

Hi Mr. McChesney,

I am back from abroad. I hope to properly engage a lawyer for this matter in the coming week, but I haven't done this yet. I understand from Ms. Porter that you have wanted to communicate to me and my husband about the proposed work. If there is something you wish to discuss please email ( or call ) me and perhaps we can find a time to chat.

Amanda Lee  
917.361.5194

Good Morning Ms. Lee,

Thank you for reaching out. I was provided with your letter to the City outlining your concerns. I hope to address the various concerns you have provided. I'm happy to speak with you on the phone as well but thought I would attempt to respond first via email.

From your letter it sounds like your concern is related to privacy. You are correct in that the boundary line was stripped of the existing plantings. However, that was only done by the owner so that new landscaping could be installed. If you scroll down below you will see two photos of the boundary line from the side and rear of the 10 Lowe Ln structure. More plantings will be going into this area but this gives you an idea of the current state of affairs. It's a priority for the owner that all neighbors enjoy the same, or better, privacy. I know you mentioned that you were abroad and just returned. If you are back in Key West then you have already seen the new plants by now.

The applicants plans are to convert the existing car port into livable space inside the home. In doing so, the roof will change from the current shed roof to a new gable which will allow an occupant inside to have suitable ceiling height. It's not a new structure, just a modification of an existing structure. The footprint of the home is not expanding at all. In fact, the front setback is being partially reduced. The installation of the doors and windows are not what triggers the variance. Those are just changes being made that are allowed by the City code to provide the homeowner with access to his backyard and pool. The homeowner has stated that he would be willing to have the windows on the bedroom be frosted so as to reduce any sightlines that may be created. We feel like this is a positive condition that will address privacy concerns.

The house will continue to be oriented to Lowe Lane. The owner will be removing the inappropriately filled in front porch and restoring the property to its originally intended architectural design.

Please let me know if you have any questions and if you would like to discuss further.

Thank you,

Richard J. McChesney, Esq.

Dear Mr. McChesney,

Thank you for your note.

I think I may have made a poor choice of words in raising concerns about the “orientation” of the house located at 10 Lowes Lane. My concern is that if the rear of the house is completely opened up, as the proposal indicates, the locus of activity (hopefully this makes things more clear than the word “orientation” did) will be to the rear of the house, rather than to the front as it is now and, I understand, always has been.

In my view, a new locus of activity (and all its consequences, including noise and structures) will have a huge impact on us, since all these proposed changes — including increased height and multiple openings — directly face toward our home. I think you can understand this since you know our property given that your mother (very ably) handled our purchase of 1013 Southard and you represented the seller at the closing.

As for questions, I have a number. I plan to attend the meeting on Thursday and hope to understand more. For now, can you tell me if the applicant plans to live in the house? I think this sort of thing makes a difference. There’s a real sense of community on Southard Street (and I imagine on Lowes Lane too).

Thank you,  
Amanda Lee