

The City of Lake Forest  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Proceedings of the August 28, 2019 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, August 28, 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, Elizabeth Sperry and Wells Wheeler.

Commissioners absent: Bill Redfield

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 and July 24, 2019 meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission.**

The minutes of the June 26, 2019 meeting were approved as presented with one revision as requested by Commissioner Wheeler.

Approval of the minutes of the July 24, 2019 meeting was postponed.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a two-story addition and exterior alterations to the existing residence.**

**Property Owner: Phillip and Mali Annibali**

**Contract Purchasers: Thomas Eckhardt Jr. & Erica Eckhardt**

**Representative: Thomas Eckhardt Sr., 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. Eckhardt Jr. explained that they had originally planned to demolish the home at the time they made an offer, however, after some study, they decided to instead renovate the house. He stated that the proposed project involves an addition and various minor exterior alterations around the house.

Mr. Eckhardt Sr. stated that one of the unique qualities of the site is that the entire existing home is located within the setback area. He added that the

petition is scheduled to be considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals in September because a zoning variance is required for the addition. He noted that a few additions and alterations were made to the home over the years. He explained that the proposed two-story addition will be located at the east end of the existing house. He stated that the addition is comprised of a wrap-around open porch and a screen porch on the first floor, and a master bedroom suite on the second floor. He noted that the intent of the proposed addition is to match the existing house in detailing and materials. He stated that the addition incorporates elements of the existing house such as the porch posts and railings, the gable roof form, and exterior materials. He explained that a storage area on the west side of the garage will be converted into garage space and a new single garage door will be added to the south elevation. He noted that a small expansion of the existing driveway is proposed to provide access to the new garage door. He explained that the portion of the driveway which extends directly south of the garage is proposed to be removed and the area landscaped. He stated that the proposed addition and alterations do not impact any healthy trees on the property. He added that one dead tree on the north property line will be removed. He stated that the landscape plan includes additional plantings in the areas of the addition and driveway extension.

Ms. Baehr stated that the overall massing and style of the proposed addition is consistent with and is complementary to the existing home. She explained that the size of the addition is relatively small compared to the overall footprint of the existing house, and the sense of open space on the site is maintained because the property is so expansive. She stated that generally, all of the exterior materials on the addition will match the existing residence. She noted however that as presented in the packet, the proposed windows only have muntins between the glass. She noted that windows with muntins between the glass are inconsistent with the historic nature of the home and character of the traditional houses in the area. She explained that staff recently became aware of an error in the public notice for the petition and as a result, she stated that staff is recommending that the Commission ask questions, take public comment and provide input on the project but delay a final vote on the project to allow a corrected notice to be sent out.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Eckhardt Jr. stated that the existing double garage door will be replaced. He added that the garage doors will either be solid or have windows at the top. He noted that the existing siding material around the house may need some replacement in small areas. He added that the new siding will likely be a fiber cement type product. He stated that they will use Pella Architectural Series windows. He confirmed that the windows will have muntins affixed on both the exterior and interior of the windows.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gayle, Mr. Eckhardt Jr. explained that the house was originally a simple cottage home. He stated that the one-story portion of the house on the west side is likely an earlier addition.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Eckhardt Sr. explained that they are still working on the locations of the new downspouts. He noted that water seems to stand on the east side of the house. He added that they will be working to correct the current drainage issues on the property. He stated that the existing windows around the house are in poor condition and will be replaced. He noted that corner boards will be used on the addition. He explained that in order to carry the structural load of the second floor of the addition, steel will likely be used for framing.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Eckhardt Sr. stated that the north side of the existing residence is comprised of many roof forms. He added that drainage issues on the site will be addressed as the plans are finalized. He noted that they have received letters from the surrounding neighbors expressing support for the project.

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

Commissioner Gibson stated that the proposed addition is visually compatible with the existing residence and enhances the balance of the home. She added that natural materials and windows, with both interior and exterior muntins, should be used. She noted that the location of the addition does not appear to significantly impact the neighbors.

Commissioner Wheeler expressed support for the petition.

Commissioner Gayle explained that she has some concerns about the proposed addition but acknowledged that it will blend in with the existing home over time. She commended the petitioner for removing a portion of the driveway and reducing the amount of impervious surface on the site.

Commissioner Lamontagne commended the petitioner for approaching the project as a renovation, rather than demolishing the house. He stated that the design of the addition is thoughtful and respectful of the existing home.

Chairman Grieve encouraged the petitioner to document the residence in its existing condition. He stated that the asymmetrical design, with the proposed addition, enhances the character of the home. He suggested that as renovations are made to the home, characteristic elements should be retained to preserve the unique character of the house.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler noted the Commission's overall support for the petition and made a motion to continue the petition to September 25<sup>th</sup> for a final vote to

allow a corrected public notice to be issued.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for approval of demolition of an existing residence located at 985 E. Illinois Road and approval of a replacement residence, attached garage, landscape plan and overall site plan.**

**Property Owners: Paul & Katerina Boulinakis**

**Representatives: Mark Downey, architect**

**Heidi Sibert, landscape 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. Downey introduced the project on behalf of the property owners. He stated that the existing ranch home on the property was built in 1957. He noted that the existing home is identified as a Contributing Structure to the Historic District due to its age but is not historically significant. He stated that the existing home has been documented through architectural drawings and photographs. He noted that the streetscape is very wooded and many trees are located on the property. He explained that the proposed replacement residence is modest in size and is sited generally in the same location as the existing residence to minimize the impact to the site's topography and trees. He noted that the driveway will still be located on the east side of the property and the attached garage will face east. He added that a small terrace is proposed on the rear of the home. He stated that the proposed residence has a balanced composition with the two-story main mass in the center and lower wings on the east and west sides. He explained that the design intent of the proposed residence is to incorporate traditional massing and roof forms with clean and simple detailing. He stated that the height of the proposed residence is less than 4 feet taller than the existing house on the property. He stated that civil engineering plans are included in the Commission's packet. He explained that the site currently does not drain well, however dramatic changes to the grade will potentially impact trees. He noted that as proposed, the grade will only change by approximately six inches uniformly around the footprint of the house. He stated that two trees will be removed due to their proximity to the rear terrace and two additional trees that are in poor condition on the east side of the property will be removed. He stated that the proposed exterior materials for the house include traditional three coat cement stucco, an asphalt shingle roof, aluminum clad windows, limestone window surrounds, wood garage doors, and a mahogany front door. He added that a cove mold detail is proposed at the eave around the house.

Ms. Sibert stated that the goal of the landscape plan is to retain the existing character of the site to the extent possible. She added that the area along the east side of the driveway will have evergreen plantings to provide screening for the neighboring home. She explained that the front walk is proposed close to the

front of the house to avoid impacting trees in the front yard. She noted that the front walkway will be bluestone. She explained that the vegetation around the house will largely be maintained, with the exception of removing buckthorn and honeysuckle which are invasive type species. She stated that the hedges at the front of the house are low growing species that were chosen to reinforce the horizontality of the home.

Ms. Baehr explained that the existing house does not have any significant architectural or historical value that makes it worth preserving. She added that the reason the home is identified as a Contributing Structure within the historic district is based on the fact that the home is over 50 years old, however no specific significance is associated with the property. She stated that based on the petitioner's statement of intent, rehabilitating the existing home is impractical, and substantial additions and alterations would be required to make the home suitable for today's standards. She noted that the proposed replacement residence is well under the maximum height and square footage allowed for this property. She explained that the location of the new house is generally in the same location as the existing house on the property which helps to minimize impacts to trees on the site. She stated that the proposed residence is comprised of simple massing and detailing and incorporates high quality materials that are consistent with the City's design standards. She explained that staff has received letters from neighbors regarding the proposed style of the home. She noted that the Commission does not dictate a particular style but is charged with ensuring that once a style is chosen, the elements of the home follow that style. She added that the neighbor to the west expressed concern about potential drainage issues as a result of the new construction. She noted that with any project of this type, before any permits are issued, detailed grading and drainage plans will be required and will be subject to the review and approval by the City Engineer. She added that the neighbor to the west requests plantings along the west side of the property to provide year-round screening.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Downey explained that the trees proposed for removal include Oaks, an Ash tree, and a Crabapple tree. He added that the trees are located at the rear of the home and on the east side of the property. He noted that the Ash tree and Crabapple tree are in poor condition. He added that replacement inches will be planted to meet the City's requirements. He stated that the proposed grade change on the site is minimal. He noted that a 4:12 roof pitch is consistently applied to all the roof forms around the house.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Downey explained that approximately a six inch grade change is proposed uniformly around the house. He added that the amount of grade change proposed was recommended by the engineer to create positive drainage on the site. He added that the increase in impervious on the site is approximately 1,800 square feet.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Downey stated that the architectural style of the proposed residence is Transitional. He explained that the style consists of traditional massing and roof forms but with modern and clean detailing. He noted that the selected architectural style is the property owner's preference. He added that the intent of the design is to blend into the traditional neighborhood while achieving the property owners' chosen architectural style. He explained that the property owners explored other architectural styles but it was clear that the Transitional style was their preference. He explained that the windows on the front of the house, with the exception of the vertical windows in the center, are located in utilitarian type spaces that are infrequently occupied. He stated that the large expanses of glass on the rear of the home are intended to take advantage of natural light from the south. He confirmed that the majority of trees on the south side of the property are deciduous. He explained that because the house is sited on an angle, the openings on the rear elevation are not directly facing the neighbors. He stated that the property owners are open to considering an alternate color for the stucco to soften the appearance of the home. He stated that the window surrounds are limestone and the eave has a cove detail.

Commissioner Gayle suggested that the reason the home has a stark appearance is related to the lack of openings rather than the color palette. She stated that over time, the color palette will blend in more with the streetscape.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gayle, Ms. Sibert stated that the terrace and walkways on the site will be bluestone.

