture. A comprehensive archive of his office's drawings and models, as well as correspondence and technical data, is held at Harvard University in perpetuity. His work, both built and unbuilt, is something to be cherished.

I haven't visited the property and don't know the condition of the building. Many buildings of this time, and at this stage in his career, suffered from window failure and water infiltration problems which are certainly fixable. The buildings are not properly insulated, and the room finishes are past their useful life. All of which can be restored and modernized without compromising the architectural integrity of the building. Some of the bathrooms feel small but this too can be remedied. The buildings are designed using architectural strategies that lend themselves to expansion while still maintaining the original spatial concepts and intimacy of his buildings and outdoor spaces. His buildings connect interior and exterior spaces, and connect people to place, in a unique way.

I ask that you please consider studying alternatives to demolishing this piece of our collective memory.

Thank you.

Robert Siegel, AIA, NCARB
Principal

Christeen Dur

From: Gina Federico <ginafed@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 10:01 AM
To: Christeen Dur
Cc: TA Andersen; Ed Forbes; Nicole Engel; Joanne Mineo
Subject: Letter to the PB and applicant – Straus House

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

October 26, 2023

Pound Ridge Planning Board
179 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, New York

We are alarmed and concerned about a proposal to demolish a house that is a true mid-century Modern gem and an architecturally significant part of the town's history and culture.

The Straus House at 125 Eastwoods Road is perhaps the most significant of Pound Ridge's many mid-century modern houses. It is indicative of the important role mid century modern architecture plays in the town's history.

We request that the demolition be put on hold until a more reasonable solution can be found.

The house is in the heart of a district of mid-century Moderns that rivals communities such as New Canaan that are more well known for mid-century Modern architecture.

It was designed in the 1950s by Edward Larrabee Barnes – a modern master who trained at Harvard under Gropius and Breuer – for the Straus family.

The house was a centerpiece of the Pound Ridge Historical Society's groundbreaking 2017 exhibition, "Modern in Pound Ridge," which catalogued for the first time 47 mid-century Modern houses in town and established Pound Ridge as a historically significant mecca of modernism.

It is our opinion that demolishing the house would be an affront to the history and culture of Pound Ridge. Instead of this house being destroyed, it should be the centerpiece of a new Eastwoods Road mid-century Modern historic district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gina Federico & Tom Andersen
47 Bender Way
Pound Ridge

Gina Federico | Gina Federico Graphic Design | 47 Bender Way | Pound Ridge | NY 10576
| gina@ginafederico.com | T 914 486 8819 | ginafederico.com

Christeen Dur

From: Nancy Geary <ngeary@nchistory.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 3:16 PM
To: Christeen Dur
Subject: Straus House - 125 Eastwoods Road

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Dur:

It has come to my attention that the Edward Larabee Barnes' Straus House may be demolished. I would urge you to reconsider. Since 1949, the New Canaan/Pound Ridge/Bedford area have been the home of wonderful - and what was then experimental - architecture. While some of these houses have sadly been demolished, efforts to educate the public and increased interest in midcentury modernism have saved many. Thoughtful modifications and/or additions can preserve the architect's original design while making the house more accessible for contemporary living and larger families.

The New Canaan Museum hosts a biennial modern house day tour that attracts hundreds of visitors from around the world. Our most recent tour - this past Saturday - saw visitors from Canada, South America, California, and Croatia. It is a wonderful way to promote something special and distinctive about the area. The Pound Ridge Historical Society, too, takes an interest in the midcentury modern architecture. Tours or special events help drive traffic to local businesses and create community pride.

Once a house is gone, the story ends. I hope you will allow all interested parties the time that may be required to figure out a better solution than demolition.

Best,
Nancy

--
Nancy Geary
Executive Director
New Canaan Museum & Historical Society
203.966.1776
617.733.5474 (cell)
[Website](#)

Christeen Dur

From: Ed Forbes <ed.forbes02@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 6:43 PM
To: Christeen Dur
Cc: Nicole Engel; Michele Rudolph
Subject: Re: Historic PR house under threat

Have found the link.

Here's an updated version of my letter that includes a complete signature:

October 26, 2023

Pound Ridge Planning Board
179 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, New York

Colleagues on the Pound Ridge Planning Board —

I write in my capacity as chairman of the Landmarks and Historic District Commission.

The Commission is alarmed to learn of a proposal to demolish a significant architectural treasure that is emblematic of a major era of Pound Ridge history.

The Straus House, located at 125 Eastwoods Road, is simply without peer among our community's many important mid-century homes. A masterpiece, it was designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes for the Straus family in the mid-1950s — the height of the mid-century modern architectural movement.

Barnes' bona fides are broadly known and appreciated — among his masterpieces are the IBM building in Manhattan and, closer to home, our own Katonah Museum of Art.

As you are aware, our community is extremely unique in that our variety of domestic architecture stretches between vernacular antiques of the mid-18th century to masterpieces of the 20th century like the Straus House. Pound Ridge is home to a vast collection of antique homes that speak to our rural and agricultural heritage. And, of course, we also count among our many special properties a large group of spectacular mid-century homes that, together, represent one of the most remarkable collections of that architectural heritage anywhere in the United States.

Our Commission is dedicated to preserving that rich architectural heritage and we are strong in our conviction that mid-century homes like the Straus house are central to preserving the history that makes Pound Ridge so special.

Should Ms. Mydland, with whom we have worked with collaboratively in her efforts to preserve other property on Eastwoods Road, be willing to discuss an application to convey landmark status to the Straus House, our commission would be delighted. Further, we believe the Straus House would be the centerpiece of

a potential Eastwood Road mid-century modern historic district, an effort we hope to undertake at the earliest possibility.

The Straus House is an invaluable architectural treasure that speaks to Pound Ridge's rich history. It should be preserved.

We hope our colleagues on the planning board will agree.

All my very best,

Ed Forbes

Chairman

Town of Pound Ridge Landmarks and Historic District Commission October 26, 2023

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179 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, New York

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