

Historic Preservation Commission  
Proceedings of the May 22, 2024 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, May 22, 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 Commission members Geoffrey Hanson, Lloyd Culbertson, Robin Petit, and Tina Dann-Fenwick.

Commissioners absent: Commissioners Leif Soderberg, Elizabeth Dalieri

City staff present: Abigail Vollmers, Senior Planner, and 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 April 24, 2024 meeting of the Commission.**

The minutes of the April 24, 2024 were approved with non-substantive corrections as requested by Chairman Grinnell.

**3. Presentation of the 2024 Lake Forest Historic Preservation Foundation Awards.**

Art Miller, former President and Life Trustee from the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, made a summary presentation of its 2024 project awards stating that the Preservation Foundation has recognized worthy preservation projects for a third of a Century. He stated that the Foundation's Board of Directors appoints a judging panel to consider projects for awards in six categories: Preservation, Heritage, Rehabilitation, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Infill. He presented photos of the recent award-winning properties and identified the owners and architects.

**4. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the front porch and courtyard area at 611 East Woodland Road.**

Property Owner: Woodland Properties, LLC

Presented by: Diana Melichar, Melichar Architects

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

Commissioner Culbertson stated that he worked with Ms. Melichar in the past but has no current business dealings with her. He stated that he is able to consider the petition objectively.

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

Ms. Melichar stated that the petitioners purchased the property in 2023 and have been working to upgrade the building systems and make repairs since that time. She presented a photo of the front entry to the house as it exists today noting that it has a dark and unwelcoming character. She stated that the goal of the project is to create a more inviting entry to the home. She presented a site plan identifying the limits of the project area. She presented an enlarged site plan and pointed out the entrance porch and driveway and pointed out the utilities and window wells located near the front entry. She commented that the area is disorganized and does not present the best first impression when approaching the home. She commented on the architecture of the front porch noting that it is nicely detailed and noted the timbering which carries through from the exterior to the interior of the porch. She stated that the construction of the porch will remain intact. She noted however that in order to bring light into the dark interior space, the petitioners proposed to open up the east side of the porch. She stated that the partial wall and spindles on the east side of the porch will be removed creating openings which will front on a newly landscaped area. She presented elevations reflecting the proposed modified east wall of the porch. She stated that the enlarged openings on the east side of the porch will be capped with Tudor arches consistent with the detailing found on the front of the porch. She stated that the mechanical equipment that is currently located in the landscaped area just east of the porch will be removed to the extent possible, the window well will be filled in, and the area re-landscaped. She stated that the porch, with the enlarged openings, will have an improved connection to the newly landscaped courtyard. She stated that the project as proposed achieves the goal of bringing light into the deep porch and enhancing the front of the home. She stated that the project compliments the Tudor style of the home.

Ms. Vollmers stated that based on available records, there is no evidence that the porch was altered in the past except for the removal of a screen door at the front of the porch. She noted that the applicable standards are reviewed in the staff report adding that several of the standards are not applicable to the petition. She stated that the proposed alterations to the porch do not alter the relationship of the porch to the home and are intended to improve the experience for visitors at the front entry. She stated that the petitioner's stated intent is to remain consistent with the existing architectural detailing and, to the extent possible, reuse existing timbers and brick and replicate the high level of craftsmanship found on the original home. She acknowledged that the proposed alterations are not reversible and suggested that the existing conditions be documented with photos and submitted to the City at the

time of permit for the City archives. She stated that the staff report includes a recommendation in support of the petition and recommended conditions of approval.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Melichar explained that consideration was given to maintaining the spindles on the front of the porch but explained that since the side and front of the porch will often be viewed together, retaining the spindles on the front creates an inconsistent appearance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Petit, Ms. Melichar stated that there has been no discussion about changing the lighting inside the porch.

In response to a question from Commissioner Culbertson, Ms. Melichar acknowledged that the gas and electric hookups will likely need to remain in the front courtyard but will be well landscaped.

In response to a question from Chairman Grinnell, Ms. Melichar stated that the manhole near the front porch will also remain.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public comment.

Art Miller, 1100 Pembridge Drive, stated that the house is a major Contributing Structure to the Historic District. He stated that although the proposed change impacts the front of the house, the change makes sense. He cautioned however that changes to the front of the house could affect the ability of the current or a future owner to obtain a tax freeze or a Façade Easement for the property.

