

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of September 1, 2021 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Jim Diamond and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, Sally Downey, Timothy G. Franzen, Scott Renken and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: John Looby

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
Jennifer Baehr, 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 June 2, 2021 meeting of the Building Review Board.

Consideration of the minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting was postponed.

3. Consideration of a request for approval of a new residence on a vacant lot, a conceptual landscape plan, and the overall site plan. The property is addressed as 405 Oak Knoll Drive and is in the Oak Knoll Woodlands Subdivision. Property Owner: Fidelity Wes of Oak Knoll LLC (Mike DeMar, 100%) Contract Purchaser: Ryan and Paige Robinson Project Representatives: Rick Swanson, 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. Swanson introduced the project on behalf of the property owner and developer. He stated that the proposed residence is on a lot in the cul de sac at the end of Oak Knoll Drive that backs up to preserved open space. He stated that due to the shape of the lot, the driveway meanders off of the cul de sac to a circular driveway in front of the house. He noted that a new residence on the property to the north was recently approved by the Board. He noted that the proposed residence does not have a typical side load garage but instead, the garage is set at an angle and the driveway wraps around the house to access the garage. He pointed out that the garage doors

are located on the rear elevation and are not visible from the street. He stated that the goal is to configure the driveway in a manner that provides a sense of entry and an elegant approach to the home while at the same time, preserving healthy trees. He stated that the house is designed in the Shingle style which is characterized by asymmetrical facades, steep gable roofs, and a playful use of window groupings. He stated that the proposed exterior materials include a cedar shingle roof, stone veneer in a gray/buff color, cut limestone window sills, composite shingle siding in a driftwood gray color, a mahogany front door, white windows with black shutters, mahogany color steel insulated garage doors, white fascia and trim boards, and white gutters and downspouts. He noted that for reference, a sample of both synthetic shingle siding and natural wood is available for the Board's review. He stated that brick pavers are proposed for the walkways and stoops. He noted that the proposed residence is in compliance with height and square footage requirements. He stated that a covered veranda with an outdoor fireplace is proposed on the rear of the home. He presented each elevations of the proposed residence to the Board.

Ms. Baehr stated that in response to the Board's request, a map of the Oak Knoll Woodlands Subdivision is included in the packet indicating the lots for which the Board has approved homes to date. She added that color renderings of the homes approved to date are also included in the Board's packet. She noted that the majority of the homes approved to date are white or gray. She stated that to assure some variation within the subdivision, the Board may want to encourage the developer to inform buyers that earth tones, as stated in the covenants for the development, should be used. She stated that the residence now before the Board appears to generally follow the City's Design Guidelines. She stated that the staff report includes some recommendations for the Board's consideration. She noted that the large window on the rear elevation appears inconsistent with the other windows on the home. She noted that the large window is divided into multiple square openings that appear contemporary in style rather than consistent with the style of the home. She suggested that the design and proportions of the window be reconsidered. She stated that additional plantings should be added along the driveway to provide a landscaped buffer between the neighboring home and the driveway. She stated that the staff report includes a recommendation for approval of the petition subject to conditions.

Board member Renken complimented the home noting that the asymmetry and architectural detailing are in keeping with the selected style. He noted that initially, he had concerns about the two large gable forms and the small gable above the entry converging at one point on the front façade. He noted however that the rendering clarifies that the gable forms are on different planes providing depth to the façade. He stated that the projecting gable element on the front of the garage appears large compared to the size of the garage itself. He suggested bringing the plate line down on the gable element. He asked for clarification on the shingle siding material. He complimented the location of the garage doors on the rear elevation and encouraged the petitioner to carefully study the turning radiuses to assure that a vehicle can maneuver into and out of the garage easily. He noted that several homes in the subdivision are Cape Cod gray, he encouraged the developer to assure greater variation in color across the subdivision.

Board member Downey complimented the home and stated appreciation for the background provided in the petitioners' statement of intent. She asked whether any of the homes in the subdivision that have been approved to date have fiber cement shingle siding. She agreed that moving forward consideration should be given to more variation in color on individual homes and in the subdivision overall. She stated that the scale and square divisions of the window on the rear elevation stand out adding that the window does not fit with the home. She suggested that if the concern is that the window divisions will obstruct the view, a large Palladian window, like the window on the front elevation, could be considered to be more in keeping the Shingle style. She asked for clarification on the elements shown on the gable ends on the north and south elevations. She agreed that landscaping should be added along the driveway to provide screening for the house to the north.

Board member Franzen complimented the home. He agreed with the recommendations offered in the staff report. He agreed that the window on the rear elevation would benefit from further study and refinement particularly with respect to the divisions in the window. He asked if it is typical with the Shingle style for windows to only have muntins in the top pane. He complimented the configuration of the driveway and the location of the garage at the rear of the home. He suggested expanding the width of the walk from the driveway to the front door to emphasize the front entrance.

Board member Walther agreed with the comments of the other Board members. He asked if there is a light inside the cupola adding that if there is, it should be set to turn off no later than 11:00 p.m. consistent with exterior lights. He noted that the Board is not concerned with the interior of the home except with respect to how the interior layout impacts the exterior. He noted that two of the windows on the front of the home are located in closets and expressed concern about views into the closets from the street. He agreed that additional landscaping is needed along the north side of the driveway. He observed that the air conditioner units are located on the street facing side of the house adding that the landscaping in that area needs to be adequate to hide views of the units from the street. He asked about the landscaping proposed in the center of circular drive and questioned how the area will appear in the winter. He noted that consistent with the previous approvals of homes in the subdivision, the shutters should be detailed with appropriate hardware.

Board member Bluhm stated that she understands why the petitioners chose the design of the window on the rear elevation as presented. She stated because it looks out on preserved open space and is not visible from the street, she has no objection to the window as proposed. She acknowledged that the design of the window is not ideal for a Shingle style house. She observed that one of the windows in a closet on the front elevation is smaller than the other windows and stands out. She noted that the color of the cedar shingle roof will change over time unless it is stained. She noted that the color of the composite siding should take into account that the cedar roof will fade over time. She suggested consideration of a darker gray for the siding to contrast with the cedar shingle roof instead the entire home being light gray. She asked if the

house could be shifted further back on the lot to allow more space for landscaping along the sides of the property. She agreed that substantial landscaping is needed along the north side of the driveway to screen views of the driveway from the home to the north.

Chairman Diamond agreed with Board member Renken's suggestion that further study be done to verify that there is adequate space to back out of the garage. He asked for clarification on the material for the porch columns. He agreed with Board member Franzen's suggestion about the front walkway. He agreed that landscaping will be important to screen the driveway and garage doors.

In response to questions and comments from the Board, Mr. Swanson clarified that fiber cement shingles are proposed for the siding. He stated that the fiber cement shingle does not come in a smooth finish and usually arrives prefinished with a sheen that identifies it as a synthetic product. He stated to avoid a sheen on the siding, the shingles will be painted like natural wood. He passed around a sample of a painted fiber cement shingle and suggested that it is undistinguishable from natural wood. He acknowledged that the back of the fiber cement shingle has a smooth finish but noted that the manufacturer does not recommend installing the shingle with the smooth side facing out. He stated that the most popular color for Shingle style homes is gray. He stated that the fiber cement siding comes in four foot panels adding that the width of the individual fiber cement shingle is the same as a natural wood wall shingle. He stated that the arched window on the rear elevation was specified by the client adding that it will not be visible from the street.

Ms. Robinson stated that natural light is important to her family. She explained that a large covered patio is proposed on a portion of the back of the home which will limit the amount of natural light so the large window is important to allow light into other areas, away from the covered patio. She stated that they chose the largest lot in the subdivision for the views. She added that the large window highlights the vaulted ceiling in the family room.

Mr. Swanson acknowledged that the arched window on the rear elevation is more contemporary than the rest of the home. He agreed that there are other ways to detail the window and stated a willingness to explore alternatives. He clarified that the elements on the gable ends are louvered vents. He confirmed that windows with muntins on only the top portion of the window are true to the Shingle style. He acknowledged that Shingle style homes also have muntins on both the top and bottom portions of the windows but stated that it is more common to only have muntins in the top portion. He confirmed that the driveway provides sufficient space for maneuvering into and out of the garage. He stated that there will be a light in the cupola and it will be on a timer. He stated that with respect to the windows in the closets, there will be window treatments to hide the view into the closets from the street. He stated that they will continue to work on the landscaping to assure that the air conditioning units are not visible from the street. He confirmed that the shutters will have shutter dogs and hinges. He stated that the color of the shingle siding is "Driftwood gray". He noted that another Shingle style home is being designed for the

subdivision with navy blue siding. He agreed that there should be variation in the color of homes in the subdivision. He stated that the porch columns will be painted fiberglass. He agreed to revisit the size of the oval window on the front elevation. He explained that the neighbors to the north will not see the garage doors and confirmed that landscaping will be added along the north side of the driveway. He stated that the landscaping in the center of the circular driveway will likely be a combination of ground cover and perennials.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Baehr confirmed that the Board approved fiber cement shingle siding on the Craftsman home at 1535 Sage Court in the Oak Knoll Woodlands subdivision. She stated that in the past, the Board has required a diversity of exterior materials and colors in subdivisions. She added that to date, the majority of the homes approved in the subdivision are white stucco.

Board member Walther pointed out that the design guidelines in the covenants for the subdivision specify that earth tones should be used.

Board member Downey suggested that the Board provide direction to the developer on exterior colors for the remaining homes in the subdivision.

Board member Walther acknowledged that the petitioners' desire for the large arched window on the rear elevation and he acknowledged the differing opinions of the Board members. He stated however that as designed, the window in his opinion appears contemporary and out of place on the house. He suggested that consideration be given to redesigning the window in a way that meets the petitioners' desire for expansive natural light while also aligning better with the Shingle style house. He suggested that alternate studies of the window be provided to staff for review and approval. He suggested that for instance, it may be possible to detail the trim differently to achieve a less contemporary appearance.

Board member Bluhm reiterated that no one will see the arched window on the back of the house. She stated that the petitioners' wish should be respected. She added that although she agrees that the arched window is not the best choice for the home, it will not be visible to others. She noted that the landscape plan will need to be enhanced to provide the required replacement tree inches as stated in the staff report.

Board member Renken stated that "Driftwood Gray" is a darker and warmer color than "Cape Cod Gray" and may provide enough of a contrast from the cedar shingle roof. He stated that he can accept the arched window on the rear elevation because it is not visible and because it is important to the homeowners. He cautioned however that the Board is charged with reviewing each project individually adding that in this case, the homeowners' desire for the arched window is acceptable because it will not be visible adding that may not always be the case. He questioned why, if the fiber cement shingles are being painted anyway, natural cedar shingles are not being used. In response to questions from Board member Renken, Mr. Swanson stated that the homeowners do not want natural wood because of bees and wasps.

Board member Renken acknowledged that the Board has already approved fiber cement shingle siding in the subdivision. He stated that the Board should require that the shingles be painted to avoid the sheen of prefinished siding.

Board member Downey stated a preference for natural wood shingles however she acknowledged that painting the shingles on site resolves the issue with the sheen. She stated that she understands why the client wants the large arched window and suggested that other options could achieve the desired goal of natural light while at the same time, aligning with the chosen style of the house.

Board member Franzen suggested that the Board approve the large arched window. He noted that Mr. Swanson is a very talented architect and suggested that if he is allowed by his clients to revisit the design of the window, a better option may be found to achieve the natural light desired in a manner that is consistent with the style of the house. He stated that he encourages the homeowners to work with Mr. Swanson on the design of the window but stated that he would not support a condition requiring the window to be modified.

Chairman Diamond agreed with the comments of Board members Walther and Franzen on the arched window on the rear elevation. Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of the new residence, conceptual landscape plan, and the overall site plan based on the findings in the staff report and incorporating the Board's deliberations as additional findings. He stated that the recommendation is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Conduct further study and consider refinements of the following:
 - a. The arched window on the rear elevation. Consideration should be given to options that are more consistent with the style of the house while at the same time, achieving the homeowners' desire for expansive natural light.
 - b. Provide an auto turn study to demonstrate that the access into and out of the garage is workable for the long term.
2. The synthetic siding shall be painted, not pre-finished, to avoid a sheen.
3. All modifications to the plans including the refinements noted above and any others made in response to Board direction 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 include, but not be limited to, all plantings or removals within the Conservation Easement and all required replacement tree inches. In

addition, the plan shall reflect plantings to meet the minimum landscape standards for new residences detailed in the Code, including ground cover, mid-level and canopy trees and evergreens across the site. The plan shall also address the following:

- a. Additional evergreen plantings shall be incorporated along the north side of the driveway to screen the driveway from the adjacent home to the north.
 - b. Assure that the air conditioner units are well screened with vegetation.
5. If determined to be necessary by the City's Certified Arborist, any declining or damaged parkway trees shall be removed and replaced by the developer prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for this property.
 6. The final grading and drainage plan shall demonstrate the project is consistent with the applicable Code requirements and will be 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, properly direct drainage and mitigate off site impacts. Grading is not permitted in the conservation easement.
 7. Tree Protection Plan – Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect trees identified for preservation and to protect trees on neighboring properties during construction, must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
 8. Details of exterior lighting 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. All exterior lights shall be set on automatic timers to go off no later than 11 p.m. except for security motion detector lights.
 - a. The intensity of the light in the cupola shall be subject to staff review and adjustment after installation. The light in the cupola shall be on a timer set to turn off no later than 11 p.m.
 9. 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 Downey 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.

Mr. Swanson explained that during the last meeting the Board discussed the use of cast stone. He stated that in response to that discussion, he and the developer invited a representative from the cast stone manufacturer, Reading Rock, to provide information on the cast stone product.

Chairman Diamond noted that no information was provided to staff or the Board in advance of this discussion however, he agreed to allow the presentation and requested that information be provided to staff for inclusion in the next Board packet. He stated that the Board is not prepared to discuss this matter at this time adding that it was not noted on the agenda.

Mr. Sweeney, Regional Sales Manager from the Rock Cast division of Reading Rock, stated that his company has completed projects in all 50 states and in Canada. He explained that the term "cast stone" is a blanket term and stated that there are differences between a manufactured stone veneer and cast stone. He stated that his company's product is made up of limestone aggregate, natural pigmentations and a water repellent. He stated that when masonry units or masonry veneers wick up water, staining occurs on the face of the masonry. He stated that because his product has a water repellent, there is no staining. He explained that some manufacturers suggest a limestone starter before installing the stone product because many manufactured stone products cannot be installed directly on grade. He noted however that the Rock Cast product can be used at or below grade. He stated that limestone can stain as seen on some historic structures. He stated that a limestone wash can be used to get rid of the stains. He stated that with the water repellent, no on-going maintenance is needed and a surface water repellent is not required because the water repellent is integral to the manufactured product. He stated that the Rock Cast product is used on courthouses and hospitals, and for high-end residential development, in areas with strict covenants and in Historic Districts. He noted that he recently completed a courthouse in Cheyenne, Wyoming with ornate details that are meant to replicate limestone.

Mr. Swanson stated that he will bring a sample of the Rock Cast product to a future meeting.

Ms. Czerniak stated that it would be helpful if information on the manufactured product are sent to staff in time to include in the Board's packet.

5. Additional information from staff.

There was no additional information presented to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner