

## APPROVED

MINUTES OF  
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING  
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.  
NOVEMBER 27, 2018

Chair Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: John Fitzgerald, Chair  
Jonathan Kubow  
Ted Eckhardt

Members Absent: Kirsten Kingsley  
Scott Seyer

Also Present: Andy & Voula Behlis, Owners of *1518 W. Thomas St.*  
Jeff Eichhorn & Beth DeBaker, DeBaker Design Group for *1209 N. Dunton Ave.*  
Aidan Quinn, AKA Architects for *Goddard School*  
James Cazares for *European Crystal Hotel*  
John Powers, Dryvit Systems for *European Crystal Hotel*  
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 13, 2018

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2018. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Fitzgerald stated that a positive vote from all 3 commissioners is required for approval of a project tonight.

## ITEM 1. SINGLE-FAMILY TEARDOWN REVIEW

### DC#18-066 – 1518 W. Thomas St.

Andy & Voula Behlis, the owners, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. The petitioner is proposing to demolish an existing single story residence with an attached two-car garage to allow construction of a new single-story residence with a detached two-car garage. The proposed front setback is 35 feet, where 50 feet is required; therefore, the plans will either need to be revised or a variation requested from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The petitioner stated that he will be seeking a variation through the Zoning Board of Appeals. The proposed design does comply with all other R-E zoning requirements.

The subject property is located in an R-E zoning district, where the minimum lot size is 20,000 sf, and it is located across the street from Virginia Terrace Park. The petitioner has indicated that the design concept is to create open spaces on the front of the home to enjoy the view of the park across the street.

Overall, the proposed new house raises numerous design concerns that the Design Commission should evaluate:

- **Scale and Massing.** Despite the proposed new home being a single-story, it has a scale and massing that is much larger than the surrounding single-story homes due to the first floor raised four feet above grade and 16-foot tall ceilings inside the house. The resulting ridge line is 12'-10" higher than the existing single-story house to be demolished.
  - o It is recommended that the elevation of the first floor be lowered and the height of the walls be reduced to better fit with the scale of the neighborhood.
- **Large Terrace.** The design includes a huge 1,000 sf raised terrace across the front of the home that is out of scale with the neighborhood.
  - o It is recommended that the scale of the terrace be reduced to a more common size for a front porch, possibly 10-feet in depth maximum. Consider extending the roof over the terrace to better integrate it with the house design.
- **Bedroom Wing.** The design includes a long narrow bedroom wing that extends deep into the lot and creates a very long flat west elevation.
  - o It is recommended that the layout be revised to significantly reduce the length of the bedroom wing.
- **Panoramic Doors.** The proposed design includes two sets of large 10-foot tall x 20-foot wide openable panoramic doors on the front of the house which dominate the front elevation. Doors of this type are more commonly seen on the rear of a house opening onto a private yard.
  - o It is recommended that the large panoramic doors be replaced with smaller scale French doors and windows that would be more appropriate on the front of a house and fit better with the context of the neighborhood.
- **Front Entry Gable.** The front entry gable is awkwardly detailed with the doors recessed below a tall flat gable.
  - o Additional design development of the front entry is recommended. Consider lowering the height of the gable and possibly integrating it with a new porch roof with decorative support columns.
- **Exterior Materials.** The exterior walls are proposed to be white EIFS with a black roof, black windows, and a black cast stone base.
  - o Consider softening the color palette with tan or gray EIFS and a more natural color stone base.
- **Driveway.** The design includes a large concrete driveway across the entire front yard.
  - o It is recommended that the driveway layout be revised to reduce the amount of paving in the front yard.

Staff recommends the commissioners consider these comments summarized as items 1 through 7 in the Staff report, requiring revisions and a re-review of the project.

Mr. Behlis said that he and his wife have lived in the home for a couple years and want to build a raised ranch home, similar to the home they built and lived in in Addison. He responded to the comments made by Staff. He questioned the 50' front yard setback requirement, which he believed should be 43' because that is the average setback of the 3 homes on the block. Mr. Hautzinger replied that the average that was calculated by the petitioner for the corner home

