

The City of Lake Forest
Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the November 20, 2019 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Bruce Grieve and Commissioners Carol Gayle, Jan Gibson, Steve Lamontagne, Bill Redfield, Elizabeth Sperry and Wells Wheeler.

Commissioners absent: None

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff, overview of meeting procedures.

Chairman Grieve reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the October 23, 2019 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The minutes of the October 23, 2019 were approved as presented.

3. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval of limited demolition, an infill addition between the residence and garage, minor exterior alterations and a building scale variance.

Property Owner: Eric and Himani Ashleman

Representative: Dave Szafarz, architect

Chairman Grieve asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petition.

Mr. Szafarz introduced the petition on behalf of the property owners. He stated that the property is located on the northwest corner of Woodland and Edgewood Roads. He noted that the house was constructed in 1924 and was designed by Walter Frazier. He added that the house reflects traditional French architecture. He stated that the home is sited in the far northeast corner of the site, maximizing the amount of open space on the south side of the property. He explained that the house has undergone numerous additions and alterations over the years including a greenhouse addition, a two-story garage addition, and a one-story addition connecting the house and garage. He added that a relatively recent addition to the home was an eight-sided pyramid skylight

located on the linking element between the original house and the garage. He explained that because the skylight is inconsistent with the character of the home, it is the intent of the property owner to remove the skylight and construct an infill addition to link the second floor of the house with the area above the garage. He stated that the goal of the design of the addition is to maintain the integrity of the original home and preserve the rhythm of massing along Edgewood Road. He explained that the addition is designed to be secondary to the original home and is recessed back from the existing front façade. He stated that rather than matching the design of the existing home, the infill addition is meant to appear complimentary to the home noting that matching the existing home would take away from the importance of the original house. He stated that the proposed addition has a copper roof consistent with the existing copper roofs on the dormers. He stated that the walls of the addition are mostly glass to differentiate the addition from the existing home and to maintain the rhythm of the existing massing of the home. He explained that an early study of the addition had a smaller amount of glass and more solid wall area, he noted however that design appeared inconsistent with the upper level of the house which is comprised of mansard roofs. He added that a mansard roof was also considered for the infill addition, however that design presented one large mass along the street. He added that the existing French doors on the first level of the linking element, between the house and garage, are proposed to be replaced with larger doors without muntins to provide an unobstructed view to the pool and garden. He noted that a building scale variance is requested. He explained that the existing house exceeds the allowable square footage for the property by 341 square feet, 7.2%. He stated that the proposed infill addition adds 73 square feet to the house and brings the total square footage of the home to 5,097 square feet, which is over the maximum allowable square footage by 8.8%.

Ms. Baehr stated that based on City Records, the skylight proposed for removal was constructed in the 1990's, and is not original to the house. She agreed that the skylight is inconsistent with the architectural style of the home. She noted that its removal will not negatively impact the historic integrity or the appearance of the home. She explained that the infill addition is proposed in the area of the existing skylight, between the main house and the garage. She explained that because the existing residence is non-conforming with respect to zoning setbacks, the infill addition also requires review by the Zoning Board of Appeals. She stated that in its current condition, the house exceeds the maximum allowable square footage for the property. She explained that although the infill addition does not increase the footprint of the existing home, the addition contributes to the second story area of the house, and a building scale variance is requested. She stated that as currently proposed, the addition features large expanses of windows on the east and west elevations that appear inconsistent with the mostly solid appearance of the home, and recommended that the expanse of glass be reduced. She added that the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation provided comments on the project and they were provided to the Commission and the petitioner for consideration.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Szafarz stated that the proposed addition is 21 feet and 5 inches from grade to the ridge line of the roof. He added that the addition is approximately 20 feet in length. He stated that the exterior walls of the addition are copper. He explained that originally, wood panels were proposed for the exterior walls, he noted however that the wood stood out from the rest of the house. He stated that the proposed windows on the addition will match the windows on the main house. He stated that the roof of the addition is a simple gable roof form. He confirmed that gutters are proposed on the addition.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Mr. Szafarz explained that other design schemes appeared to draw more attention to the addition. He added that the design intent of the addition is to appear subtle and secondary to the main house. He stated that the addition serves as a sitting room that provides a physical connection between the house and garage on the second floor.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Szafarz stated that the copper panels on either side of the windows on the addition are small enough that only one sheet of copper is needed and seams are not necessary. He explained that a downspout is proposed from the upper roof of the addition to a gutter on the lower level to avoid water splashing off the roof on the first floor.

Commissioner Wheeler questioned whether the size of the addition be reduced since its function is to provide a pass through from the second floor of the house to the garage.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Szafarz stated that the proposed width of the addition is minimal. He explained that if the width of the addition is reduced, the height of the roof will increase.

Commissioner Gayle stated that in her opinion, the different design treatment of the addition makes it stand out from the rest of the house.

In response to comments from Commissioner Gayle, Mr. Szafarz reiterated that the mass of the addition is recessed from the front of the house which helps to minimize its appearance. He stated that the copper on the addition will become a dark bronze color within the first year.

Commissioner Redfield suggested consideration of a triple window on the front elevation of the addition to match the existing triple window below, creating improved balance between the existing home and proposed addition.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lamontagne, Mr. Szafarz confirmed that the proposed windows will be operable. He stated that incorporating one

long window box planter on the addition would be inconsistent with the size of the window boxes found on the existing home. He explained that the materials and detailing of the addition were chosen in order to diminish its appearance in relation to the existing home.

In response to questions from Chairman Grieve, Mr. Szafarz stated that the interior of the addition will have a pitched ceiling.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson stated that the addition has a different rhythm of solids to voids than the existing home. She suggested that consideration be given to reducing the number of windows, particularly on the front elevation, and a different siding material for the walls. She noted that the muntin pattern could be refined to soften the appearance of the windows. She recommended that the height of the addition be lowered to the extent possible while maintaining adequate head room.

Commissioner Sperry commended the petitioner on the plan to remove the pyramidal skylight agreeing that it conflicts with the very traditional style home. She stated that the proposed addition appears to overpower the existing home, particularly the original portion of the residence. She commented that the windows proposed on the addition are very large compared to the small narrow windows on the original residence. She noted that the use of the copper panels for the exterior walls of the addition may appear busy in comparison to the existing materials on the home.

Commissioner Wheeler agreed that the number of windows on the addition should be reduced to align more closely with the fenestration pattern of the existing home. He acknowledged that the different size windows on the second level of the existing home presents a challenge in selecting windows for the addition. He stated that using copper panels on the walls may be problematic because the panels will expand and contract in response to temperature change.

Commissioner Gayle suggested that rather than differing from the existing house, the addition could incorporate some of the elements of the house. She suggested exploration of a way to diminish the appearance of the windows on the addition.

Commissioner Redfield agreed with comments made by fellow Commissioners.

Commissioner Lamontagne commended the petitioner noting that removing the skylight will be an improvement to the home. He suggested that rather than introducing a different size window on the addition, the windows could match

either the windows on the garage or on the house. He explained that the proportions of the proposed windows create a vertical appearance while the existing house has a strong horizontal direction. He suggested shifting the addition further back from the front of the house to further diminish its appearance as it relates to the existing house. He noted that using a wood shingle roof may help the addition fit in more quietly with the existing home.

In response to questions from Mr. Szafarz, Chairman Grieve stated that the intent of the Commission is to offer direction to the petitioner and encourage consideration of refinements that may enhance the appearance and compatibility of the addition. He clarified that it is not the role of the Commission to design the addition. He emphasized that the addition is located very close to the street, making it very visible. He suggested that sunlight reflecting off of the large expanse of windows on the east elevation may draw attention to the addition. He encouraged the petitioner to give further consideration to the fenestration on the addition. He acknowledged that because the addition is largely intended to serve as a pass-through, there may be an opportunity to lower the height. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to continue the petition with the following direction to the petitioner.

1. The goals of the petitioner and Commission are aligned, removal of the skylight is endorsed.
2. The overall mass is of concern specifically the heavier weight at the top versus the bottom.
3. Study window alternatives for the link element.
4. If the true function is as a passage way and sitting area between the residence and garage, consider diminishing the roof form to avoid interfering with the adjacent mansard roofs.
5. Consider the recommendations in the staff report.
6. Consider all of the Commissioner's comments offered at the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for storefront alterations and updated signage for Walgreens at 296 E. Deerpath.

Property Owner: Altounian Properties

Representatives: Michelle Reuss, Walgreens Co.

Michael Dzik, architect

Chairman Grieve asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest.

Commissioner Lamontagne recused himself due to his employment with the petitioner.

Ms. Reuss introduced the project design team. She noted that the Walgreens store has been in Lake Forest since 1932. She stated that the project involves updated signage and storefront alterations. She explained that the existing curved sign cabinet over the original store entrance will be removed to reveal the original architectural features. She stated that new non-illuminated signage that fits within the architectural elements of the store's entrance is proposed. She added that the proposed signage is aluminum with raised lettering. She stated that the design of the proposed signage is intended to match the style and colors of existing signage found throughout the Central Business District. She explained that the building features a Greek Key detailing around the existing storefront windows and the same detail will be incorporated as the border for the new signage. She stated that a plaque on the east elevation is also proposed. She explained that the plaque is 2 feet wide by 2 feet and 10 inches tall. She noted that the plaque is intended to resemble historic building markers found throughout the Central Business District. She explained that the current signage totals 100 square feet and exceeds the maximum square footage allowed. She added that the proposed signage totals 49 square feet, which still exceeds the allowable square footage allowed, but is significantly smaller than the existing signage. She noted that the existing photographs installed within the storefront windows on Deerpath are proposed to be removed to allow more visibility into the store. She stated that the windows along Western Avenue will be reopened. She noted that the windows have been closed off since the 1980's. She stated that reopening the windows will restore the open storefront along Western Avenue and allow more visibility and natural light into the store. She explained that the new window mullions will be located behind the existing columns along the façade and the benches and soffits along the storefront will remain. She stated that the new windows will also incorporate the Greek Key detailing found on the existing building. She explained that the extensive interior renovations are also planned.

Ms. Baehr stated that the updated signage and storefront alterations are proposed as part of Walgreens's overall plan to update the store's appearance. She stated that while the total sign area proposed exceeds is the size permitted by Code, the amount of signage appears appropriate given the store's

prominent location within the Central Business District and the long history of the business at that location. She noted that the proposed plaque features a graphic which approval from the Commission. She stated that the proposed changes will enhance the appearance of the building and surrounding streetscape adding that staff supports the petition as presented.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gayle, Mr. Harris stated that the lettering will be slightly raised from the surface of the sign. He stated that the Greek Key detail will be applied to border of each of the signs above the entrance.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Dzik explained that the interior soffit will be modified to allow the new windows to be full height. He stated that the new windows will have the same glass as the existing storefront windows on Deerpath. He added that the color of the window frames will match the existing storefront windows.

Commissioner Wheeler expressed concern about the potential for light spillover from the interior of the store on to the Western Avenue due to the reopening of the windows along Western Avenue.

In response to concerns expressed by Commissioner Wheeler, Mr. Dzik stated that the light fixtures are set back from the windows.

In response to questions from Commissioner Sperry, Ms. Reuss confirmed that the new signage will not be illuminated. She stated that the colors of the letters were chosen to more closely match other signage in the Central Business District than the existing white letters. She added that some type of window treatment could be explored to reduce light spillover from the interior of the store. She stated that the graphic proposed on the plaque is the Walgreens brand logo.

Commissioner Sperry explained that plaques found throughout the Central Business District are used to identify historic designations. She explained that the proposed plaque should avoid suggesting that the building has received a preservation award or a landmark designation. She expressed concern about the design of the graphic proposed on the plaque.

In response to comments by Commissioner Sperry, Ms. Ruess stated that the intent of the graphic is to identify the Walgreens store on the east elevation. She agreed to review the current design of the plaque in response to comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson agreed with Commissioner Sperry's comments about the proposed plaque. She added that the plaques found throughout the Central Business District are typically bronze.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Ms. Reuss confirmed that if any damage to the stone around the store entry is found when the existing sign is removed, it will be repaired. She stated that the Greek Key border is ¼ inch thick. She acknowledged that the City Code requires that any interior signage must be at least 18 inches back from the window, not taped to the window.

In response to questions from Chairman Grieve, Ms. Reuss confirmed that the store is not open 24 hours.

Chairman Grieve suggested that the lighting could be selected to minimize the amount and intensity of light spilling from the interior of the store on to the streetscape. He suggested that the plaque could incorporate facts specific to the Lake Forest Walgreens store. Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gayle agreed with Chairman Grieve's suggestion for the plaque. She explained that the plaque presents an opportunity to connect to the Lake Forest community. She suggested that the plaque could include information on the building and original architect. She agreed with Commissioner Gibson's recommendation to use bronze for the plaque.

Commissioner Wheeler agreed with comments of the other Commissioners on the design of the plaque. He suggested that a window treatment be explored to minimize the amount of light emitted from the store on to the streetscape. Commissioner Sperry agreed that a historic narrative should be incorporated into the design of the plaque. She suggested that the Walgreens logo proposed on the plaque be modified to only include the cursive "W."

Commissioner Gibson stated that the location of the plaque appears unusual. She agreed that a window treatment should be explored to minimize light impacts on the streetscape.

Chairman Grieve encouraged the petitioner to consider the Commission's comments and suggestions. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grieve invited a motion.

Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving new signage and storefront alterations for Walgreens, at 296 E. Deerpath. He noted that the approval is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and subject to the following conditions.

1. Reconsider the plaque including: removal of the graphic, size, placement, material and the incorporation of some local historic references.
2. Be mindful of off-site light impacts.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

OTHER ITEMS

8. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

No testimony on non-agenda items was presented to the Commission.

9. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner