

The City of Lake Forest
Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the July 24, 2019 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Bruce Grieve and Commissioners Jan Gibson, Carol Gayle, Steve Lamontagne, Bill Redfield, Elizabeth Sperry and Wells Wheeler.

Commissioners absent: None

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff, overview of meeting procedures.

Chairman Grieve reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the June 26, 2019 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Approval of the minutes of the June 26, 2019 meeting was postponed.

**3. Continued consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement residence and attached garage, tree removal and landscape plan and the overall site plan for property located at 531 E. Woodland Road.
Property Owner: Todd Altounian
Representative: Peter Witmer, architect**

Chairman Grieve asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Witmer stated that the plans were refined to respond to suggestions made by the Commission at the previous meeting. He noted that the revisions made to the plans include changes to the landscape plan, the configuration of the motor court, the location of the driveways, and the color palette of the home. He added that the revised plans preserve trees previously proposed for removal and reduce the impervious surface on the site. He stated that the additional curb cut on Sheridan Road is shifted north to reduce the amount of regrading required. He explained the enhanced architectural detailing now proposed with the addition of some openings and a horizontal limestone band around the house. He noted that the exterior brick will be painted gray, rather than white, to soften the appearance of the house. He stated that the landscape plan reflects

layers of plantings across the site to screen the motor court at the front of the house from views from the street.

Ms. Baehr stated that the petition was considered at the previous Commission meeting and at that time, the demolition of the existing residence was approved. She explained that during the previous meeting, the Commission offered input on the proposed replacement residence that was largely focused on reducing the amount of impervious surface on the site, minimizing impact to trees, adding some detailed to the house and softening the color palette of the new home. She noted that overall, it appears that the changes made address the Commission's comments. She stated that the staff report presents findings in support of the revised plans.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Witmer explained that alternative options to the additional curb cut on Sheridan Road were studied. He stated that an additional curb cut is appropriate for the size of the property and the scale of the proposed residence. He stated that the option presented is the most successful in reducing the amount of impervious surface and preserving trees. He explained that because the residence is oriented on an angle, it is difficult to shift the house further back on the property due to the required setbacks. He noted that before a paint color is chosen for the exterior brick, color samples will be provided to staff for approval.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Witmer explained that the stark appearance of the color palette is intentional and is consistent with the architectural style.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Ms. Czerniak stated that the Code currently does not have a limit on the amount of impervious surface allowed on a site. She added however that the Code limits the percentage of property that can be covered by structures

In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Witmer stated that the brick will be painted.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that consideration be given to making the string course darker than a limestone color for compatibility with the gray brick.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gayle, Mr. Witmer stated that other driveway configurations were explored and the proposed configuration, preserves the most significant and healthy trees.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Witmer stated that at its widest point, the driveway is approximately 18 feet. He noted that a retaining wall along the west side of the motor court will probably not be necessary. He explained that the landscaping planned along the driveway will screen the paved surface from the street. He agreed that the landscape plan

can be further developed to help screen the northwest wing of the house where the basement is exposed. He stated that the majority of the trees proposed for removal are in poor condition. He added that the metal roofs are intended to identify the entry points at the front and rear of the house. He explained that gutters are not currently proposed. He noted that the area around the front door is meant to be a transparent element.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited public comment.

Noelle Kasdin, 1119 Sheridan Road, expressed concern about the additional curb cut and the amount of paved surface proposed on the property. She explained that the majority of the living spaces in her home face the 531 E. Woodland Road property. She noted that the views from her home will be impacted due to the loss of trees and increased paved areas. She stated that the driveways and motor court as proposed are out of character with the surrounding area. She noted that other driveways and motor courts in the area are well-hidden from view. She added that a ravine runs through her property and expressed concern about additional stormwater runoff in the neighborhood.

Peter Kasdin, 1119 Sheridan Road, expressed concern about potential safety issues as a result of the additional curb cut on to Sheridan Road. He noted that speeding on Woodland and Sheridan Road is already an issue in the neighborhoods.

In response to public comment, Mr. Witmer stated that the intent is to preserve as many trees as possible. He added that while it is possible to have a multi-story house on the property, the proposed residence is only one-story, and as a result, the impact to views of the property will not significantly change from what currently exists.

In response to public testimony, Ms. Czerniak stated that the City Arborist visited the site numerous times and has carefully reviewed options for the driveway configuration and motor court. She added that one of the most significant trees on the property is a White Oak which would be impacted with either a circular or square motor court in front of the new house. She noted that with the site plan as now presented, the tree can be preserved. She suggested that a condition could be included in the approval requiring additional plantings around the wide part of the driveway to screen views of cars parked in front of the house from off the property. She added that from a zoning perspective, two curb cuts are permitted on the property. She explained that minimal grading is proposed and stormwater management will be subject to review by the City Engineer. She added that staff will continue to work with the petitioner to reduce the impervious surface on the site. She stated that before any permits are issued for work on the site, the City Engineer will require detailed grading and drainage plans and will assure that the plans meet the applicable requirements.

Hearing no further public testimony, Chairman Grieve asked for final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson stated that the landscape plan should be enhanced to screen views of the driveway and parked cars from off of the site. She suggested that an alternate roof material be considered in place of metal. She expressed disappointment in the second curb cut on Sheridan Road. She noted that in her opinion, the frontage along Sheridan Road should be left as open lawn with landscaping.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that additional landscaping should help to address the concerns of the neighbors.

Commissioner Gayle expressed appreciation to the petitioner for the work done to address the Commissioner's comments from the previous meeting. She agreed that the second curb cut on Sheridan Road could be a safety concern.

Commissioner Lamontagne stated that the petitioner has been thoughtful in the design of the home.

Chairman Grieve summarized the Commission's comments. He added that overall, the project satisfies the applicable criteria. He explained that additional landscaping is essential to this project. He added that the final color palette selected for the house will have an impact on the streetscape. He encouraged the petitioner to carefully consider the color palette in consultation with staff. He encouraged the petitioner to work with the neighbors to address their concerns. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, he invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval of the replacement residence, preliminary landscape plan and overall site plan for the property located at 531 E. Woodland Road. He noted that the approval is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and is subject to the following conditions.

1. Further consideration shall be given to the color palette in an effort to soften the visual impact of the house from the streetscape.
2. Extraordinary efforts shall be taken to protect trees identified for preservation during construction activity. A pre and post construction tree care plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
3. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission with the modifications detailed above. If any further modifications are proposed in response to the Commission's discussion or as a result of final design development, plans clearly detailing the areas of

change must be submitted at the time of submission for permit, along with the plans originally presented to the Commission, and will be subject to review by staff, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to verify that the plans are consistent with the intent of the Commission and the approvals granted.

4. At the time of submittal for a building permit, detailed drainage and grading plans must be submitted. The plans shall clearly reflect all existing trees and identify those proposed for removal. Grading and filling shall be limited to the minimum necessary to meet accepted engineering standards in the interest of minimizing stress on the trees intended to remain. The plan shall detail the amount of impervious surface with the goal of reducing the impervious surface to not exceed the pre-existing conditions on the site.
5. At the time of submittal for a building permit an updated and complete tree survey and removal plan shall be submitted showing calculations of the total tree inches to be removed or impacted.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a detailed landscape plan shall be submitted and shall be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. The plan shall provide for the required replacement inches on site to the extent possible using good forestry practices and identify any remaining inches for which a payment in lieu of planting will be made.
7. Details of all exterior lighting, if any is proposed, shall be reflected on the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets of all light fixtures should be provided and all fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be shielded from view from off the property by the fixtures and if not, then by frosted or beaded glass dense enough to obscure views of the light source. The right to night, dark sky goals shall be satisfied.
8. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval in an effort to minimize impacts on trees identified for preservation and on the surrounding neighborhood. No parking is permitted on the adjacent streets due to traffic volumes and the narrow roadways.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations at 680 N. Sheridan Road. A building scale variance is also requested.

Property Owners: Henson & Anna Robinson

Representative: Jeff Letzter, designer

Chairman Grieve asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Letzter introduced the project on behalf of the property owners. He stated that based on his research, it appears that the home at 680 N. Sheridan Road was originally built in 1900 as an accessory structure to the Harvey M. Thompson House, at 660 N. Sheridan Road. He noted that the home has undergone many changes since its original construction. He added that the columns on the front of the house do not appear original to the home and may have been added during renovations done in the 1940's. He noted that the existing columns appear out of scale with the home and are proposed to be removed and replaced with a one-story covered entry element that is more consistent with the style of the home. He explained that the flat roof on the west portion of the home is proposed to be replaced with a hip roof to match the roof form on the main mass of the house. He stated that the project does not involve any building footprint changes. He noted that a portion of the existing paved area along the front of the house will be removed and replaced with landscaping. He stated that the house has some maintenance issues from years of neglect, a leaking roof and rotting siding, which will be addressed. He explained that the existing house has an internal two-car garage that will be reduced in size to a one-car garage to provide more interior living space. He added that all the shutters on the house will be replaced with new shutters and hardware. He stated that the windows in the bay on the rear of the home will be removed to accommodate a new interior fireplace.

Ms. Baehr explained that the intent of the current request is to address some of the less compatible changes that have been made to the residence over the years. She stated that overall, the proposed alterations appear appropriate and consistent with the architectural style and character of the house which is identified as a Contributing Structure to the Historic District. She noted that a building scale variance is requested because the existing house is over the allowable square footage by about 460 square feet or 8%. She stated that the existing overage is largely due to the two-story covered porch. She noted that after the removal of the porch, the overage will be reduced to approximately 230 square feet over the allowable square footage or about a 4% overage.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Letzter explained that the design of the railing proposed above the front porch was influenced by the railing on the existing front porch. He agreed that the existing dormer on the rear elevation is out of character with the home but noted that no changes to the dormer are proposed as part of this project. He stated that the changes to the rear bay are driven by the desire for a new fireplace. He explained that the

fireplace is located within the bay because it is centered on the rear wall of the family room. He agreed to explore adding further detail to the entry adjacent to the garage, he noted however, it is not a primary entrance and is hardly visible from the front of the house or the street.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Letzter stated that the entire roof is proposed to be replaced with asphalt shingle to match the existing roof material. He noted that soffit vents and a continuous ridge vent are proposed.

Commissioner Wheeler observed that removing the windows from the bay on the rear elevation diminishes its appearance. He suggested that the new fireplace could be located in one of the corners of the room.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Letzter stated that the existing shutters on the home are not proportional to the windows and extend from the window head height to the ground level. He added that the new shutters will be proportionate to the windows. He explained that the existing garage is not large enough for two cars and is currently used mostly for storage. He added that there is an accessory structure on the east side of the property that serves as the garage and obviates the need for the existing garage which is located internal to the house.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Letzter stated that only the windows that are not operable and in poor condition will be replaced. He noted that the new windows will be wood with simulated divided lites. He added that the porch railing will be wood and the columns will either be wood or a fiberglass product.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson suggested that the petitioner consider making changes to the existing dormer on the rear of the home. She expressed support for the overall project.

Commissioner Gayle expressed support for the proposed changes. She stated that the project is creative and thoughtful in addressing the less compatible changes that were made to the house over time.

Commissioner Lamontagne acknowledged the petitioner's attention to detail. He suggested the changes to the bay window on the rear be reconsidered. He agreed that consideration should be given to enhancing the entry adjacent to the garage.

Chairman Grieve summarized the Commission's comments. He commented that the proposed changes will simplify the appearance of the house and are in

keeping with the character of the property. He stated that the original design intent of the house is most evident on the rear elevation. He added that the original design of the home should be used to help guide the petitioner as the project is further developed. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, he invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations and building scale variance for the property located at 680 N. Sheridan Road. He noted that the approval is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and subject to the following conditions.

1. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. If any modifications are proposed in response to Commission direction or as a result of design development, plans clearly detailing the areas of change must be submitted at the time of submission for permit, along with the plans originally presented to the Commission, and will be subject to review by staff, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to verify that the plans are consistent with the intent of the Commission and the approvals granted.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect trees and vegetation during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
3. Details of exterior lighting, if any is proposed, shall be reflected on the plans submitted for permit. All fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be shielded from view. All exterior lights shall be on timers and set to turn off no later than 11 p.m. except for security lights with motion sensors.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood. No construction parking is permitted on Sheridan Road or on Deerpath.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

- 5. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to authorize demolition and approve a new residence and rehabilitation and modification to an original coach house. Approval of tree removal, landscape and hardscape plans is also requested. The property is located at 1302 N. Green Bay Road.**
Property Owners: Ralph & Mary Gesualdo
Representative: Timothy Kress, architect

This agenda item was postponed at the request of the petitioner prior to meeting and was not heard.

6. Non-Action Item: Discussion and input on a matter referred to the Commission by the Plan Commission, the Swift Subdivision, 770 Washington Road. No action is requested.

Ms. Czerniak stated that this agenda item was referred to the Commission by the Plan Commission for input, no Commission action is required. She explained that at the time the Historic Preservation Commission considered the request for demolition of the residence on the Swift property, the Commission requested the opportunity to provide input to the Plan Commission on any future development proposal for the property. She explained that the Plan Commission heard an introductory presentation on a subdivision proposal for the Swift property at the last meeting. She stated that the property is approximately 3.8 acres and is located within walking distance to the train station and near the new condominium development on McKinley Road. She noted that the property is zoned R-3 with a minimum lots size of 40,000 square feet and is also in the Historic Residential and Open Space Preservation Overlay District which allows flexibility with respect to lot size, setbacks, curb cuts and other aspects of a development so long as the underlying density is not exceeded. She noted that a 4-lot subdivision is in proposed, in conformance with the density allowed by the zoning district. She explained that the Historic Preservation Commission is asked to identify what aspects or characteristics of the site should be considered for preservation as part of the subdivision and redevelopment. She added that the overlay district gives the Plan Commission and City Council the flexibility to preserve natural features, historic features, and the character of the property. She stated that all of the comments from the Historic Preservation Commission will be forwarded to the Plan Commission. She stated that the Commission is not asked to take any official action or vote on this agenda item.

