

Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the March 20, 2024 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Acting Chairman Geoffrey Hanson, and Commissioners Elizabeth Dalierre, Lloyd Culbertson, and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: Chairman Maureen Grinnell, and Commissioners Tina Dann-Fenwick, and Robin Petit.

City staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
Abigail Vollmers, Senior Planner, Community Development

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

Acting Chairman Hanson 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 February 28, 2024 meeting of the Commission.

The minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting were approved.

3. Continued consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement sign reflecting the new name of an existing business at 240 East Deerpath Road. Pet People is now Hollywood Feed.

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

Tenant: Hollywood Feed

Representative: Collin Seymour, Sign Palace

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

Mr. Seymour stated that since the January meeting, the proposed signage package was revised in response to the Commission's comments and suggestions and after a follow up meeting with City staff. He stated that a non-illuminated sign is now proposed consistent with other signs along the Deerpath streetscape. He stated that a green backer board is proposed matching the color of the awning. He stated that one inch thick acrylic letters will be mounted to the backer panel and painted gold. He acknowledged that the color shown in the packet appears to be a mustard yellow but noted that a harvest gold color is planned to align with the gold color

more closely on other signs on the Deerpath streetscape. He stated that the store hours, as suggested by the Commission, are proposed as vinyl lettering on the doors. He stated that the business prefers to use the animal graphics on the entry doors as presented.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the revised signage proposal responds to the comments previously offered by the Commission. She confirmed that illuminated signage is no longer proposed for consistency with other signage along the Deerpath streetscape. She stated that as now proposed, gold acrylic letters are pin mounted on a green aluminum backerboard. She noted that the letters in the images provided by the petitioner appear to be more yellow than gold and suggested that the final colors should be subject to staff review. She stated that no signage is proposed on the awning. She stated that the business hours and specific language relating to pets permitted in the store is proposed on the front entrance door. She stated that the business name will not be duplicated on the door. She stated that whimsical graphics in a red-brown color are proposed on the door. She stated that the staff report recommends consideration of using green for the graphics to match the awnings and backerboard for the sign and limit the number of colors on the front façade. She stated that the staff report provided findings in support of the petition subject to several recommended conditions.

Acting Chair Hanson invited questions from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Seymour explained that the reddish-brown color of the graphics is a corporate color used throughout the company's stores. He stated that Hollywood Feed may be open to considering other colors for the graphics but noted that alternative colors have not been used in other locations.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Seymour stated that currently no signage or graphics are proposed on the rear door.

In response to questions from Acting Chairman Hanson, Mr. Seymour stated that it was determined that signage on the awning is not necessary because pedestrians will be able to view the products in the store front display windows. He stated that the products offered in the store will be clear at a pedestrian level.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Acting Chairman Hanson invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Culbertson commended the petitioner for responding so well to the previous comments offered by the Commission. He stated that he understands the staff comment regarding the inconsistency between the color of the sign and the proposed color of the graphics on the door but stated that he is comfortable with the

reddish brown graphics given that they are consistent with the graphics used at other stores.

Commissioner Dalieri also complimented the petitioner for working well with the Commission and staff. She stated that the changes made align the proposed signage with the other signage along Deerpath. She stated a preference for green graphics on the door but noted that there will be a variety of colors visible in the windows from the displays inside the store so she can support the color of the graphics as shown.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that the current proposal represents a significant improvement over the plans presented at the January meeting. He stated support for the reddish-brown graphics as proposed.

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

Commissioner Dalieri made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for updated signage to reflect a new business name, Hollywood Feed, at 240 E Deerpath based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Commission subject to the following conditions.

1. The green and gold colors on the wall sign shall be subject to final approval by staff. The selected color tones should match the awnings and a gold, rather than a mustard yellow, is intended for the lettering to be consistent with gold lettering used on signs elsewhere in the Central Business District.
2. At the petitioner's discretion, the store hours and business name may be added to the rear door consistent with the lettering on the front door.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Culbertson and was unanimously approved by the Commission by a vote of 4 to 0.

4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving demolition of a residence and garage at 261 North Mayflower Road.

Property Owner: Bellevue Place, LLC (Diana R. Moore Trust 100%)

Representative: David and Diana Moore

Susan Benjamin, Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC

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

Mr. Moore thanked the Commission for protecting the character of the community. He stated that as a former member of the Commission, he is fully aware of the standards and the rules. He stated that his family is hoping to have the opportunity to center the Howard Van Doren Shaw house that they own at 255 Mayflower Road

more appropriately on a larger site after demolition of the house that is the subject of this petition. He stated that the report prepared by Susan Benjamin and the staff report both document that the proposed demolition meets the applicable standards. He stated that after the home at 263 Mayflower Road is demolished, the bluff will be stabilized consistent with the work completed on the 261 Mayflower Road property to the south. He pointed out that the bluff, which is about 35 feet east of the house that is proposed for demolition, has sloughed twice in recent years and is very steep. He introduced Ms. Benjamin to summarize the Historic Assessment report she prepared.

Ms. Benjamin presented images of the original and the current house. She stated that the original house was not just remodeled in the 1950's but was completely transformed from a good example of a Shingle style house to a style intended to be Colonial Revival. She noted however that the transformation was not well done. She reviewed various aspects of the house and pointed out the inconsistencies with the Colonial Revival style. She stated that in today's dollars, the cost of the 1951 transformation is estimated at \$926,000. She stated that after the 1950's transformation of the house, a garage was added and later, a connecting breezeway. She reviewed that the entrance to the residence is out of scale with the windows and other elements. She pointed out that the brick appears to be low quality and may have been sand blasted which is not a recommended treatment for brick. She stated that overall, the house lacks the balance and symmetry which are important defining characteristics of Colonial Revival homes. She concluded that the house as it exists today is not even a poor relative of the original house, is not distinguished in any way, and is not a strong design. She stated that it is appropriate and consistent with the character of the historic district to restore more green space around the Howard Van Doren historic residence to the south. She added that stabilization of the bluff will not only benefit the property but will benefit the larger community.

Ms. Vollmers stated that the staff report presents findings in support of the proposed demolition. She added that because of the significant differences between the original house and the house as it exists today, staff did considerable due diligence to verify the history of the property and confirmed that in fact the original significant Shingle style house was completely changed into the undistinguished home that exists on the site today.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Mr. Moore explained that the portion of the driveway closest to Mayflower Road will remain because it serves as access to 263 Mayflower Road. He stated that the access is documented through a recorded easement. He stated that the rest of the driveway as it extends to the east, will remain until the demolition is completed and the property restored. He stated that after work on the property is completed, the majority of the driveway will be removed except for the portion that serves the 263 Mayflower Road property. He stated that the existing wood stairway to the beach is unsafe and will be removed. He stated that a decision on the future of the funicular has not yet been made but

stated that it will remain at least for the short term until a detailed plan is developed for stabilization of the bluff.

In response to a question from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Moore explained that currently, there is a blind spot along the driveway to the 255 Mayflower Road house. She stated that the intent is to soften the curve of the driveway by shifting a portion of it on to the 261 Mayflower Road property once the house is demolished and the property restored. She stated that the driveway will not be shifted more than 50 feet. She stated that no changes are proposed to the curb cuts. She stated that there is a stone stairway from the top of the bluff down to the beach on the 255 Mayflower Road property.

In response to questions from Commissioner Daliere, Mr. Moore stated that the bluff is eroding toward the house but there is no certainty on whether or when the house could be impacted by the erosion. He noted that when the bluff on the 255 Mayflower Road property started to fail, large cracks began to form in the lawn.

In response to questions from Commissioner Daliere, Ms. Moore stated that the large Oak tree will be protected during demolition activity. She stated that several large dead limbs were already removed from the tree and new cables were installed.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Acting Chairman Hanson invited public comments.

Marcy Kerr, Executive Director of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, stated that the Foundation supports the demolition. She reviewed the criteria on which demolitions must be evaluated and stated that the criteria are satisfied. She noted that there may be interior elements remaining from the original home that could be worth preserving. She stated that the Foundation is tough on demolition requests but noted that due to the lack of distinction of the house as it exists today, the Foundation is supportive of the petition. She stated support for the proposed native plantings proposed for the site after demolition.

Heather Strong, 230 Mayflower Road stated general support for the demolition but expressed concern about what may happen in the future. She expressed concern that various properties along the lakefront could be consolidated and developed with a use that would draw more density and traffic to the area. She noted the current controversy in Winnetka regarding development and private ownership of lake front property. She stated that the City should be taking steps to avoid something similar in Lake Forest.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Acting Chairman Hanson invited a response to public testimony from staff.

