

**The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of March 1, 2023 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 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: 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 from the February 1, 2023 Building Review Board meeting.

The minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. Consideration of a request for approval of the demolition of the existing coach house/garage on the north side of the property at 524 Illinois Road and approval of a replacement coach house/garage generally in the same location. A building scale variance is also requested.

Property Owner: Dean Thuente

Project Representative: Robert D. Douglass, architect

Chairman Diamond asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest.

Board member Downey stated that she is a friend of the project architect but noted that she will be able to review the petition objectively.

Mr. Thuente stated that his family has lived in the house for several years. He stated that the original house was built in the 1800's and moved to its current location in 1913 based on available information. He stated that the coach house is comprised of a two-car garage and an office on the second floor. He noted that initially the plan was to restore the coach house but noted that after study, it was determined that the coach house is not structurally sound. He stated that demolition of the existing coach house and construction of a replacement coach house is proposed. at an entirely new coach

house is now proposed. He reviewed the site plan noting the location of the Lake Forest College football field adjacent to the property. He noted that the footprint of the new coach house will be shifted slightly to pull the structure out of the utility easement which extends along the north side of the property. He stated that a three vehicle bays instead of two, are proposed in the new coach house. He stated that the intention is to replicate the existing coach house to the extent possible.

Mr. Douglass stated that the house and coach house pre-date the current zoning regulations. He reviewed the proposed site plan and pointed out the building setbacks and the utility easement. He noted that the existing coach house has an exterior staircase that will be moved inside for safety. He stated that the existing coach house has shiplap siding unlike the house which has clapboard siding. He presented photos of the existing coach house. He reviewed the existing floor plan and noted the areas where the building is structurally failing. He stated that the existing second floor space is small. He presented elevations of the existing coach house. He noted that placing a foundation under the existing structure was considered, but found to not be workable. He presented floor plans for the first and second floor of the proposed coach house. He noted that on the second floor of the east elevation, a French door is proposed with a small balcony. He reviewed the front elevation noting that the style of the dormers proposed were inspired by those on the main house. He reviewed the other elevations and noted the relationship between the proposed coach house and the various elements and the character of the main house. He noted that the original coach house did not relate to the house. He stated that the proposed coach house is intended to be more consistent in character with the house.

Ms. Baehr confirmed that initial discussions with the petitioner were about rehabilitation of the existing coach house. She commended the petitioner and the project architect for the due diligence put into exploring the possibility of rehabilitation. She acknowledged that the new coach house is designed to pick up on some of the character elements of the house. She suggested that since the structure is simple, the two dormers on the front elevation should match each other and requested Board input on the dormers. She explained that the proposed replacement coach house exceeds the square footage allowance for a garage and the excess must be added to the square footage of the house. She noted however that some of the elements on the proposed coach house are considered design elements and as a result, overall, the total square footage on the property is reduced with the new coach house. She stated that the height and mass of the proposed coach house is generally the same as the existing coach house. She stated that a landscape plan will be required to reflect foundation plantings around the new coach house to at least meet the minimum requirements of the Code.

Chairman Diamond invited questions from the Board members.

Board member Downey stated support for the demolition and the building scale variance. She noted that the coach house is prominent from the streetscape. She said that in her opinion, the symmetry of the dormers is important and agreed with the staff recommendation pertaining to the dormers.

Board member Renken stated support for the demolition and building scale variance. He agreed that the mass and height of the proposed coach house appear generally consistent with the existing coach house. He suggested that consideration be given to slightly widening the proposed dormers to more closely match the dormers on the house. He acknowledged the desire to incorporate elements of the existing house into the design of the new coach house but pointed out that the proposed coach house is too small of a structure and as a result, the asymmetry does not work as well as it does on the much larger house. He stated that the design of the coach house should remain simple and agreed with staff's recommendation that the dormers should match each other. He stated that the proposed coach house is an improvement over the existing structure.

Board member Bluhm commended the petitioner and project architect for the work done to date. She stated that in her opinion, the structure is not very noticeable from the street. She agreed that two matching dormers would be a preferable approach. She stated that since the house is clapboard, the coach house should also be clapboard.

Board member Looby stated support for the demolition of the coach house and the building scale variance. He stated that the dormers, if widened, will match the dormers on the house and will provide additional space on the interior. He stated that the existing coach house looks surprisingly good but acknowledged the foundation issues. He stated support for the project.

Board member Walther agreed with the comments of the other Board members. He asked for clarification on the type of siding proposed on the coach house. He noted that with the new foundation, the siding will no longer be in direct contact with the ground. He stated support for wood siding to match the siding on the house. He stated that if composite siding is used, wood should still be used for the trim and other accent pieces. He if retaining the larger gable element on the front elevation of the proposed coach house is desired, consideration should be given to having the element project from the wall to distinguish it from dormer element. He stated that the lite pattern in the coach house windows does not match the pattern windows on the house. He suggested using a consistent pattern on the house and coach house. He acknowledged the effort to match the pitch of the roofs on the dormers on the new coach house with the dormers on the house.

Hearing no other questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond commended the project and invited the petitioner to respond to the questions and comments offered by the Board.

In response to the comments offered by the Board, Mr. Thuente stated that the issues about the dormers pointed out by the Board really are design aspects that should be left up to the homeowners' design preference. He noted that the house to the north was renovated without following the appropriate City processes. He stated that in his opinion, the front elevation of the proposed coach house as proposed, looks better

than if the two dormers were identical. He stated that as a homeowner, he would rather use exterior products that will last a long time than replicate existing materials. He stated that he would like to use materials that are easy for contractors to use. He stated that the bids for building a new coach house are approximately \$450,000 adding that he will not get a good return on the project. He stated that he did construction work in Deerfield and understands the concept of constructing buildings to look like they were original. He stated his intend to add foundation plantings.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Douglass noted that the windows on the existing home are larger than the windows proposed on the coach house. He stated that larger windows may appear out of proportion with the coach house. He stated that the Board's comments on the dormers and front facing gable as proposed on the coach house are subjective. He noted that in his opinion, the differentiation between the two elements on the front façade creates movement across the elevation.

In response to a question from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Baehr stated that no correspondence was received on the petition.

Chairman Diamond invited final comments from the Board.

Board member Renken stated that the Board has allowed fiber cement siding in the past but has consistently required wood for trim, fascia, and soffits. He stated support for the use of fiber cement siding. He agreed with Mr. Douglass' comments on the windows and stated support for the lite patterns as proposed. He pointed out that the larger gable element proposed on the front elevation does not appear to provide any additional interior space. He asked the petitioner to explain the reason for the preference for the asymmetrical front elevation.

In response to a question from Board member Renken, Mr. Douglass agreed that the gable element on the front elevation does not provide much addition square footage inside the coach house. He stated that the front facing gable is desired for aesthetic reasons.

Board member Bluhm stated that in her opinion, the siding should be clapboard to match the house. She stated however that fiber cement siding that replicates clapboard is acceptable rather than natural wood. She stated that the asymmetrical dormers as proposed do not appear to fit in with other structures in the neighborhood. She asked whether three dormers were considered, instead of two, to create a focal point on the front elevation. She stated that the new coach house will be a great addition to the property and acknowledged the costs associated with rebuilding the structure. She stated strong support for matching dormers as opposed to the front facing gable element.

Board member Looby agreed with Board member Renken that fiber cement siding is appropriate with wood trim. He cautioned that the pre-painted fiber cement board will not match the white color of the house and suggested painting the coach house siding on site to assure that the color matches the house. He stated support for the project.

Board member Walther stated that if fiber cement siding is used, it is critical that the color matches the house.

Board member Downey stated support for matching dormers on the front elevation. She agreed with Board member Looby's comments on the siding. She noted that not much of the siding is visible on the front of the coach house.

Chairman Diamond agreed with the comments of the other Board members. He stated support for matching dormers on the front elevation. He noted the importance of using natural materials.

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

Board member Looby made a motion to recommend approval of the demolition of the coach house.

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

Board member Walther encouraged the petitioner to consider the Board's input on the front elevation and the preference for two matching dormers, rather than the asymmetrical design as proposed. He pointed out that several Board members, educated and experienced individuals offered input in support of matching dormers. He encouraged the petitioner to consider the Board's comments regarding composite materials rather than natural materials. He asked the petitioner to be respectful of the Board's opinions.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of a replacement coach house. 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. Consideration shall be given to the following:
 - a. Symmetrical dormers on the front elevation.
 - b. The use of natural wood siding.
2. The color of the siding shall match the house.
3. All modifications to the plans including those detailed above, those made in response to Board direction, and changes made as a 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. A landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Arborist. At a minimum, the landscape plan must include foundation plantings around the replacement coach house.
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. Light fixtures may not encroach into the required zoning setbacks. Given the location of the building very close to the setback lines, avoiding encroachment into the setback requires careful attention.
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. Due to the narrow and curving nature of the street, no on street parking of contractor vehicles is permitted.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and 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 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Planner