

Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the January 30, 2024 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, 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, Robin Petit, Geoffrey Hanson, and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: Tina Dann-Fenwick

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

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 November 7, 2023, meeting of the Commission.

The minutes of the November 7, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

3. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new residence located at 831 Rosemary Road. The original house on the property was demolished by a previous property owner in 2016 after approval by the Commission.

Property Owner: David Barry and Nicole Scheer

Representative: Shawn Purnell, architect

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

Mr. Purnell stated that the property was previously before the Commission under different ownership. He stated that the previous owner received approval to demolish the house that was previously located on the site and approval of a new residence. He stated that the previous owner demolished the house but never proceeded with construction of a new house. He stated that when he was engaged by the new owners of the property, he and the new owners studied the previously approved plans but decided to move in a different direction. He noted that the site is located on a corner which results in a limited buildable area. He stated that the

owners desire a Georgian style home and noted that it is difficult to design a home consistent with that style facing Rosemary Road given the narrow configuration of the lot running east to west. He explained that fronting the house on Sheridan Road provides the width necessary for the massing of a Georgian home. He added that fronting the house on Sheridan Road is appropriate given the prominence of the street. He stated that the current siting of the house faces the garage doors to the south, away from both Sheridan and Rosemary Roads. He noted that the house is set back from the corner allowing the intersection to be softened by landscaping. He stated that the intention of the design for the house is to create a simple center massing balanced with single story elements on either side. He stated that quality exterior materials are proposed, consistent with the Historic District. He pointed out that Sheridan Road in this area is not a traditional streetscape because Lake Forest College athletic fields are located across the street. In response to comments in the staff report about the rear elevation not rising to the level of detail of the other elevations, he explained that the back yard is extremely narrow, because of the corner lot. He stated that he thought about adding a bay element to the rear elevation but is reluctant to narrow the outdoor living area further. He stated that he is aware that the square footage and height of the house both closely approach the maximums permitted. He stated that care will be taken to avoid exceeding the maximums during construction with strict adherence to the plans.

Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the Commission previously saw and approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for this property. She stated that the property was owned by the College prior to a previous property owner bringing forward a petition requesting approval of the demolition of the then existing ranch home and approval of a replacement house in 2016. She stated that the ranch house was oriented to Rosemary Road and pointed out that the curb cut is still evident on the property. She stated that the ranch house was demolished by the previous owner after the 2016 approval but noted that the new house was never constructed by that owner. She stated that the site plan and a rendering of the previously approved house are included in the Commission's packet for reference. She stated that the new owners are proposing a house oriented to Sheridan Road to more appropriately address the important street frontage. She stated that the siting as now proposed works well with the corner lot. She noted that the property is sited across the street from the Lake Forest College athletic fields and adjacent to a significant historic residence to the east. She noted that the property to the south is owned by the College and may in the future be the subject of a redevelopment proposal. She stated that the proposed residence is generally consistent with the selected architectural style and presents simple roof forms and appropriate details. She noted that the front door appears narrow in the context of the main mass of the residence. She also pointed out that the east, rear facing elevation has less articulation and detailing than the other elevations. She acknowledged that the rear elevation will likely not be seen from off of the site. She stated that findings in support of the petition are provided in the staff report along with recommended conditions of approval.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Purnell described the piers, gate and fence. He clarified that a five foot tall fence is proposed along the full street frontages of Sheridan and Rosemary Roads. He stated that the piers will match the brick on the home. He pointed out the proposed location of the fence. He acknowledged that the plans presented to the Commission indicate a four foot fence but confirmed that a five foot fence is desired and will be setback the distance required by the Code. He confirmed that the Scotch Pine in the southwest corner of the site will be removed. He stated that the petitioner is open to refining the front door. He acknowledged that through a combination of reorganizing the floor plan and adding some design elements, the scale and interest of the front entrance element could be enhanced.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Czerniak noted that there is some information on the fence in the packet.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Purnell stated that the driveway is proposed to be asphalt with a brick border. He agreed to do further study of the front door in relation to the double doors above.

Commissioner Petit stated that in her opinion, the window placement on the east, rear facing elevation makes sense in relation to the floor plan.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Czerniak stated that the amount of impervious surface proposed on the site is approximately the same as previously existed. She noted that along the streetscapes, there is a fair amount of pervious surface and vegetation.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Purnell acknowledged that the curve on the dormers is more contemporary than elements found in the traditional Georgian style. He stated that in his opinion, the curved dormers are less fussy and a simpler detail, appropriate for the style desired by the owners. He stated that the dormers will provide light and ventilation since the upper space will be habitable. He stated that the dormers fit with the scale and design of the home. He explained that a few of the windows in the dormers are larger than would ordinarily be found on a Georgiana home for the owners' convenience.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri referencing standards 4 and 6, Mr. Purnell agreed that the front entrance could be re-worked. He stated that three columns are proposed rather than one to allow the entry to make a statement. He noted that this technique is found on some Georgian homes and appealed to the owners. He confirmed that the bricks will be lime washed to achieve a natural patina. He stated that a palette of lime washed bricks has not yet been prepared. He stated that the garage doors will be white, wood doors. He acknowledged that more detail needs to be developed on the fence.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Purnell agreed to reconsider the front door. He agreed to provide more detail on the proposed fence including the height and setback.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that he is sympathetic to the desire to preserve as much outdoor space as possible on the east side of the home given the narrow area available. He suggested consideration of detailing the large expanse of the unbroken rear facing wall with trellises to add interest.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Purnell clarified that there are two balconies, one on the west elevation and the other on the north elevation. He stated that there is no intention to put furniture on the west facing balcony. He stated that the west facing balcony is desired by the petitioners for air circulation and light.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony.

Tom Gleason, 982 Sheridan Road, Lake Bluff, spoke on behalf of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation. He complimented the design of the house. He agreed that details on the fence need to be provided given the prominence that the fence will have on the Sheridan Road streetscape. He stated support for the project.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Purnell stated that both aluminum and wrought iron are being considered for the fence.

In response to a question from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Purnell stated that a four or five foot fence is under consideration.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Mr. Purnell confirmed that the existing grading on the site will generally be maintained with only changes necessary to comply with good engineering practices. He stated that the house is not artificially raised. He stated that the steps will be bluestone.

In response to a question from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Purnell stated that decorative, clay chimney pots are proposed.

In response to a question from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Czerniak stated that the petitioners can choose to have a Rosemary Road or a Sheridan Road address and based on their preference, the City will assign an appropriate number consistent with the address grid.

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

Mr. Purnell stated that the petitioners are willing to address each of the issues raised by the Commission through further study and refinement.

Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Hanson stated that although information on the fence was not included in the packet, Mr. Purnell was able to provide some information and agreed to provide further detail on the fence to staff going forward. He encouraged the petitioners to consider a wrought iron fence and to avoid an aluminum fence. He stated support for the east elevation as presented noting that there appear to be a sufficient number of windows. He stated that he is surprised to see the curved dormers given the selected architectural style but stated that he can accept that element as proposed.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that additional detail should be presented to staff on the fence and the landscape screening proposed in combination with the fence. She stated that it is important to pay attention to the streetscape. She agreed that the front entrance should be reconsidered.

Commissioner Culbertson stated support for either a wrought iron or aluminum fence. He noted however that the fence should be high quality with some heft to it. He stated that although the fence is an important issue that needs to be resolved, he is comfortable delegating that review to staff. He stated that the fenestration on the east elevation appears satisfactory as presented but noted that if changes are made to achieve a more traditional appearance, final review can be delegated to staff. He complimented the thought and effort on the part of the petitioners and their architect. He acknowledged that the lot is challenging.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell commented that the siting as now presented is a significant improvement over the previously approved plan. She invited a motion.

Commissioner Soderberg made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new residence on a vacant lot at 831 Rosemary Road based on the findings presented in the staff report and adopted by the Commission. He stated that the approval is subject to the following conditions.

1. Study and refine the front door and double doors above to avoid an overly narrow, undersized appearance. Final approval of this element is subject to staff review and a finding that the changes respond to the comments offered by the Commission.
2. Include detail on the chimney caps in the plans submitted for permit.

3. Include detail on the fence, piers and gates in the materials submitted for permit. The plans shall detail height, setback, material, scale, and style.
4. Submit plans for permit that are consistent with the plans on which the Commission based its approval. Any and all changes and enhancements made to the plans after the Commission's review must be clearly highlighted on the plans submitted for permit and a copy of the plans presented to the Commission must be included for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review the plans submitted for permit for consistency with the Commission's approval and deliberations and consult with the Chairman as appropriate.
5. Submit a detailed landscape plan that fully meets the Code requirements for new residences with the addition of landscaping to soften views of the motor court and the south extension of the driveway from the Sheridan Road streetscape. The plan must be submitted prior to the scheduling of rough inspections and shall be subject to the review and approval by the City.
6. Submit a tree protection plan and construction parking and staging plan. The plans shall be subject to City approval prior to the issuance of building permits. No on street parking is permitted on Sheridan Road. Adequate sightlines as determined by the City must be maintained at the corner for any vehicles parked on Rosemary Road. Neighboring driveways must remain accessible at all times and the streets must remain passable and free of dirt and construction debris.
7. Provide details of all exterior lighting with the plans submitted for permit. Submit cut sheets for all light fixtures. 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 from off of the property. All exterior lights shall be set on automatic timers to go off no later than 11 p.m. except for motion detector lights.