Peter Thadani, 633 Woodland Road, expressed concern about where the generator will be located since it is being moved from the front of the house. He asked that care be taken to avoid impacting his property.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grinnell invited a response to public testimony from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar stated that the owner has no intention of applying for a tax freeze or Façade Easement for the home.

Chairman Grinnell invited a response to public testimony from staff.

Ms. Czerniak stated that at a minimum, generators must be located 20 feet from the property line.

Chairman Grinnell invited final questions and comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Culbertson stated that the modifications are well done and expressed support for the petition.

Commissioner Petit stated that the modifications were a good improvement to the porch.

Commissioner Hansen also voiced support for the petition stating that the changes were handled lightly.

Commissioner Dann-Fenwick expressed that the design was sensitive and that with the reuse of materials was in support of the petition.

Chairman Grinnell commented that the porch as proposed appears to be an improvement over the porch as originally designed. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, she invited a motion.

Commissioner Hanson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving modifications to the front porch at 611 East Woodland Road and re-landscaping of the adjacent courtyard. He stated that the motion is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted as part of the motion. He stated that the approval is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. Any refinements made in response to direction from the Commission, or as the result of final design development, shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Commission shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Commission's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
2. Photo documentation of the existing porch shall be included with the permit submission documents. Photos will be included in the city archives.
3. Relocation of the generator shall be carefully considered to assure no negative impacts on neighboring properties.
4. Tree Protection Plan – Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect any trees identified for preservation that may be impacted during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
5. Details of any 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. All exterior lighting shall be sensitive to the dark sky character of the neighborhood.

6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials' staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties and existing trees and landscaping during construction.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Culbertson and approved by the Commission by a 5 to 0 vote.

**5. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the removal of a chimney visible from the streetscape at 464 Oakwood Avenue.  
Property Owner: 464 Oakwood Avenue, LLC  
Presented by: Diana Melichar, Melichar Architects**

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

Commissioner Culbertson reiterated that he worked with Ms. Melichar in the past but has no current business dealings with her. He stated that he is able to consider the petition objectively.

Hearing no further declarations, she invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar stated that the petitioners have undertaken a comprehensive renovation of the home, inside and outside. She stated that the existing roof, gutters and downspouts will be removed and replaced. She noted that the existing asphalt roof will be replaced with cedar shingles. She explained that the renovation provides the opportunity to address the awkwardly placed chimney. She presented photos of the chimney noting how it impacts the exterior and interior of the home. She stated that the fireplace which the chimney serves requires significant investment to bring it up to current life safety Codes adding that given its inconvenient location, the petitioner desires to remove it. She presented images of the exterior of the house without the chimney noting that if a new fireplace was installed, it would likely be located along an exterior wall which would place the chimney at a more visually appropriate location than the current chimney.

Ms. Vollmers began with an acknowledgement that this is a discussion of form versus functionality. She noted that the chimney appears to be strangely located when viewed from the outside, and that the chimney is not a distinctive design. She stated that the staff report addresses the standards that are applicable to this petition. She

clarified that the removal of the chimney, although it changes the appearance of the roof from the street, addresses the awkwardness it creates both inside and out and improves the functionality of the house. She noted that removal of the chimney does not appear to change the overall character of the house adding that the symmetry and centered entry on the front of the home are not impacted. She acknowledged that the chimney, once removed, is not easily replicated. She noted that if a chimney is proposed in the future, it would likely be located on an outside wall. She stated that from a form and function perspective, removal of the chimney appears to be appropriate.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Melichar acknowledged that the single, non-proportional shutters on first floor windows are unusual. She stated that modifications to address the shutters are not in the scope of the current project.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Melichar stated that a vernacular home of this age would have always had a chimney. She stated that if the chimney is removed, the roof will be re-enforced.

Chairman Grinnell agreed that form and function are an important consideration in this petition. She agreed that the shutters on the first-floor windows are awkward and suggested that Ms. Melichar take the Commission's comments on the shutters back to the petitioners. Hearing no further questions from the Commission, she invited public comment.

