

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of the June 4, 2008 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday June 4, 2008, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Acting Chairman Lloyd Culbertson and Board members, Steuart Tray, Madeleine Dugan, Don Schoenheider, Peggy Vignocchi and John Hamilton

Building Review Board members absent: Chairman Ray Buschmann

Staff members present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, Peter Coutant, Senior Planner and Megan O'Neill, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures – Acting Chairman Culbertson

Acting Chairman Culbertson provided an overview of the meeting procedures and introduced the members of the Board and staff.

2. Approval of the April 2, 2008 meeting minutes.

Approval of the minutes was postponed.

NEW PETITION – RESIDENTIAL

1. A request for approval of the demolition of the existing residence and construction of a new residence located at 424 S. Ridge Road.

Owners: Todd and Jana Van Paris

Representative: Charles Hackley, architect

Board member Schoenheider recused himself from the proceedings due to his relationship with the petitioner. He left the chambers.

Mr. Van Paris introduced the design team. He stated that he is a Lake Forest residence and is building this home for his family. He noted that the architect explored a renovation project and commented on the difficulties in completing that type of project.

Mr. Hackley introduced the petition. He commented on the existing house noting the deficiencies in the plan and structure. He discussed the renovation project noting that the amount of work is extensive and would ultimately become a full demolition request. He reviewed the drainage and water problems present on the site. He reviewed the demolition criteria. He reviewed the proposed elevations and floor plans. He discussed the massing of the proposed structure in relation to the massing of the existing structure. He commented on the neighborhood character.

Mr. Coutant presented staff comments. He stated that this request is rooted in the desire to renovate and expand the existing structure. He stated that the existing foundation would need to be replaced to address the flooding issue. He stated that material submitted by the petitioner justifies and supports the decision to demolish the existing structure and design a replacement

structure. He stated that the design of the replacement structure fits the character of the neighborhood and adjacent houses. He recommended approval of the demolition and replacement structure.

In response to Board member Tray, Mr. Hackley discussed the proposed grading and solutions to the drainage problems.

In response to questions from Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Coutant stated that the Engineering staff completed a preliminary review and stated that due to the size of the lot, there are adequate opportunities to capture and handle the storm water runoff. He stated that this proposal might even improve the drainage in the area.

In response to questions from Board member Hamilton, Mr. Hackley stated that no final decisions on the paving material have been made noting his interest in using permeable materials. He stated that there is less impervious surfaces proposed than existing on the site.

In response to questions from Board member Dugan, Mr. Hackley stated that a reclaimed Chicago common brick with a limestone wash or painted brick are options. He stated that the color would be a shade of buff or natural finish. He commented on the proposed joint of the brick. He stated the intent to make it look older even though it is new.

In response to questions by Board member Tray, Mr. Hackley commented on the curb cut proposed on Ridge Road.

In response to questions by Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Hackley commented on the location of the replacement structure and the increased distance from the trees. He stated that the replacement structure is slightly taller than the existing house.

In response to questions by Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Coutant stated that staff is comfortable with the location of the house and the preservation of the trees.

In response to questions by Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Hackley stated that the intent of the asymmetrical gable is to help bring the mass down and make the attached garage feel like an out building.

Board member Tray commented that the property is quite large and is adequately screened. He stated that the increased height is not of concern due to the size of the lot.

Acting Chairman Culbertson invited public comment. Hearing none he invited final comments from the petitioner.

Mr. Van Paris commented on the height of the structure noting that in the summer the existing home is not visible and their intent is to maintain the existing landscape screen.

Board member Tray commented on the existing condition of the house.

Board member Hamilton made a motion to approve the demolition subject to the approval of the replacement structure.

The motion was seconded by Board member Tray and it was unanimously approved.

Board member Hamilton commended the petitioner on being below the permitted bulk and expressed support of the project.

Board member Tray expressed support of the replacement structure noting that the new structure has a basis in the renovation project.

