

Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the October 26, 2022 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Maureen Grinnell and Commissioners Elizabeth Dalieri, Jan Gibson, Geoffrey Hanson and Robin Petit.

Commissioners absent: Commissioner Lloyd Culbertson, one vacant position

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

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

Chairman Grinnell 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 11, 2022 meeting of the Commission.

The minutes of the special October 11, 2022 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were approved with corrections as requested by Chairman Grinnell.

3. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the addition of dormers on the front and rear elevations and to allow exterior alterations to the residence at 301 W. Laurel Avenue. Approval of a hardscape plan is also requested.

Property Owners: Kevin and Christina Nugent

Project Representative: Jeff Letzter, project manager

Chairman Grinnell asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, she invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Letzter stated that due to illness, the petitioners are not present. He stated that the petitioners recently purchased the property and noted that the Commission previously considered a request for approval of demolition of the residence which was presented by a different owner. He stated that the new owners are committed to restoring and preserving the residence. He noted that in recent years, the home has suffered from some neglect. He presented photos of the home and the site. He stated that the sunroom at the south end of the house was added in the 1950's but noted that a foundation in that area appears on the original plans. He stated that there is a raised terrace at the rear of the home bordered by a wall on the north side which presumably was intended to shield the terrace from the service portion of the

residence. He stated that the terrace is bordered by dense vegetation to the south but noted that the vegetation does not meet today's Code requirements for a railing due to the height of the terrace. He stated that in order to avoid installing a railing, the petitioners plan to raise the grade adjacent to the terrace and maintain the hedgerow. He commented on the front porch noting that it is very shallow and does not provide protection from the weather. He stated that as proposed, the porch will be extended out three feet, but the existing width will be maintained. He stated that the existing porch columns will be reused. He stated that the shutters will be restored and reused. He noted that the existing shutters on the first floor are white and configured as panels. He stated that the shutters on the second floor are dark green and louvered. He stated that all of the shutters will be painted dark green. He stated that the doors on the sunroom will be replaced with doors of a more appropriate style. He noted the existing dormers on the rear elevation of the house and explained that the petitioner intends to build out the attic space as usable living space and desires more natural light. He explained that to offer more light into the attic space, three dormers are proposed on the front elevation where there are currently no dormers. He stated that the east facing dormers will provide impressive views from the attic space. He stated that the new dormers will match the existing dormers on the rear of the home. He stated that one additional dormer is proposed on the rear elevation. He stated that the window near the service porch on the front elevation will be replaced with a full size window to match the adjacent window. He stated that on the north elevation, the three individual garage doors will be replaced with one double door and one single door, all wood, with glazing to match the existing doors. He stated that the garage doors will be painted green to match the shutters. He stated that the circular configuration of the driveway will remain the same. He presented a comparison of the existing and proposed elevations. He stated that the bay windows on the rear elevation will be replaced with French doors. He reviewed the interior demolition plans noting that the house was designed with considerable service space which is being converted to family living space. He stated that the window air conditioners will be replaced with a central air unit. He stated that the existing windows will be replaced for energy efficiency. He reviewed the roof plan noting the four new dormers that are proposed. He stated that one of the existing chimneys which is not will be removed noting that it is not functional. He presented a conceptual landscape plan noting that no tree removal is proposed on the site.

Ms. Baehr confirmed that the previous property owner presented a petition to the Commission for demolition of the residence and noted that petition was denied by the Commission. She stated that the City is fortunate that the new owners desire to restore and preserve the residence. She noted several staff concerns and questions about the proposed alterations. She noted that additional information is needed on the proposed replacement windows particularly with respect to the profile and the color of the glass. She stated that a dark glass is not appropriate and will impact the overall visual character of the house. She stated that minimal changes are proposed for the front elevation of the house. She stated that the front of the house is significant, elegantly understated, with modest detailing. She commented that in

staff's opinion, the addition of dormers to the front elevation could overwhelm the front façade and impact the historic integrity of the home. She pointed out that the front elevation is not symmetrical and placing the dormers in a way that looks intentional may be difficult. She asked for input from the Commission on the dormers proposed on the front elevation of the house. She stated that the staff report presents findings in support of the petition subject to some clarification and conditions of approval.

Commissioner Petit thanked the petitioners for preserving the house. She stated that prior to reading the staff comments, she found the proposed dormers on the front of the house to be concerning. She stated that she thought about options for placement of the dormers. She questioned the benefit of adding the dormers to the front elevation. She asked for additional details about the proposed expansion of the front entry and on the proposed replacement windows. She asked how much the hardscape on the site will be reduced. She asked for clarification on the changes proposed to the rear terrace.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Letzter stated that the dormers proposed on the front of the home are intended to provide for more natural light into the attic space and to allow for views out from the space. He confirmed that the dormers are not needed for additional head room. He stated that the placement of the additional dormer works well on the rear and noted that on the front, one dormer, as proposed, is aligned with the front door. He stated that the house, constructed in the 1930's, was built with an attached three-car garage on the north side. He noted that the proposed front dormers appear to center the house. He stated that the width of the front porch will remain the same and the porch will be extended about three feet. He confirmed that the amount of impervious surface on the site will be reduced. He confirmed that all of the windows are proposed for replacement with wood windows with simulated divided lites. He stated that the window profiles will remain the same. He stated that the muntins on the replacement windows will be close to the same size as the existing muntins. He stated that the goal is for the replacement windows to have a clear, insulated glass. He explained that the intent is to raise the grade around the terrace to eliminate the need for a railing.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that the home is well preserved and complimented the petitioners for taking on the renovation of the home. She questioned whether the views from the dormers would be significant given the placement, intended use of the space and the existing trees. She noted that due to the roof pitch, the amount of natural light into the space will be limited. She asked about the replacement of the rear bay windows. She asked whether the basement offers the opportunity for additional living space.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Mr. Letzter stated that the configuration of the rear bays will remain the same with a single French door inserted at the center of each bay. He confirmed that the basement provides living space and has windows.

Commissioner Hanson observed that on the second floor, above the service entrance, the wood louvered shutters appear to be original to the house with a deeper louver. He questioned whether the other shutters on the second floor are original to the home. He asked whether all of the shutters will match the original shutters. He observed that all of the first floor shutters appear to be operable.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Letzter stated that he is unsure whether all of the existing shutters are original. He stated that the intent is to remove and restore the shutters noting that is if some of the shutters are found to be not inconsistent with the original design, replacements to match the original design will be used. He confirmed that the intent is to retain the hardware and the operable shutters. He noted that there is a heavy wood casing around the window openings.

Commissioner Gibson expressed appreciation to the petitioners for restoring the home. She noted that she has some questions about whether the petition complies with Standards 2 and 17. She noted that the proposed dormers on the front elevation do not appear to be consistent with Standard 2 and suggested that consideration be given to eliminating the dormers on the front façade. She stated that she assumed that the porch on the south side of the home was a later addition and found it interesting that the original plans show a foundation in that area. She asked if the windows will be custom made. She asked if consideration was given to restoring the windows noting that was done at the Library, another Edwin Hill Clark designed building. She asked if research was done to confirm the original front façade. She asked about the pitch of the main roof. She suggested that if the house is landmarked in the future, it may be of value to retain the small window at the service entrance on the north side of the house. She stated that the house has landmark qualities and suggested contacting Landmarks Illinois to discuss the possibility of a Façade Easement.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Mr. Letzter confirmed that the windows will be custom made. He stated that the feasibility of restoring the windows can be discussed with the owners and the builder. He stated that the main roof pitch is 8:12. He stated that the petitioners' preference is to add the dormers to the front elevation. He stated that an alternative could be to add more dormers or a larger dormer to the rear elevation. He stated that in the Colonial Revival style, dormers are not unusual.

Chairman Grinnell stated that the Commission denied the demolition of this home last year with the hope that someone would step forward and preserve the home. She stated that the bones of the house are worth saving and commended the petitioners for their desire to do so. She commented that if Edwin Hill Clark wanted dormers on the front elevation, he would have put them there originally. She agreed that Standards 2 and 17 are not quite met with the current proposal. She stated that the dormers present a significant change to the almost untouched front facade. She invited public comment.

Jim Opsitnik, 971 Verda Lane, spoke on behalf of the Preservation Foundation and commended the petitioners for preserving the home and commended the Commission for denying the previously proposed demolition. He stated that the Foundation's sole objection is to the proposed addition of dormers on the front elevation. He stated that the dormers will negate any potential for landmarking the home or placing a Façade Easement on the home in the future. He stated that the wood used in the original windows cannot be replaced. He encouraged the petitioner to consider restoring the windows. He stated that wood storm windows are as energy efficient as modern windows. He stated that new windows can impact the visual appearance of the home and the historic integrity.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grinnell invited final questions from the Commission. Hearing none, she invited final comments from the petitioner.

Mr. Letzter agreed to talk with the petitioner about restoring, rather than replacing the windows. He acknowledged that both having custom windows made and restoring existing windows are a big undertaking. He stated that the petitioners would like to add dormers to the front of the house but acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Commission. He stated a willingness to explore options for expanding the dormers on the rear elevation. He said at a minimum, the additional dormer on the rear elevation will be important.

Chairman Grinnell reiterated that there may be some value to the petitioner in landmarking the property. She stated that the Commission is pleased to see the current plan and added that the goal of the Commission is to make this the best project possible by adhering to the Standards.

Commissioner Gibson complimented the overall project. She stated that the dormers proposed on the front elevation are inconsistent with Standard 2. She noted that often dormers are not constructed or properly detailed causing an additional concern. She stated that the existing dormers on the rear elevation appear to be appropriately scaled and the additional dormer appears to be properly placed. She stated that Standard 17 could be satisfied if the windows are restored, instead of replaced. She agreed that storm windows could provide the insulation desired. She stated support for preserving the appearance of the rear terrace through making the modifications as proposed. She suggested that further research be conducted on the shutters to assure consistency with the original design. She stated support for the combining of two of the single garage doors into a double door because the garage doors are not visible from the front elevation. She commended the reduction in the amount of impervious surface on the site.

Commissioner Hanson noted that although the garage doors face Laurel Avenue, views from the streetscape are limited because of the landscaping. He stated that although it is disappointing to see the individual garage doors lost, a double width door is reasonable from an ease of use perspective. He stated support for green

garage doors, instead of white. He cautioned that storm windows could detract from the appearance of the home. He stated that before he visited the house, it seemed that the addition of dormers on the front elevation could enhance the main mass of the house. He noted however that after visiting the site, he supports eliminating the dormers on the front elevation. He stated support for the proposed addition of a dormer on the rear elevation. He stated that he may be hesitant to support the dormer if the design deviates from the existing dormers.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that she knows from experience that original windows hold up well because they were well built. She stated that in her opinion, the addition of dormers to the front elevation will not add value to the house and is not consistent with the Commission's Standards.

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

Commissioner Hanson made a motion granting a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the addition of a dormer on the rear elevation and approving exterior alterations and a modified hardscape plan. He stated that the motion is based on the findings presented in the staff report and noted that the Commission's comments and deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the motion includes the following conditions of approval.

1. Eliminate the dormers from the front elevation.
2. Give priority to the consideration of restoration of the existing windows as opposed to replacing the windows. If any windows are replaced, staff is directed to review the profile, muntins, color of the glass, and overall quality of proposed replacement windows.
3. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission with the modification noted above. If any additional modifications are proposed in response to Commission direction or as a result of design development, plans clearly detailing the areas of change must be submitted at the time of application 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 any changes are consistent with the approvals and the Commission's comments.
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 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.

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 in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties and existing trees and landscaping during construction.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and was 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.

Commissioner Gibson made a motion to approve the Historic Preservation Commission 2023 Meeting Calendar.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak
Director of Community Development