

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Building Review Board**  
**Proceedings of July 1, 2020 Meeting**

A meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was conducted remotely in compliance with Governor's Executive Order 2020-07, issued on March 16, 2020 that suspended certain Open Meetings Act provisions relating to in-person attendance by members of a public body due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Jim Diamond and Board members, Chris Bires, Joanne Bluhm, Sally Downey, John Looby, James Sykora, and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: None

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

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

Chairman Diamond 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 February 5, 2020 meeting of the Building Review Board.**

The minutes of the February 5, 2020 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a new residence on a vacant lot located at 885 Valley Road. Approval of the associated site plan, proposed tree removal and landscape plan is also requested.**

**Property Owner: Michael Bertucci**

**Representative: Adam Lyons, architect**

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

Mr. Lyons explained that the property is a vacant lot at the intersection of Valley Road and Stone Avenue and is adjacent to the Skokie Valley Drainage Ditch to the east. He stated that the surrounding area is an established neighborhood with homes of a variety of architectural styles many of which were popular from the 1960's through the 1980's. He added that throughout the design process, the property owner has been in contact with the adjacent neighbors to share the progress of the plans for the new home. He explained

that the site itself poses many design challenges because of the topography, floodway and the many mature heritage trees on the property. He stated that to create a more buildable lot, the property owner worked with FEMA and received concurrence that the floodway limit line is more accurately located further to the east on the site than originally depicted. This change allowed for additional grading to create a more workable building pad. He explained that many site plans were considered including various driveway configurations in an effort to preserve some of the significant trees on the site. He stated that the proposed residence is designed in the Prairie architectural style. He explained that the style of the house calls for a low-profile and non-imposing presence on the site. He stated that consistent with the Prairie style, the home reflects strong horizontal lines, natural materials, shallow roof forms and wide overhangs. He stated that the house has a side load garage with a motor court and covered porch at the front of the house. He reviewed the floorplan. He stated that the placement of openings around the house is sensitive to the adjacent homes. He added that the rear elevation features more openings to take advantage of the views, however this area is private and is not easily visible from surrounding properties. He explained that the landscape plan is designed with the hope of preserving many of the existing trees on the site and reflects plantings consistent with the character of the site and surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Baehr reviewed that the property is located on the east side of Valley Road, in a neighborhood with homes of a wide variety of architectural styles and massing types. She stated that the 885 Valley Road property is vacant and has never been developed. She explained that the proposed residence is designed in the Prairie architectural style, and features many elements common to that style such as low-pitch hipped roofs, wide overhangs, and horizontal massing and detailing. She stated that staff recommends further study of the proportions of the front porch in an effort to better relate to the scale and proportions of the other elements of the home. She explained that the proposed exterior materials are a combination of stone and stucco for the exterior walls, asphalt shingle for the larger roof forms, and standing seam metal for the smaller roofs. She added that the proposed materials are consistent with the Prairie architectural style and are also compatible with the homes in the surrounding neighborhood. She explained that considerable time was spent by both the petitioner and staff reviewing the trees on the site. She stated that the site plan as proposed is a result of those discussions. She added that staff will monitor the trees that are proposed to remain on the site throughout the construction process to evaluate whether additional trees are likely to be lost due to construction requiring additional replacement inches. She stated that staff received a letter from a neighboring property owner shortly before the meeting adding that it was distributed to the Board and the petitioner. She noted that the letter expresses concern regarding drainage and impacts to trees on the site. She reiterated that staff will continue to work with the petitioner on the grading and drainage plan and on evaluating how best to preserve the trees on the site that are designated for preservation.

In response to questions from Board member Looby, Ms. Baehr explained that replacement inches will be required for trees on the site that are impacted during construction in addition to the trees that are currently proposed for removal.

Board member Walther agreed with staff's comments regarding the front porch area.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mr. Lyons explained that if the roof on the garage was extended toward the house, it would not result in an increase in the overall square footage of the house. He agreed to study the front porch further in an effort to simplify the roof forms. He added that the use of stone for the front porch columns is under consideration along with the addition of clerestory windows above the front door and removal of the transom window.

Board member Bluhm stated that the chosen architectural style is appropriate for the site. She expressed support for the changes to the front porch as discussed.

Board member Sykora expressed support for the project overall and encouraged the petitioner to work with staff as further study is done on the proportions of the front porch.

Board member Bires agreed with the comments about the front porch. He encouraged the petitioner to continue to work with staff on drainage to avoid impacts to neighboring properties and tree preservation.

In response to questions from Board member Bires, Mr. Lyons stated that the color palette will consist of earth tones.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Czerniak explained that to determine replacement inches for the trees that are impacted a number of factors are considered, such as condition, species, and size. She stated that staff understands that with a vacant lot it is necessary for trees to be removed. She added that staff works with the City's Certified Arborist to determine if inch for inch or double inch for inch replacement inches are required, or for some trees, no replacement inches.

