

**The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of December 7, 2022 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 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, John Looby, Scott Renken and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Timothy G. Franzen

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

**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 from the August 4, 2022 and November 2, 2022 Building Review Board meetings.

The minutes of the August 4, 2022 meeting were approved as submitted.

The minutes of the November 2, 2022 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of the addition of a second-story on the west side of the home, an open front porch, and approval of related exterior alterations. The property is addressed as 853 Oakwood Avenue.
Property Owner: Oakwood Family Management LLC
(Tom Swarthout, David Swarthout, Cynthia Luetje and James Swarthout)
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. Swarthout stated that the proposed project takes advantage of a change that was made to the Code a number of years ago to exempt open front porches from the allowable square footage. He stated that he grew up in the Oakwood Avenue neighborhood and noted that his family still lives in the area. He stated that he is partnering with other family members to enhance the property.

Mr. Breseman gave an overview of the history of the property. He noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals recently recommended approval of zoning variances in support of the

proposed additions to the home. He stated that a partial second floor addition is proposed at the front of the house along with an open front porch, aesthetic improvements and upgrades including new paint and a new roof. He stated that the footprint of the house of the main portion of the house will not be increased. He stated that the open, at grade, front porch will diminish the visual impact of the second floor addition. He stated that all of the brick will be painted to update the look of the home. He stated that the overall height of the home, with the addition, is four to five feet below the neighboring homes. He stated that the existing overhangs and soffits on the addition will match those on the house. He provided photos of the house and noted that the landscaping will be updated and will be simple and clean. He reviewed a current survey of the property. He provided an overview of the siting of the other homes along the street noting that the proposed improvements to the home will allow it to fit better with other homes in the neighborhood. He noted that many of the homes on the block are two story and many have porches, some of which are elevated. He reviewed the proposed floor plans. He stated that the shallow pitch roofs will be maintained to keep the massing of the house down and the simple lines of the home will be preserved. He presented a demolition plan. He presented elevations of the home with the proposed addition and front porch. He stated that new windows will be installed and will be double hung where permitted by the Code from an egress perspective. He noted that shutters will be added to soften the brick. He presented a section of the home and a rendering.

Ms. Baehr stated that the proposed project will significantly improve the house and the neighborhood. She noted that the open front porch provides a connection to the streetscape. She noted that the petitioner has stated that proper hardware will be installed on the shutters. She asked for input from the Board on the appropriateness of the depth of the roof overhang on the proposed addition noting that it appears somewhat awkward. She recommended the addition of some small ornamental trees in the front yard to help soften views of the house with the second story addition.

Chairman Diamond invited questions from the Board.

Board member Looby stated that the house today is not consistent with the neighborhood and complimented the planned improvements. He agreed that some plantings in the front of the house would be helpful to allow the house to settle into the neighborhood. He stated that the home will be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Board member Walther asked how the floor of the porch will be treated, about the material that is intended for the base of the columns, and whether there are plans for exterior light fixtures. He agreed that adding plantings with some vertical height in the front yard would be beneficial to the site. He observed that the wide overhang as proposed is consistent with some of the other homes in the neighborhood and requested some additional information on the architectural details and on how the roof will be vented.

Board member Downey complimented the proposed addition and stated that the updated house will fit well into the neighborhood. She acknowledged that proper

hardware on the shutters will enhance the house but noted that few homes in the neighborhood have that detail. She pointed out that most homes in the neighborhood have hedges in the front yard, instead of trees.

Board member Bluhm complimented the proposed improvements to the home agreeing that the proposed project will benefit the neighborhood. She stated that the depth of the eave as proposed is acceptable in her opinion. She stated that providing proper hardware on the shutters should be considered. She agreed that a small ornamental tree in the front yard would be a nice addition. She asked about the location of downspouts.

Board member Renken agreed that the proposed improvements are well done. He questioned whether there are too many materials on the front façade. He observed that every other Four Square style home in the neighborhood has a front dormer. He suggested that the siding on the front gable be narrowed to a five or six inch exposure. He complimented the double windows and agreed that the casement windows are appropriate in the locations as shown. He suggested that an 18 inch overhand instead of two feet could improve the appearance of the front of the house. He agreed that some medium height landscaping in front of the house is appropriate.

Chairman Diamond complimented the proposed improvements. He asked about the material and color of the downspouts.

Board member Downey asked if thought was given to locating the master bedroom on a lower level rather than on the upper floor.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Swarthout stated that the gable on the front façade could be brick. He noted that the front porch floor will be brushed concrete.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Breseman agreed that brick could be used on the front gable. He stated that the base of the columns could be brick or wood. He pointed out the proposed locations of the downspouts. He agreed that the overhang could be reduced to some extent. He stated that the front porch has a lesser overhang to keep it simple. He acknowledged the opportunity to add detail to the windows but noted the desire to keep the house simple. He stated the intent to use traditional colors, putty, or a light gray for the windows. He stated that the intention is for the house to fit in and not to attract attention. He acknowledged that the rendering does not accurately represent the landscaping intent and agreed that plantings with some height in the front yard are appropriate. He confirmed that no gutters are proposed on the porch but agreed to add an element to divert rain from above the front entrance.

Chairman Diamond invited public comment, hearing none, he asked for final comments from the Board.

Board member Renken asked that brick or siding with a narrower exposure be considered for the upper front gable. He stated support for the lighter wood columns rather than columns with a brick base.

Board member Bluhm stated that a landscape plan should be required as a condition of approval. She agreed that water coming off the porch, over the entrance, should be addressed.

Board member Walther noted that the petitioner agreed to consider an 18 inch overhang for the addition, rather than a two foot overhand. He agreed that brick or siding with a narrower exposure on the front gable should be considered along with some refinement of the detailing of the soffit. He stated that the columns should be wood or a composite material for the entire height, without a brick base. He stated support for some vertical landscaping in the front yard.

In response to a question from Board member Renken, Mr. Breseman stated that an appropriate material, something other than plywood, will be used for the soffits.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Mr. Breseman stated the intent to use 18 inch panels metal standing seam panels on the roof instead of 12 inch but agreed to review the scale of the panels with staff. He stated that exterior lighting will likely be can lights and a couple small sconces adjacent to the doors.

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

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a partial second story addition to the front of the home, the addition of an open front porch, and exterior alterations as detailed on the plans and presented by the petitioner. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and noted that the Board's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the recommendation is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. The following design refinements shall be reflected on the plans submitted for permit:
 - a. Brick or siding with a smaller exposure shall be used on the front gable.
 - b. The soffits on the addition shall not be plywood, shall not exceed 18 inches in depth, and shall be appropriately detailed.
 - c. Shutter dogs and hinges shall be installed on the shutters.
2. All modifications to the plans including those detailed 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.

3. 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.
 - a. The landscape plan shall include, at a minimum, foundation plantings and vertical plantings such as small ornamental trees at the front of the home.
4. 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.
5. Details of exterior lighting shall be submitted with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets for all light fixtures shall be provided and all fixtures, except those illuminated by natural gas at low light levels, shall direct light down 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.
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 Renken approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

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

There was no additional public testimony presented to the Board.

6. Additional information from staff.

There was no additional information presented to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Planner