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

4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement sign reflecting the new name of an existing business at 240 E. Deerpath. Pet People is now Hollywood Feed.

Property Owner: The Chicago Trust Company, Asha Gandhi, trustee

Tenant: Hollywood Feed

Representative: Collin Seymour, Sign Palace

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

Mr. Seymour stated that he did not prepare a presentation but noted that materials are included in the Commission's packet. He explained that Hollywood Feed recently purchased Pet People and is undertaking a Nation-wide change in the branding. He stated that the proposed signage will match other locations in the Chicago area and noted that use of the corporate colors and branding is proposed. He stated a willingness to discuss the illumination. He noted that the building is different from others in the area.

Ms. Czerniak stated that to date, staff has not been able to reach anyone from Hollywood Feed adding that normally, staff engages the business owner in signage discussions. She stated that based on the limited information provided to date, staff recommends continuing the petition to allow time to meet with Mr. Seymour and representatives of Hollywood Feed. She clarified that the existing Pet People sign is not illuminated as stated in the material submitted by the petitioner. She pointed out that there are not illuminated signs along the Deerpath streetscape. She stated that the sign appears to be consistent with the 25 square foot limitation assuming a backboard is not proposed. She stated that it is unclear from the material submitted whether or not a backboard is proposed. She stated that some signage and graphics are proposed on the door adding that the Commission in the past has discouraged redundant signage. She noted however that given the uniqueness of this business, some information such as the fact that leashed animals are permitted in the store may be appropriate along with the hours of the business. She recommended continuing the petition to allow staff to connect with the petitioner and the petitioners' representative to get clarification and to discuss various aspects of the petition.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Seymour confirmed that the sign at the Deerfield store was modified to meet that community's standards. He stated that the Deerfield sign is illuminated with white face and black returns on the letters.

Commissioner Petit noted the potential to identify the space with signage on the awning valances. She stated support for putting the hours of the business on the door. She noted that because the parking is in the back, door signage should be located on the rear door as well. She stated support for the sign without a backer board, just a script sign. She stated that if a lighted sign is proposed, it should be on the Forest Avenue sign. She encouraged the use of green for the sign as used throughout the community.

Mr. Seymour stated that since he has now seen the site, he will take some ideas back to Hollywood Feed including providing signage on the rear door to the business. He stated that the backboard was eliminated in Deerfield and stated that the same can be done at this location. He stated that his company does not do signage on awnings so that is not within the scope of the project.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Seymour stated that the intention is to replace the signage at the location of the existing signage. He stated that the intent is to avoid damage to the façade. He stated that signage on Forest Avenue is not being considered. He confirmed that green was used in Deerfield for the signage but noted that the graphics on the door are yellow and red. He stated that most communities do not require a permit for door graphics.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Seymour stated that the sign was spec'd to be internally illuminated. He stated that he is now aware that the existing sign is not lighted nor are other signs on the street lighted. He confirmed that he will ask Hollywood Feed about alternate colors. He stated that letters with a white face with a black return, the sides of the letters, have been used in other locations.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that if two signs are proposed, the maximum permitted signage area would still be 25 square feet.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Seymour acknowledged that the type of business is not changing so customers will still know the location as a pet store despite the name change.

In response to a question from Ms. Czerniak, Mr. Seymour confirmed that there is no intention to paint the bricks or replace the doors or windows.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public testimony.

Mr. Gleason noted that a letter was submitted by the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation agreeing with the staff report. He stated that the Foundation has a concern that as presented, the signage may not conform to the signage standards.

Hearing no further public testimony Chairman Grinnell invited final questions and comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that the petition is very incomplete adding that more information and the involvement of the business owner is important.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Commissioner Culbertson noted that there were several questions that Mr. Seymour was not able to answer until he consults with the business owners.

Commissioner Hansen stated that in his opinion, it is not a good use of time for the petition to be continued. He suggested that the Commission can provide direction to the petitioner on what would be acceptable.

Commissioners Culbertson and Dalieri stated that additional information is needed along with the involvement of the owner.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Grinnell invited a motion.

Commissioner Culbertson made a motion to continue the petition to allow the issues raised to be clarified and addressed and the business owner to be consulted.

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

OTHER ITEMS

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

There were no additional public comments.

6. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development