

**Minutes
Historic Zoning Commission
April 14, 2020**

Call to Order

The "Zoom" platform meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mal Wall at 3:00pm

Commission members present

Chairman, Mal Wall Gavin Duke Ron Farris Bunny Blackburn
Jeanette Whitson

Staff members present

City Manager, Beth Reardon City Attorney, Doug Berry
Assistant City Manager and Building Official, Lyle Patterson
City Recorder, Edie Glaser

Consideration of the Minutes

Minutes of the HZC Meeting held March 10, 2020

Motion to approve: Farris **Second:** Duke **Vote:** All Aye

Old Business:

1. The application for a certification of appropriateness for Province Builders, John Swift (20012), 1210 Nichol Lane for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single family home. The demolition permit of the existing home was granted at the January 14, 2020 HZC meeting.

Presentation: John Swift the owner of 1210 Nichol Lane and Preston Shea, with P. Shea Designs, were available for questions and answers.

Board Questions/Comments:

-Blackburn, I am concerned with the height and size of the house presented. I would like to see it blend in more with the neighborhood and surrounding homes.
-Patterson, the house is just over 8000 square feet.
-Blackburn, I do not know a house even approaching that size on Nichol Lane, am I correct on that?
-Patterson, yes.
-Duke, do we have a typo on this lot? The front door does not align with the two side windows. In the inspirational photo, that looks nice, there is a consistency of window heights. Something with the porch as well is not matching up with the inspirational photos (Duke drew on the image to line up the doors and windows). The roof cornice seems very tall as well.
-Whitson, what are the ceiling heights on the third floor?
-Swift, there are 9 ft ceilings at the top and 11 ft at other sections of the attic. The attic can be lowered pretty easily.
-Farris, I agree with Duke on the front door with its scale and proportion to the other windows. We need to see a site plan with topography. The scale and proportion of the home is quite a bit larger than the other homes on the street. I don't think this Board can say you can't meet the bulk standards, but I think what we are commenting on is the general street view.
-Wall, the house that is submitted is twice the size of anything else on Nichol Lane. I am interested in the developer bringing us enough information that we can make an intelligent decision on whether this facility is going to fit compatibly with the rest of the neighborhood.

-Swift, if the garage is a separate wing of the house in terms of the footprint, and the main structure itself appears to be 6400 heated, are we looking at that and saying the house is twice as big from the heated standpoint or all structures under roof because the garage is a separate lean?

-Whitson, I don't think we are just talking about square footage; I think we are talking about the massing of this house. There are allowable limits but what we want people to do when designing in Belle Meade neighborhoods is to decide what they would like in their home, look at the neighborhood, and design a home that is a melding of those two priorities.

-P. Shea, the home does fit within the bulk standards of Belle Meade. I think we need a clear definition of compatibility. Is there a percentage? This is the third time this home has been presented and massing has not been an expecting point. We have been working on style and detail.

-Blackburn, I have expressed many times in looking at this the massing of this house and the height of this house. This is not the first time this has come up. We have guidelines, they are published, compatibility on the street is very clearly stated.

-Whitson, can you tell us your view of how this is compatible with the Street?

-P. Shea, I was not necessarily saying it was compatible or was not. With the City of Franklin HZC, the term compatible was defined. There is not a set percentage or number of feet with the City of Belle Meade. Some measurable definition would be greatly appreciated.

-Farris, regarding bulk standards I think the applicant has all the right to hit the bulk standards, that is a footprint coverage specifically, and a FAR that relates to scale and massing. I am not comfortable advising applicants to a percentage reduction that we would be looking at on a project to the footprint bulk standards. I think there is a way to design a home that does maximize its bulk footprint standards but is still compatible in scale and proportion in the neighborhood.

-P. Shea, without a percentage it will always be wide open for interpretation.

-Farris, I don't believe the Board is prepared to give that kind of answer to the question. If I was making this presentation based on the feedback you have been given, I would have diagrams of what the two neighboring residences have as an aesthetic from the street view. I believe this Board does not feel this home is compatible with its immediate neighbors.

-Swift, am I being confined to only the two neighboring lots or is it the neighborhood in general? I do know there are homes across the street that are much taller than the neighboring lots on my side of the street. I am fine with trying to get to some design that you all feel would be acceptable but I will say having been here this is the third time, I'm not really much more informed of exactly what direction we need to go than I was the first time we submitted it.