Board member Downey suggested that an alternative species be considered to replace the Spruce trees currently reflected on the landscape plan in an effort to incorporate plantings that are more consistent with the neighborhood and the site.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, the Mr. Lyons explained that the lower pitch roofs are a heavy gauge aluminum. He added that the distance between the seams of the metal roof panels is 12 inches. He stated that the windows are not proposed to have muntins. He stated that the stone on the exterior is natural Lannon stone.

Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final comments and questions from the Board.

Board member Looby expressed support for the project.

Board member Walther suggested consideration of a tapered profile for the front porch columns, to match the detailing found on the garage.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Baehr stated that the letter submitted by the neighbor will be shared with the City Engineer. She added that the drainage and grading plans can be shared with the neighbor to allow the opportunity for input prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Board members Bires and Sykora expressed support for the project.

Board member Downey encouraged the petitioner to incorporate the suggestions regarding the front porch and landscape plan as the plans are further developed.

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

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a new residence and associated site plan, proposed tree removal and landscape plan. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings in the staff report, the testimony presented by the petitioner, and the Board's deliberations. He stated that the recommendation is subject to the following conditions:

1. Study and refine the front entry element in an effort to reflect proportions consistent with the rest of the home and selected architectural style. Consider eliminating the vertical covered element and including tapered stone columns.
2. Consider incorporating clerestory windows above the front porch.
3. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Board. All modifications made to the plans in response to direction from the Board 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 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's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
4. The final landscape plan shall be subject to review and approval by the City Arborist. The plan must reflect the 107 required replacement inches or, a payment in lieu of on-site planting must be made to the City prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
5. Tree Protection Plan – Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect any trees identified for preservation during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. In addition, for any trees that, as determined by the City Arborist, may be impacted by construction activity, a plan for protection, including pre and post construction treatments as may be appropriate, must be prepared by an independent Certified Arborist and submitted with the building permit application. The tree protection plan shall be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
6. Details of exterior lighting, if any is proposed, shall be included with the plans submitted for

permit. All fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view by the fixture or by sight obscuring glass to preserve the dark sky character of the community and avoid light impacts on neighboring residences.

7. 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.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for approval of a second floor addition and various exterior alterations to the single family home located at 846 Northmoor Road.  
Property Owners: Stanislaw & Patrycja Szafranski  
Representative: Joanna Druzgala, architect**

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

Ms. Druzgala introduced the project on behalf of the property owners. She stated that the existing house is a modest one story ranch home. She gave an overview of the architectural styles found in the surrounding neighborhood. She explained that the existing floor plan is very closed, with small rooms. She stated that the intent is to open up the floor plan to create a modern layout. She added that a deck will be built on the rear of the existing house. She stated that the existing roof will be completely removed to allow for a second story addition to create attic space, and, if needed in the future, additional living space. She added that the new roof is a combination of multiple gable and hip roof forms. She noted that the height of the house with the proposed changes will be 27 feet at the highest roof peak. She gave an overview of the alterations proposed around the existing house, including a new front entry element, window replacement, relocation of openings, and infilling of some existing openings. She added that decorative canopy elements and a limestone base are proposed on the front elevation. She noted that the existing chimney will be extended in order to meet building code requirements. She stated that the exterior brick will remain and new brick will be used to fill in openings and raise the exterior walls. She added that the new roof will be asphalt shingle. She noted that the existing driveway and curb cut will remain.

Ms. Baehr stated this property is located on the north side of Northmoor Road, noting that the area is a small lot neighborhood, with many different style homes. She explained that the existing house on the property is a one-story ranch style home that was built in 1959, and, based on City records, very few changes to the home have been made since its construction. She stated that this request involves the complete removal of the existing roof, a second story addition, and various other alterations on the exterior of the home. She explained that the owners recently purchased the property and the alterations are proposed to make the home more suitable for modern day living and to update the home's appearance. She stated that the existing footprint of the house will remain, but the exterior walls will be raised. She added that as currently proposed, the second story addition will be attic space. She stated that the proposed exterior alterations will change

the style of the house from a modest style ranch home to a more contemporary style home. She explained that staff recommends further studied of the front entry element, the limestone base on the front elevation, and the dormer above the garage. She stated that the proposed exterior materials are generally consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, although the trim, soffits and fascia boards are currently proposed to be a composite material, rather than a natural material. She stated that staff recommends the use of wood for these elements consistent with the City's Design Guidelines. She stated that staff received a letter from a neighboring property owner expressing concern about drainage. She stated that the City's engineering staff was made aware of the concerns. She added that prior to the issuance of a building permit, the drainage and grading plans will be reviewed and will be subject to approval by the City Engineer.

