

Historic Preservation Commission  
Proceedings of the April 26, 2023 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, 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 Jan Gibson, Elizabeth Daliere, Geoffrey Hanson, Robin Petit and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: Lloyd Culbertson

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 March 22, 2023 meeting of the Commission.**

The minutes of the March 22, 2023 meeting were approved with corrections as requested by Commissioner Gibson.

**3. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the construction of an open porch addition at the rear of the home at 590 Sheridan Road. Minor exterior alterations to the rear of the home and a building scale variance are also requested.**

**Property Owner: Matthew and Amy Miclea**

**Project Representative: Diana Melichar, architect**

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

Commissioner Gibson stated that she met the property owner while visiting the site. She added that they did not discuss the petition.

Commissioner Daliere stated that she also met the property owner while visiting the site adding that they did not discuss the petition.

Hearing no further declarations from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar stated that the petitioners desire to construct an open porch on the rear of the home. She presented images of the existing conditions pointing out the relationship between the home, garage and the large rear yard. She stated that previously, there was a deck in back of the house adding that it was removed by a previous property owner. She stated that the petitioners want to create more of a connection between the house and the backyard. She stated that the open porch will eliminate some of the walkways and stoops in the rear yard and connect the home to the garage. She presented elevations of the home and noted that the home was built prior to the adoption of the current Building Scale limitations. She noted that the steep roof forms contribute to the square footage of the home based on the current calculation method. She stated that the proposed plans include removal of the rear chimney to allow the addition of a bedroom window. She stated that French doors are proposed on the first floor, out to the new porch. She stated that new windows and doors are proposed in some areas in the existing openings. She stated that the windows will have shutters. She noted that the proposed porch is designed to be compatible with the home and has a simple form and appropriate detailing. She noted the awkward, tall wall on the north elevation on the garage and explained that the new porch will mitigate the appearance of the height at the wall and garage connection. She stated that the porch will be completely open and will not be visible from off of the site. She presented an aerial image of the property noting the location of the proposed porch behind the house and out of view from the streetscape. She presented an image indicating the distances from the nearest homes on the adjoining properties. She stated that no change to grading is proposed.

Ms. Baehr stated that the proposed porch is at the rear of the home and not visible from the streetscape. She stated that a building scale variance is requested. She stated that the staff report presents findings in support of the building scale variance based on the limited visibility and open nature of the porch.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Ms. Baehr stated that if the current or future property owners desire to enclose the porch in the future, the square footage would be recalculated and if necessary an additional variance may need to be requested.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Baehr confirmed that if screens were added to the porch, it would still be considered a design element with no change to the square footage calculation. She confirmed that a deck does not count toward the square footage of the home even if it has a temporary covering.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Baehr stated that a patio is not counted in the square footage.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Melichar explained that the pitch of the porch roof is too shallow for wood shingles. She stated that the skylights

are proposed on the porch roof to allow natural light into the home noting that the geometry of the home limits opportunities for natural light.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Melichar stated that sliding French doors are proposed in the location of the existing chimney. She stated that the windows adjacent to the chimney will be removed. She confirmed that a new window will be added on the second floor, in the location of the chimney which will be removed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Ms. Melichar described the capitals on the porch columns. She confirmed that the replacement windows will match the windows on the house.

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

Commissioner Gibson stated support for the building scale variance noting that the existing attic space contributes to the overage.

Commissioner Dalieri noted that the overage is acceptable given the impact the attic space has on the calculations. She noted that sufficient landscaping exists to screen the proposed porch.

Commissioner Petit suggested consideration of skylights with a lower profile.

Chairman Grinnell commended the petitioner for reducing the amount of hardscape in the back yard and eliminating the multiple stoops. She invited a motion.

Commissioner Hanson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for an open porch at the rear of the home, minor exterior alterations to the rear of the home, and a building scale variance. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and noted that the Commission's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the motion is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Consideration should be given to skylights with a lower profile.
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 as a result of final 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 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.
4. Details of all 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.
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 in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties, trees, and landscaping during construction. No parking is permitted on Sheridan Road.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and was approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to the Ragdale Barnhouse at 1260 N. Green Bay Road. The exterior alterations include modifications to the south courtyard wall of the barnhouse, window rehabilitation and roof replacement.**

**Property Owner: City of Lake Forest**

**Project Representatives:**

**Michael Cleavenger, Executive Director, Ragdale Foundation**

**Diana Melichar, architect**

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

Commissioner Soderberg stated that his wife served on the Ragdale Board for 10 years but has had no involvement in discussions about the proposed project.

Hearing no further declarations from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar introduced the petition on behalf of the Ragdale Foundation. She stated that approval of rehabilitation of the Ragdale barnhouse and window restoration is requested. She reviewed the history of alterations made to the barnhouse structure over time. She presented an image indicating where window restoration and rehabilitation is proposed in the barnhouse. She stated that all of the historic windows will be restored including the windows on the second floor and the steel windows on the first floor. She added that the windows in the cupola will be repaired. She stated

that the windows in the corridor along the south facing façade of the barnhouse will be replaced and will be consistent with the conference room window wall on the west elevation and presented an image of that wall. She presented images of the existing south facing wall and noted that the existing plexiglass window wall does not respect the original elements of the barnhouse. She presented a floor plan and described the plan to open up the enclosed corridor along the south facing window wall to living space. She presented a rendering of the proposed south elevation with the new windows. She presented historic and current images of the barnhouse. She noted that the wood columns and brackets were removed when the corridor along the south facing façade was enclosed with plexiglass. She presented images of the existing and proposed south elevation noting that the columns and brackets will be reinstated. She noted that the transparent nature of the south wall will emulate the original open porch. She stated that the proposed changes are intended to support the mission and programs of the Ragdale Foundation. She stated that the proposed alterations and repairs will provide building spaces that are comfortable and weather tight. She noted that the proposed changes to the south façade will improve upon the less compatible renovations that were done in the past.

Ms. Baehr reviewed the proposed scope of work noting that the project addresses ongoing issues and will improve upon the existing conditions. She stated that the south façade is not an original condition. She stated that to the credit of the project architect and the Ragdale Foundation, various options were explored to address the condition of the windows. She stated that it was determined that the existing windows can be restored and rehabilitated. She stated that the window sizes and proportions will be maintained. She stated that the staff report includes findings in support of the petition. She noted that one letter was received from a neighboring property owner and was provided to the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Melichar, confirmed that consideration was given to replicating the conference room facade, with the window wall set back from the columns, however the interior space offered by the proposed plan is necessary to provide needed living space. She stated that the windows will be set back as far as possible working within the existing conditions and structural issues. She noted the location of the proposed doors on the south elevation. She confirmed that repainting will be done as needed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Melichar stated that the conference room windows are treated with a finish that will be matched with the new windows to avoid a dissimilar appearance. She confirmed that some structural work is needed due to the previous removal of the columns on the south façade.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Melichar stated that the historic information on the original farmhouse portion of the barnhouse was provided by the Ragdale Foundation.

Commissioner Hanson noted that it is possible that the farmhouse is the oldest structure in Lake County.

Commissioner Gibson commended the petitioner on the presentation.

In response to questions from Commissioner Gibson, Ms. Melichar stated that the siding will only be replaced in areas where the window restoration results in the need for patching. She stated that the cupola is not leaking but will be re-caulked and repainted. She explained that it is unclear whether the barnhouse originally had a slate or wood roof adding that the roof material will be replaced in kind. She noted that the rafters are under-sized adding that slate could not be accommodated under the current conditions. She confirmed that any new brackets will replicate the brackets on the conference room façade and that the thickness of the brackets will appear authentic. She confirmed that the windows in the original farmhouse portion of the structure have a two over two muntin pattern.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Melichar noted that currently, there are various types of bricks on the floor in the corridor. She stated that the brick floor is not set in a hard bed and will need to be re-installed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Cleavenger confirmed that accessible restrooms are provided in the structure.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Melichar confirmed that the width of the brackets has not yet been determined.

Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony.

Arthur Miller, 1100 Pembridge Drive, stated that complete documentation on the age of the barnhouse is not available. He offered some additional history on the barnhouse. He agreed that the farmhouse portion of the barnhouse could be one of the oldest structures in the City noting that it is in good condition. He stated that the entire barnhouse complex is interesting because of its evolution over time. He noted the importance of the site because of its association with Howard Van Doren Shaw. He stated that the restoration and repairs proposed are commendable and acknowledged that there are challenging issues associated with the structure. He suggested that more work should be done to document the structure.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the petitioner.

Mr. Cleavenger thanked the Commission and the community for the support offered to allow the restoration and improvements to move forward commenting that they are a necessary investment in the property.

Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Petit stated support for the petition.

Commissioner Gibson commended the restoration and the rehabilitation of the historic windows.

Commissioner Hanson noted that in the existing condition, the south facing corridor wall is jarring in comparison to the rest of the structure. He commended the petitioner for undertaking the project.

Commissioner Daliere noted that the Ragdale campus is a museum of architectural styles. She complimented the project.

Commissioner Soderberg stated support for and commended the project.

Chairman Grinnell noted that the south corridor has always been problematic and complimented the solution now presented. She invited a motion.

Commissioner Gibson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving modifications to the south courtyard wall of the barnhouse, window rehabilitation, and roof replacement. She stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and noted that the Commission's deliberations are incorporated 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. If any modifications are proposed as a result of final 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.
2. 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. No parking of construction vehicles in the circle in front of the barnhouse is permitted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Daliere and the motion was approved by a 6 to 0 vote.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **5. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.**

Patty Poth, 331 Mayflower Road, stated that she is representing the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation. She read correspondence from the Foundation pertaining to the Plan Commission's consideration of an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the Central Business District. She noted that the correspondence was provided to the Commission prior to the meeting.

**6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Baehr recognized Commissioner Gibson noting that it is her last meeting as she is terming off the Commission. She stated that Commission Gibson will be invited back to be recognized as a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development