was a measurement to the detached garage, which is an accessory structure, and the measurement should have been to the home, which is the primary structure. **Mr. Behlis** also clarified that the interior ceiling height would be 12' and not 16' as stated by Staff, which **Mr. Hautzinger** understood and agreed with. In response to Staff comments about the west wing of the home, **Mr. Behlis** explained that there will be 3 bedrooms measuring approximately 14' in width and another 5' for the hallway, for a total of 20' of width along the west elevation that he felt was appropriate in size.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked if there was any public comment and there was no response from the audience.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** said that the proposed design is unique and he asked the petitioner to talk about the aesthetic of the home and whether it was designed by an architect. **Mr. Behlis** said that he designed the proposed home himself, as well as his previous home in Addison that was similar but not located across the street from a park. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said that a lot of great architecture is designed by non-architects, such as Thomas Jefferson, and he had no issue with a homeowner designing their own home; however, he felt the front elevation was not quite there yet. He liked the balance of the big windows and the glass railings, but felt the gable above the front door was odd and needed further study, and there is a lot of empty space above the window. **Commissioner Eckhardt** felt the front elevation needed to be more majestic, and **Mr. Behlis** explained that the panoramic doors are at 10' and the interior ceiling height is 12'.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** also reviewed the proposed colors and materials and said that although he could visualize the new home for the most part, a colored rendering would have been helpful. **Mr. Behlis** replied that his previous home in Addison has the same black pre-cast and EIFS being proposed, and could be seen on the internet for reference. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said his concerns were not with the colors or materials, but with the massing of the front door. **Mr. Hautzinger** clarified that the front door is recessed back, and the gable above is aligned with the wall, based on the side elevations. **Commissioner Eckhardt** liked that the front entry was recessed and suggested bringing the front of it forward to engage the stairs and create a cover. He felt the entire area needed further study.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** also said that the orientation of the new home to face the park made a lot of sense, and he questioned why a private courtyard was not created with the bedrooms on both sides, instead of all on the same side. **Mrs. Behlis** said their preference is to have all the bedrooms on one side of the home and **Mr. Behlis** added that moving a bedroom to the east side of the lot would result in the loss of green space in the yard, as well as a loss of terrace space on the back of the home. **Commissioner Eckhardt** had no other comments at this time.

**Commissioner Kubow** said that overall, he liked the material palette and the white and black colors, and he understood the petitioner's thesis for the design; focusing south towards the park and getting a lot of natural light. He also agreed with **Commissioner Eckhardt's** concerns about the front entry and that it needs something more, but he was unsure what. Even with a high floor-to-ceiling height, all he sees on the front elevation is the 4' band of pre-cast and the roof, which is the opposite of what should be happening; there should be less roof and more of the vertical face of the home. His biggest issue is with the west elevation, which seems really awkward, and although he understood why the petitioner wants all the bedrooms on one side, context is important. The new home does not have to match the adjacent home, but it should be respectful of the homes next to it. **Commissioner Kubow** also pointed out that the material palette is completely different than surrounding homes, which is fine, but there should be a way to be consistent with the architecture and dimensions of what is around the home. Additionally, the long wall on the west elevation feels severely out of place.

**Mr. Behlis** pointed out that windows are being proposed along the west elevation to offset the length of the long wall, and larger windows could be added if necessary. **Commissioner Kubow** thought that landscaping along the west elevation could help, and **Mr. Behlis** said that landscaping is being proposed along the terrace on the front elevation that will be as tall as the pre-cast stone base, and the same could be done along the west elevation. He felt the windows being proposed along the 108' long west elevation would offset the commissioners' concerns, and he reiterated his suggestion to increase the size of the windows or add another large picture window. **Commissioner Kubow** felt that a change in the roofline, such as adding a gable, might help give the elevation more definition, and **Mr. Behlis** reiterated his suggestion to replace the 6 transom windows with 3 picture windows along the west elevation.

**Commissioner Kubow** said that a three-dimensional rendering showing the colors and the context would have been beneficial and maybe help sell him a little more on the proposed design. For him, he just sees a big, 2 dimensional, flat, huge wing that just feels awkward as currently shown. He felt the proposed design could be adjusted without completely redesigning the home, making it more accommodating and softening it. He suggested the petitioner work with his architect on that. He also reiterated that something needs to change on the front elevation to help draw your eye, instead of staring at the roof and the 4' stone band at the entrance; make it a little bigger, or bring it out further and add columns on either side.

