

**The City of Lake Forest  
Building Review Board  
Proceedings of September 4, 2024 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Acting Chairman Scott Renken and Board members Eric Lohmueller, Sarah Lamphere and Joanne Bluhm

Building Review Board members absent: Chairman John Looby, Justin Stamer, and Sally Downey

Staff present: Luis Prado, Assistant Planner and Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

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

Acting Chairman Renken reviewed the role of the Building Review Board, and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

**2. Consideration of the minutes from the August 8, 2024 Building Review Board meeting.**

The minutes of the August 8, 2024 meeting were approved as presented.

**3. Consideration of preliminary plans for a new two story single family residence on a vacant lot at 1425 Telegraph Road.**

Property Owner and Representatives: Forest Lake LLC (Conrad and Yvonne Karbowski)

Acting Chairman Renken asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Yvonna Karbowski stated that the property is 1.8 acres, and the proposed home is 6,300 square feet. She stated that the house has an unfinished attic, an attached garage and will be built on a slab without a basement or crawl space. She stated that instead of a basement, a recreation room is provided on the first floor. She stated that there is one neighboring property to the south and three neighboring properties to the north. She stated that the triangular property to the east, along the railroad tracks, is also in their ownership. She stated that no development is proposed in that area. She stated that the lot proposed for development has frontage on Telegraph Road. She presented images of the nearby homes and photos of the site from various perspectives. She noted the approximate location of the proposed

house on the site. She stated that the remnants of the driveway that provided access to the house that was previously located on the site will be removed. She stated that the trees along Telegraph Road will remain. She presented images of the proposed elevations of the house and the floor plans. She stated that hardi-board is proposed for the siding and some of the trim along with aluminum clad fascia. She stated that vinyl windows are proposed, and architectural asphalt shingles and standing seam is proposed for the roof. She presented samples of materials.

Mr. Prado stated that initial Board comment is requested on the preliminary plans for a new two story single family residence. He noted that the property is a vacant lot but was previously developed with a small house that was demolished many years ago due to its deteriorating condition. He noted that staff observations, questions, and recommendations are reviewed in the staff report. He stated that a landscape plan has not yet been submitted by the petitioners pending some initial feedback on the overall design of the site and the home. He requested Board comments and direction to provide guidance to the petitioners and staff as the plans are further refined and detailed. He stated that a motion to continue the petition would be appropriate after Board discussion.

Board member Bluhm stated that it would be helpful to stake the site and provide illustrations that clearly show the relationship of the proposed home and hardscape to the property lines, the neighboring homes, and the Telegraph Road streetscape. She asked whether the access to the homes to the north would be changed as a result of the proposed redevelopment of the property. She agreed with the comments in the staff report pertaining to improving the balance between windows and solid walls on the various elevations. She acknowledged that a house designed in the farmhouse architectural style will be compatible with the neighborhood and encouraged further work on the design to more fully achieve the desired style. She encouraged consideration of incorporating gable elements and a front porch which are elements commonly found on farmhouses. She suggested taking design cues from other homes in the neighborhood. She noted that the house as proposed appears taller than other homes in the neighborhood. She stated that a softer color palette should be used and commented that black gutters and downspouts will call attention to elements that are not usually prominent. She stated concern about the proposed use of vinyl windows noting that there are other products that will elevate the look of the home. She noted the expansive hardscape proposed and commented that she has personally witnessed stormwater issues in the area. She encouraged consideration of reducing the amount of hardscape. She stated that the trees along the north property line should be retained.

Board member Lamphere agreed with the comments raised in the staff report. She stated that the front elevation will benefit from refinement to achieve greater symmetry. She asked for clarification on the different roof materials, the location and color. She asked for clarification on the windows on the side elevations. She stated that the overall color palette of the house should blend in with the surrounding homes noting that as proposed, the color palette is stark. She noted concern that all

synthetic products are proposed on the exterior of the house. She suggested the addition of natural wood to elevate and soften the appearance.

Board member Lohmueller commented that based on the preliminary plans, it is difficult to identify the intended architectural style. He acknowledged that the board and batten treatment is consistent with the farmhouse style. He observed that the roof is steep but noted that the section through the house is fairly flat. He suggested further study of the roof forms noting that as presented, the roof confuses the style and raises some questions about how the roof will come together at various points and how it will meet the wall. He asked the petitioner to include images of homes that inspired the design noting that reviewing elements from those images could be helpful in refining the design of the home. He commented that as presented, the side elements appear to be later additions rather than part of the original design of the home. He noted that the house as configured is wide across the lot and does not take advantage of the significant depth of the lot. He stated that a hardi-board product can be done well on a home but noted that sometimes the product is installed poorly and as a result, does not present a quality appearance. He stated that more thought is needed, and more detail should be presented to the Board on how the materials will come together. He suggested consideration of wood for the soffit and fascia and stressed the importance of good quality construction overall. He stated that the window and roof trim should be painted in a consistent manner. He suggested breaking up the long run of vertical siding with a different treatment at the base of the walls. He noted that it is unclear how the walls will meet grade. He encouraged reconsideration of the front entry noting that as presented, it appears as a hole punched in the wall without any detailing. He stated that the driveway should not extend to the property line.