Commissioner Gibson stated that from a streetscape and historic district character perspective, the garden element at the southeast point of the property and the grove of oak and conifer trees along Washington Road are important features of the site. She noted that during the previous hearing, Susan Benjamin stated that at least a 40 foot setback for all structures is appropriate to preserve the character of the southern part of the property. She stated that in her opinion, because Walnut Road is a very short street, curb cuts should be limited in this area.

Commissioner Sperry noted that the 40 foot setback along the streetscape is critical in preserving the character of the property. She stated that the mature vegetation on the property should be preserved. She added that particular attention should be paid to how the subdivision will impact Triangle Park visually. She noted that the site already has a point of entry at the north end. She stated that curb cuts and driveways should be minimized to preserve the streetscape views and openness of the site.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested that cluster housing or townhomes may be appropriate for the site to minimize the impact to the features and vistas of the property. He stated that features such as the council ring – type element and the area near the pond should be considered for preservation. He noted that the location of the new property lines should be sensitive to the features of the site.

Commissioner Gayle stated that the property is in an important and prominent location within the City and historic district. She added that the natural beauty of the site, the wooded character, and the sense of open, park-like space should all be preserved to the extent possible.

Commissioner Redfield agreed with comments made by Commissioner Gayle. He added that the landscaping on the property, particularly the rock and garden at the southeast corner of the property should be preserved and restored.

Commissioner Lamontagne stated that preserving the mature, healthy trees on the site is important, he noted however the grading done for future construction may pose challenges for preserving trees. He stated that the rocks and vegetation surrounding the pond should be preserved, rehabilitated or enhanced. He suggested that the rock feature could be made visible to pedestrians to enhance the streetscape. He recommended that a single curb cut be considered for proposed lots two and three. He observed that lots one and four could potentially be developed with a circular driveway with landscaped open space that visually becomes an extension of Triangle Park and the parkway.

Chairman Grieve stated that for many decades, the Swift property was shared with and enjoyed by the neighborhood and community as a whole. He stated that the subdivision should be mindful of working to maintain the pastoral qualities of the site. He suggested that setbacks be established in a thoughtful manner so that some of the features of the site are shared, at least visually, and not isolated on private property. He noted that because of the grade change across the property, the topography of the site should be carefully considered when drawing the property lines. He stated that although there is no formal public hearing because the Commission is not taking any action on the topic being discussed, public comments are welcome.

George Sperzel, 1523 Estate Lane, stated that he and his wife have a contract to purchase the proposed Lot 1, the northern most lot of the proposed subdivision. He stated that the location of the property is ideal for his family. He added that he has built two homes in Lake Forest and understands the requirements of the City. He expressed concern about the potential for the site to be developed with the cluster housing. He stated that cluster housing is inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood and would require a developer to step in to develop the property. He expressed concern that approach would net the Swift family less for the property than if the lots are sold to individual buyers. He agreed that to minimize impacts to the site, appropriate setbacks, restrictions on fences, and some adjustment of lot lines will be needed. He stated that it is important that the

Commission's direction to preserve some of the features of the site still allows some flexibility as the lots are developed. He noted that preserving the pond could potentially lead to maintenance issues.

John Bilski, 403 E. Westminster, stated that he is strongly in favor of the 4-lot subdivision. He stated that in his opinion, the property should not be developed with cluster homes but instead, the area should remain a single-family neighborhood.

Jeff Torosian, 401 E. Westminster, stated that he agrees with previous speakers. He explained that he purchased his property knowing that there are zoning, historic district and overlay district protections. He stated that cluster housing is not permitted on the property without a zoning change. He noted that a single drive shared by multiple property owners is inappropriate and out of character with the surrounding neighborhood.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Chairman Grieve asked for direction from staff.

Ms. Czerniak stated that staff will transcribe the comments offered as part of the minutes for the meeting. She added that the Commission will have the opportunity to review the comments before they are forwarded to the Plan Commission. She explained that staff will meet with to discuss modifications to the proposed subdivision in response to the comments offered.

OTHER ITEMS

8. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

No testimony on non-agenda items was presented to the Commission.

9. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner