

**The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of December 6, 2023 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, December 6, 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, Eric Lohmueller, Scott Renken and Justin Stamer

Building Review Board members absent: Board member Timothy G. Franzen

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

**1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures –
Chairman Looby**

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 November 1, 2023 Building Review Board meeting.

The minutes of the November 1, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

3. Continued consideration of a request for approval of a garage and second story addition on the north side of the residence at 1055 Beverly Place. Enclosure of a screen porch at the south end of the residence to expand the year round living space is also proposed.

Property Owners: Theodore Hadjis and Stephanie Poulos

Project Representative: Jeff Letzter, project manager

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. Letzter reviewed that at the last meeting the Board continued consideration of the petition. He said that as a follow up to that meeting, he and the petitioners carefully reviewed the comments, concerns, and suggestions offered by the Board and explored alternative plans with a focus on preserving the heritage Oak trees, assuring that the driveway is as functional as possible, and reviewing the family's needs. He reviewed the existing elevations of the home and presented some images of surrounding homes. He reviewed the previously proposed site plan noting the proposed new driveway location and the resulting impacts on trees. He said that one of the alternative plans considered retained a side load garage, but it was determined that the plan did not function well. He reviewed the plan as now proposed noting that the garage is reoriented from a side load garage to face north, toward Longwood Drive. He pointed out that the revised site

plan avoids the need for a new curb cut and driveway and increases the potential for preserving the heritage trees located to the north of the house. He stated that as it approaches the garage, the existing driveway is widened slightly to facilitate movement into and out of the new garage. He stated that the revised plan achieves the goals of the owners and provides expanded garage space and space for second floor home offices. He stated that the plan as now presented generally maintains the look and character of the residence. He presented overlays of the elevations as now proposed and the current residence. He presented the elevations and a section reflecting the addition as now proposed. He pointed out that the roof lines are intentionally kept low by tucking the second floor space under the roof line. He stated that as suggested by the Board, the solid panel above the windows in the garage were eliminated and the windows as now proposed align with the windows on the front elevation of the home. He stated that the dormer as now proposed is copper to tie in with the existing residence. He added that the dormer is lower and set back further than previously proposed to correspond to the two new garage doors minimizing views from the street. He stated that the plan as now presented requires variances from the east property line for the addition and to allow a small portion of the driveway to be wider than 16 feet within the front yard setback.

Ms. Czerniak commented that the petition is an example of the value of the Board and the City's process. She stated that the project evolved into a better project because of the petitioner's willingness to carefully consider the comments offered by the Board. She stated that the plans as now presented address the concerns previously raised by the Board by minimizing impacts on significant trees, improving functionality, utilizing the existing driveway, setting the garage doors back from the north facing façade, and improving the details of the windows and dormers. She stated that the streetscape views of the addition are improved overall. She reviewed that the variances that are requested require review by the Zoning Board of Appeals and said that staff will note the Building Review Board's comments on the current plans in the staff report prepared for the Zoning Board of Appeals. She encouraged the petitioners to consider whether the driveway as proposed is wide enough near the garage to accommodate movements into and out of the garage. She acknowledged the efforts to minimize the extent of variances requested but noted that assuring that the garage is functional is important. She noted that the project includes enclosing the screen porch at the south side of the house adding that no changes were made to this element since the last meeting.

Board member Downey stated that she appreciated the petitioners' explanation at the last meeting of the thought process resulting in the proposed addition which will allow the family to remain in the house. She commended the plan as now presented and stated that it is the right solution for the house and the trees. She expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the petitioners and their consultant.

Board member Stamos stated support for the petition as now presented and acknowledged the work of the petitioners and their consultant. He stated that the plan represents a good compromise.

Board member Renken stated that the plan now presented captures what is the best for

the house. He stated that his two major concerns, keeping the existing curb cut and protecting the trees, are addressed with the plan. He stated that initially he thought that the proposed encroachment into the side yard setback was quite severe but noted that after walking the property and seeing that the neighbors' garage is five feet from the property line, he is comfortable with the proposed plan. He noted that there is a row of arborvitae that appear to encroach about a foot on to the neighbors' property and encouraged the petitioners to minimize the over dig in an effort to preserve the arborvitae as a screen for both parties. He stated that the plan presents a great solution adding that the architectural details as presented will blend well with the house.

Board member Blume stated her full support for the project as now presented and agreed with the comments of the other Board members. She suggested extending the row of arborvitae if there is sufficient space. She noted that the plan now presented provides the petitioners with a private space in the back yard shielded from the streetscape.

Board member Lohmueller agreed that the proposed plan results in a fairly severe encroachment into the side yard setback but noted that despite that, he supports the plan. He noted that the garage with the storage room is massive and encouraged the petitioners to think about how to light the space. He suggested thinking about lighting the space more consistent with a residential use as opposed to a garage.

Chairman Looby commended the petitioners for being willing to consider the comments offered by the Board and taking the extra time to consider alternative plans. He commented that the current plans appear to meet the petitioners needs and desires and more. He agreed that the petitioners should be sure that the driveway is wide enough to facilitate movements into and out of the garage. He stated that the addition will work well with the house.

In response to questions from Board member Lohmueller, Mr. Hadjis stated that the extra garage space may be used as a shop, homework space, or to meet some other need. He stated that the intent is not to have the entire addition appear as a garage and agreed to consider appropriate lighting.

Ms. Poulus thanked the Board for encouraging more thought adding that consideration of alternatives was an important exercise that resulted in a better project. She stated that rather than losing anything they wanted, they got more as a result of the process.

Hearing no further responses from the petitioner, Chairman Looby invited final comments from staff.

Ms. Czerniak noted that two letters of support were received from neighboring property owners.

Chairman Looby invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final comments from the Board. Hearing none, he invited a motion.

Board member Renken made a motion to recommend approval of the two story addition at the north end of the house for a garage, storage space, and second floor living space and approval of enclosure of a screen porch at the south end of the residence. He stated that the motion is based on the findings presented in the staff report and adopted by the Board and is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. The petitioner shall reconsider the driveway width near the garage doors to verify that sufficient hardscape is provided for cars to back out of the garage.
2. All possible precautions shall be taken to preserve and protect the arborvitae along the east property line.
3. Given the size of the storage space adjacent to the garage, consideration shall be given to lighting it in a residential manner to avoid the appearance of an oversized garage or industrial type space.
4. Detailed information on all exterior materials and the materials of the shutters and the garage doors shall be included with the plans submitted for permit.
5. Any modifications made to the plans after the Board's review and prior to submittal for permit, including those made in response to Board direction or discussion and those made as a result of final design development, shall be clearly called out on the plans submitted for permit. A copy of the plan presented to the Board, clearly labeled as such, shall be included in the permit application submittal for comparison purposes. Prior to the issuance of permits, staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to verify that they are consistent with the Board's direction and approval or if further Board review is required.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit:
 - a. A tree plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. The plan shall identify any trees proposed for removal and trees identified for protection and preservation including parkway trees and trees on neighboring properties if there is a potential for construction impacts.
 - b. A plan shall be submitted identifying the location of tree protection fencing to be installed prior to the start of construction and describing pre and post construction treatments proposed to increase the chances of long term survival of the trees.
 - c. 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, reflect foundation plantings around the new addition to meet the minimum Code requirements and if required, any replacement trees required to satisfy the inch for inch replacement for trees removed. The landscape plan shall include the quantity, species, and size at the time of planting for all new landscaping.
7. At the time of submittal for a building permit, detailed drainage and grading plans must be submitted. Grading or filling is limited to the minimum necessary to meet accepted engineering standards and practices.

8. 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.
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. Adequate sightlines at the intersection must be maintained at all times and streets and neighboring driveways cannot be obstructed.

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

**4. Consideration of a request for approval of a partial demolition, an addition and significant alterations to the residence, construction of a carport, installation of a new curb cut and driveway off of Marion Avenue, and the addition of hardscape. The property is located at 1062 Valley Road.
Property Owner and Representative: Oana Herghelegiu**

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

Ms. Herghelegiu stated that a second floor addition is proposed over the existing garage which is currently attached to the house with an open breezeway. She stated that the driveway will be relocated from Valley Road to Marion Avenue to access a carport proposed near the west property line. She presented existing and proposed site plans and elevations. She described the second story addition which will extend the existing second story of the house to the north and west and noted the proposed roof top deck. She stated that the addition will be stepped back away from the nonconforming north wall of the existing garage to conform to the zoning setbacks. She stated that the existing walls of the garage and the roof of the house will be removed along with interior walls. She reviewed the changes proposed to the existing first and second floor plans. She reviewed the changes proposed to the front porch. She presented photos of the existing interior of the house. She reviewed the location of the new foundation proposed to extend the basement. She stated that a large deck is proposed at the rear of the home. She presented sections of the proposed new construction and conceptual renderings. She stated that a carport is proposed near the west property line, separated from the house by mature trees. She stated that a carport, instead of a garage, will limit the amount of excavation that will be required to minimize impact on the trees. She stated that concrete pavers are being considered for the driveway. She presented photos of the wooded yard around the home. She stated that currently, the grade of the driveway rises above Valley Road slightly and encroaches slightly on to the neighboring property. She noted the point at which the driveway narrows to avoid a large tree. She said that consideration was given to reusing the garage and driveway but noted that because a new foundation is needed in that area, the decision was made to relocate the driveway to Marion Avenue and construct a carport. She stated that the driveway to Valley Road will be transformed into a walkway. She stated that an

engineer is working to determine the appropriate configuration and route for the new driveway with the goal of reducing pavement on the site to the extent possible. She noted that there are some dead trees on the site and on the adjacent parkway and said that additional landscaping is planned to provide screening along the north property line. She stated that natural materials and hardi-board are proposed for the exterior of the house and garage.

Ms. Czerniak noted that the petitioners are only the second owners of the house and noted that local architect, Don Murray, designed, built and lived in the house with his family since the early 1960's until he passed away in 2020. She stated that the house is designed in the contemporary style and noted that the petitioner proposes to upgrade and expand the house in keeping with the contemporary style. She noted that substantial demolition is proposed but as currently calculated by the petitioner, less than 50 percent of the house will be demolished meeting the definition of a partial demolition. She noted some areas of concern from the staff perspective and requested Board comment and direction on the massing of the second story addition close to the north property line, the large round street facing window, likely impacts on significant trees from the expansive hardscape and change in hydrology, and headlight impacts on private areas of neighboring homes due to the location and configuration of the proposed driveway and carport. She noted a carport could result in stored items being visible from off of the site. She suggested further study of the location and configuration of the driveway and of options that could offer some screening of vehicles, and anything stored in the carport.

Chairman Looby invited questions from the Board.

Board member Stamer stated support for the carport and suggested that to address the impact of headlights on the neighbor to the north, consideration should be given to shifting the driveway 25 feet to the east and curving it to enter the carport. He stated that the large circular window at the front of the house could be stark on the streetscape but noted that there are various solutions to address that issue.

Board member Blume stated that in her opinion, the streetscape will be improved with the proposed changes to the house. She agreed that the large, round window does not fit in with the streetscape despite the contemporary style of the home and questioned the appropriateness of the large window in a bedroom. She commented that the transom windows below the round window make the street facing elevation of the addition appear as a garage. She stated that the smaller round window on the first floor of the home does not have as much impact or visibility from the streetscape and is acceptable. She suggested that the front elevation of the proposed second story addition be studied further. She stated that it appears that the driveway from Marion Avenue will need to be curved to access the carport and noted that some of the White Oaks may be impacted. She agreed that the potential for impacts from headlights on the private areas of neighboring homes will need to be impacted and suggested consideration of a fence and a row of arborvitae along the north property line. She noted that the house to the west of the carport does not have any windows that would be impacted by headlights. She acknowledged that the carport is consistent with the

contemporary design of the house but encouraged consideration of alternatives particularly considering the difficulty in dealing with snow.

Board member Lohmueller commented that the house is hardly noticeable from the street due to the vegetation. He complimented the plans to date adding that there is a wide variety of architectural styles in the neighborhood, including contemporary homes. He stated that he has no concern about the proposed circular window. He stated that a carport is workable in the neighborhood noting that he observed one or two others in the area. He stated support for the concept of drilling piers rather than constructing a full foundation for a garage. He stated that there are various options that could provide the screening that is needed for the neighboring properties. He suggested consideration of siting the carport to allow cars to pull in directly off of Marion Avenue. He stated that the project will be a great addition to the neighborhood.

Board member Downey stated that the potential for impact on the neighboring home is concerning. She stated that the impacts will need to be mitigated in some way that cannot be changed over time. She stated that in her opinion, a carport is impractical in the Chicago area and noted that carports over time can become visually unappealing with trash cans and stored items. She stated that people always need storage space. She stated that the proposed large, round window appears jarring in comparison to the linear elements of the house and in her opinion, it detracts from the overall appearance of the house. She stated that it is likely that the trees near the addition and the tree in the middle of the patio will all decline and be lost. She noted that the roof forms appear to direct water on to the neighboring property to the north. She pointed out that in the image presented, the pillars appear to obstruct the front steps to some degree but acknowledged that is not likely the intent.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Czerniak clarified that no variances are requested from the Building Review Board. She stated that requests for variances will be presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals for consideration. She stated that the existing garage encroaches into the setback toward the north property line and a variance will be needed to allow modifications to the existing nonconforming structure. She stated that the proposed second floor addition as presented will be set back sufficiently to fully comply with the setback in this area. She stated that the existing house encroaches into the corner side yard setback along Marion Avenue on the south side. She explained that a variance is needed because alterations are proposed within the setback.

Board member Renken commented that the petitioners are taking a modest home and bringing it up to today's standards. He stated that he understands that the existing garage does not meet today's standards and the need to accommodate vehicles in another way. He stated that he understands the interest in relocating the driveway to make use of the west portion of the property since there is space available. He stated support for the second floor addition noting that with the proposed addition, the house does not exceed the allowable square footage. He stated that based on his experience, the tree surrounded by the deck will not survive long term even if a crushed stone surface is used below the planks for the deck. He stated that he does not support

the carport. He stated that the petitioner explained that a carport is proposed in an effort to preserve trees on the site but noted that with either a carport or a garage, a thickened concrete slab is needed impacting trees either way. He stated that stored items will accumulate in the carport and stated that in his opinion, a garage is a better solution. He pointed out that no gutter or downspouts are shown on the drawings adding that the property is higher than the property to the north and water cannot be allowed to just drain off the roof of the proposed addition. He stated that a gutter should be provided and pointed out that due to the encroachment into the setback, there is not sufficient space for a swale along the property line. He stated stormwater should be picked up and directed underground, if possible, given the potential for impact on the neighboring property. He stated support for the project functionally noting that the petitioners are gaining living space that they need. He stated that with respect to screening, more than arborvitae is needed to mitigate impacts on the neighboring properties. He summarized his concerns: the carport, screening, and drainage. He stated that he does not like the round window but said that it is not his primary concern.

Ms. Herghelegiu stated that they have engaged an engineer and intend to properly address stormwater runoff.

Chairman Looby agreed that the large, three car carport is a concern. He stated that given the size, it may appear as a picnic shelter. He agreed that a thickened concrete slab will be needed in the carport to avoid the concrete breaking up in a short time. He stated that the carport will present challenges in the winter adding that even if heaters are installed, snow may melt but will turn to ice. He stated that in his opinion, the carport will be a detriment to the future sale of the house. He stated that he believes that the circular window can be addressed in some way to address the concerns raised. He stated that the plans as presented do not provide sufficient detail on what is intended with respect to the hardscape. He stated that pavers on a compacted surface will not be pervious, and water will runoff those areas. He stated that it is important the hydrology of the site be understood and considered in the design and materials. He stated that the water on the property must be controlled to avoid impacting neighbors. He stated support for the exterior materials as proposed.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Herghelegiu stated that the plans were recently revised to eliminate the concrete surface proposed under the deck. She pointed out that the existing driveway in front of the home will be removed eliminating hardscape in that area. She stated the intent to use small pavers for the new driveway and manage all of the water on the site.

In response to a question, Ms. Czerniak stated that if the driveway or slab in the carport are proposed to be heated, the drainage plan needs to consider water runoff from those surfaces.

Chairman Looby emphasized that pavers over a crushed stone base are not fully pervious. He added that it is critical that the petitioner study the turning movements into and out of the carport to assure the driveway is adequately sized and configured.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Tofan presented alternatives to the round window that were studied to date including a square window, transom windows, vertical windows, and a decorative treatment to soften the appearance of the circular window. She stated that a different shape does not appear to be a good aesthetically and added that the square window conflicts with the angle of the roof. She stated a desire to maintain the relationship between the east and west facing windows. He stated that circular windows are their signature element and stated that in his opinion, it fits well with this house.

Board member Renken suggested that the window could be sloped to correspond to the roof.

In response to a question from Board member Blume, Mr. Tofan stated that programable, electric drapes can be used to provide privacy in the bedroom at sunrise and sunset. He explained that at night, the window will appear translucent.

Board member Downey commented that the alternative with slats appears to soften the appearance of the window.

Chairman Looby agreed that the slats soften the appearance of the window. He noted that with the transom windows, the element appears as a garage.

In response to comments from the Board, Mr. Tofan stated that the transom windows are intended to make the second floor appear as though it is floating. He stated that the existing foundation under the garage was evaluated and determined to be sufficient to support a second floor. He stated that gutters are planned but are not shown on the plan. He stated that the driveway in front of the home will be reduced to a walkway.

Chairman Looby noted that the flat roof area, if it is accessible from the second floor, will need to have railings. He stated that the railings need to be shown on the plans. He stated that overall, more detail is needed.

Jerome Kelly, 1044 Valley Road, noted that the driveway as proposed, off of Marion Avenue, will direct headlights repeatedly into his family and dining rooms. He stated concern about the request to encroach into the setback along the north property line noting concern about increasing the drainage on to his property. He stated that currently, five properties drain on to his property. He stated his preference that the structure comply with the established zoning setbacks.

Christine Munns, 231 Marion Avenue, agreed that moving the driveway 20 feet to the east will provide better access into the carport. She confirmed that there are no windows on the east side of the house to the west of the proposed carport. She agreed that a fence along the north property line will be helpful in mitigating any impacts from headlights of vehicles pulling into or out of the carport. She noted that headlight impacts only last for a few minutes. She stated that her concern is about lights on homes that stay on all night. She stated that there are drainage issues in the

neighborhood as water flows to the creek east of Valley Road and confirmed that the properties at 1040 and 1044 Valley Road take water from properties further west and not block the flow. She stated that overall, she supports the proposed design with the slats over the circular window. She stated that treating the trees will allow them to survive the construction.

Mr. Munns agreed that moving the driveway to the east could direct headlights away from the neighboring houses.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Looby stated that the petitioners need to provide details on exterior lighting proposed on the patios, house, driveway and in the carport. invited final comments from the Board.

Board member Downey suggested consideration of a wall on the north side of the carport to provide screening for headlights and storage.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Herghelegiu confirmed the intent to use the roof top between the home and the addition.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that roof top decks are permitted and are found on homes throughout the community.

In response to questions from Board member Renken, Ms. Herghelegiu stated that the roof extending over the patio to the west is intended for shade.

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

Board member Blume made a motion to continue consideration of the petition with direction to the petitioners to consider the comments, concerns, and suggestions offered by the Board including, but not limited to the following.

- Reconsider the carport.
- Study turning movements to assure the driveway is adequately sized and configured.
- Provide an exterior lighting plan including details of lighting proposed on the house, near hardscape, on the patios, and in the carport. Provide a site plan and cut sheets of proposed fixtures.
- Reflect details on the elevations including, but not limited to, the gutters, downspouts, and the railing at the roof top deck.
- Study the trees further to determine the realistic impacts.
- Consider alternatives to the round, front facing window.
- Review the front facing transom windows to avoid the appearance of a garage.
- Complete the preliminary drainage plans to assure that runoff from the structure and the proposed additional hardscape does not impact neighboring properties.

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

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 provided by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak
Director of Community Development