Board member Tray made a motion to approve the replacement structure subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Prior to the scheduling of a framing inspection for the new construction, the landscape plan shall be submitted for review and approval by staff. In the event that the landscaping cannot be planted prior to the issuance of an Occupancy Permit due to the time of year, a financial guarantee shall be posted in the amount of 110% of the cost of the plant materials and labor to ensure planting at the first available season.
 - i. The landscape plan shall identify all vegetation, both mature trees and undergrowth areas that will be removed or maintained.
 - ii. The landscape plan shall be shown on the approved grading and utility plan to allow verification that any plantings will not negatively affect approved drainage patterns or conflict with utilities. Any changes to the topography or drainage to the property must be reviewed by the City Engineer.
 - iii. A note shall be placed on the landscape plan stating that approval of the plan is for plantings only, any driveway piers, gates, fences, lighting, garden structures, pool, or other accessory structures will require separate approval and permits.
2. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the petitioner shall provide digital photographic documentation of the existing home and site to the City.
3. If determined to be necessary, chain link tree preservation fencing shall be installed prior to construction. The location of the fencing shall be reviewed and approved by city staff.
4. A construction material staging plan and construction vehicles parking plan shall be provided by the petitioner, reviewed, and approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. All construction parking and staging of materials shall occur on the property.
5. As required by the City Code, the demolition tax of \$10,000 shall be paid prior to the issuance of the permit.

Board member Hamilton seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Board member Schoenheider joined the Board for consideration of the following item.

NEW PETITION – ACADEMIC

2. **A request for approval of an addition to the Sports Center at Lake Forest College located at 555 N. Sheridan Road.
Owner: Lake Forest College
Representatives: David Siebert, Lake Forest College and Jim Curtin, architect**

Mr. Schutt, president of the College, introduced the petition and discussed the goals of the proposed Sports Center. He stated that the College is lacking quality sports facilities compared to peer colleges. He discussed the difficulties with the current facility.

Mr. Curtin, architect for the project, reviewed the site plan. He stated that a portion of the existing building will be demolished to make way for the proposed addition. He reviewed the addition location with respect to setbacks from the street. He stated that the goal is to make the proposed addition work seamlessly with the existing building. He discussed the uses within the existing building and the relationship with the proposed addition. He discussed the interior space layout and division of space. He stated that the facility will only serve the current student population. He reviewed renderings of the proposed exterior and interior. He discussed the exterior materials of brick and cast stone. He stated that clearstory windows at the ground level north elevation will provide light into the lower level. He discussed the connection between the new facility and existing building. He provided a rendering of the building with existing landscape screening.

Mr. Cliff Miller, landscape architect, stated that the main concern is protecting the view from the Sheridan Road corridor. He stated that as much of the mature landscape on the east side of the building will remain in tact. He noted that some large trees have been moved to the east side of the site and will screen the building and the older building to the south. He stated that there is a substantial amount of vegetation in place. He noted that some trees on the north side of the facility will need to be removed, however most of the trees are in decline. He discussed the proposed additional landscaping. He stated that the concept is to continue the restoration of Oak tree plantings throughout the campus. He stated that they have provided as many trees as is feasible in the area around the building.

A model of the proposal was provided to the Board.

Ms. Czerniak provided some background information on the College. She stated that institutions have played an important role in the history of the city. She stated that institutions are all located in residential neighborhoods. She noted that Lake Forest has not adopted a zoning district that covers institutional uses, but kept residential zoning to recognize that the connections and borders to neighborhoods need careful attention. She stated that the City recognizes that institutions like the College need to be able to grow and expand in order to remain viable. She noted that in the past 10 years the City has worked to the College to adopt one master plan and a second updated plan has recently been discussed. She stated that the planning process has allowed focus on improving and cleaning up the perimeters of the campus. She stated that the activities of the expansion are focused internal to the campus, but this process allows the opportunity to review what happens along the perimeter of the campus in order to appropriately screen residential properties across the street.

Ms. O'Neill stated that the Board is reviewing the architectural design of the addition. She encouraged the Board to ask questions of what is proposed and noted that there are a number of consultants in attendance to answer questions. She noted the need to ensure that the landscaping at the perimeter of the site appropriately screens and buffers the project from properties and along Sheridan Road. She discussed the number of trees that will be removed and the requirements for a tree planting plan over a 5 year period. She reviewed other recommended conditions of approval. She noted conditions that the height of the building should not exceed 40 feet, concerns for impact of light shed from the building and the compatibility of the design to the existing structure and the neighborhood.

In response to a question from Board member Schoenheider, Ms. Czerniak stated that a five year time period for the replacement plan allows time to gain a sense of the building's size and height and where the trees need to be planted to buffer the construction from the perimeter of Campus.

She stated that the five year timeframe will also allow staff to review and monitor the trees over that period of time. She stated that a five year timeframe seems reasonable. She stated that there are other nearby areas that could benefit from some cleanup and new tree planting. She stated that we don't want to over plant but would like the opportunity to infill as necessary. She stated that the preference would be to preserve the single grove of Oaks, but staff recognizes that the college has needs from a funding and facilities need standpoint. She noted that they are not heritage trees but they are important.

In response to a question from Board member Vignocchi, Mr. Siebert reviewed the information included in the addendum. He stated that the information is intended to provide clarification to the materials and details proposed.

In response to a question from Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Curtin discussed the connection of the addition to the existing building. He noted the configuration of the roof of the existing structure. He discussed the details of the break between the two structures. He discussed the mechanical screening. He stated that the mechanicals would be low profile and set in from the edge of the building. He discussed the site lines and distances at which the mechanicals would be visible. He stated that the roof top units would not be screened due to the placement. He discussed the reasons why rooftop are proposed and not ground mount units.

In response to a question from Board member Vignocchi, Mr. Curtin stated that the brick will match the existing brick on the building.

In response to a question from Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Curtin stated that the Sheridan and Maplewood façade has the goal of bringing in natural light to the interior. He discussed the connection between the two buildings. He stated that the existing building is dark and unwelcoming. He stated that the idea in the proposed addition is to open the space to allow interior activities to be visible upon entering the building.

Board member Schoenheider stated that the College needs to upgrade the facilities. He stated that the Board may be struggling with how the addition fits into the neighborhood and with the overall character of the design.

In response to questions from Board member Schoenheider, Mr. Curtin stated that the average height of the building is 36 feet and the high point is 42 feet. He stated that they would like to lower it as much as possible noting that from an accessibility standpoint the new addition matches the level of the existing building. He stated that they really would like to match floor elevations with the existing building.

Board member Schoenheider questioned if the College had done any planning for improving the entrance on Maplewood or incorporating the ice rink into the proposed improvements.

Mr. Schutt stated that the College very much wants to improve South Campus and this is the start of that improvement. He stated that the College is at the start of planning for the entrance. He stated that there is more work around the entrance that needs to be done. He stated their goal of making the entrance a much more attractive space. He stated that they looked at incorporating the hockey rink, but due to time, space and money it was not possible to incorporate into the project. He stated that the planning for South Campus is really just getting started. He stated that the planning for the Campus will include a tree replacement plan.

Board member Schoenheider stated that the current entrance provides space that allows for an inviting entrance. He stated his hope that the proposal doesn't result in a cavernous entrance.

In response to a question from Board member Schoenheider regarding the contextual compatibility of the addition to the neighborhood and impact of light-shed, Mr. Curtin stated that they have made adjustments to address the light-shed issue. He noted that lower level windows have been removed from the east elevation. He stated that the idea of running on the raised running track with natural lighting from windows is important to the design. He stated that there are many ways to mitigate the light during the day and night.

Board member Schoenheider stated that it is importation to find a solution to address the light shed issue.

Mr. Curtin stated that the interior light will be indirect rather than direct lighting.

Board member Schoenheider reiterated that addressing the lighting will be important. He stated that he is struggling with how the architectural design of the addition, particularly the north and east, fits the character of the neighborhood and the Campus. He stated his desire to see some alternatives explored for the exterior design.

In response to a question from Board member Dugan, Mr. Curtin stated that the connector piece is glass with low level lighting. He stated that the connector addition is setback 12 feet back from the existing building.

In response to a question from Board member Dugan regarding landscaping, Mr. Siebert stated that there are a number of existing pine trees in poor condition that will be replaced.

In response to a question from Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Curtin stated that staff has recommended a condition that the building not exceed 40 feet, therefore, something will need to be figured out to reduce the height. He stated that they will re-look at the structural plan to reduce the height.

Mr. Schutt stated that a height variance will not be requested and a compliant plan will be submitted.