I would like to feel confident that if we go back and make some modifications that we have some sense of direction here. Right now, I'm hearing that this house as it is designed is not acceptable.

-Patterson, asked if the total square footage is 7854? Noticed on your plan it is 7576. Just want to verify.

-P. Shea FAR is 7576.

-Farris, I think there is a way to study Nichol Lane and to present an argument as to why this house should be scaled and escalated as it is or subject to the provisions you may make after the study of what is occurring on Nichol Lane. The burden of convincing the Board that it meets the harmonious nature of the neighborhood is on the applicant.

There are probably examples on the street that will support your case and probably some that will not. We have been complimentary that it is an identifiable style. It has a historical style that we can pin to it that is one of the driving components of our guidelines.

-Duke, the other side of the Street is Metro.
-Farris, I would stretch out my study of neighborhoods. There are examples beyond Nichol Lane that you could bring into play. The board would be focused on the neighborhood of Nichol lane, West Brookfield, and Canterbury.

Public Comments

Gray Thornburg, 1212 Nichol Lane, we are renovating a house on Nichol Lane and using the maximum FAR we have available to us on the property. There are larger houses on the street, but this house is way far and above in volume and massing. The three car garage along the back is a massive piece as well.

Board Questions/Comments:

-Wall, I understand from the developer's standpoint to take the building envelope and max out the square footage and FAR for the house you want on it because your margins are better. If that is what you need to do you need to also convince this group of people that the structure that you propose to put up is in keeping with the other houses in that neighborhood.

-Farris read the guidelines aloud on page three and bullet points on page four.

-Duke, I would like to see examples of houses in the neighborhood that come close in scale to this.

-Blackburn, I am concerned about the height of the house relative to the other houses on the street, the size of the house, scale of the garage and the concern of the neighbors.

-Farris, I would like to see a more detailed site plan and a topography.

Motion to defer for sixty days: Farris Second: Whitson

Vote: All aye

2. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Matt Bass, (20021), 429 Royal Oaks Drive for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single family home.

The demolition permit of the existing home was granted at the February 11, 2020 HZC meeting.

Presentation: Preston Shea with P. Shea Designs

Board Questions/Comments:

-Blackburn, I have received a letter from the neighbors. They have expressed their concerns with the size of the home relative to the other homes on the Street.

-P Shea, we have fine-tuned some of the detail work, defined some of the materials and at the Commission's request minimized some of the exposure of the foundation by adding a retaining wall to the left of the house. We submitted the site plan and the retaining and grading plan.

-Wall, they also dropped the finish floor elevation.

-Farris, we do not have the revised and new site plan. We had asked for a detailed site plan with topo showing all proposed improvements. Think we need to move for deferral until we have items we have requested.

Motion to defer for sixty days: Whitson Second: Blackburn

Vote: All aye

Board Discussions:

Patterson, the check list on the Certificate of Appropriateness along with the summary made at the end of each of these discussions should guide the architect and the homeowner on the direction.

Jessica Viner, 433 Royal Oaks Drive, asked if there was a timeline on when the demolition is to occur since it has already been approved?

Patterson, you have one year to act upon the approval of the Commission. We have maintenance that has to be done for every home.

Dunkin Dash, 425 Royal Oaks Drive, asked if the demolition that was approved was approved under the heading that the home not being fit or under the heading of building a new proposed home with a plan to be approved? For my Family, what was said about the Nichol Lane property would apply here in term of the currently proposed plan and aesthetics relative to the rest of the neighborhood.

Farris, we approved based on if the property was of significance which we concluded it was not and approved demolition. It was not contingent upon a design.

Mall addressed P. Shea that if he is fine tuning grading plans that is information the Commission has not received yet. Your job when you come back is to make a case on why this house on that lot fits with its neighborhood.

Whitson addressed P. Shea saying he should take into consideration some of the concerns and comments the neighbors made today.

Farris, the home has an identifiable style that I can be comfortable with but how you address the massing and the overall comment last time was that it was graded, and it's finish floor elevations are positioned to accommodate that lower level. That was a big concern of this board.

Blackburn, the existing basement did not have the ceiling height that this one does. This is a concern we have expressed and hope to see more on this.

3. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for El Jack Custom Homes, LLC (20032), 4210 Sunnybrook Drive, for the demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and construct a new single-family home. The demolition permit was approved at the March 10, 2020 HZC Meeting.

Presentation: Mark Spivey with El Jack Custom Homes, explained the home will be Federal Style and listed the changes made since the last meeting.

- Roof pitch went from a 10 over 12 to a 9 over 12 as requested by the Commission.
- Raised the eave on the house up 6 inches and lowered the roof ridge line by 12 inches.
- Made the dormers on the second floor on the front of the house 8 inches wider and taller which made them more proportional to the roof.
- Lowered the stone water table in the front to create a good separation from the windows.
- Added shutters to the front of the house.
- Worked on the dormers on the front of the house on the second level.
- Changed the roof above the front porch.
- Moved the house 5 feet to the right giving us a 20 ft set back on the left side.
- Added on the left elevation three additional windows.
- Added stone piers to the bottom of the 12 inch posts on the back deck.

- Added more decorative roof vents on the right and left elevation on the top.
- Changed the window grids to 6 over 6.

Board Questions/Comments:

-Duke, are there samples of the stone veneer? Is that true bed stone?
 -Spivey, yes, it is true bed all around the house and the chimney.
 -Duke, on the front elevation you are showing a flat grade across then on the right elevation something has to happen to get you down to that garage level. I am not seeing that on your plan. It would drop off significantly from your front porch. I don't have a grading plan or a proposed topo. I would check your driveway. The driveway has to be 5 feet off the property line. The right elevation has a lot of blank space, might consider some faux windows.
 -Spivey, would you like to see faux windows with shut gutters?
 -Duke, or shut shutters.
 -Whitson, that would require gutters on the windows on that whole side. I don't think there is room for the shutters the way that the windows are spaced out.
 -Spivey, we did add two windows on the main level in the master bedroom and one in a guest room on the second level.
 -Whitson, you will most likely have a grading wall there to keep the grade up in the front.
 -Farris, the front elevation does not match what is on the site plan. I would suggest you look at the Federal style dormers and how Federal style roof lines are terminated. I am struggling with Federal style attached to this house.
 -Bunny, this house does not meet the criteria of Federal style houses.
 -Farris, the house has the direction of taking it to that simplicity but the details of the dormers and how the eave line is terminated do not align with a Federal style house yet. The A symmetrical gable on the garage side I am struggling with that being Federal.
 The space between the top of the windows and the gutter line does not seem like Federal style proportions and scale.
 -Spivey, the distance between the windows and the gutters you feel is too much?
 -Whitson, it is top heavy.
 -Blackburn, I would use the example of the house you had on Forsythe.
 -Spivey, hopefully by the next meeting we will have the finished topo.

Motion to Defer for sixty days: Blackburn **Second:** Whitson
Vote: All aye

4. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Chandelier Development (20033), 100 Bellevue Drive South, for the demolition of existing home (Property of Significance) and construct a new single-family home.

Presentation: Joel Lyons, property owner, provided a power point presentation for the Commission of the interior and exterior of the home. The home has 8ft ceilings on the first and second floor which presents major challenges. It is on a 1930's stone foundation. The back yard grading goes straight to the basement. Every rain event there is standing water in the crawl space. Inside the home structurally it has some major problems, the stairs are about to cave in, there are numerous leaks and mold throughout. The painting materials can be an issue as far as asbestos and lead paint. There are window HVAC units. The exterior walls and throughout the home there is excessive

cracking. Essentially every room in the home has water intrusion. There is not a plumbing system working in the house.

A lot of discussion last month was about preserving the home. Unfortunately, I believe it is beyond repair for a lot of the reasons I am presenting in this power point presentation. My request is to demo the current home. I would like to address that the former owners were presenting the house as a tear down and not allowing potential buyers to enter the home. One of the neighbors who spoke at the last meeting against the tear down was actually trying to purchase the home as well.

Public Comments:

Carolyn Sorenson, 106, Bellevue Drive South, we submitted a letter to the committee with our concerns with the proposed new design for the house.

-P. Shea was this on the current design?

-Sorenson, yes.

Board Questions/Comments:

-Blackburn, when did you close on this property?

-Wall, the property closed March 20, 2020.

-Blackburn, the items you have listed are typical with these older homes that need to be renovated. We have had overwhelming support not to tear this home down.

-Wall, has the design changed from last month?

-P. Shea, yes due to the initial feedback to make the home in more keeping with the neighborhood we went to a colonial revival style which is already established on that street. The character of the home has changed completely the massing has not.

-Wall, we have two letters in support of keeping the house. I wish we could keep this house, but we may be too late. I am certain that we cannot put a seven thousand square foot house on that street.

-Blackburn, I would encourage the owner to renovate it.

-Whitson, I understand the water issues and the neglect in the home. Perhaps there should be an inspection of the home to see how far gone it is. Before we decide we are going to allow the demolition of this home due to condition I think we have to have a little bit better showing than photos. There was nothing that I saw in the house that looks like it is too far gone.

-Patterson, I have been in the home and it does have a lot of water damage. It is pretty self-explanatory of the pictures he has presented. There is probably asbestos in the kitchen flooring and in one of the additions. In my personal opinion in keeping the home it would have to take someone who really wants to do it.

-Duke, could there be an exercise done to show us the existing house and with the new build? To see the scale and proportion of what is being put in versus what is there existing?

-Wall, there are a lot of older cottage homes that have been restored, expanded and renovated on that street. The largest home on the street is about 4200 square feet. The scale and mass of what they are proposing to put there at 7500 square feet is out of the question.

-P. Shea, the FAR of this home is 7105 including heated and unheated and attic up to 5 feet. This is not a small house, but it is not 7500.

-Duke, it would be helpful to see what is existing to what is being proposed.

-Lyons, the plan has 12 foot ceilings on the first floor and 10 on the second. We could drop that back down to 10 on the first floor and 9 on the second if massing is a concern. We are within the height restriction.

-Farris, regarding demolition if we read what makes it a property of significance and evaluate it based on that, think that is what we will have to do and that is what the applicant needs to present on.

-P. Shea, our directive after the last meeting was to revisit the street and draw inspiration from the other homes which we did. This home is very much in keeping with the neighborhood and with massing we could drop the ceiling height a bit as Joel mentioned.

-Duke, it would be helpful to see a topography of where the water is coming from in the house.

-Lyons, it is hard to address these eight foot ceilings.

-Whitson, it is very difficult to create a modern living space with an eight foot ceiling. An eight foot ceiling is a significant burden. To ask someone to put the type of money into renovating something in this shape but be living with an 8 foot ceiling in their main living space is hard.

-Duke, for the condition I saw it looks like it may be beyond some repairs.

-Whitson, an approval of a demolition is not an approval of the replacement. The Commission will be looking very hard at the structure to make sure it does blend with the neighborhood if we move forward with the demolition.

Motion to deny the demolition permit: Blackburn Second: Wall

Motion to defer on the demolition: Farris Second: Whitson

Vote: All Aye

Board Discussions:

Farris, read the HZC Guidelines. He struggles with this house that it possesses integrity of design, materials and workmanship.

Duke, if they could present more of a case showing their project and height in keeping with the neighborhood that would be helpful.

Blackburn, would it be possible to go in the house?

Lyons, yes

Berry, must go separately.

Lyle Patterson will arrange the times for Commission to view the house. Lyons will provide the code to the house lockbox to Lyle.

New Business

1. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Todd Huber (20041), 4410 Iroquois Ave., for the partial demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and renovations of more than 35%.

Presentation: Tyler Stephens began his presentation with a power point presentation of 4410 Iroquois. This is a corner lot. We debated tearing it down but, in the end, made a better floor plan to keep the house. The current house is very non-descript and has been hidden for many years behind a wall of vegetation. There is a sun porch that faces Jackson that has nice metal rail details that are on the posts. This is one element that we want to save and reuse. We feel like we can put some good use to them and a good way to preserve some of the character of the house. The house is all brick but does not really have a certain style to it. The structure is good. It has a nice layout. This lot is not only on a corner, but it has an ally on the North side. It is surrounded by streets on all three sides, three faces that we can take advantage of as far as presenting the house.