Marina Puryear, 485 Oakwood Avenue, stated that as a real estate professional, she has worked with potential homeowners who struggled with the chimney location, and stated support for the removal of the chimney on the grounds that it presents a functional challenge to the interior of the home.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the Commission. Hearing no further comments, she invited a motion.

Commissioner Dann- Fenwick made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the chimney from the house at 464 Oakwood Avenue subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. 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 consult with the Chairman as appropriate.

2. Submit a tree protection plan and a construction parking and staging plan. The plans shall be subject to City approval prior to the issuance of building permits. On street parking is permitted however, the street must remain passable at all times and access to all neighboring driveways must be unobstructed.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Petit and approved by the Commission by a 5 to 0 vote.

**6. Consideration of a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the proposed new home at 205 North Green Bay Road.**

**Property Owner: John A. Plant**

**Representative: Nate Lochner, A. Perry Architects**

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

Mr. Plant introduced the petition noting that his family is excited to have found a property on which to build a new home after moving to the community several years ago.

Mr. Lochner presented photos of the site noting that it is the last vacant lot in the area which was subdivided in the 1960's. He stated that the property is overgrown and some of the trees on the site are in poor condition. He stated that the property is accessed from a private road that extends east from Green Bay Road. He stated that the property is directly adjacent to the original estate house. He presented photos of other homes in the area and homes elsewhere in the community that provided design inspiration for the proposed residence, one of the inspirational homes was just recognized by the Preservation Foundation.

Next, he presented conceptual renderings of the proposed house noting that it is flanked by strong chimney elements. He noted the pattern of solids and voids and the three front facing gable elements. He pointed out the strong center entrance and explained that the design was refined to break down the massing and scale of the front elevation. He noted the simple roof forms and the continuous roof ridge. He stated that care was taken to design a home that is consistent with the scale of other homes in the area. He presented photos and samples of the proposed exterior materials including Indiana cut limestone. He reviewed each elevation.

Moving to the landscaping, Mr. Lochner reiterated that many of the trees on the site are in poor condition adding that 16 of the 21 trees proposed for removal are rated as dead or in poor condition. Of the five additional trees that are now proposed for removal, the City's Certified Arborist identified two significant trees that are worthy of preservation. He noted that they cannot be saved by modifications to the site plan without impacting other trees that are identified for preservation. A conceptual

landscape plan was then presented, and it was noted that the intent is to preserve several trees on the site.

Ms. Vollmers stated that the property is just under an acre and slopes from the west to east. She stated that the east half of the property is wooded and noted that a portion of the west side of the property was part of the putting green for the estate house. She commented that the proposed residence complies with the height and square footage limitations and noted that the proportions, balance, rhythm, and symmetry present a simple and strong front façade and an elegant presence on the street. She noted that the window walls recede and the gables project forward in a modern style. She stated that the front entry provides a sense of arrival. She noted the dormers on the rear elevation and the articulation of the side elevations. She stated that the proposed casement windows are consistent with the style of the home noting the detailing of the windows that punctuate the gables and the other windows around the home that are simpler in detailing. She stated that high quality exterior materials are proposed consistent with the materials used on other homes in the neighborhood.

Moving to the conceptual landscape plan, she pointed out that significant plantings are proposed around the home. She acknowledged that three significant large trees will be removed because there is not a way to save them given the size of the house, the amount of hardscape, and the established zoning setbacks. She stated that replacement inches will be determined based on the plans submitted for permit for the significant trees that will be removed. She stated that prior to any work on the site, the City's Certified Arborist will review the tree protection plan provided by the petitioners and will inspect the tree protection fencing erected on the site. She added that as part of the permitting process, the City Engineer will review the grading and drainage plan to confirm that no negative off site impacts result from the proposed work on the site. She stated that impacts to the private road will need to be addressed privately with the other homeowners that use the road. She concluded noting that the transitional style of the home is a nod to other homes in the area while creating a unique character for the new home. She stated that the correspondence received was provided to the Commission in advance of the meeting.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenick, Mr. Lochner provided more detail on the proposed exterior materials. He stated that the intent is for the stone to have an "old world" appearance adding that it will be tumbled, not be machine cut. He explained that the lighter stone is intended as an accent, and that the top of the chimney and windowsills will be limestone. He stated that medium cedar shakes are proposed for the roof and that the siding, gutters, and downspouts will be a bronze color. He clarified that to achieve a modern look, a contrast between lighter elements and darker elements is desired. He confirmed that the front porch is recessed in the front gable which is proud of the two flanking window walls giving it a sense of prominence. He reviewed in more detail the relationship of the front porch to the limestone pieces and the adjacent roof. He acknowledged that with the