In response to a question from Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Curtin stated that the impact of windows on the playing courts has been considered. He stated that the running track will deflect the light entering the windows and indirect light will light the courts below. He stated that the dominant row of windows is on the north elevation. He stated that there is a plan for addressing the lighting cast outside the building. He stated that some type of window treatment could be considered to limit lighting visibility from windows at night.

In response to a question from Board member Vignocchi, Mr. Curtin stated that exterior lighting is not needed on the north elevation or the Sheridan Road side. He noted that the building is turned toward the campus.

In response to a question from Acting Chairman Culbertson, Mr. Schutt stated that with respect to utilities, the College is working with ComEd to develop a plan to bury and relocate utilities. He stated that unless there is some legal impediment the College will figure out a way of dealing with the issue.

In response to a question from Board member Hamilton, Mr. Curtin commented on the running track and the height of space needed for the various uses within the space. He noted that these are practice facilities. He stated that there are several different sports that have different requirements noting the delicate balance between complying with height requirements and use of the space.

Board member Hamilton requested that alternate elevations be reviewed including the use of a mansard roof to soften the height issue and slope the roof back away from the face of the building.

Acting Chairman Culbertson invited public comment.

Mr. Mark Knower, 215 N Sheridan Road, stated that his house is the most significant historic structure in the neighborhood. He stated that he has lived in the house for 10 years. He stated that the College is not in the historic district. He stated that this request is not in front of the Historic Preservation Commission, but the City Code requires the Board to consider the surrounding neighborhood. He stated that he loves living next to the College and using the facilities at times. He stated that he has a significant issue with the architectural design proposed. He stated that there is a wonderful opportunity to look at the architecture within the campus. He suggested that the College look at some of the great historic architecture on campus and consider how to make this fit in. He asked that the Board deny this proposal based on the design not being within the context of the established area. He noted that the design does not fit the character of the historic district, and is not compatible with the property and surrounding neighborhood. He asked that the College consider alternative designs and look at other solutions within the community for the design of the addition. He stated that he is not a proponent of using landscaping to hide architecture. He stated that all of the neighbors have buried the utilities. He questioned who polices the five year plan and asked that it not be deferred.

Mr. Safrin, 245 North Sheridan Road, stated his general support for the plan. He acknowledged concerns for light impact from the interior lighting, he stated that the natatorium has no landscaping and has not been screened. He asked that the plan provide for screening of the existing building along Sheridan road. He stated that some clearing of the trees and landscaping has given the impression that the plan is approved.

Mr. Rick Carlin, 211 Washington Road, stated that he attended a meeting by the College and lighting was discussed. He stated his concern that the lighting that has been added recently to the south campus has not been downward screened. He stated his concern that there be some guarantee that lighting be directed downward as much as possible. He stated concern for noise from the mechanical units and asked that consideration be given to sound abatement. He stated that the noise carries considerably. He asked if the expansion will result in more traffic due to use from outside activities.

Mr. Gininelli, 191 North Sheridan, stated that he is proud to be next to the College as a neighbor. He stated that he has built his house and has learned that the process has improved his house. He stated that he understands that the expansion is a necessity. He stated that his concern is the Sheridan Road streetscape. He stated that he would like to see a full landscape plan. He stated that the increase of lighting is a concern. He stated that he is concerned for the roof-top mechanicals. He asked that an alternative be considered. He questioned if the brick will blend with the existing building. He asked that the concerns of the neighbors be considered. He stated that the design should be reconsidered.

Mr. Knower stated his concern for storm water management and asked that it be considered.

Ms. Hiser, 215 Maple Court, she stated that several neighbors have expressed concerns. She asked for clarification on the loss of setback from Maplewood Road. She stated that there is no other place on campus where a building of this size is so close to an entrance. She encouraged the Board to do a more extensive communication of the project to the neighbors. She stated that many of the residents all the way to Mayflower should be noticed of the project.

Acting Chairman Culbertson noted that seven letters were received prior to the meeting. He noted that many of the concerns have been raised. He summarized some of the issues that have been raised. He stated that a letter in strong support of the project was received as well.