Ms. Czerniak confirmed that all of the properties along Mayflower Road in the area of the proposed demolition are zoned for single family residential use only. She stated

that any proposal in the future to subdivide property or redevelop properties in the area will require review by one or more Boards or Commissions.

Acting Chairman Hanson invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that the loss of the original house was unfortunate. He stated support for the demolition of the residence as it exists today.

Commissioner Dalieri noted that in response to public testimony, the current lakefront debate occurring in Winnetka involves the transfer of public property to a private property owner. She reviewed the demolition criteria and stated that all of the criteria are satisfied. She stated that in her opinion, removing the house enhances the historic character of the area. She noted that historically, estate homes such as the home next door were surrounded by open space.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that the original house was noteworthy, but after the unsympathetic alterations, the house is no longer important to the Historic District. He stated support for the demolition as proposed.

Acting Chairman Hanson stated that the demolition makes sense. He commended the petitioners for a well put together petition. He stated that it is clear why the demolition is proposed, to provide more open space to support the Howard Van Doren Shaw designed residence next door and to stabilize the bluff which represents a public good. He stated that the addition of open space will pay homage to the Howard Van Doren Shaw house. He invited a motion.

Commissioner Soderberg made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the demolition of the residence at 261 Mayflower Road based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Commission as part of this motion. He stated that the motion is subject to the following conditions.

1. Until demolition occurs, the structure must remain secure, all windows and doors closed and locked to prevent unauthorized entry. General maintenance of the structure and overall property shall continue in compliance with all Code requirements.
2. During demolition activity, all trees and vegetation, unless approved for removal by the City's Certified Arborist, shall be protected from damage. If determined to be necessary by the City's Certified Arborist, trees close to the areas of demolition activity shall be treated with pre and post construction measures to increase the chances of long-term survival.
3. The residence shall be removed in its entirety, including the basement and the site cleared of all debris. The area of the basement shall be filled with material

approved by the City and graded even with existing grades on the site. The fill shall be compacted as directed by the City.

4. Beyond the footprint of the house, grades shall not be altered during demolition activity.
5. On an ongoing basis, before, during and after demolition, the property must be maintained. All grass shall be mowed on a regular basis and trees, shrubs and other vegetation shall be regularly maintained to avoid the appearance of an unkempt or overgrown property.
6. Any new structures proposed for the property shall require review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission based on the applicable standards in the Code to assure compatibility with and a positive contribution to, the Historic District.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dalieri and was approved by a vote of 4 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.

Continued Discussion: Process and Criteria for Considering Synthetic Roof Products

Commissioner Hanson invited an update from City staff on the topic.

Ms. Czerniak stated that as a follow up to the Commission's discussion in February, staff prepared a memorandum which was included in the Commission's packet which documents the Commission's due diligence on this topic over the past several months. She reviewed that the Commission's discussion started in June 2023. She noted that during the summary, the Commission heard from a panel of local architects about their experiences with and thoughts about synthetic roof products. She noted that the Commission was provided with the opportunity to review samples of various types and qualities of roofing material. She stated that in the Fall, the Commission held a workshop during which the Commission, and some members of the public, took a bus tour to view various roof products installed on homes throughout the community. She stated that at the February meeting, the Commission reviewed a draft of the process and criteria prepared by staff in response to the Commission's discussion to date, research conducted, and public

input. She reviewed that the discussion of the use of synthetic roof products is being driven by the reduced availability of quality natural cedar roofing products and the push back from some insurance companies on the continued use of cedar roof products. She added that roofing contractors have been very aggressive in encouraging homeowners to take advantage of insurance payments for roofs that were or allegedly were, damaged by a hailstorm last year. She noted that at the last meeting, a Commissioner summed up the issue saying that although synthetic products are not preferred, their time has come. She noted that to date this fiscal year, the City has issued over 900 roofing permits in comparison to just over 200 permits on average in past years. She reviewed the process and criteria for consideration requests for synthetic roof products in the Historic Districts and for Locally Designated Landmarks as revised based on comments received from the Commission's review last month. She stated that requests fall into three categories:

- Homes in the Historic District that are associated with a significant architect require review and approval by the Commission.
- Homes in the Historic District that are not associated with a significant architect are reviewed by staff and at staff's discretion, can be forwarded to the Commission for review.
- Homes encumbered by a Façade Easement held by Landmarks Illinois are subject to review and approval by Landmarks Illinois.

She noted that a checklist of submittal requirements for all requests for approval of synthetic roofs and specific review criteria are included in the Commission's packet. She stated that no formal action is required by the Commission, but invited further comments on the process, submittal checklist and criteria as revised by staff.

Acting Chairman Hanson invited public testimony.

Brian Norton, President of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation and a resident at 90 Woodland Road, expressed concern about the process for review of requests for approval of synthetic roof products. He stated that under the proposed process, the Commission is limiting its review and the application of the 17 standards to only some projects in the Historic District. He stated that the Code does not limit the Commission's review only to projects of significant architects. He stated that different review standards should not be applied to homes that are located next to each other. He stated that under the proposed process, the Commission is delegating it power to staff and as a result, the decisions will not be made at an open meeting. He stated that the Code requires that any alteration affecting the exterior architectural appearance of a structure in a Historic District requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. He stated that the Code is not intended to only preserve some houses but to preserve the Historic District.

Jan Gibson, 59 Franklin Place stating that in the foreseeable future, multiple synthetic building materials may be presented to the Commission. She questioned at what

point does a historic house turn into a false image rather than a house with materials replaced in kind. She asked whether replacement materials that are not consistent with the materials originally used on the house will change a house from being Contributing, to non-Contributing. She suggested that the consideration should be based on the building itself rather than on whether a significant architect was involved in the design. She questioned whether architects will be added to the Significant architects list in the future. She noted that buildings built today will be considered Contributing structures in 50 years. She questioned whether a house having a synthetic roof should qualify as a Contributing Structure in the future. She stated that the proposed checklist is brief and suggested that information should also be requested on whether the ASTM standards (American Society for Testing and Materials) should be considered and suggested that color stability, types of warranties, composition material, and other factors should be considered. She noted that in 2009, Boston permitted synthetic roof products but rescinded that approval in 2019. She suggested that Lake Forest should learn from other communities.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Acting Chairman Hanson invited staff response to public comment.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the process of determining whether or not projects are referred to the Commission has always started with staff review. She noted for instance, review of rear additions, with no visibility from the street, in cases where no variances are required, do not need to be referred to the Commission for review. She noted that in every case, the Commission, as well as staff, are charged with balancing various interests and determining where along a continuum of compliance projects fall and whether the applicable standards are satisfactorily met. She stated that the review process is not a science and there is no single right, one size fits all solution. She stated that the technical aspects of a material are not under the Commission's purview.

Acting Chairman Hanson invited comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Daliere suggested that information on whether or not the house has front facing gables, and if so, how many will be important.

In response to Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Czerniak stated that when the Commission has approved substitute materials for specific elements on a house such as simulated divided lites, rather than true divided lites; aluminum clad wood windows, and trim that has characteristics similar to the Boral product, staff approves projects with those materials administratively if there are no other reasons for referring the project to the Commission. She stated that as currently envisioned, in limited situations, staff will have the authority to approve the use of synthetic roof products if applicable criteria are met. She stated that an administrative decision made by staff can be appealed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Czerniak stated that neighbors are not noticed when permits are issued directly, only when a Board or Commission process is involved.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Ms. Czerniak stated that the significant architects could be eliminated from consideration leaving the determination of whether to review a particular petition to the Commission solely up to staff based on the criteria.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Czerniak stated that the review process for synthetic roofs puts more requirements and parameters in place than exist today for roofs.

Commissioner Dalieri suggested that all requests for use of a synthetic roof product should come before the Commission. She stated that she does not believe that process would be onerous.

In response to questions from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Czerniak stated that she is aware of one home in the Historic District where a synthetic roof was installed in conflict with the permit that was issued for a cedar roof. She noted that all new homes require review and approval by the Commission. She stated that to date, the Commission has not been presented with a request for a synthetic roof on a new home in the Historic District. She stated that there is some urgency for the discussion on synthetic roof products to conclude.

Commissioner Culbertson suggested that since this is a new initiative, a trial period is appropriate. He noted that it may be possible in the future for staff to review all requests for synthetic roof products as is done with aluminum clad wood windows and some synthetic trim.

Commissioner Dalieri reiterated her concerns about reviews by staff.

Acting Chairman Hanson asked that some reference to anti-monotony be added to the criteria to assure that there is some variation in the appearance of synthetic roof products along the streetscape as there would be with cedar shakes as they age. He stated that the criteria should speak to variation on a single roof as well to avoid a monolithic appearance. He suggested that variation could come in the form of color, width of the shingles, and depth of exposure. He noted that by attempting to match the characteristics of the roof material that exists today in thickness, width and variability, the characteristics of the original roof material that was previously replaced, may or may not be replicated. He invited further comments from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Czerniak stated that as with any new material, synthetic roof products will need to be monitored over time

to understand durability, color fastness, and other traits. She confirmed that City technical staff, as with all products, will assure that the product specified meets all building and life safety requirements and carries the necessary approvals and certifications from outside agencies. She stated that the products will continue to evolve over time and information and observation may lead to additional criteria, or to the elimination of some of the criteria currently suggested.

In response to a comment about landscaping from Acting Chairman Hanson, Commissioner Soderberg commented that it is difficult to be prescriptive on landscaping that should be required to soften the appearance of a synthetic roof. He acknowledged that a tree canopy could take 30 to 50 years to develop and cannot be dictated by the Commission.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that in his subdivision, property owners are encouraged to provide an address of a home where the exact product being proposed is already installed. He commented on the review process as presented by City staff and stated that he feels strongly that the Commission should weigh in on homes that are associated with a significant architect or are truly significant from an architectural or craftsmanship perspective. He commented that in his experience, the people who own these homes usually are very good stewards and are devoted to retaining their historic character. He stated that it would not be appropriate for the Commission to simply say no to synthetic roof products, he doubted whether such a stand would hold up from a legal perspective. He stated that like aluminum clad windows, synthetic roof products are here to stay. He stated that in his opinion, the approach presented by staff is a good first effort at establishing some parameters on how to approach the synthetic roofing issue in the historic district.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that the Commission's deliberative discussions on this topic has expanded the criteria that should be considered, beyond the 17 standards, for a very specific application where there are special circumstances that need to be evaluated within a larger context. He agreed with Commissioner Culbertson that positioning the Commission in the way that closes the door on a product that many in the community see as beneficial does a disservice to the community and the cause of preservation. He stated a concern about requiring every request for a synthetic roof product to come before the Commission and noted that staff has demonstrated the ability to apply standards as well as recognizing when there are challenging circumstances which require Commission review. He suggested that during the initial period of testing this process, the Commission should be provided with information on the number of permits issued administratively allowing synthetic roof products in the Historic Districts and where the installations have occurred.

In response to a question from Commissioner Daliere, Ms. Czerniak stated that she believes that about five or six homeowners in the Historic Districts may be waiting

currently to proceed with requests for approval of a synthetic roof product some of which will need to be presented to the Commission for action.

In response to a question from Acting Chairman Hanson, Ms. Czerniak summarized the enhancements to the criteria requested by the Commission. She noted that language will be added relating to anti-monotony, considering the thickness of the proposed synthetic product in relation to the existing roof material, and clarification about any landscape augmentation that may be required. She stated that a request for the address of a property or properties where a specific product is already installed will be added to the submission requirements.

Acting Chair Hanson asked the Commission for final comments on the process presented by staff which would allow administrative review and approval in limited circumstances. He noted that the submission requirements and criteria provide clear guidance. He suggested a six-month review of whichever process is put in place.

In response to a question from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Czerniak stated that the Significant Architect has existed for some time and could periodically be reviewed and updated by the Commission based on findings and documentation. She reiterated that as with all projects, staff always have the ability to refer a petition to the Commission rather than make a decision at the administrative level.

Commissioner Dalieri stated that since the same criteria would be used by both staff and the Commission it might be beneficial for the Commission to have a 3 – 6 month period in which all synthetic roofing petitions in the historic district would be reviewed. This would help the Commission better understand the nuances of the criteria and if any changes needed to be made in conjunction with staff.

Commissioner Culbertson stated support for the process as presented by staff for a three month trial period with the understanding that staff can refer any petition to the Commission at its discretion beyond those that will, based on the process outlined, require Commission review.

Commissioner Dalieri stated a preference for all requests for synthetic roof products being presented to the Commission.

Commissioner Soderberg agreed with Commissioner Culbertson and supported a three month trial of the process as presented by staff.

Acting Chairman Hanson agreed with Commissioners Culbertson and Soderberg.

Ms. Czerniak thanked the Commission for the discussion and direction and noted that the Commission will likely see petitions for synthetic roofs at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Abigail Vollmers
Senior Planner