

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Building Review Board**  
**Proceedings of August 5, 2020 Meeting**

A meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, August 5, 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, Joanne Bluhm, Sally Downey, John Looby, James Sykora, and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Chris Bires

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 July 1, 2020 meeting of the Building Review Board.**

The minutes of the July 1, 2020 meeting were approved with corrections from Board member Bluhm.

**3. Continued 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 explained that the Board previously considered the petition during last month's meeting. She stated that since the last meeting, the plans were revised to provide clarification and address the Board's concerns. She stated that the existing house is a modest one story ranch home with an attached two car garage. She reviewed the existing elevations of the residence. She explained that the existing floor plan is very closed off, with small rooms. She stated that

the intent of the proposed interior alterations is to open up the floor plan to create a modern layout. She described the proposed floor plan. She stated that a deck is proposed on the rear of the existing house. She noted that the footprint of the existing home is not proposed to change. She stated that the existing roof will be completely removed and the new roof will allow for attic space that may be converted to living space in the future. She noted that the height of the new roof at its highest point is 27 feet. She stated that the new roof will be asphalt shingle with aluminum gutters and downspouts. She stated that all the existing windows will be replaced with aluminum clad wood windows. She explained that the height of the exterior walls will be raised using brick to match the existing home. She stated that the dormer above the garage was modified in response to Board comments to include a square window in place of the previously proposed horizontal window. She stated that the front entry was also modified to reflect proportions more consistent with the overall elevation. She noted that sidelights were added on either side of the new front door to help highlight the front entrance. She stated that the limestone base on the front elevation and the canopy roof elements above the picture window and garage door were removed in response to the Board's comments at the last meeting. She added that wood is now proposed for all the trim, fascia boards and soffits. She explained that the existing chimney will be extended to meet building code requirements and a new clay chimney pot will be installed. She stated that a landscape plan was prepared and reflects all landscaping that will remain and be protected during construction. She stated that new plantings are proposed at the front of the house and on the west elevation to help soften the appearance of the large expanse of solid wall.

Ms. Baehr explained that this petition was presented to the Board at last month's meeting and after discussion, the Board continued the project to allow the petitioner to consider some refinements and conduct further study of the proposed alterations. She added that in particular, the Board asked the petitioner to revisit the front entrance, the dormer window above the garage and elements such as the limestone base and canopy roofs proposed on the front elevation. She stated that the Board also asked that a conceptual landscape plan be prepared in an effort to incorporate some new plantings to soften the appearance of the home from the street. She explained that the petitioner made revisions to the plans to address the Board's previous comments adding that the changes appear to enhance the overall design of the house and make the home more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. She stated that the staff report includes a recommendation that as the landscape plan is further developed, a tree should be added to the front yard to help soften the impact of the increased mass of the house over time. She stated that the staff report provides a recommendation in support of the petition subject to standard conditions as detailed in the report in the Board's packet

Board member Bluhm expressed support for the revised plans.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Druzgala explained that in the revised plans, the front door is shifted slightly west of the location of the existing front door to allow room for sidelights. She stated that the dormer window above the garage is large enough to meet current Code requirements to allow the space to be converted into a bedroom in the future if desired. She stated that a Japanese Maple is proposed on the

southwest corner of the house. She noted that the existing tree on the west side of the house will remain.

Board member Looby suggested consideration of planting euonymus in place of climbing roses on the trellises on the west elevation. He noted that roses may not do well in the shade on the west side of the house. He added that the plantings on the west elevation could be espaliered to create artwork on the west wall.

Board member Downey expressed support for the changes made to the front elevation of the home. She agreed with comments made by Board member Looby regarding the plantings on the west wall.

Board member Sykora commended the petitioner on the revisions made to address the Board's concerns.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Ms. Baehr suggested that the Board could add a condition requiring a mock up of the brick and direct staff to review if for consistency with the color of the existing brick. She added that if matching brick cannot be found, all of the brick, old and new may need to be painted.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mrs. Szafranski explained that the brick that will be used to raise the exterior walls is recycled brick from another location. She clarified that the new front door and light fixtures will have a modern appearance.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Druzgala noted that a can light will be installed above the front door and wall mounted fixtures will be installed on either side of the garage door. She stated that window treatments can be used on the large picture window on the second floor to hide the unfinished space from the street. She stated that the new window sills will match the existing concrete sills on the house.

Board member Walther noted that the dark color proposed for the windows and doors may present a stark contrast with the light colored brick. He stated that the proportions of the front entry column have been improved since the last meeting. He noted that the existing tree in the front yard appears to provide enough height to help soften the appearance of the increased mass of the house from the street.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Druzgala stated that the front door is 8 feet, 2 inches tall and 5 feet, 5 inches wide, including the sidelights. She confirmed that a round natural clay chimney pot will be used.

Chairman Diamond agreed with comments made by Board member Sykora about the importance of matching the brick color.

Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public

testimony. Hearing none, he invited final comments from the Board.

Board member Walther stated that some minor refinements to the landscape plan are needed to incorporate suitable plantings on the west side of the house. He added that the potential for light spillover from the large picture window on the second floor should be addressed.

Board member Looby agreed with Board member Walther's comments.

Board member Bluhm agreed with Board member Walther's comments regarding the stark contrast between the light color brick and the dark windows and doors. She suggested that the color of the windows and doors should be reconsidered to avoid a stark contrast with the brick.