Commissioner Lamontagne stated that the design of the home appears out of character with the neighborhood.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Downey explained that the projecting two-story mass on the north elevation is a stairway. He added that the second floor contains guest spaces and will not be used often. He stated that a steeper roof pitch does not fit with the intended style of the home and would increase the appearance of mass. He stated that other exterior materials such as stone were considered, however stucco is preferred by the property owners. He noted that consideration can be given to incorporating the smaller gable forms found on the rear elevation, on the front of the house.

In response to questions from Chairman Grieve, Mr. Downey stated the stucco will likely have a sand texture. He explained that some of the windows around the house have a slight projection, two to three inches, to create shadow and depth.

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

John Howard, 945 E. Illinois Road, expressed support for the demolition of the existing residence. He stated that because the character of the street is dark and

wooded, he has concerns about light impacts from the new residence. He asked that privacy screening be incorporated into the landscape plan given that the new residence extends further to the west than the existing home. He noted that the area has issues with water drainage. He added that grading and drainage on the site should be carefully reviewed to address some existing issues and to avoid negative impacts to the neighborhood resulting from the new construction. He stated that when construction is underway, construction vehicle parking in the area should be limited to avoid numerous vehicles parked on the street.

Julia Howard, 945 E. Illinois Road, stated that after heavy rainfalls, water sits in the northwest corner of the property. She added that water also sits on the south part of the property.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grieve invited a response to public comment from the petitioner.

In response to public comment, Mr. Downey stated that the grading and drainage plans have been carefully developed to avoid any negative impacts to the neighbors. He explained that the intent is to incorporate year-round screening that can survive underneath the upper story canopy while maintaining a natural appearance on the site.

Chairman Grieve invited final comments from the Commission regarding the demolition of the existing residence. Hearing none, he invited a motion pertaining to the demolition.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to approve the demolition of the existing residence at 985 E. Illinois Road based on the findings detailed in the staff report and subject to the approval of a replacement residence.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sperry and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

Chairman Grieve invited final comments from the Commission regarding the replacement residence.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the two-story projecting mass on the front of the house has a strong verticality that contrasts with the mostly horizontal form and fenestration of the home. He suggested consideration of reducing the height of the planters on the front of the home for consistency with the horizontal character.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Downey stated that the property owners prefer windows without muntins, but agreed to further explore the use of muntins. He noted that the front door is a solid wood door with a wood transom above. He added that the door will likely be mahogany. He stated that interior window treatments will be installed to avoid off site light impacts and to

control the sunlight entering the home from the south elevation.

Commissioner Gibson emphasized the significance of the homes in this area and the traditional architectural styles of the neighborhood. She stated that the proposed residence is not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. She encouraged the petitioner to further investigate how drainage on the site will be handled.

Commissioner Gayle agreed with Commissioner Sperry's concerns regarding light impacts to the surrounding area. She suggested using more landscaping to mitigate the light coming from the home.

Paul Boulinakis, 105 E. Laurel Avenue, explained that he and his wife recently purchased the property and are current residents of Lake Forest. He asked the Commission to be clear about the changes that should be considered in order to more closely align with the City's design criteria.

Chairman Grieve stated that the intent of the Commission is to provide general feedback and direction to the petitioner to guide consideration of refinements to the design of the home. He explained that the Commission does not design aspects of the home, but rather, provides comments for consideration as the project is revised and developed further.

Commissioner Lamontagne commended the petitioner on the siting of the home to minimize impacts to the site. He encouraged the petitioner to incorporate some of the human scale elements found on the south elevation on other areas of the home. He stated that the color palette should be softened so the home is more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Chairman Grieve stated that the computer renderings may be doing a disservice to the design of the home because the depth and shadow is not visible. He noted that based on the Commission's comments the design need some further study and refinement. He noted that landscaping is a significant part of the project and will complement the home. He suggested consideration of breaking up the vertical windows on the front of the home to avoid a large expanse of glass. He added that to help emphasize the offset around the windows, a different color could be used. He expressed appreciation for the overall massing and scale of the home.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Downey stated that the sidelights on the front door will have clear glass. He noted that other roof materials were studied, however those materials did not seem to fit with the character of the home. He added that a metal roof would appear harsh and is inconsistent with the neighborhood. Mr. Downey stated appreciation for the Commission's comments and agreed to give them careful consideration as refinements are made to the design of the home. He explained that the fabric of many North Shore communities is diverse with very traditional homes adjacent to more

contemporary homes.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Grieve invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to continue consideration of the replacement residence with direction to the petitioner to conduct further study and consideration around the following aspects of the project.

1. Refine the fenestration in an effort to lessen the stark appearance of the home.
2. Consider the use of windows with muntins to create a character more in keeping with the surrounding properties and historic district.
3. Use a more subtle color palette in an effort to fit it more quietly into the surrounding area.
4. Refine the exterior materials and textures to soften the appearance of the home.
5. Incorporate human scale elements to allow the home to fit more quietly into the neighborhood.
6. Refine the landscape plan to mitigate off site light impacts and to provide adequate screening between the new house and neighboring properties.
7. Assure proper drainage and grading to avoid negative impacts to surrounding properties.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

### **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