

Historic Preservation Commission  
Proceedings of the May 24, 2023 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, May 24, 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 Lloyd Culbertson, Elizabeth Dalieri, Tina Dann-Fenwick, Geoffrey Hanson, Robin Petit and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: None

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 April 24, 2023 meeting of the Commission.**

The minutes of the April 24, 2023 meeting were approved with corrections as requested by Chairman Grinnell.

**3. Presentation: Lake Forest Preservation Foundation Annual Awards**

Laura Luce, Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, announced the awards recently presented by the Foundation in three categories: rehabilitation, restoration, and preservation.

**4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for perimeter stucco walls, metal fencing and metal entry gates at the property addressed as 930 Lake Road. Landscape lighting, hardscape modifications, and new landscaping are also proposed.**

**Property Owner: Chicago Land Trust #8002370703**

**Applicant: Judy DeAngelis as power of attorney**

**Project Representative: Matthew Torchalski and Sara Furlan, Mariani Landscape**

Chairman Grinnell stated that she was contacted by a neighbor of the subject property and advised that written testimony can be submitted to City staff for distribution to the Commission and that testimony can be presented at the public hearing. She stated that she is able to consider the petition objectively. She asked that Commission for any other Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest.

Commissioner Petit noted that when she visited the property, she introduced herself to the property owners but did not discuss the petition. She stated that she is able to consider the petitioner objectively.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that she met neighbors of the subject property when she visited the property, and they voiced concern about the project. She stated that she will still be able to consider the petition objectively.

Mr. Torchalski reviewed the elements on the site that are proposed for demolition. He presented the proposed site plan pointing out the locations of the proposed seven foot tall stucco wall along Lake Road and the metal fencing proposed along Westminster. He reviewed the details of the proposed stucco wall noting that the wall is proportional to the house and similar to other walls along Lake Road. He noted that identical metal gates are proposed at both driveway entrances and are designed in a contemporary style inspired by the Art Deco style of the house. He noted that the gates are open, rather than solid. He noted that on Westminster, the entrance gate is attached to piers instead of walls. He noted the location of the mailbox and controls, facing the driveway, not the street. He presented an elevation of the metal fencing and noted that the fence is slightly taller than the existing fence along Westminster. He stated that an evergreen hedge will be planted behind the metal fence for privacy and to minimize the visibility of the fence. He pointed out the location of the existing fence along the north property line noting that it will remain and will be infilled as needed. He reviewed the proposed hardscape noting that an exposed aggregate concrete will replace the concrete pavers in the front motor court adding that the walkway and terrace will be limestone. He noted that the overall color palette is black and white to match the residence. He stated that the pool deck will be slightly expanded to the west. He reviewed the landscape lighting plan noting that seven up lights are proposed to light existing trees around the front motor court and will replace existing lights. He stated that lights are proposed to illuminate the address plaques at both the entrances on Lake Road and on Westminster. He presented an image of the proposed light fixtures noting that the lights will have a shroud. He stated that grasses are proposed along the street facing side of the wall along Lake Road.

Ms. Baehr reviewed that the petition includes a privacy wall along Lake Road and along a small portion of the Westminster streetscape, just west of Lake Road. She stated that the height and location of the wall comply with applicable Code requirements. She acknowledged that the proposed wall will change the appearance of the property from the streetscape but noted that there are privacy walls throughout the Historic District, along Lake Road and in prominent locations such as at the intersection of Green Bay Road and Deerpath. She noted that most of the streetscape on Westminster will remain visually open with an open fence. She stated that the style and materials of the proposed wall and gate are consistent with the contemporary style of the house. She stated that the streetscape side of the wall will need to be screened with vegetation noting that the Code requires screening of at

least 30 percent of a solid wall or fence after two growing seasons. She added that the Code requires that a wall over four feet in height must be setback from the front and corner side yard property lines at least three feet. She stated that landscape screening is required for solid fences and walls, but not for open fences. She stated that the location of utilities and adequacy of sightlines are both considered by City staff in reviewing plans for any plantings in or near the parkway. She noted that two letters from neighboring property owners were received and were provided to the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Torchalski confirmed that along the north property line, the existing fence will remain and will be infilled as needed. He confirmed that the existing metal fence along the north property line has finials, but the new fence will not.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Mr. Torchalski confirmed that the amount of impervious surface on the site will be reduced slightly and reviewed the hardscape areas that will be removed. He said that the pool deck will be enlarged slightly. He confirmed that the footprint of the proposed wall is included in the impervious surface calculation. He said that the metal fence is a foot shorter than the proposed wall. He explained that the gate has a metal frame with one and a half inch square pickets and will be about 50 percent open. He stated that the style of the gate matches the contemporary style of the house. He noted that ornamental grasses are proposed along the wall and fence with flowering shrubs at the corners.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Furlan stated that the client is aware that additional landscaping is required to satisfy the Code.

Commissioner Petit questioned whether the impervious surface area will really be decreased. She noted that perimeter walls appear to be more visible on the east side of Lake Road than on the west side where there is more landscape screening. She questioned whether the long, unbroken wall as proposed satisfies Standard 4, which speaks to the rhythm of solids and voids. She questioned whether internal harmony will be achieved on the site given the variety of hardscape materials proposed. She acknowledged however that the various materials are commonly used, individually in the area. She expressed concern that the grasses proposed on the outside of the wall and fence will not provide sufficient screening. She suggested shifting the fence further on to the property, away from the property line.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Baehr confirmed that inch for inch replacement for the trees removed on the property is satisfied with the proposed landscape plan.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Baehr stated that the impervious surface calculation was done by the petitioner's representative. She stated that pavers are considered semi-pervious.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Torchalski noted that the wall is setback 10.5 feet from the sidewalk. He stated that currently, lights are mounted to the walls around the motor court. He confirmed that the lighting plan as presented proposes uplighting to illuminate vegetation and the address plaques. He stated that the only lights proposed outside of the wall are lights to illuminate the address plaques.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Torchalski explained that stucco walls are proposed along Lake Road rather than an open fence for privacy and because there is a precedent for stucco walls on the property around the motor court.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Furlan explained that a row of evergreens is proposed inside the fence along Westminster to screen views of the back side of the wall along Lake Road from Westminster.

Commissioner Dann-Fenwick noted that Lake Road has a park-like character and questioned whether the proposed solid stucco wall will impact the character of the open, landscaped streetscape in a manner that is inconsistent with Standard 12 which requires preservation of distinguishing features.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Furlan stated that the grasses will grow to 24 to 30 inches tall and noted that the grasses, along with other shrubs, will meet the Code requirement for screening 30 percent of the solid wall.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick Mr. Torchalski agreed to consider expanding the width of the entrance gate. He stated that the design of the wall is simple and would be complicated by adding pillars.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Furlan stated that introducing pillars into the wall would be inconsistent with the clean and minimalist style of the house.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Torchalski stated that due to a change in grade, the gates on Westminster swing out. He stated a solid wall rather than an open fence is proposed along Lake Road to provide the privacy desired by the property owner.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Furlan noted that there is a hierarchy to the house and a wall, rather than a fence, seems more appropriate along Lake Road given the formality of front of the home.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Torchalski confirmed that the stucco wall will be the same color as the stucco on the house. He stated that the contractor who built the home will build the wall.

Chairman Grinnell commented that the stucco wall around the home at the corner of Green Bay Road and Deerpath is not stark white.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Furlan agreed that additional landscaping would soften the wall as viewed from Lake Road. She noted that along Westminster, the original evergreen hedge was not thriving due to the amount of water in the area and was removed. She stated that as viewed from the Westminster streetscape, the proposed plantings will provide a solid green hedge along the streetscape. She said that additional landscaping can be considered on the street side of the fence along Westminster.

Chairman Grinnell invited public comment.

Brian Bryzinski, 941 E. Westminster, stated that his home is immediately south of the subject property on the south side of Westminster. He stated that he has lived on Westminster for 26 years and has enjoyed the open feel of the streetscape. He stated that, in his opinion, the proposed wall will dramatically change the visual character of the street in an undesirable way. He expressed concern about the proposed mass and height of the wall and fence. He noted that the wall and fence will have a significant visual impact despite the minimalist design. He suggested that the wall will obstruct views of vehicles and pedestrians at the corner. He asked for clarification on how far along the Westminster streetscape the wall will be extended. He expressed concern that the proposed lighting will be intrusive to the neighbors. He stated that the intended design of the fence along Westminster is unclear. He questioned whether the wall and fence are set back an adequate distance from the sidewalk. He asked for plantings, that provide year round screening, on the outside of the fence.

Laura Luce, 111 Ridge Road, read the letter that was submitted by the Lake Road Preservation Foundation prior to the meeting. (The letter is incorporated into the record for this petition.)

Mark Kowlzan, 925 Lake Road, stated that he purposefully kept views into his property open from the street and to allow views to the Lake. He stated that he was able to achieve security without a wall.

Chairman Grinnell invited final questions and comments from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Torchalski confirmed that the wall is 10 feet from the inside edge of the sidewalk along Lake Road. He confirmed that along Westminster, the fence is seven feet from the inside edge of the sidewalk.

Chairman Grinnell noted that along Westminster, the fence is proposed in the same location as the existing fence. She noted that there appears to be space for additional plantings along the outside of the fence.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Baehr stated that as proposed, the wall meets the Code requirements for maintaining adequate sightlines at the corner of Lake Road and Westminster. She stated that engineering staff will review final plans to confirm that proper sightlines are maintained.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Furlan stated that the existing walls along the south side of the garage will remain. She explained that the property owners feel that the existing motor court walls block views from the house to the front yard. She noted that there is a drain at the center of the motor court that will be eliminated because it is not very attractive. She added that drainage in the courtyard will be properly addressed and will be subject to approval by the City Engineer.

Commissioner Petit thanked the petitioner for responding to the various questions. She stated that in her opinion, Standards 4, 5, and 10 could be more fully met with some modifications to the stucco wall and suggested consideration of widening the entrance, breaking up the flat wall, and softening the wall with additional plantings. She stated that the overall design of the various elements on the property does not feel cohesive given the many styles and materials proposed. She stated that it would be helpful to understand how the requirement for year round screening of the wall at 30 percent will be satisfied. She stated that the streetscape could benefit from plantings on the outside of the fence.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that the lighting plan appears to comply with the City's lighting guidelines. He stated support for the plan in general including the wall. He noted that there are other significant homes with solid walls on Lake Road. He stated support for more landscaping to screen the wall. He stated that the wall could be removed by a future owner.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that it is unfortunate that the homeowner is not here to state with conviction that the plan is what is desired. He stated that a compromise to the current plan would be beneficial. He noted that options such as breaking up the wall, lowering it, or increasing the set back from the streets should be considered.

Commissioner Dalieri acknowledged that the Code requirements are met however, the Commission is charged with applying the 17 Standards in addition meeting the Code requirements. She noted that the owners likely purchased the home because of the Lake Road streetscape. She noted other properties with walls and commented on the character and unique conditions of other gates. She stated that, in her opinion, on the Westminster streetscape, the metal fence is acceptable with landscaping on the outside. She stated that on the Lake Road, she questions whether Standard 4, rhythm of solids to voids, is met given the length of the wall. She stated that more landscaping is needed along the wall. She noted walls on other properties are screened with vertical landscaping.

Commissioner Hanson stated that in general, he has concerns about fences or walls along the streetscape and noted some examples. He noted that the Commission recently saw a petition for a fence on Mayflower Road and continued that petition and in response to Commission and public comments, improvements were made. He noted that Standard 4, rhythm of solids and voids, does not appear to be adequately met with the current plan. He commended the willingness of the petitioner to consider additional landscaping. He stated that he could reluctantly support the petition.

Commissioner Dann-Fenwick concurred with Commissioner Dalieri's comments and noted the important of respecting the Historic District. She stated that Lake Road is prominent, and the streetscape views and park-like setting are impressive. She stated that in her opinion, the wall will detract from the streetscape and impact the distinguishing character of the area. She stated that based on her evaluation, the plans do not meet Standards 4, 10, 12. She suggested setting the wall back further from the property line and suggested consideration of continuing the metal fence around the entire property and eliminating the wall.

Chairman Grinnell noted that there has been a great deal of construction activity on Lake Road in recent years. She stated that the Commission is charged with preserving the character of the area. She stated that it is important that the Standards are more fully met which will require changes to soften the appearance of the wall. She acknowledged that the Code requirements are satisfied. She agreed that it is unfortunate that the property owner is not present to provide additional information and respond to the Commission's comments.

Commissioner Culbertson asked that consideration be given to lowering the height of the wall and opening up some sections.

Chairman Grinnell invited a motion.

Commissioner Hanson made a motion to continue the petition with direction to the petitioner to conduct further study and refinement of the design of the wall in response to the comments, concerns, and suggestions offered including, but not limited to, the following.

1. Consider modifications that retain the openness of the site as viewed from the streetscape.
2. Soften the appearance of the solid wall.
3. Consider lowering the height of the solid wall.
4. Consider widening the driveway entrance gate on Lake Road. (Note: The width of the driveway cannot exceed 16 feet within the front yard setback)
5. Reflect additional landscaping on the plan including taller, year round plantings along the exterior of the fence and solid wall.
6. Consider shifting the solid wall further back from the property line.
7. Provide images of the proposed gate.

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

**OTHER ITEMS**

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

There were no additional requests to speak from the public.

**6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Baehr stated that staff will poll for an upcoming workshop.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development