



Long Island Traditions
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January 3, 2022

Kristin Baranski
Hayes Township
Board of Zoning Appeals
Charlevoix, MI 49720

Re: Application submitted by Scott and Debra Law

Dear Ms. Baranski:

I am a folklorist and architectural historian who specializes in maritime culture and architecture in New York State. I have worked with the NY State Historic Preservation Office on thematic context narratives and surveys relating to maritime culture including boat yards and boat houses (<https://cris.parks.ny.gov/>). In addition, we work with the NY Department of State's South Shore Estuary Reserve Council on historic preservation issues and surveys (<https://longislandtraditions.org/south-shore-portal/>).

I have received information from LuAnne Kozma regarding the proposed boat house by T. Scott Law in Charlevoix. As you may know, we have several historic boat houses on Long Island, dating from the 19th century to the present day. I have conducted surveys on Long Island's north and south shores, and the east end of Long Island including the Hamptons, where boat houses are numerous. From my research boat houses take two distinct forms:

1. Structures designed to house water-based transportation exclusively, including motorized vessels and non- motorized vessels. Historically these boat houses were of frame construction, modest in size accommodating 1-3 boats, typically with a gable front entrance and frame platform in the upper portion for storing sails, oars and boat equipment. The boat houses are generally several hundred feet away from living and recreational structures since they have been considered fire hazards, particularly if there are motorized vessels housed in the structure.
2. Boat houses with captains' quarters. In the late 19th century and to the present day, boat houses were constructed with a living quarter for the captain. These are usually found in estate settings. The boat houses were designed to accommodate approximately 5 vessels, those owned by the property owner and for visiting guests. The captain's quarters were added in case of fire, which happens occasionally even in the present day. The captain was also

responsible for assisting visitors in docking their vessels, or helping boaters caught in inclement weather. The living quarters are generally modest, and do not contain any living features beyond a bedroom, galley kitchen, and small living room. As in the case of traditional boat houses, there is a risk of fire when housing motorized vessels.

In reviewing the plans submitted by T. Scott Law to the Army Corps and the municipality, I was struck by the scale of the “boat house” proposed and that it included a host of features that are not traditionally considered part of boat house designs. These incompatible features include:

1. Event/storage area (based on the plans submitted they are of identical size) and are of such a scale that it does raise the question as to what is intended in this space
2. An elevator
3. Men’s and women’s rooms with double sinks
4. Table and chair storage area
5. A large kitchen
6. Several covered decks

What is perhaps most striking in the plans is the scale of the structure, and the absence of a bedroom for the captain, the primary feature for boat houses with living features. Having surveyed boat houses around Long Island, including those of 20th century industrial magnates such as Frederick G. Bourne (founder of the Singer Sewing Company) and writer/poet William Cullen Bryan, I have never seen any of the features mentioned above in a boat house, historic or contemporary. We therefore urge you to reject the application submitted by T. Scott Law.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Solomon". The ink is a dark color, possibly black or dark blue, and the signature is written in a fluid, connected style.

Executive Director
Long Island Traditions



**LAURIE KAY SOMMERS
CONSULTING**

historic preservation. folklore. oral history

January 4, 2022

April Champion Project Manager
Western Section Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Detroit District
477 Michigan Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48226-2550
April.R.Champion@usace.army.mil
RE: USACE File: LRE-2020-01805-41-S20 submitted by Scott and Debra Law

Dear Ms. Champion:

I am writing to express deep concern about the Law's proposed boathouse in Hayes Township, Charlevoix County. I am a Michigander and historic preservation professional based in Okemos, Michigan with a keen interest in sustainable growth and stewardship of the Great Lakes watershed. I am familiar with Charlevoix since beginning research on Beaver Island in 1989. Most recently I have worked in historic Fishtown and so am well aware of the careful oversight by the ACOE in granting permits for construction in the watershed. I also know what responsible private development looks like. This is not the case here.

I have received information from LuAnne Kozma regarding plans for the Laws' boathouse, both original and revised. I am concerned that this project will set a precedent for large developments under the guise of "boathouses" that will be detrimental to Lake Charlevoix and to lakeside developments across the state. The revised plan is no different in scale or impact than the original. It strikes me as similar to the "super garages" that are far more than simple garages. In use and function, this is clearly a "super boathouse." A project of this scale will negatively affect the shoreline and allow development of large buildings right on the lake. Although clearly in the private interests of the Laws, this development is contrary to the public interest and to the history of greenbelt protection along the Lake Charlevoix shoreline.

Please consider the impact and precedent-setting nature of this permit request and deny it.

Sincerely,

Laurie Kay Sommers Consulting, LLC
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