

Historic Preservation Commission  
Proceedings of the March 8, 2022 Meeting

A special meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was conducted remotely.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Maureen Grinnell and Commissioners Jan Gibson, Geoffrey Hanson, Ron Levitsky, and Robin Petit

Commissioners absent: Two vacant positions

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

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

Chairman Grinnell stated that she determined that an in person meeting was not prudent due to the Covid 19 pandemic. She reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

**2. Continued consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the demolition of a single family residence and a replacement residence at 650 Lake Road. The Commission's deliberations at this meeting will focus on the proposed replacement residence.**

**Property Owner: Stephanie Burke**

**Project Representative: Diana Melichar, architect**

Chairman Grinnell asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, she reviewed that the Commission considered the petition at the February meeting and discussed it at length. She invited any further questions or requests for clarification from the Commission.

Commissioner Levitsky noted that the information provided by the petitioner stated that if the home was rehabilitated, the end product would be compromised. He questioned whether there is certainty that after repair and remediation work is completed, the home would be habitable.

Ms. Baehr stated that from staff's perspective the end product would likely be compromised because of attempting to work within the limitations of the existing structure.

Ms. Czerniak added that there is a concern that given the extent of removal and reconstruction that will likely be needed to address the issues uncovered to date, there will likely be very little remaining from the existing residence. She stated that trying to retrofit the existing structure to address the problems could possibly result in some structural and moisture problems not being fully resolved.

Commissioner Gibson thanked the petitioner and staff for being so thorough in the reports that were provided to the Commission for review.

Hearing no further questions on the demolition request, Chairman Grinnell invited a presentation from the petitioner on the proposed replacement residence.

Ms. Melichar reviewed that at the previous meeting she explained the structural and environmental problems impacting the house. She stated that even if monumental and costly repairs and renovations undertaken, uncertainties about the health and safety of the house may remain. She stated that approval of the demolition of the house is requested. She presented the proposed replacement structure. She stated that the replacement residence is designed to create a classically proportioned, comfortable, and inviting home rather than a dominant and imposing estate. She stated that the Georgian style is appropriate for Lake Road adding that the attributes of this style, balance, symmetry and historic detailing, appeal to the property owner. She explained that the style of the existing home does not work for a modern day home and does not meet the needs of the property owner. She explained that if the existing home were to be replicated, to meet today's living and building code requirements, taller ceiling heights would be needed causing significant overage above the permitted square footage for the property. She noted that the plans for additions and alterations to the existing home that were previously approved by the Commission proposed additions at the rear of the home and required a building scale variance of nine percent over the allowable square footage. She explained that the Georgian style allows for a compact second floor plan with double loaded rooms and efficient circulation. She stated that living spaces that expand into the landscape are also indicative of the Georgian style offering plenty of light, air and views. She stated that the size and mass of the replacement residence are not imposing and do not dominate the streetscape. She presented an overlay of the existing and proposed building footprints. She stated that the proposed residence at 99 feet, is shorter than the existing residence which is 120 feet in length adding that the building mass is pushed further away from the street in contrast to the wings of the existing home which protrude in front of the main mass, toward the street. She pointed out that the roof ridge of the existing home is 80 feet in length while the roof of the replacement residence utilizes hip roof forms to reduce the visual size of the roof and building mass. She stated that the replacement residence is three feet two inches taller than the existing residence adding that the maximum height extends only 21 feet, along the central ridge. She noted that the proposed height of the home is approximately six feet lower than the allowable building height for the property, 40 feet. She stated that the proposed flanking wings are one foot, six inches lower than the ridge height of the existing residence and 16 feet and nine inches long to be subordinate to the main mass of the home. She stated that the footprints of the adjacent homes are larger than the proposed replacement residence and they are sited closer to the street. She stated that the existing garage is just five feet from the north property line and noted that the proposed garage is 35 feet from the north property line creating better spacing of buildings along the street. She stated that the proposed exterior materials for the replacement residence consider the materials

used on nearby homes. She stated that the proposed exterior materials include Pennsylvania Mica Stone in blues and grays for the exterior walls and medium charcoal gray slate for the roof. She stated that muted tones are proposed to blend into the natural setting and allow it to recede from the street unlike the existing white home. She stated that since the last meeting, the window proportions were refined, and the sunroom was widened while still complying with the allowable square footage. She stated that the existing circular driveway in front of the house will be removed eliminating over 3,000 square feet of impervious surface on the property. She stated that many mature canopy trees on the property will be preserved, and understory, ornamental trees and layers of evergreens and native plant materials will be added under the existing trees to complement the woodland across the street. She stated that the front of the home will be further softened with foundation plantings and deciduous trees in garden spaces. She stated that the replacement home will fit the character of the Lake Road neighborhood.

Ms. Baehr stated that the Commission is continuing consideration of a request for approval of demolition of the existing home and approval of a replacement residence. She stated that at the last meeting, the Commission's questions and discussion focused on the demolition and ended with the Commission indicating general support for the demolition. She stated that the focus is on the proposed replacement residence. She stated that based on staff's review, the proposed residence reflects a strong design and high quality materials consistent with the neighborhood and with the selected Georgian style. She acknowledged that the replacement residence differs significantly in style and character from the existing residence. She stated however that the applicable standards appear to be met. She pointed out that the existing residence sits quietly on the site and the proposed residence presents a more formal and dominant appearance on the street. She suggested that incorporating additional plantings into the front yard could help to soften the impact of the new home on the streetscape. She asked for Commission input on the style and character of the proposed replacement residence given the unique circumstances of this petition.

Commissioner Gibson asked if the proposed Pennsylvania Mica Stone will be difficult to obtain. She noted that the stone is on the Kersey Coates Reed house. She asked if smoke from the chimney in the great room will be present a problem given the proximity to the master bedroom windows.

Ms. Melichar confirmed that a stone similar to the stone on the Kersey Coates Reed house is desired and confirmed that she believes it is accessible. She explained that she does not anticipate that the property owner will have windows open in the winter when the chimney is in use.

Commissioner Petit noted that one of the design precedent images presented features stucco niches and stone arches with windows above and pointed out that the proposed residence has similar details however, the windows above have shutters unlike the design precedent. She suggested that consideration be given to

eliminating the shutters to achieve greater consistency with the precedent images to simplify the appearance of the home. She asked whether the openings on the front elevation in the music room and library will be windows or doors.

Ms. Melichar stated that consideration was not given to eliminating the shutters. She clarified that the openings in the music room and library on the front elevation are doors with bluestone stoops.

Commissioner Levitsky asked staff for clarification on the findings provided in the staff report pertaining to spacing on the street. He observed that the replacement residence will be set back further on the site than the existing home and the home to the north. He added that the replacement residence is shorter than the existing home and has a softer color palette. He asked the petitioner if consideration was given to designing the replacement residence in the Colonial Revival style, the style of the existing home.

Ms. Baehr responded that the massing of the Georgian style creates a very strong street presence that is different than the existing home which has a more subtle style. She noted that the home to the north is also designed in a Georgian style and has a prominent presence on Lake Road. She explained that because of the architectural style of the replacement residence, and the massing, the replacement residence will have a different presence on the streetscape than the existing residence.

Ms. Melichar responded that a home designed in the style of the existing style, of the size desired by the property owner, would exceed the allowable square footage. She explained that the Georgian style makes sense because the massing lends itself to the programmatic needs of the property owner. She stated that the replacement residence is smaller than the home to the north and is set back further from the street and has different detailing. She noted that the replacement residence will be softened by landscaping in the front yard as opposed to the house to the north, which has an open front yard. She stated that the neighbor to the north has stated support for the proposed residence.

Commissioner Hanson asked for clarification on the window on the north elevation. He pointed out that the muntins were removed from the transom windows on the rear elevation.

Ms. Melichar responded that the window on the north elevation will have two shutters and explained that because of the window's location near a corner, one shutter will rest open, against the adjacent west wall. She confirmed that the window was widened for consistency with the other windows around the house. She stated that the muntins were removed from the transom windows on the rear elevation also for consistency with the other windows. She added that the muntins in the transom above the front door remain to accent the entrance.

Chairman Grinnell stated commended the petitioner for decreasing the mass and building footprint of the replacement residence adding that the design is strong. She

stated however that the replacement residence is not the quiet that it is replacing. She suggested consideration of eliminating the portico railing since it is not needed for safety, to quiet the front elevation. She commented that if the site was a vacant lot and the petitioner was proposing a home for the property, it is not likely that the residence would be designed in the style of the existing residence. She noted that the design of the existing residence is not as strong as the design of other homes on Lake Road. She noted that there are two substantial homes on either side of the proposed residence. She stated that from a preservation standpoint, once the existing residence once is gone, it will be missed. She explained that is why the Commission is working hard to do what is possible to protect the character of the streetscape across from the woodland. She stated appreciation for the petitioner's efforts to inform the Commission on the state of the existing resident structure and for the careful design of the replacement residence.

Ms. Burke recognized how difficult it is for the Commission to let go of the existing residence. She acknowledged that the existing home has charm. She stated that her goal is to honor Lake Forest and Lake Road with the replacement residence. She noted that she has sought input from the neighbors to be sure the new home will fit into the neighborhood. She stated her intent to enhance the landscaping to help the home blend into the natural setting.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony. Hearing none, she invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson stated that in her opinion, the proposed replacement residence is compatible with the surroundings. She stated that the replacement residence is not overstated despite that fact that it is designed in the high Georgian Revival style. She noted that the proposed exterior materials are of the highest quality adding that the home will be a beautiful addition to the neighborhood. She commended the petitioner for reducing the building footprint and the amount of impervious surface on the site.

Commissioner Levitsky agreed with Commissioner Gibson. He stated that the home is compatible with the surrounding area in terms of the exterior materials and the architectural style. He added that the house is set back further from the street than the existing house and has a smaller footprint and softer color palette. He stated his expectation that the house will blend in well with the natural woodland across the street. He stated support for the petition.

Commissioner Hanson acknowledged that the existing home is a bit quieter and more subdued than the proposed residence by noted that it is imposing in its own way with stark white walls, its proximity to the street, and minimal landscaping. He stated that the replacement residence, in his opinion, will not call more attention because it will be set back further from the street and has a softer material palette. He stated that the replacement residence will be a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited a motion.

Commissioner Gibson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the demolition of the existing residence and construction of a replacement residence. She stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the comments of the Commission as additional findings. She stated that the motion is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. Any refinements made in response to direction from the Commission, 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 Commission 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 Commission'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 on and off the site which are intended for preservation during construction and the plan will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. Pre and post construction treatments should be detailed as part of the protection plan.
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. The landscape plan shall identify all trees and vegetation to be protected and preserved and provide for significant landscaping in the front yard to, over time, soften the impact of the new residence on the streetscape and to align with the wooded character of the streetscape on the east side of the street.

If during construction, trees identified for preservation are compromised in the opinion of the City's Certified Arborist, replacement inches or payment in lieu of on site planting may be required.

4. 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. All exterior lighting shall be sensitive to the impacts on the public park and the wood land across the street and the dark sky character of the neighborhood.

5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials' staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties and existing trees and landscaping during construction. **No parking of construction vehicles or contractor vehicles is permitted on Lake Road.** Off site parking may be required with contractors shuttled to the site.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Petit and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

- 3. Consideration of a request for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the existing garage, construction of a three-car garage addition, and exterior alterations to the residence at 820 E. Westminster.**  
**Property Owners: Michael and Marybeth O'Shea**  
**Project Representatives: Marybeth O'Shea and Ewa Polanski, architect**

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

Commissioner Levitsky stated that the petitioners are his neighbors and recused himself from participating in the consideration of the petition.

Chairman Grinnell invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. O'Shea stated that she and her husband recently purchased the property at 820 E. Westminster. She stated that the property is just over an acre in size with an inground pool in the rear yard. She explained that the home is a two-story structure with low pitch hip roofs and eight foot tall ceilings throughout most of the home and lower ceilings in some areas. She stated that the low ceilings are one reason driving the proposed modifications. She stated that other than renovation of the master bathroom in 2006, the home was mostly untouched for over 20 years. She noted that there are maintenance issues that need to be addressed including fixing the crooked pediment on the front of the home. She stated that significant changes are proposed to the garage. She explained a goal is to create a garage that can accommodate three cars and storage to eliminate parking cars in the driveway. She stated that the existing garage is undersized for even two cars. She stated that the proposed also accommodates a larger powder room for those using the pool and creates a mudroom with access to the rear yard. She noted that the pool is very close to the house limiting options for enlarging the home to the north. She explained that to make the existing garage functional, it would need to be expanded on three sides, so demolition of the garage is proposed. She stated that the proposed garage addition is on the east side of house and is 13 feet longer and six feet deeper than the existing garage. She stated that the pool equipment will be relocated to the east side of the garage addition and will be screened with landscaping. She stated that the exterior materials will match the materials on the house. She stated that various designs were studied with the goal of maintaining the traditional style of the home. She stated that the selected design has a gambrel roof form consistent with the style

of the home as viewed from the street. She stated that the space above the garage will be used as a playroom and office. She stated that these spaces cannot be accommodated within the existing footprint of the house. She stated that the basement has extremely low ceilings and duct work. She stated that the columns on the front porch have settled and as a result, the pediment is crooked adding that those elements will be repaired as part of the project. She stated that the front door will be replaced with a new glass door to let natural light into the foyer. She stated that it may be difficult to find bricks for the addition that match the home so the brick work on the house and on the addition will be painted Benjamin Moore White Dove to achieve a consistent appearance across the entire home. She stated that the front door and shutters will be black. She stated that the existing exterior light fixtures will be replaced with new lantern type fixtures. She stated that the renovated home will blend seamlessly with the neighborhood and will meet the family's needs.

Ms. Baehr stated that approval of demolition of the two car garage and approval of a two story garage addition is requested. She reiterated that the current garage is undersized for a two car garage. She stated that the existing garage is front facing and the proposed addition maintains the front facing garage. She noted that the homes directly west and south have garages that face the street. She stated that on this site, a side load garage will require significantly more hardscape and regrading of the site to provide access into and out of an east facing garage. She stated that a side load garage will also need to be sited closer to Westminster due to the location of the existing pool behind the home. She confirmed that the petitioner considered alternate plans for the addition and determined that the plan presented worked before for the site. She explained that the garage with second floor space above is designed to match the one and a half story wings on the existing home which helps to mitigate the appearance of mass and height of the addition as viewed from the street. She recommended elimination of the shutters on the east and north elevations since the shutters are not traditionally found on groupings of windows. She stated that overall, staff finds that the petition satisfied the applicable standards.

Commissioner Hanson asked about the color of the new garage doors.

Ms. O'Shea responded that the garage doors will be either black or white.

Ms. Polanski stated that her recommendation to the property owners is to paint the garage doors white, instead of black, so the garage does not dominate the home.

Ms. O' Shea expressed concern that white garage doors with white brick may make the garage appear larger. She presented a color rendering with black garage doors.

Commissioner Petit stated that in her opinion, the proposed appears not be a careful and sensitive renovation to the existing home. She asked if some of the asphalt could be eliminated from the front of the home.

Ms. O'Shea acknowledged that significant amount of asphalt in front of the home. She stated that in the long term, more landscaping is proposed in the front yard. She

stated that in the future, brick pavers may be considered. She stated that one of the reasons the front facing garage was maintained was to limit the need for additional hardscape.

Commissioner Gibson asked if the petitioner would consider leaving the brick red if matching brick can be found for the garage.

Ms. O'Shea stated that painting the brick white is intended to soften the appearance of the home to allow the addition to blend in with the home. She stated that painting the brick white will allow the decorative elements to stand out. She stated that the existing brick is not a traditional brick color and has an orange tone.

Commissioner Gibson pointed out that the pediment on the existing garage is larger than the pediment at the center of the house. She questioned whether in considering the possibility for a side load garage thought was given to eliminating some of the asphalt in front of the home to balance the need to extend a driveway to a side load garage. She stated eliminating the front facing garage doors could enhance the front of the home. She suggested refining the portico columns to reflect more detail at the capitals.

Ms. O'Shea explained that they looked at many options including a side load garage and a front facing garage at an angle but noted that zoning variances would be required. She stated that the goal was to minimize the size of the addition adding that a side load garage would result in a larger second floor space. She stated concern about drainage adding that minimizing grading on the site is an important consideration.

Ms. Polanski stated that the pediment columns can be refined as suggested by Commissioner Gibson.

Commissioner Gibson asked for clarification on the design of the dormers and pointed out that the existing dormers have a smaller apron below the windows than the dormers on the addition. She agreed that the shutters should be eliminated.

Ms. Polanski stated that the dormers on the addition will match the size and proportions of the existing dormers.

Ms. O'Shea agreed to eliminate the shutters.

Chairman Grinnell stated that the house could be enhanced with an east facing garage she stated however that she is convinced that that is not a feasible option for this site. She suggested updating the light fixture above the front door to match the new fixtures proposed on the addition.

Mrs. O'Shea stated that the light fixture above the front entrance will be replaced with either a lantern type fixture to match the lights on the garage addition or a fixture to replicate the existing fixture.

Chairman Grinnell pointed out that farmhouse style doors are reflected on the plans, on the east end of the house. She suggested that doors more consistent with the style of the house would be appropriate.

Ms. O'Shea stated that the intention is to use doors with an upper glass panel and a traditional panel on the lower half.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony. Hearing none, she invited comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Gibson asked that consideration be given to refining the portico columns and eliminating the shutters. She stated that the new dormers should match the proportions of the existing dormers. She suggested a hanging light at the front entrance consistent with the Colonial style. She agreed with Chairman Grinnell's suggestion to replace the farmhouse doors with doors more in keeping with the style of the home. She pointed out that the existing window on the west elevation is the only window that does not have muntins and asked that consideration be given to creating consistency with the windows on rest of the home.

Commissioner Hanson stated that the design is thoughtful adding that the proposed addition gives deference to the existing house. He stated however that the black garage doors draw attention to the garage and away from the house.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited a motion.

Commissioner Gibson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the demolition of the existing garage and construction of a three-car, two story, garage addition, and various exterior alterations. She stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the Commission's comments. She stated that the motion is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Further consideration shall be given to the following.
  - a. The color of the garage doors.
  - b. The size and proportions of the dormers on the second story addition.
  - c. Refinement of the portico columns.
  - d. Selecting a door style that is more consistent with the style of the home.
2. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. If any modifications are proposed in response to Commission direction or because of design development, plans clearly detailing the areas of change must be submitted at the time of submission for permit along with the plans originally presented to the Commission and will be subject to review by staff, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate to verify that the plans are consistent with the intent of the Commission and the approvals granted.

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. The plan shall provide for, at a minimum, foundation plantings around the addition. If during construction, trees on the site are compromised in the opinion of the City's Certified Arborist, replacement inches or payment in lieu of on site planting may be required.
4. 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.
5. Details of exterior lighting shall be included 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. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials' staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties and existing trees and landscaping during construction.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Petit and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

### **OTHER ITEMS**

#### **5. 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.

#### **6. Additional information from staff.**

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr  
Planner