amount of impervious surface and grading proposed on the site, it will be difficult to preserve the Oak trees but noted that pre and post treatments will be completed as directed by the petitioner's arborist.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dann-Fennwich, Mr. Plant said that a gravel driveway was considered but stated that an asphalt driveway is best for his family.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hansen, Mr. Lochner, provided further details on the proposed roof product explaining the intended size of the cedar shakes. He stated that the cedar shakes will turn gray over time.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hasen, Ms. Vollmers confirmed that drainage and future maintenance of the private road are not matters within the Commission's purview.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Lochner stated that the aluminum gutters will be a bronze color to match the windows. He confirmed that the oversized chimneys extend out the same distance in the front and back of the house. He acknowledged that portions of the house have a significant amount of glass but noted that light impacts on neighboring homes should be mitigated by the fact that the windows are punched into the stone. He explained that the areas of the house that project out are intended to minimize some of the light spillover.

Mr. Plant noted that Norway spruces are planned in an effort to mitigate off site light impacts. He stated that an alternate color can be considered for the fence that will enclose the yard to better align with the house than the currently proposed black fence. He stated that the intent is for the fence to disappear into the plantings.

Chairman Grinnell asked that care be taken to address light spillover, drainage, and the private road. She noted that the house will not be visible from Green Bay Road. Hearing no further questions from the Commission, she invited public comment.

Mr. Miller, 1100 Pembridge Drive, stated that originally the Sequoia Court home which served as an inspiration for this home was highly visible from the street but today, seven years later, only the roof top above the trees is visible. He stated that the fact that home was well screened made it easier to approve. He agreed that considering landscaping to mitigate light impacts will be important and will provide privacy for the homeowner. He suggested Green Giant Arborvitae.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grinnell encouraged the petitioner to communicate with the new owners of the estate house. She invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Hanson complimented the home. He agreed that attention should be paid to minimizing light spillover and he encouraged careful attention to the landscaping. He stated support for the petition.

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

Commissioner Culbertson made a motion to grant a Certification of Appropriateness approving a new residence, the overall site plan, and conceptual landscape plan at 205 N. Green Bay Road. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Commission as part of the motion. He stated that the following conditions of approval are incorporated into the motion.

1. Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. Any refinements made in response to direction from the Commission, or as the result of final design development, shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Commission shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Commission's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
2. Tree Protection Plan – Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect any trees identified for preservation during construction as well as trees on neighboring properties, must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist.
3. Details of exterior lighting shall be submitted with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets for all light fixtures shall be provided and all fixtures, except those illuminated by natural gas at low light levels, shall direct light down and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view. All exterior lights shall be set on automatic timers to go off no later than 11 p.m. except for security motion detector lights. All exterior lighting shall be sensitive to the impacts on the public park and the wood land across the street and the dark sky character of the neighborhood.
4. A final, detailed landscape plan and tree removal plan shall be submitted at the time of submittal for permit reflecting a minimum of 72 replacement inches with high quality trees. The plans will be subject to review and approval by the city arborist.
5. Grading and filling on the site shall be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to achieve proper drainage consistent with good engineering practices.

6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a materials' staging and construction vehicle parking plan must be submitted to the City for review and will be subject to City approval in an effort to minimize and manage impacts on the neighborhood, neighboring properties and existing trees and landscaping during construction. Given the limited access to the area from the private road, off site parking for contractors may be required. The private drive must remain open and passable at all times.

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

### **OTHER ITEMS**

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

There were no additional public comments.

#### **6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Vollmers provided an update on synthetic roofs and noted that staff will be contacting the Commissioners to poll for a workshop that will be scheduled for a Saturday in the fall. She stated that more information will be forthcoming.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Abigail Vollmers  
Senior Planner, Community Development