In response to public testimony, Mr. Schutt thanked the neighbors for coming. He stated that on behalf of the college he can assure that all of the issues are being taken seriously and they will work to address the issues. He stated that the college is a private institution that requires raising funds for each project. He stated that the project is a 17 million dollar project. He stated that they have considered alternatives early on and he believes this is the option that best fits the needs of the College. He stated that this proposal is within the smallest footprint possible. He stated that he disagrees with some of the comments about whether landscaping is an important part of the project to screen and minimize the impact to the neighbors. He stated that the elevation along Sheridan Road will be virtually invisible from the street due to the existing landscaping. He stated that he understands the concern for the lighting. He stated that the current proposal has much smaller windows than originally. He stated that light shed can be almost eliminated. He stated that the college needs to get started and to come to a conclusion on some of these issues. He encouraged the Board to be judicious in considering these issues and the limits on the College's freedoms in designing the facility. He stated that the building meets setback requirements. He stated that the building will be setback 15 feet from Maplewood Road at the closest, increasing to 45 feet as the building moves west. He stated that the open space in front of the building will be lost. He stated that situating the building on the south or west of the existing facility may have worse impacts.

In response to a question from Board member Vignocchi, Mr. Schutt stated their hope to begin construction this fall with completion within 12 months.

Ms. O'Neill stated that a landscape plan will be required and ultimately approved by the Board noting conditions that require landscaping to include plantings to the north and south of the addition. She stated that the tree replacement plan will be in addition to the landscape plan as a second phase. She noted that there are both historic and non-historic buildings in the area. She stated that staff feels confident that the contextual compatibility issue can be addressed. She stated that exploration of placement of the mechanical equipment can be considered. She stated that the five year planting plan will be a phased plan with the ability to augment the plan over that time period. She stated that storm-water management plan is being reviewed. She stated that the addition will not add to the capacity of the enrollment or traffic.

Acting Chairman Culbertson stated that the Board is proud of the college and what it provides to the city. He stated that the primary concern is to do justice to the project.

In response to a question from Board member Schoenheider, Ms. Czerniak stated that staff does need further involvement from the Board and the neighbors need to see a refined plan. She stated that staff can work with the college to revise the plans and address the issues that have been raised. She stated that staff can work to bring a plan back in short order. She stated that many of

the issues can be addressed. She suggested that following the return of this project to the Board, returning with a full phased landscape plan and timeframe for construction would be helpful. She stated that it is appropriate to bring the project back to the Board.

Board member Schoenheider stated that the project needs to come back to the Board. He questioned if a subcommittee should be involved in looking at the issues. He stated his willingness to participate if it would be a viable and useful tool. He stated that there is information that is needed.

Board member Hamilton concurred with Board member Schoenheider comments. He noted that sharing with the Board their previous attempts at alternative plans would be very helpful. He stated that it would be useful to understand to alternatives to understand the process in reaching the solution proposed noting that it will help show that what is proposed is truly the best solution. He stated that it is an asset to be in a community where a college exists. He commented on concern for fenestration on the east and north elevation and requested more information on the shade system that could be proposed.

Board member Vignocchi stated that given the 12 month construction schedule, a shortened planting deadline be considered.

Acting Chairman Culbertson noted that a five year planting program will allow sufficient time to evaluate the plant material as it matures.

Board member Dugan stated that she loves and appreciates the college. She stated that the college is in a tough position because they are limited financially. She stated appreciation that the existing building can't be replaced in its entirety. She stated a concern with the relationship of the proposed to the existing building. She stated that screening with landscaping is important and is consistent with the character of Sheridan Road. She stated her desire to see revisions to the plan.

Board member Tray stated that he can not support the project as currently proposed. He stated his concern with the architectural compatibility noting that he would like to see substantial changes to the design.

Acting Chairman Culbertson summarized that continuing the petition is appropriate and encouraged the Board to appoint a subcommittee.

Board member Schoenheider made a motion to continue the matter and appoint a subcommittee to work with the College and City to make refinements to the proposal to address as many of the issues possible. He asked Mr. Curtin to prepare information to help the Board understand alternatives that were considered and ways to address the issues that have been raised.

The motion was seconded by Board member Hamilton and it was unanimously approved.

OTHER ITEMS

3. Opportunity for the public to address the Board on non-agenda items.

No member of the public spoke at the meeting on non-agenda items.

4. Additional Information from Staff.

Ms. O’Neill stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting date is July 2nd noting that staff will poll the members to ensure that there will be a quorum present.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan C. O’Neill,
Assistant Planner