

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of January 3, 2019 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Thursday, January 3, 2019 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Ted Notz and Board members, Jim Diamond, Ross Friedman, Bob Reda and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Chris Bires and Fred Moyer

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development and Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

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

Chairman Notz 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 of the December 5, 2018 meeting of the Building Review Board.

The minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting were approved with one correction as requested by Chairman Notz.

3. Continued consideration of a request for approval of a partial demolition and additions to an existing residence. Modifications to the existing detached garage are also proposed. The property is located at 139 Woodland Road.

Owners: Jeff & Stacy Collins

Representative: Jeff Letzter, designer

Chairman Notz asked the Board members 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 explained that the petition was continued at the last meeting and since then, revised based on the Board's and neighbor's comments. He reviewed the project explaining that the stucco exterior, windows and front-facing gable of the existing residence stay intact. He reviewed that additions are proposed on the east and west sides of the existing residence. He noted that the proposed addition on the east side of the residence is a two-story addition and the addition on the west side of the house is an expanded shed dormer addition. He stated that the site presents a number of challenges. He added that the project was presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals in December 2018 and a side

yard setback variance was recommended to allow construction of the proposed two-story addition. He explained that the existing residence is only five feet from the south property line and in response to the comments at the previous meeting, the two-story addition was stepped back slightly from the north façade. He stated that the addition cannot be shifted any further to the south. He stated that the proposed demolition of exterior walls is limited to only the area of the proposed two-story addition on the east side of the house. He stated that during the last meeting, the Board discussed the massing of the two-story addition. He explained that as currently proposed, the two-story addition adds 10 feet of width to the front elevation of the house noting however that the plans were revised to create a larger reveal between the existing front wall, north façade, of the house and the front wall of the proposed addition. He explained that the step back was achieved by shifting the second floor back from the front elevation. He noted that the stepping back of the addition helps preserve the original front elevation of the residence and diminish the impact of the two-story addition. He pointed out that the modification resulted in a reduction in the height of the roof of the two-story addition by 10 inches and noted that the fenestration pattern on the addition was also modified. He noted that the flared buttress detail on the existing house is incorporated into the two-story addition. He explained that during the last meeting, the Board discussed the size of the windows in the expanded dormer on the west side of the house. He stated that the plans now provide for a four-wide window, adding 1'-8" to the width of the opening. He explained that a few revisions were also made to the existing detached garage. He stated that the pedestrian door was shifted south, on the west elevation to better align it with the side door to the house. He noted that windows were added on the other garage elevations. He added that by shifting the pedestrian door to the south and eliminating some of the walkway, more landscaping can be added to site. He explained that the revised plans consist of other minor changes, and overall, improve the appearance of the proposed additions.

Ms. Baehr stated that as explained by the petitioner, the revised plans address many of the concerns raised at the last meeting. She added that at the last meeting, the Board raised concerns over the removal of the existing chimney but the revised plans still call for its removal. She stated that staff recommends further study of the design in an effort to retain the chimney. She explained that overall, the revised plans appear to be consistent with the City's design standards and the additions appear generally compatible with the existing residence given the site limitations. She noted that the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation provided comments on the compatibility of the additions with the massing and architectural elements of the existing residence. She added that staff received a letter from a neighbor expressing concern about the scale of the proposed addition and dormer in relation to the existing residence. She noted that the neighbor also encouraged retaining the interior architectural elements, however, changes to the interior are not under the Board's purview unless the changes cause alterations to the exterior appearance of the residence.

In response to Board member Diamond, Mr. Letzter explained that the existing windows on the house were recently installed. He stated that the windows on the proposed addition and dormer will match the new windows in the house.

Board member Friedman stated that the revisions made to two-story addition improve the balance and symmetry of the house. He explained that he still has concerns about the mass of the expanded dormer. He stated that he understands the intent of aligning the west wall of the dormer with the west wall of the house below, however he noted that this leaves little roof surface in front of the dormer.

In response to questions from Board member Friedman, Mr. Letzter stated that the west wall of the dormer could be pushed back slightly to allow for a larger roof surface in front of the dormer.

Board member Friedman stated that the removal of the chimney is a concern. He suggested that consideration be given to adding a chimney element at the north face of the dormer. He explained that this could address the concerns over the loss of the chimney and also help to mitigate the mass of the dormer.

In response to Board member Friedman, Mr. Letzter confirmed that the entire roof will be replaced with asphalt shingles. He added that aluminum gutters and downspouts and a stained wood front door are proposed.

Board member Friedman suggested that consideration be given to copper gutters and downspouts which would be appropriate for this type of house. He added that if the front stoop requires railings, the design of the railings should be reviewed by staff since they will be prominent.

In response to Board member Friedman, Mr. Childs stated that the proposed garage door will either be steel or fiberglass with a painted finish.

In response to questions from Board member Friedman, Mr. Letzter stated that the existing garage will be re-sided and will have new roofing, windows, trim, and fascia.

