

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Building Review Board**  
**Proceedings of October 7, 2020 Meeting**

A meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, October 7, 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 remotely: 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 September 2, 2020 meeting of the Building Review Board.**

The minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting were approved as presented.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a two story addition at the rear and side of the existing residence and demolition of the existing garage and construction a replacement garage. The property is located at 114 Washington Circle. A building scale variance is also requested.**

**Property Owners: Jim and Eileen Swartout**

**Project Representative: Michael Breseman, 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. Breseman explained that the subject property is located in a neighborhood comprised of homes built in the early 1900s with a variety of architectural styles. He noted that the property owners recently purchased the property. He explained that the goals of the project include expanding the kitchen, creating a family room with a dining area, adding a mudroom on the first floor and creating a master suite and office on the second floor. He

added that a replacement, larger garage is proposed at the rear of the property to accommodate today's larger vehicles. He noted that a building scale variance of 5 percent is requested. He stated that factors in support of the variance request include the fact that there is significant square footage in the attic due to the roof pitch that is not living space and the large wrap-around porch accounts for additional square footage since it exceeds the allowance for design elements. He noted that the location of the addition is dictated by the zoning setbacks. He explained that the existing house encroaches into the side yard setback on the north side of the property so the addition is shifted south to avoid further encroachment into the setback. He stated that the massing of the addition reflects simple forms consistent with the Farmhouse style. He explained that originally, the proposed addition was taller, however after working through design studies, the height of the addition was lowered to allow the addition to be subservient to the existing home. He presented the floorplans of the home and existing and proposed elevations. He explained that a conceptual landscape plan was prepared and the property owners intend to complete the landscaping in phases. He stated that a patio is located at the rear of the proposed addition. He stated that the replacement garage is a simple two car garage with storage space at the rear. He noted that a shed dormer is proposed on the front of the garage. He stated that the addition and replacement garage will have horizontal fiber cement siding, architectural asphalt shingle roofing, and aluminum clad windows.

Ms. Baehr explained that the petitioner is requesting approval of additions to the existing home, demolition of the existing detached garage and approval of a new two car detached garage. She stated that the proposed additions will match the existing home in appearance and in style. She explained that the additions are intended to make the home more functional for the new owners. She stated that the existing residence complies with the allowable square footage for the property. She explained that the additions in total add 1,190 square feet to the home including square footage for elements that could be considered design elements if the entire allowance for design elements was not already accounted for by the existing front porch on the house. She stated that the square footage of the existing home along with the proposed additions exceeds the allowable square footage by 144 square feet, 5 percent of the allowable square footage. She noted that a review of the criteria for a building scale variance is included in the staff report and based on staff's evaluation, the criteria for a building scale variance are met. She explained that the existing garage does not provide the space needed for the petitioner's vehicles and the work necessary to make the existing garage functional would result in a large portion of the existing garage being rebuilt. She stated that the proposed garage is designed in a manner that complements the home to a greater extent than the existing garage. She noted that staff received two letters from neighboring property owners in support of the project adding that copies of the letters were provided to the Board and to the petitioner. She noted that a recommendation and findings in support of the petition are detailed in the staff report.

In response to questions from Board member Looby, Ms. Baehr confirmed that the Board may want to include a condition requiring that the landscaping is completed concurrently with the addition.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Mr. Breseman stated that the existing windows on the house were installed recently, by a previous owner, without City approval. He stated that there are no plans to replace the recently installed windows. He explained that aluminum clad wood windows with simulated divided lites and fiber cement siding are proposed for the addition and garage. He noted that the new windows will be double hung windows, consistent with the existing windows.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Mr. Breseman explained that the size of the garage was driven by the size of the owners' vehicles and the desire for additional storage space. He added that the size of the garage is limited by the square footage allowance for the garage.

Board member Bluhm commended the petitioner on the project and expressed support for the building scale variance.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mr. Breseman confirmed that Hardie board will be used to patch areas of siding on the existing house. He explained that the addition will have open eaves to avoid conflict with the location of the windows. He noted that open eaves are often found on Farmhouse style homes. He stated that depending on the owners' budget, opening the eaves on the existing house may be a possibility.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Baehr confirmed that the portion of the existing porch that is proposed to be enclosed is included in the square footage calculation for the house.

Chairman Diamond stated that the proposed project will enhance the appearance and improve the functionality of the home.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Mr. Swartout stated that he and his family are currently residents of Lake Forest. He explained that he and his family love the neighborhood and the property's proximity to the Central Business District. He stated that the existing home does not accommodate a family of six adding that the proposed addition will allow for the home to be functional for his family. He noted that the property currently has a number of mature trees that provide screening of the house from the street and neighboring properties. He stated the intent to preserve the trees and add landscaping over time. He confirmed that the porch has a tongue and groove wood ceiling.

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

Board member Bluhm suggested that the owners explore opening the eaves on the existing house if it is feasible within the budget.

Board member Walther commented that opening the eaves on the existing house will

make the home more consistent overall with the Farmhouse style and will result in consistency in detail between the house and the addition. He added that the new garage should also have open eaves for consistency.

Board member Looby agreed with Board member Walther. He stated that the project will greatly improve the property and neighborhood.

Board member Downey stated that the project reflects a strong design. She stated that in her opinion, the closed soffits on the existing house do not appear to detract from the overall design of the house.

Board member Sykora agreed with comments made by Board member Bluhm. He expressed support for a condition that speaks to at least a portion of the landscaping being completed concurrent with the construction of the addition.

Chairman Diamond agreed with comments made by Board member Walther. He agreed to allow further comment by the petitioner as an exception to the Board's meeting procedures.

Mr. Breseman agreed that opening the eaves on the existing house is a great idea, he noted however that opening the eaves could lead to more invasive work. He stated that open eaves will be added to the garage.

In response to comments from Mr. Breseman, Board member Walther suggested that a section of the eave can be opened to investigate the extent of work that would be needed to open the existing eaves.

Ms. Czerniak suggested that a condition be added directing consideration and exploration of modification of the existing eaves on the house to match the detailing of the eaves on the addition.

In response to comments from the Board, Mr. Swartout confirmed that the intent is to preserve the existing trees on the site. He stated that the landscaping in front of the home is planned to be completed this fall and the plantings on the south side and at the rear of the property are planned to be done concurrent with the construction of the addition and garage. He noted that to comply with the City's Design Guidelines, the siding and windows on the addition and garage were updated at a cost and noted that the budget may not allow for opening the existing eaves around the home.

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

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a rear and side addition, demolition of the existing garage and approval of a replacement garage, and a building scale variance. He noted that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed 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. Consideration should be given to modification of the existing eaves on the house to match the open, sloped soffit as proposed on the addition which is more consistent with the farmhouse style. The eave on the garage shall match the sloped soffit on the addition as presented to the Board.
2. If any modifications are made to the plans that were presented to the Board, either in response to Board direction, or as the result of final design development, the modifications 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. A final landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Arborist. Particular attention shall be paid to assuring sufficient screening along the property lines either through existing vegetation or additional plantings if it is determined by the City's Certified Arborist that additional screening can be accommodated to reasonably screen the appearance of the additions and garage.
4. The landscaping that serves to screen the rear and side addition shall be planted concurrent with the construction of the addition or, if planting is not possible due to the time of year, a bond shall be posted in the amount of the cost of the plant materials and labor plus ten percent to assure planting as early as possible during the next planting season.
5. Details of any exterior lighting that is proposed shall be provided with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets of all light fixtures shall be provided and 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. All exterior lights, except for motion detector lights for security purposes, shall be set on timers to turn off no later than 11 p.m.
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.

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 the demolition of the existing single family residence and a replacement residence on the property located at 1088 Griffith Road.**

**Property Owners: Brian and Jennifer Harbison**

**Project Representative: Ruben Anastacio, 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. Harbison introduced the project. He stated that he and his wife purchased the property in 2018 with plans to build their retirement home. He explained that they are requesting approval to demolish the existing residence on the property in its entirety and build a replacement residence. He stated that they initially considered renovating the existing home but based on the poor condition of the home, rehabilitation was not feasible. He stated that when they began the design process for a replacement residence they studied the character of the surrounding neighborhood. He explained that the replacement residence is designed in the Colonial Revival style and features a brick exterior and simple massing and detailing. He explained that the lot is very small and presents many challenges in siting the residence. He stated that front, side and rear yard setback variances were recently supported by the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow construction of the residence and attached garage as proposed. He stated that the driveway is configured to avoid impacting a parkway tree and a tree that is along the north property line. He stated that two maple trees in the rear yard will be removed. He added that the trees are in fair to good condition based on the survey that was prepared.

Ms. Baehr stated that the property is on the west side of Griffith Road and is a through lot, with frontage on both Griffith Road and McKinley Road. She explained that the existing home on the property was built in 1912 and has been vacant for a number of years. She stated that the petitioner engaged a structural engineer to conduct a study of the condition of the existing home and based on the engineer's findings, the cost to repair and renovate the existing home far exceeds the long term value. She noted that the structural report is included in the Board's packet for reference. She stated that based on information in the structural report and staff's own evaluation of the existing home, the demolition criteria appear to be met and findings in support of the demolition are detailed in the staff report. She explained that as proposed, the site plan reflects the replacement residence generally in the location of the existing home on the property with an attached garage in the northwest corner of the site. She stated that the proposed residence is designed in the Colonial Revival style, and features elements of that style such as a front entry portico and quoin detailing. She stated that the proposed material palette consists of materials that are consistent with the style of the home and the surrounding neighborhood. She stated that staff recommends pervious materials for some of the hardscape on the site to reduce the amount of impervious surface given the heightened concerns about stormwater runoff particularly in small lot neighborhoods. She added that staff also recommends that the proportions and style of the windows be studied further in order to more closely follow the style of the home and present a more consistent appearance across all the elevations of the home. She stated that the petitioner provided a conceptual landscape plan that reflects new plantings including some small trees and shrubs at the front of the home. She noted that there are two existing maple trees in the rear yard that are proposed for removal and based on the survey, these trees are in fair to good condition and with their removal, a total of 12 replacement inches will be required on the final landscape plan. She noted that staff received letters in support of the project from neighbors in the area and the letters are included in the Board's packet. She stated that overall, based on staff's review of the project, the standards

of the Board are generally met, and a recommendation for approval subject to conditions is offered in the staff report.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Mr. Anastacio stated that the garage door will be aluminum with a wood grain. He explained that the different sizes of windows that appear on the side and rear elevations relate to the interior layout of the home. He noted that asphalt shingle is proposed for the roof material.

Board member Walther stated that the windows should be refined to achieve greater consistency around the elevations. He suggested that the horizontal windows on the left elevation be eliminated and vertical windows, more consistent with the proportions of the windows on the front of the home, be used. He added that the windows should present a consistent muntin pattern.

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

Board member Looby suggested that samples of the materials be provided to staff for review before installation.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Mr. Anastacio agreed that an additional window in the garage can be considered.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Ms. Baehr explained that as currently proposed, the residence and garage are very close to the maximum of 30 percent lot coverage.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Mr. Anastacio stated that the window located close to the ground on the right elevation is located in the stair to the basement.

Board member Downey observed that the windows on the right elevation are located at many different heights and should be further studied. She suggested that an alternative to concrete be considered for the front walkway and rear patio.

Chairman Diamond agreed with Board member Downey's comments. He invited final comments from the petitioner.

Mr. Harbison stated appreciation for the Board's comments and agreed to consider the adjustments suggested by the Board.

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

Board member Looby suggested bluestone or pavers for the hardscape areas to enhance the appearance of the house and to limit impervious surface. He agreed with the comments made by other Board members regarding the windows.

Board member Walther stated that because there is very little room on the north side of the property between the driveway and the property line, it is important that care be taken to direct water away from the neighbor's property. He suggested landscaping, absorbent materials or a curb along the driveway to direct water runoff.

Board member Bluhm agreed with Board member Looby's comments regarding limiting the hardscape materials.

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

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of the demolition of the single family residence and approval of a replacement residence and attached garage. He noted that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed 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. The plans shall be refined to address the following items:
  - a. Incorporate pervious materials into the hardscape plan to reduce the amount of impervious surface on the property.
  - b. Study and refine the window style and proportions in an effort to more closely follow the chosen architectural style and to present a more consistent appearance across all elevations.
  - c. Consider installation of a curb along a portion of the northern edge of the driveway and landscaping to mitigate drainage toward the neighboring property.
2. If additional modifications are made beyond those detailed above, either in response to Board direction, or as the result of final design development, the modifications 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. The overall height of the house, in combination with any grade changes shall be clearly detailed on a section submitted at the time of application for permit to verify that the height does not exceed 30 feet from the point of lowest existing grade adjacent to the home, to the highest roof peak. As-built drawings shall be submitted at appropriate intervals as determined to be necessary by City staff, to verify compliance with the height limitations.
4. The final grading and drainage plan shall demonstrate the project is consistent with the applicable Code requirements subject to review and approval by the City Engineer. Grading or filling on the site should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to meet good engineering practices to properly direct drainage.



5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a detailed, landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. The plan shall, at a minimum, meet the landscaping standards for new residences detailed in the Code and provide for the required 12 replacement inches on site to the extent possible using good forestry practices. If all replacement tree inches cannot be accommodated on the site, the number of remaining inches for which a payment in lieu of planting will be required must be noted on the plan. The full payment in lieu of on site plantings is required prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
6. Tree Protection Plan – Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect trees during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City. Careful attention shall be given to protecting parkway trees.
7. Details of exterior lighting shall be submitted with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets of all light fixtures shall be provided and 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. All exterior lighting, except for security lights with motion detectors, shall be on timers to turn off no later than 11 p.m.
8. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood.

The motion was seconded by Board member Bluhm 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 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr  
Assistant Planner