Acting Chairman Renken suggested reconsideration of the site plan. He noted that the only significant tree on the property appears to be where the driveway is proposed. He noted that the radius of the circular driveway should be reviewed for functionality as well as the right angle in the driveway proposed near the garage. He stated that at a minimum, the driveway must be set back at least five feet from the property line or a distance adequate to accommodate landscape screening. He encouraged reworking the roof forms to achieve uniform pitches and suggested consideration of adding gables to the side elevations to break up the massing and relate to the window placement. He spoke to the window groupings and alignment and noted that there is considerable mass with few windows. He pointed out that adding windows will allow for more natural light into the rooms. He stated the importance of creating a hierarchy of massing with the elements of the home. He agreed that the design could benefit from creating symmetry. He suggested consideration of metal posts with a roof at the front entry. He suggested breaking up the verticality of the appearance by adding a lower band and suggested the use of panels. He stated that hardi-board is appropriate for the siding but stated that cedar should be used for the fascia and friezes. He stated that at a minimum, the windows should be aluminum clad wood windows, not vinyl.

Mr. Karbowski stated that the roof pitches can be adjusted for consistency. He stated

that the design of the home, in his opinion, integrates the side masses with the central mass. He noted that symmetry is subjective adding that there is no intent to achieve perfect symmetry with the home. He pointed out that the front entrance is recessed about seven feet back from the wall plane and is 12 feet wide. He stated that the recess serves as a front porch. He noted the trim piece over the front entrance that is intended to provide detail to that element. He stated that windows are placed around the home to work with the interior space. He noted that the main mass of the house steps forward from the two side masses and offered to provide a three dimensional rendering to better illustrate the massing. He confirmed that the house will be constructed on a slab.

Hearing no further questions or comments from the Board, Acting Chairman Renken invited public comment.

Ben Belavsky, 1423 Telegraph Road, complimented the overall design of the proposed home. He commented that the footprint of the home is large and expressed concern about the loss of trees and vegetation, removal of soil, the resulting impact on water and heat, the aesthetic impact, and the loss of wildlife habitat. He asked for information on plans for stormwater management and protecting mature trees on the site and on adjacent properties. He stated that as a neighbor, he is concerned about parking and staging and noted that the private driveway that serves his house and his neighbor's house will need to remain unobstructed. He commented that there are drainage issues in the area in general and expressed concern that the removal of vegetation and the addition of hardscape will exacerbate the issue. He stated that currently, his sump pump works constantly.

Acting Chairman Renken commented that prior to the issuance of building permits or permits for site development, drainage and grading plans must be submitted to the City and will be subject to review by the City Engineer. He stated that a tree survey and tree removal/preservation plan will also be required and will be subject to the City Arborist's review and approval. He stated that the driveway or other hardscape may need to be shifted to avoid conflict with significant trees if any are identified. He stated that a construction staging and parking plan will be required and will be reviewed by the City. He stated that a lighting plan will also be required and will need to demonstrate that any exterior lighting is softened and directed downward consistent with the City's Lighting Guidelines. Hearing no further comments from the Board, he invited a motion.

Board member Bluhm made a motion to continue consideration of the petition for 1425 Telegraph Road with direction to the petitioner to conduct further study and refinement of the plans in response to the comments and questions raised by the Board including, but not limited to, the following.

1. Conduct further study of the site recognizing the configuration of the parcel. Refine the site plan, the siting and footprint of the house, the driveway, and other

hardscape to better relate to the property. Give consideration to:

- Realigning the driveway to preserve significant trees and to allow for a substantial buffer between the driveway and garage apron and the property line to allow for plantings and stormwater management.
  - Removing the circular feature of the driveway or, at a minimum, re-size it to properly accommodate vehicles.
  - Softening the 90-degree turn in the driveway as it approaches the garage.
  - Reorienting the house to better relate to and utilize the shape of the lot.
2. On the site plan, show the proposed house in relation to the neighboring properties including:
    - Structures on those properties.
    - Orientation of the structures in relation to the proposed development.
    - Driveways to the neighboring properties.
    - Ingress/egress and any public utility easements.
  3. Provide inspirational images representing the desired style of architecture.
  4. Conduct further study and refinement of all elevations of the house.
    - Refine the overall architectural design of the residence with a focus on consistency with all aspects of the selected architectural style.
    - Use uniform roof pitches and review the roof forms and functionality. Consider the incorporation of gables on the side and rear elevation to break up the roof mass.
    - Present a hierarchy of massing overall balancing the central mass with the masses on either side with the goal of achieving a cohesive appearance.
    - Reconsider the symmetry and proportions overall.
    - Refine the elevations to achieve a more regular pattern and proportional arrangement of windows, doors, solid walls and design features to more closely align with the City's Residential Design Guidelines.
    - Consider the use of dormers.
    - Conduct further study of the front entrance. Consider the addition of detailing and a front porch consistent with the selected farmhouse style.
  5. Study and refine the exterior materials.
    - Soften the color palette overall for compatibility with the surrounding homes.
    - Use fiberglass or metal clad wood windows with simulated divided lites with muntins affixed to the interior and exterior with a spacer bar between the glass.
    - Use wood for trim including facias, friezes, and soffits.
    - Consider horizontal detailing, panels or siding, at the base of the house to mitigate the vertical appearance and to add interest.
  6. Submit an updated tree survey and tree removal plan that fully and accurately document the species, size, and condition of the trees on the site and clearly identifies those proposed for removal.

7. Submit a detailed landscape plan that at a minimum:
  - Satisfies the planting requirements in the Code for new construction.
  - Includes trees, beyond the minimum required by the City for new construction, to satisfy the replacement inches required to compensate for the removal of trees.
  - Provides a landscape buffer of a minimum of eight feet between any hardscape and the property lines.
  
8. Stake the site, the footprint of the house and alignment of the driveway a week prior to the Board meeting. Provide a site plan that correlates to the staking on site with identifying numbers.

The motion was seconded by Board member Lohmueller and was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

**4. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda items.**

No additional public testimony was presented to the Board.

**5. Additional information from staff.**

No additional information was provided by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development