

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Historic Resource Inventory Amendments

Prepared By: Greg Prichard, Historic Preservation Planner

Date: June 4, 2020

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Authorizing the Township Secretary to advertise a public hearing and notice of intent to adopt an ordinance to amend the Code to add 565 Barrett Avenue, Haverford to the Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II resource.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Historic Resource Inventory amendments must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

NA

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The property is located within the Haverford Station Historic District. Unlike other historic districts in the Township, contributing resources in the Haverford Station Historic District are not listed on the Township's Historic Resource Inventory, although they are eligible to be added. Historic properties not listed on the HRI are protected from inappropriate demolition as are historic properties that are listed as Class I or Class II resources on the HRI. However unclassified historic resources are not eligible for preservation incentives afforded to similar properties listed as Class I or Class II resources on the HRI. Listing the property on the Historic Resource Inventory requires a Code amendment, which requires the review and recommendation of the Planning Commission.

The 7,023 sq. ft. (.16 acre) property is located on Barrett Avenue. The property is zoned MDR1 and contains a contributing resource within the Haverford Station Historic District. The property is currently improved with a single-family dwelling with an 882 sq. ft. footprint and a detached garage with a 276 sq. ft. footprint. The property is accessed via a vehicular driveway on Barrett Avenue.

According to property atlases, the home was constructed between 1920 and 1926. No permit records or building plans for the property have been found in the Township's archives.

In order to qualify for Class 2 designation, a resource must meet at least two out of ten designation criteria as outlined in § 88-18-A of the Township Code. The Township's Historic Preservation Planner has determined that the property at 565 Barrett Avenue is eligible for Class 2 designation, citing the following criteria in § 88-18-A of the Township Code:

(1) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;

The property fits into the general architectural character of Barrett Avenue and dates from the ca. 1895-1930 period of the block's original development by a series of builders.

(2) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or Township;

The home's gambrel roof form is consistent with many of the other contributing properties on Barrett Avenue and within the Haverford Station Historic District. Though few homes on Barrett Avenue are exactly alike, the characteristics such as roof massings are generally consistent and representative of their period of development.

(3) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

The property is a modestly scaled house on a block of homes intended for middle-class residents. The diversity of the historic district's contributing resources is unique among the Township's seven historic districts. It is important that the Township recognize all kinds of neighborhoods; Barrett Avenue is an example of a historic block that, while not as architecturally significant as other districts, displays a consistent character representing an intact example of an early 20th century middle class neighborhood.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Township Secretary be authorized to advertise a public hearing and notice of intent to adopt the ordinance.