Board Questions/Comments:

- Blackburn, what would you call the style of this house.
- Stephens, Tudor Style
- Blackburn, can you explain the size of the dormers?
- Stephens, those are existing dormers. They are small but go with the original character of the house.
- Gavin, can you describe the exterior materials?
- Stephens, we are using Boral Brand Pavers. These are made out of fly ash, a byproduct made from wood. Once it is painted it absorbs paint very well since it is not wood. It is manmade wood.

Motion to approve: Farris Second: Duke Vote: All Aye

2. The application for a certificate of appropriateness for Shelby Brown (20042), 815 Westview Avenue, for the partial demolition of existing home (Property of Conservation) and renovations of more than 35%.

Presentation: Darby Brown, we have tried to do as little as we can to the house to make it a simple renovation. There are a couple of things we need to do to the elevation to bring some character to it that has brought us here. There is a creek that runs behind the house. This house is in a flood plain. We are using the existing footprint of the house that is about 2300 square feet. The first floor will stay intact with the exception of the rear addition. The rear addition needs to be moved up to match the existing level of the house. This would bring it out of the flood way. The house has an existing staircase that goes up to an attic space that was used for storage. We are going up into that space and adding a bonus room and two bedrooms. This will bring the house from 2300 square feet to 3600 square feet. To make it livable up there we have changed the pitch from a 6-12 to an 8-12. We have added two dormers to the front of the house and one dormer to the back. The chimney and the car port exists. We added a pitched roof over the car port to give it some character.

We are keeping the existing brick on the house that will be painted. The windows will be Marvin integrity windows. The front elevation will change the pitch. It will raise the ridge about 3 feet. The yard will remain the same. Using existing grade and driveway.

Board Comments/ Questions:

- Blackburn, the application describes this as a Ranch style house. This is not Ranch. I cannot put an architectural style to it.
- Farris, I am struggling with the composition and scale of the windows in the back. The plan is showing double hung windows and then picture windows above, that composition gives me some pause. We would be looking for a very identifiable style as you renovate the house. The front elevation seems a little off weighted. I am not sure I agree with the orientation or placement of the dormers relative to the over all length and scale of the house. We need to get the house into a style.
- Whitson, is there a siding portico at the front?
- Brown, we are looking at a stone or wood veneer. We are trying to improve what exists there and give it some curb appeal. We looked at putting more dormers on the front but are having to work around the chimney.
- Duke, four dormers on the front may give it a cape cod style and give it balance.
- Blackburn, none of this matches right now. The height of the roof relative to the house with two little dormers over the right is very disproportionate.

The elliptical window does not go with this. Are the windows true divided light on the front?

-Brown, they are simulated divided.

-Blackburn, I am not comfortable with the plans and where they are right now.

-Whitson, I am happy that you have taken this small house on a problem lot and trying to preserve the size and integrity of the structure that is there. I think there is some work to be done with the presentation of the aesthetics especially of the façade. The front needs better symmetry. The portico needs to be something that is more in keeping with a cape cod style. The four dormers across the front and change the dimension of that small oval window, that does not really fit, and then it will be ok.

I applaud that you are keeping an old house, adding on square footage and trying to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

-Brown, we are working with how much we can spend on it. With the composition and brick and Marvin integrity windows it will match to the other houses within 2 or 300 yards either way.

-Whitson, I am good with the materials.

-Duke, are vinyl windows approved?

-Patterson, I will look into it.

-Blackburn, I would have your architect work on the back of the house for you.

-Brown, we are limited to window sizes on the back due to the metal roof.

-Farris, think it would be helpful if we knew what is existing to what is new. Are the four windows in the back existing or new?

- Brown, they are new.

- Duke, is the carport new or existing?

- Patterson, the carport was already there but it has been torn down and a new car port is going in. It will need to go to BZA.

- Jeanette, I believe you have to have someone stamp these drawings either an architect or engineer. Is that correct Lyle?

-Patterson, yes.

-Brown, I will check with the person doing the drawings for me.

-Blackburn, the horizontal window in the back might need to be removed.

-Brown, that is in a bathroom and can be taken out.

Motion to defer: Blackburn Second: Jeanette Vote: All aye

Summary:

Style, Windows, drawings more accurate, address issue with dormers, code on windows, materials around the front door, survey and site plan.

Motion to Adjourn: Duke Second: Whitson Vote: All aye

Chairman, Mal Wall

City Recorder, Edie Glaser