Board member Friedman stated that the garage is prominent because it is close to the street and on a small lot. He suggested consideration of adding details such as extending the rafter tails and rake on the garage to create more harmony between the residence and garage.

Board member Reda stated continuing concern over the scale of the dormer in relation to the rest of the house acknowledging that there has already been discussion on how the dormer could be modified.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mr. Letzter stated that if rafter tails are added on the garage, the overhang should match the depth of the overhang on the existing house. He commented on possible modifications to the dormer noting that it may be possible to push the north wall of the dormer back or reduce the pitch of the dormer roof to minimize the appearance of mass.

Board member Friedman suggested consideration of shifting the dormer walls in slightly and the addition of a chimney element noting that those modifications could change the appearance of the dormer dramatically. He noted that a new chimney should be similar to the character of the existing chimney.

Chairman Notz observed that as the petitioner works through the concept of a new chimney element, the placement of the chimney should be carefully considered and not be too far east and aligned with the second floor windows.

In response to questions from Chairman Notz, Mr. Letzter confirmed that if the north wall of the dormer is pushed in, the windows will be shifted so that they are still centered on the front of the dormer.

Chairman Notz stated that the revised plans create a more natural and cohesive appearance.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Notz invited public comments.

Barbara Peterson, 130 Woodland Road, stated that she appreciates the care and concern that the petitioners have put into the revised plans. She added that her grandfather built the original house. She stated her hope that the character and integrity of the house is maintained.

Susan Boren, 120 Woodland Road, agreed with a letter written by another neighbor that it appears to be a design mistake to eliminate the best view from the home, to West Park, by locating a closet on the west elevation. She expressed concern about replacing the existing small dormers with large, out-of-scale dormers and removal of the original chimney. She commented that the two-story addition should be set farther back from the front of the existing house. She expressed concern that the design as proposed may create an awkward building form and impact the character and integrity of the original house.

Greg Schlecks, 90 Woodland Road, stated that the revised plans are an improvement over the previously submitted plans. He added that the residence sits on a very prominent corner and is very visible.

Jim Opsitnik, President of Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, commended the Board, the architect and the property owner for the improvements made to the plans. He explained that the previously submitted plans did not appear to be compatible with the existing house and neighborhood.

Mr. Collins, stated that he is the new property owner of 139 Woodland Road. He explained that when he bought the house, it was in disrepair. He explained that he will use the suggestions from the Board and the neighbors as final refinements are made to the plans. He stated that the review process has been a great learning experience.

Hearing no further public testimony, Chairman Notz invited final comments from the Board.

Board member Reda stated that it appears that there are a few remaining issues with the plans as proposed. He suggested that the width and depth of the dormer should be modified to minimize its appearance. He stated that a chimney element should be added as discussed earlier. He added that consideration should be given to adding or extending the rafter tails on the garage to add interest and match the house.

Board member Friedman stated that the garage door should be of a style and material that are compatible with the residence. He added that using copper gutters and downspouts would add richness and character to the home.

In response to comments from the Board, Ms. Czerniak stated that currently, the garage encroaches into the setback on the east side. She explained that eaves are not permitted in the side yard setbacks. She noted that adding rafter tails on the east side would require a zoning variance and a hardship to justify the variance would be difficult.

Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Notz invited a motion.

Board member Reda made a motion to recommend approval of limited demolition of exterior walls as necessary for the additions, a two-story additions to the existing residence, an expanded dormer and modifications to existing detached garage at 139 Woodland Road. The recommendation is based on the findings in the staff report, and the testimony presented by the petitioner, the Board's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. Approval is recommended subject to the following conditions:

1. The expanded dormer proposed on the west elevation shall be refined based on the input and direction from the Board as detailed below. The dormer shall be subject to final approval of a Board subcommittee appointed by the Chairman.
 - a. The addition of a chimney on the north side of the dormer shall be studied.
 - b. The width, depth and roof pitch of the dormer shall be given further consideration.
 - c. The west facing windows shall be further refined.
 - d. Overall, refinements shall be made to minimize the impact of the expanded dormer on the north and west elevations.
2. Any modifications made to the plans that were presented to the Board or approved by the subcommittee in response to the above conditions, or as the result of final design development, shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Board and subcommittee shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board and subcommittee's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.

3. Details of exterior lighting, if any is proposed, shall be provided at the time plans are submitted for permit. All fixtures shall direct light down and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view.
4. A plan for construction parking and materials' staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development. No construction parking or staging is permitted on Woodland Road or Summit Avenue due to the narrowness of the streets, the traffic levels and, with respect to Woodland Road, its importance as a route to the high school.

The motion was seconded by Board member Friedman and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

OTHER ITEMS

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

There was no additional public testimony presented to the Board.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented from staff.

Board member Reda announced that he will be leaving the Board three months early to allow a new member to get up to speed before the larger turnover of Board members that will occur in May of this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner