

**The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of July 5, 2023 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman John Looby and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, Sally Downey, Timothy G. Franzen, Eric Lohmueller, Scott Renken and Justin Stamer.

Building Review Board members absent: None

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 Looby 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 June 7, 2023 Building Review Board meeting.

The minutes of the June 7, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a sunroom addition on the rear of the home at 1021 Prairie Avenue. A building scale variance is requested.
Property Owners: Jill and Fred Bartuch
Project Representative: Frank Klepitsch, architect**

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Klepitsch stated that a one-story sunroom addition is proposed at the back of the home and reviewed the dimensions of the proposed addition. He described the site and the surrounding area noting that the property is one lot in from Everett Road. He commented on the existing landscaping on the site and stated that additional landscaping is proposed as part of the project. He stated that the addition is proposed over a portion of the existing deck at the rear of the home and noted that a hot tub is proposed in the same general area. He presented photos of the home and noted the change in grade on the site which results in some exposure of the basement on the south side which adds to the square footage based on the City's calculation method. He reviewed the proposed site plan. He pointed out the large arbor vitae in the photos and vegetation on neighboring properties which together provide good screening between the properties and pointed out an area along the rear property line which will

be infilled with additional arbor vitae. He presented the proposed elevations noting the new elements and pointing out the relationship to the existing house. He noted that the addition is designed to be transparent with many large windows. He described the railing proposed on the deck. He stated that the proposed addition is compatible with the house and the neighborhood and noted that the added mass is softened by existing and proposed landscaping. He stated that the sunroom will not be visible from the street and is understated. He pointed out that the height of the addition is 16 feet from the ground, much lower than the height of the house. He noted that the house was built before the current building scale regulations. He stated that the square footage overage results in large part from the exposed basement which is a function of the grade change across the property. He stated that neither the exposed basement or the proposed sunroom add to the appearance of mass of the home from the streetscape. He stated that the proposed addition totals 367 square feet and together with the existing home results in a square footage overage of 22 percent.

Ms. Baehr stated that the petition is before the Board because a building scale variance is requested. She stated that the sunroom addition is proposed on the rear of the home and is designed to have a light and open appearance. She stated that the house currently is over the allowable square footage by 11 percent which in part is the result of the exposed basement as noted by the architect. She stated that based on staff review, the criteria for a building scale variance are satisfied. She stated that the staff report details findings in support of the variance and includes recommended conditions of approval.

Board member Bluhm commended the project. She asked for clarification on how the sunroom is accessed from inside the house and on whether the addition is intended as an all-season room. She suggested consideration of replacing the bottom row of windows on the addition with a wall for convenience and functionality.

Board member Renken agreed with the findings in the staff report in support of a building scale variance. He stated although the exposed basement is included in the square footage calculation, in this case, it does not add to the appearance of mass. He stated that the request is reasonable. He complimented the design, noting that it is sensitive to the house and screened from the neighbors particularly on the south side. He added that the east side of the property could benefit from additional landscape screening.

Board member Stamer asked whether there are any plans for plantings to screen the exposed foundation.

Board member Lohmueller stated that the petitioner explained the project well and complimented the design of the project.

Board member Downey agreed that the applicable criteria are met. She asked for further detail on the deck stairway and railings.

Board member Franzen agreed that the criteria for a building scale variance are met.

He noted that the staff report called attention to the solid wall on the south elevation in the location of the sauna. He commented that the railing proposed on the deck appears cotemporary in contract to the traditional style of the house.

Chairman Looby asked for comments from the petitioner on the solid wall on the south elevation.

In response to Board questions, Mr. Klepitsch stated that the sunroom will have white clapboard siding with less exposure than the siding on the house. He noted that with respect to the lower row of windows on the sunroom reflected on the elevations, the area could be a solid panel and trimmed out to appear as windows if desired by the petitioners for convenience and functionality. He said that the space will be conditioned for use year round. He noted that access to the space is through the family room. He explained that the existing stairway in back of the house is necessary due to the grade change on the site. He noted that by relocating the stairway as proposed, the grade change is reduced. He acknowledged that a railing may be needed to comply with the Building Code. He stated that with respect to the style of the railing on the deck, further consideration can be given noting however that the contemporary design was selected because it maximizes views to the backyard. He stated that given the simplicity of the design of the proposed addition, the portion of the brick wall that is solid and without detail is intentional.

Board member Renken noted that a bulkhead could be installed at the base of the walls to allow for an outlet if the lower windows are desired.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Bartuch stated that additional foundation plantings are planned.

Hearing no further questions from the Board or responses from the petitioner, Chairman Looby invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final comments and motion from the Board.

Board member Franzen made a motion to recommend approval of a sunroom addition on the rear of the home and building scale variance. 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. 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.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect trees and vegetation

identified for preservation during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.

3. 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.
4. 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 Bluhm and approved by a 7 to 0 vote.

4. Consideration of a request for revisions to previously approved plans for the Amberley Woods Courtyard Homes. Revised plans are presented for homes at 1845, 1935 and 2015 Amberley Court.

Property Owner: McNaughton Development, (Paul McNaughton, 100%)

Project Representative: John Barry, McNaughton Development

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Barry noted that after McNaughton Development took over the development, the City approved three different home styles for construction on the remaining 19 lots of the Amberley Woods development. He noted that McNaughton Development is the third developer involved in the project. He stated that McNaughton has come forward with various proposed changes and is again doing so in response to buyers requesting some customization of the homes. He presented elevations detailed the changes proposed for the home at 1845 Amberley Court. He stated that the addition of a sunroom at the rear of the home and the addition of a third floor bedroom are proposed. He noted that corresponding roof changes as a result of the addition of the bedroom. He presented a site plan showing the expansion of the footprint of the home to the rear to accommodate the sunroom. He reviewed the modifications proposed to the house to be constructed at 1935 Amberley Court. He stated that a third garage bay is proposed along with some window and roof form changes. He presented elevations and a site plan. He reviewed the changes proposed to the house to be constructed at 2015 Amberley Court noting that the addition of a sunroom at the rear of the home and an additional bedroom on the second floor are proposed. He stated that the chimney is proposed to be relocated and noted the roof form changes resulting from the additional bedroom. He presented elevations and a site plan.

Ms. Baehr stated that the Board has seen requests from McNaughton Development for a number of changes to the plans that were approved in 2021. She noted that some of the changes proposed have been significant including changes to the building

footprint, massing, and roof forms. She stated that it is unusual for a developer to repeatedly request modifications to approved plans. She noted that staff has identified the changes when reviewing plans submitted for permit causing delays in the permitting process. She stated that the current request proposes changes to three homes. She noted that the staff report recommends approval of the majority of the changes now requested with the exception of the addition of a third, front facing garage bay proposed on one of the homes, and with a recommendation that the dormers proposed on the home to be constructed at 1845 Amberley court be aligned in size and placement to present a consistent appearance around the home. She noted that several letters were received from neighboring property owners and were distributed to the Board. She noted that the letters expressed concern about ongoing changes proposed to the approved plans and the third garage bay specifically. She added that the letters also raise general concerns about drainage in the area.

Board member Downey expressed disappointment that City staff continues to devote significant time to identifying inconsistencies between the approved plans and the plans submitted for permit. She stated that if changes from the approved plans are being considered by the developer, they must all be called out prior to staff review. She stated that staff did a commendable job in discovering all of the changes made by the developer which were not properly called out on the plans submitted by the developer. She stated that a two car garage is consistent with the overall development and was anticipated from the start. She stated that adding a third garage bay is not consistent with the neighborhood, streetscape, or the size of the lot. She noted that there appears to be a considerable grade change on the 1935 Amberley Court property from west to east and questioned whether sufficient space is provided for drainage and landscaping. She acknowledged the neighbors' concerns about drainage generally in the development. She stated that more study may be needed to determine the best location for the outdoor mechanical equipment. She confirmed that she received and read the letters from the neighbors.

Board member Lohmueller agreed with Board member Downey's comments. He stated that the Board's role is to interpret the standards and ensure that new buildings are visually compatible with the surrounding development. He stated that in this development, the homes are all very similar and the sites are tight. He stated that a three car garage is not compatible with the surrounding development.

Board member Bluhm agreed with the comments of the other Board members. She stated that staff did a good job of identifying the changes proposed by the developer and articulating the basis for approving most of the changes proposed. She stated that in Lake Forest garages are often screened from the street and pointed out that three front facing garage bays is too much particularly given the small lots.

Board member Renken stated that if the current plan with three garage bays facing the street, was presented originally, he would not have supported it for the reasons stated by the other Board members. He stated support for the proposed changes except for the addition of a third garage bay. He noted that the sunroom is a one story element at the rear of the elongated house with no visibility from the streetscape. He stated that

the third garage bay does not meet the standards adding that three car garages were never anticipated in the development. He stated that the proportions of the garage to the house exceeds good design principles.

Board member Stamer agreed that the narrowness of the lots imposes some limitations. He suggested that consideration be given to air conditioner units that designed to be quieter.

Board member Franzen reiterated that the developer needs to identify all proposed changes prior to staff's review of the plans submitted for permit. He stated support for the staff recommendations as detailed in the staff report and the reasoning behind the recommendations. He stated that the proposed addition of a third garage bay is too severe a change given the limitations of the lot.

In response to a question from Chairman Looby, Mr. Barry confirmed that the dormer on the home proposed at 1845 Amberley Court could be shifted to improve the balance and symmetry of the elevation.

Board member Downey noted that the original approvals required a mix of front load and side load garages, she asked staff to ensure that those requirements are met.

Chairman Looby reminded the developer that if any changes are proposed to the approved plans, staff should be alerted to allow a determination of whether Board review is required. He added that any proposed changes from the approved plans must be highlighted on the plans submitted for permit. He stated support for the changes currently proposed with the exception of the proposed third garage bay. He noted that a third garage bay is inconsistent with the other homes in the development and with the narrow condition of the lot. He noted that the additional driveway surface that would be needed to make a three care garage functional would leave little pervious surface remaining on the lot.

Wayne Urbanek, 2025 Amberley Court, stated that he submitted a letter that was previously distributed to the Board. He stated that the neighbors do not want to continue to come before the Board to respond to changes proposed by the developer. He stated that the neighbors have tried to work with McNaughton Development to make a welcoming community. He stated that in his opinion, the previous approvals should stand. He noted that there is a large track of wetlands behind the homes to the south and it needs attention and requires cooperation from the developer. He stated that he understands that ongoing construction has impacts but noted that the sewers and traps are full of sediment from construction which is flowing into the detention ponds. He noted that with respect to the home proposed next to his house, there will be fourteen windows facing his property. He expressed concern about the location of the mechanical equipment and noise impacts on his home.

Keith Kreb, 1815 Amberley Court, said that he was one of the first residents on Amberley Court. He stated that the engineering plans needs to be reviewed and executed with excellence. He noted that the water flows across the site from west to east to the

detention ponds along Conway Farms Drive.

Hearing no further requests to speak from members of the public, Chairman Looby invited final comments and a motion from the Board.

Board member Bluhm made a motion to recommend approval of the modifications proposed to the previously approved designs for the homes addressed as 1845, 1935 and 2015 Amberley Court with the exception of the following:

1845 Amberley Court:

- The dormers on the west elevation shall be revised to match in size and appearance to present more balance and symmetry on the elevation.

1935 Amberley Court:

- The third garage bay is not approved and shall be removed.

Board member Bluhm noted that the recommendation is based on the findings presented in the staff report and incorporates the Board's comments as additional findings. She stated that the motion is subject to the following conditions.

1. Careful attention shall be paid to location of outdoor mechanical units and efforts shall be made to mitigate sound impacts on neighboring homes given the proximity of the homes to each other.
2. All grading and drainage plans shall be carefully reviewed given concerns raised about overall drainage on the site.
3. The plans submitted for a building permit shall be modified to eliminate the third garage bay at 1935 Amberley Court and modify the dormers at 1845 Amberley Court. If additional modifications are made to the plans 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.

All conditions of the original approval shall apply including:

4. The developer shall maintain a matrix of homes and their locations throughout the buildout of the development to assure appropriate diversity of models and architectural styles and submit said matrix updated, with each building permit submittal.
5. An updated tree survey will be required for each lot at the time plans are submitted for permit to determine which trees are worthy of preservation and require protection during construction. Healthy, heritage trees should also be

considered in laying out the site plan recognizing that some trees will need to be removed to allow development of the lots.

6. Landscape plans for each residence shall be submitted prior to the issuance of a building permit for each building.
7. Construction parking and staging plans shall be submitted to the City along with the application for building permit for each home. Amberley Court must remain passable and free of dirt and debris at all times.

The motion was seconded by Board member Renken and was approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

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

No additional public testimony was presented to the Board.

6. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Planner