**Chair Fitzgerald** did not want some of his small comments to sound like he did not like the home; he was intrigued with the home and felt it was nice. He agreed with the other commissioners that further work needs to be done with the front doors and the front entrance; perhaps it needs to be lower, or the doors taller without a transom. He did not mind the large bi-fold doors on the front elevation, but to him, the front entrance seemed secondary, and he pointed out the vacant space above it as an area that needs further tweaking. **Chair Fitzgerald** also asked why the entire home was up 4', which seems really high, and when looking at the home from the street, the 4' will still be visible even with landscaping. He felt this would be intrusive to the neighbors, and although he was not exactly opposed to it, he was wondered if it needed to be lowered. This could also be an issue for discussion by the Zoning Board of Appeals if the petitioner moves forward with a variation request. **Mr. Behlis** said that they showed the design to the neighbors, and one of the neighbors is here tonight. **Chair Fitzgerald** also felt the driveway needed to be softened, and although he was not opposed to the length of the west elevation, he agreed with Commissioner Kubow's suggestion to add another gable on that elevation. Submitting a landscape plan would help the commissioners see how the west elevation would be softened.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked again if there was any public comment on the project and there was a response from the audience.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Calandro, 1512 W. Thomas Street. He lives east of the home and is in support of the project, although he has no windows that actually face the new home because his garage is located adjacent to the new home.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** reviewed the floor plan, pointing out the recessed area inside the front entrance that opens to 12' and the exact line of that opening with regards to the elevation and how it meets the gable up above; it does not appear to work structurally. He was trying to figure out the relationship of how the pediment over the entrance lands to the ground because it appears to float, which is bothersome and needs to be worked out. **Mr. Behlis** said that the front door could be flush to the rest of the home, the gable brought forward, and columns added by the stairs. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said the detail of the eave is similar to a 1970's home, not a modern detail for today. He felt the proposed design needs some additional care with the details; it is potentially there, but not yet, and it is really important for the home.

With regards to the very long west elevation and very long roof, **Commissioner Eckhardt** felt there were lots of ways to camouflage a long wall, and he suggested creating another gable at the back end of the elevation, similar to the gable at the front end. He felt the petitioner's architect should at least show options to the petitioner, and showing them in 3 dimension or in a massing model would instantly be apparent to the petitioner what the elevation and roofline will look like. He was not trying to discourage the petitioner from the proposed design, but encourage adding more details to the front elevation and front entry.

**Commissioner Kubow** recommended the petitioner work with his architect to come up with a few ideas, just some sketches that could be brought back to Staff, who can review them before it comes back to the commissioners. Focusing on the front door, he suggested removing the gable and flattening it out, and adding a gable above each set of panoramic doors, putting the focus more on the big open area on the front elevation. **Mr. Behlis** was concerned about taking away from the 10' height of the panoramic doors, which he felt was an awesome feature on the home.

**Commissioner Kubow** reiterated his suggestion that the petitioner work with his architect and come up with a few ideas for the front elevation and the west elevation. The home needs a little more design work and brought back.

**Chair Fitzgerald** said that there were some great ideas given tonight for the west elevation, which he was okay with and liked, and landscaping was a must for him as well. He still felt something needed to be done with the front entrance, and added a suggestion to raise some kind of a shed dormer instead of the gable being proposed. He also agreed with the suggestion for a 3-D view of the new home, because once it is built it cannot be changed. He asked for clarification on the height of the front elevation and the front gable, which was said to go back 5', and commented that this was even more unusual to him because he thought the entire wall was recessed 5'.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked the petitioner what his original design looked like before the gable was added in response to Staff's comments, and **Mr. Behlis** replied that the entire roofline on the front elevation went straight across and the front doors were flush to the panoramic doors. **Chair Fitzgerald** said that he preferred that design, or exploring something bigger at the front entry that is not traditional like what is currently proposed.

**Mr. Behlis** said he would eliminate the gable above the front door and create a roofline going forward towards the staircase to create a canopy, and make the doors flush with the panoramic doors. **Commissioner Eckhardt** said that he liked the recessed front entry because it defines the front door and gives it protection from the rain; he discouraged the petitioner from pulling the front doors forward. **Mr. Behlis** said the front doors would not be pulled forward; a canopy to the front would be created.

**Chair Fitzgerald** presented options to the petitioner for coming back with revisions. A date specific could be made tonight that would not involve posting a sign for public notice, or it could be left open until such time as the petitioner is ready to come back, which would require posting a public notice sign again. **Mr. Behlis** suggested coming back in a couple of months, and he was considering going before the Zoning Board of Appeals prior to coming back here.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** told the petitioner to come back with a front elevation that they liked, so the commissioners could review it and given an opinion. **Commissioner Kubow** presented an idea for the petitioner to consider that he found on Google, which included columns done in a modern way. **Mr. Behlis** asked that a date specific in two months be made tonight, and **Mr. Hautzinger** said that would be January 22, 2019.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, TO CONTINUE THE REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED NEW SINGLE-FAMILY HOME TO BE LOCATED AT 1518 W. THOMAS STREET (DC#18-066) TO THE DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING ON JANUARY 22, 2019.

KUBOW, AYE; ECKHARDT, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE.  
ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.