Chairman Diamond reiterated the importance of finding brick to match the existing brick on the house. Hearing no further comments or questions from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a second floor addition and various exterior alterations to the existing residence at 846 Northmoor Road as reflected in the revised plans presented to the Board. The recommendation is based on the findings in the staff report, the testimony presented by the petitioner and the Board's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. Approval is recommended subject to the following conditions:

1. Details of the second floor window treatment shall be provided to staff at the time of submittal for permit. The treatment shall obscure the unfinished attic space and mitigate any light spillover.
2. Any further modifications and refinements made to the plans that were presented to the Board, either in response to Board direction, including the items detailed above, 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.
3. Details of exterior lighting, if any is proposed, shall be submitted with the plans submitted for permit. All fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view from off of the site. All lights shall be on timers set to turn off no later than 11 p.m. except for motion sensor lights.
4. Prior to the installation of the brick, an on-site mock-up of the brick shall be provided and will be subject to staff review approval for the purpose of verifying that the selected brick matches the existing brick.

5. A final landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by City staff. The plan shall be refined to reflect sustainable, year round vegetation to break up the west elevation all year round.
6. 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. On street parking is limited to two cars immediately in front of this property due to the narrowness of the street.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for approval of awnings and signage for an existing business, Britt Carter, located at 1350 Skokie Highway.**

**Property Owner: Britt Carter and Company (Mark Britt Carter, 45%, Vicki J. Carter, 45%, and Jeremy N. Carter, 10%)**

**Representative: Daryl Hunzinger, Evanston Awning Company**

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. Carter stated that Britt Carter has been in Lake Forest since 1994. He explained that the purpose of installing the awnings and signage on the building is to enhance the visibility of the building from the highway and to draw attention to the business. He stated that many customers have trouble finding the store. He noted that the only existing sign for the business is a small monument sign that is not very visible from the highway. He explained that the business is the only retail establishment in this area. He noted that the business is outside of the City's business districts. He acknowledged that variances from the Code are requested due to the unique location of the business. He stated that it is appropriate that the awnings and signage differ from those typically permitted in the City's business districts. He stated that a total of eight awnings are proposed on the front of the building. He explained that awnings with stationary valances are proposed instead loose valances to better withstand the strong winds given the business's location adjacent to the highway. He stated that the proposed awning fabric is a black with a thin gray stripe. He added that the projection of the awning from the storefront is 24 inches. He stated that with a larger projection, the awning becomes too horizontal and the awning signage on top of the awning is not as visible as it is with the steeper pitch.

Ms. Baehr reviewed that the petition requests approval for awnings and awning signage. She added that variances are requested to allow for more signage than what is permitted by Code, to allow for lettering on the top of the awning rather than on the valance, to allow stationary rather than loose valances and to allow the use of a graphic on each of the awnings. She stated that based on the petitioner's statement of intent, the proposed awnings are desired to update the appearance of the building and to increase visibility from the highway. She stated that because of the business's unique location adjacent to the highway and outside of the City's business districts, it is reasonable to grant the variances requested. She stated that as currently proposed, the awnings have open ends

and stationary valances. She explained that the Code states that valances should be loose, however the petitioner explained that stationary valances will be more durable due to the unique location of the building adjacent to the highway. She stated that the proposed signage is centered on the upper portion of the awnings rather than on the valance. She explained that the Code requires lettering to be placed on valances only, but in this case, the petitioner has made the case that it is more appropriate to have the lettering on the top of the awning in order to increase visibility of the store and due to the limited access. She explained that the proposed awning signage includes the business name as well as a graphic. She stated that the Code limits the size of graphics to a maximum of 15 percent of the total sign area, and as proposed, the graphic exceeds 15 percent, however the graphic is minimal and subtle, and appears to be proportionate to the size of the awning. She stated that overall, the proposed awnings and signage enhance the appearance of the storefront and help to draw more attention to the business. She added that the staff report includes a recommendation for approval and findings in support of the petition.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mr. Carter stated that some trees along the front of the building may need to be trimmed to allow the awnings to be installed.

Board member Bluhm stated that the awnings will help customers find the location of the business. She added that because this business is in a stand-alone building outside of the City's business districts, the variances seem appropriate. She explained that she initially questioned having open ends on the awnings, however with the ends open, it allows for more natural sunlight into the store.

Board member Looby expressed support for the project. He stated however that the signage on the awnings facing the front door, rather than the street, seems unnecessary. He suggested that the signage be removed from the awnings in that location. He stated that the appearance of the awnings is well thought out.

Board member Downey agrees that the business is currently very difficult to find. She stated that the awnings will help to identify the building as a retail location.

Board member Sykora expressed support for the petition.

Chairman Diamond agreed with comments made by other Board members.

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

Board member Looby made a motion to recommend approval of awnings and awning signage for Britt Carter and Company including variances from the total allowable signage square footage, signage on the top of the awning, rather than on the valance, loose valances, open end on the awnings and approval of the graphics as proposed. The following conditions are included in the motion.

1. Signage shall be removed from the awnings facing north and south, adjacent to the front entrance, away from the streetscapes.
2. Awnings and awning signs may not be illuminated or backlit.
3. Any modifications to the plans, either to respond to direction from the Board or changes made for other reasons, must be submitted for review and a determination by staff, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, that the plans are in conformance with the approvals granted and the conditions prior to submitting a complete application and plans for a building permit.

The motion was seconded by Board member Sykora and approved by a vote of 6 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 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr  
Assistant Planner