Board member Sykora stated that further study and refinement of the front elevation could benefit the project by highlighting the entrance.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Ms. Druzgala stated that the gutter on the dormer will be connected to the gutter on the garage.

Board member Bires agreed with Commissioner Sykora's comments about the front entrance.

In response to questions from Board member Bires, Ms. Druzgala stated that the front door could be widened and sidelights added. She stated that the proposed dormer will be brick to match the rest of the house. She stated that a square window can be considered in the dormer over the garage.

In response to questions from Board member Bires, Mr. Szafranski stated that he is considering removing the limestone base from the front elevation and retaining the existing brick.

Board member Downey suggested considering the home across the street as a reference for adding detail to the front entrance. She stated that homes in the neighborhood do not appear to incorporate any limestone on the exterior. She observed that the limestone appears more consistent with a commercial building. She stated that it is important that the existing trees at the front of the house are preserved in order to help soften the view of the increased roof mass.

In response to Board member Downey, Mr. Szafranski noted that the existing trees will remain, but will be trimmed.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Druzgala stated that the existing window wells will remain.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Mr. Szafranski explained that the existing downspout on the front of the house, adjacent to the front door, will be replaced but remain in the same location. He explained that the canopy elements above the

windows are proposed in an effort to add interest to the front elevation.

Board member Bluhm pointed out that the limestone may discolor easily given the proposed location at the base of the house.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Druzgala stated that a gable roof was explored for the garage however, the property owners prefer the hip roof with a dormer instead.

Board member Looby agreed that further refinement of the front entrance and dormer window is needed. He encouraged the petitioner to study the elements further.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Druzgala stated that some landscaping could be added on the west side of the house in order to break up the appearance of the large solid wall on the west elevation.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Szafranski stated that there is an existing tree on the west side of the house which may help to break up the mass of the wall.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Druzgala explained that originally, the property owners considered painting the brick so that all the brick on the house, the existing and new, will match. She noted however that the property owners found brick that matches the existing house to use in raising the existing walls and filling in openings. She stated that there is no intention to impact the trees and vegetation on the site.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Szafranski stated that after the work on the house is finished, some plantings may be added at the front of the house.

Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public testimony. Hearing none, he invited final comments from the Board.

Board member Downey stated that additional landscaping, with some height, should be added to the front yard in order to soften the increased mass of the house.

Board member Bires agreed that additional plantings are needed. He stated that given the input provided by the various Board members, in his opinion, the project should be refined and brought back to the Board for further review.

Board member Sykora stated that because openings are being removed on the west elevation, landscaping should be added to break up the large expanse of solid wall.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Baehr explained that the City's engineering staff is aware of the letter from the neighbor expressing concern about drainage. She reviewed that when the plans are submitted for permit, the City Engineer will review the plans further taking into account the neighbor's concerns. She noted that

another letter that was received discussed the increased square footage of the house. She explained that staff responded to the neighbor to explain how square footage is calculated based on the City's methodology.

Board member Looby stated that it is important that the new brick and mortar match the existing brick.

Board member Walther observed that the existing house has a substantial soffit and overhang and the proposed soffit is much narrower. He stated that as a result, there may not be much of a difference with respect to the total roof area.

Chairman Diamond stated that close attention to how the existing openings are filled in is important in order to avoid areas that reflect the outline of the previous location of the opening. He added that a landscape plan should be provided to reflect plantings at the front of the home and to soften the west elevation.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Druzgala stated that a clay chimney pot will be incorporated.

Hearing no further comments or questions from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to continue consideration of the petition to allow the petitioner to consider the comments and questions raised by the Board and neighboring property owners and to allow for the submittal of additional information, clarification and refinement of some aspects of the design. The following points should be addressed prior to submittal of materials for further Board review.

1. Refine the proportions and scale of the front entry. Additional elements such as sidelights should be considered to make the front entry more prominent.
2. Study and refine the dormer above the garage including, but not limited to modification of the shape and proportions of the window.
3. Modify the drawings to reflect the removal of the limestone base. The petitioner stated that as a budget consideration, the limestone base is no longer proposed.
4. Consider removing the canopy elements above the garage door and picture window on the front elevation.
5. Refine or further detail the west elevation to break up the large expanse of brick wall. If landscaping is intended to break up the mass of the wall, reflect the landscaping, trellis elements or other features on a landscape plan and other graphic representations.



6. Submit an overall landscape plan that reflects existing trees and vegetation that is intended to remain and any new plantings proposed. Landscaping should be considered to help soften the additional mass and height of the house.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 7 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 by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr  
Assistant Planner