

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**  
**August 14, 2014 Meeting Minutes**  
**Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers, 7:30 pm**

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Acting Chair Greg Battoglia, Dan Moroney, Regina Nally, Chris Payne, Tony Quinn, Tom Sundling  
ABSENT: Joerg Albrecht, Fred Brandstrader, Chair Rosanne McGrath, Don McLean, Vice Chair Gary Palese  
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, AICP – Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

*Motion by Sundling to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Second by Nally. Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

**NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**MINUTES**

*Motion by Quinn to approve the July 10, 2014 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Sundling. Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**A. Historic Landmarks: Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for the following:**

**Edward B. Kittle House, 636 Fair Oaks Avenue, Tallmadge and Watson (1909)**

Architect Jack Lesniak was present on behalf of the property owners.

Staff provided an overview of the Historic Landmark Nomination. The *Edward B. Kittle House* is an excellent example of Prairie School architecture. The building was constructed in 1909 and was designed by architects Tallmadge and Watson. Tallmadge and Watson were part of the Chicago School (a term coined by Tallmadge) and the Kittle House is an example of the variations of the Prairie style that were created by members of the group. Edward Kittle was a manager of the Sprague Electric Works of the General Electric Company. The house is nominated under the following four criteria for designation:

- (1) *Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States;*
- (3) *Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States;*
- (5) *Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen;*
- (6) *Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, craftsman, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

*Motion by Nally that the property at 636 Fair Oaks Avenue is eligible for Historic Landmark designation under criteria (1) (3) (5) and (6) as presented in the Nomination Report. Second by Payne. Motion approved 6-0.*

AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia

NAY: None

**Walter S. Gerts House, 200 S. East Avenue, Frank D. Thompson (1897)**

Property owners Richard Hillengas and Susan O'Brien were present.

Staff provided an overview of the Historic Landmark Nomination. The *Walter S. Gerts House* is an excellent example of an eclectic mix of the Queen Anne and early Prairie School styles of architecture designed by architect Frank D. Thompson. The building was constructed in 1897 during a period of significant change in residential taste in architectural styles, particularly in Oak Park, where Frank Lloyd Wright and other like-minded architects were beginning to experiment with a more organic style of design. This eclectic example exhibits a transition between the ornamental and asymmetrical forms of the Queen Anne style to the horizontality of the Prairie School. The building is also significant as the home of prominent Chicago businessman Walter S. Gerts and for its unique architectural design. Gerts was born and raised in Oak Park and from one of its earliest families. He was an executive in his father's brush manufacturing company Gerts, Lombard & Company. It is also significant as the home of Arthur B. Templeton, the second owner of the house originally from Scotland, who co-owned the Templeton Lumber Company in Chicago. The house is nominated under the following four criteria for designation:

- (1) *Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States;*
- (3) *Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States;*
- (5) *Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen;*
- (6) *Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, craftsman, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

*Motion by Sundling that the property at 200 S. East Avenue is eligible for Historic Landmark designation under criteria (1) (3) (5) and (6) as presented in the Nomination Report. Second by Quinn. Motion approved 6-0.*

AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia

NAY: None

**B. HPC 2014-46: 315 Wesley Avenue (Olis): Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a two-story coach house (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)**

Property owner Cecelia Olis and Brendan Olis were present.

Staff provided an overview of the application. The building is a Contributing Resource within the within the *Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*. The house was constructed in 1893-94 and attributed to architect William J. Van Keuren. The two-story detached frame coach house (now garage) was likely constructed at the same time or soon after. The proposal is to demolish the garage due to its seriously deteriorated condition and replace it with a new two-story detached garage in a design and size similar to the existing, clad in cedar siding. The owner has agreed to look at reusing several of the historic windows.

The Village's structural engineer inspected the property in April 2014, along with the owner and property maintenance inspector. The structural engineer's comments are as follows:

*"Inspected the two-story detached garage, which is more than 100 years old. It appears that the building is leaning on all exterior sides to an unstable state, with the garage overhead door non-*

*operable and removed (according to owner) and the exterior walls missing sheathing and broken with openings. The building must be repaired or stabilized to meet safety code or demolished, if agreed by owner, as soon as possible.”*

Although the garage is a significant accessory structure, contemporary in design and age with the 1893 house, it is minimally visible from the street and seriously deteriorated, warped and leaning in many directions. Stabilization and rehabilitation would be cost prohibitive. The design of the new garage is compatible with the house as it is similar in size, massing, design and materials to the existing garage, and meets the Architectural Review Guidelines. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application to demolish the structure.

*Motion by Nally to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 315 Wesley as submitted. Second by Payne.*

The Commission discussed the deteriorated condition of the coach house and was concerned that it was allowed to deteriorate to such condition. They encouraged salvaging the garage, as well as reusing the historic windows and brackets on the new garage, or at least save them.

Brendan Olis stated that it has no base, causing it to sag over the years. It has inferior framing and the garage doors were added.

Cecelia Olis stated that they will reuse some of the windows, but the brackets are too big for the eaves of the new garage. She is currently looking for a salvage company.

The Commission noted that the drawings for the new garage need more detailed notes to indicate dimensions and height, etc. The new garage appears to be compatible with the house, and is not required to replicate the existing.

*Motion by Nally amended to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 315 Wesley with the condition that more detailed notes be added to the drawings. Second by Payne.*

*Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battaglia*

*NAY: None*

**C. HPC 2014-52: 155 S. Oak Park Avenue (Oak Park Brewing Company/Hamburger Mary's) – Cook County Class L application for commercial rehabilitation (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)**

Property owners Ashley Wright and Brandon Wright were present.

Staff provided an overview of the application. The building is a Contributing Resource within the *Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*. The one-story brick and terracotta building was constructed in 1928 by Roy E. Tullgrew for Sam Cooper and designed by architects Lowenberg & Lowenberg. It has maintained its original use as commercial, and has been vacant for several years. The current applicants have recently purchased the property. The proposal is to remove the interior non-historic offices and convert the building into a restaurant and brewpub housing the Oak Park Brewing Company and Hamburger Mary's. The interior renovation will include kitchen space, dining room, brewery equipment, bathrooms, cabaret-style lounge with stage, and upgraded utilities. The exterior renovation will include new storefront windows and two entrances in the existing opening. The storefronts will be set back approximately 6 feet to allow for outdoor seating. One section of the storefront will have operable windows.

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The applicants are proposing to apply for the Cook County Class L real estate tax incentive. The incentive requires that the owner's investment in a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building must equal at least 50% of the building's assessed market value for the year prior to commencing the work, which is 2014. The proposed investment in the rehabilitation of the building is valued at \$1,000,000. Upon approval of the Class L incentive, the property will be assessed at 16% of the fair market value for the first 10 years, 23% in the 11<sup>th</sup> year, and 30% in the 12<sup>th</sup> year.

The following is required from the Village for the application:

- A formal recommendation of approval from the HPC to the Village Board specifying that the project budget and proposed scope of work meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Certified copy of an ordinance or resolution from the Village Board of Trustees which supports and consents to the granting of the incentive, finds that the Class L incentive is necessary for the rehabilitation of the property, and approves the HPC's recommendations.

The proposed scope of work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Village of Oak Park's Architectural Review Guidelines. The proposed investment in the building far exceeds the minimum requirement for the Class L incentive. Therefore, staff supports the application.

*Motion by Moroney to forward a Resolution to the Village Board recommending approval of the Class L application for 155 S. Oak Park, stating that the project budget exceeds the minimum investment required and the scope of work meets or exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Second by Nally.*

The Commission discussed the necessity of economic incentives to encourage and support the rehabilitation and reuse of historic commercial buildings. They recommended repairing the terracotta façade where necessary and reusing some or all of the terracotta storefront bases.

Ashley Wright stated that although the incentive provides a reduction in property taxes, they still are responsible for employees, sales taxes, etc. They look for reusing historic buildings as it is part of their image and business model. They will retain the terracotta storefront bases where they run along the sidewalk. They can add a railing along it as the new storefront windows will be set back to allow for outdoor seating. They requested suggestions on railing design.

The Commission discussed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The proposal, with the retention of the bases, meets the Standards as they are retaining a commercial use for the building, retaining and preserving the historic character and materials and not altering character-defining features (terracotta façade and bases; storefront opening size), and retaining any interior historic features that may be discovered. These details can be defined in the plans and elevations when the application comes back for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

*Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

- D. **HPC 2014-53: 404 N. East Avenue (Petrick)** – Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a rear two-story addition (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*) Architect Nevin Hedlund was present representing the property owners.

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The two-story brick and stucco house is located at the northeast corner of East and Superior, and is a Contributing Resource within the *Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*. The house was constructed in 1914 for W. E. Dwight and was designed by architect Robert Seyfarth. Exterior work visible from the street requires Historic review. The scope of work meets the definition of demolition in the preservation ordinance, and therefore the project will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The proposal involves the construction of a rear two-story addition and open/screen porch. The addition, located at the northeast corner of the house, will extend back 9 feet from the existing rear addition, with the porch attached to the rear. The addition will be visible from Superior and from East. Also proposed are alterations to some of the existing window openings on the north elevation of the original house and existing addition.

The proposed rear addition meets the Guidelines as it is compatible in style, design, materials and location. The proposed window alterations on the north facade do not meet the Guidelines as the existing large windows appear to be original, and are visible from the street, while the new openings do not relate in size or shape with others on the north façade and so are not in keeping with the character of the house. Therefore, Staff cannot recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted.

Nevin Hedlund noted that they used Seyfarth's original drawings as a base. The window alterations on the north are minor and difficult to see from the street. The original windows on the north were different than the rest of the windows on the house. Their intent was to meet the Guidelines.

*Motion by Payne to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 404 N. East as submitted. Second by Sundling.*

The Commission discussed the window alterations on the north façade. The existing casement windows do not appear to be original, and the existing window openings are not defining characteristics. The window alterations are not contrary to the Standards and marks new vs. old. They also discussed the change in grade and the design of the rear porch.

Nevin Hedlund stated that they are moving up a design element on the rear façade. The porch columns are a little different than the front porch, but the design of the rear was always different.

*Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

- E. **HPC 2014-55: 527 Belleforte Avenue (Grandview Capital, LLC)** – Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a single-family home (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*)  
Bryan Balk of Grandview Capital was present.

The two-story frame gable front house is listed as a Contributing Resource within the *Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*. The house was constructed sometime prior to 1902 as there are no permits on file. Numerous changes have occurred to the house over the years, including a two-story addition in 1913, conversion to two-family use in 1950, enlarging the second-floor porch in 1954, and rear additions in 1957 and 1963. The house also has a raised replacement concrete foundation and aluminum siding, though there are no permits on file for when those changes occurred. The scope of work meets the definition of demolition in the preservation ordinance, and therefore the project will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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The applicant is requesting that the property be reclassified as a Non-Contributing Resource due to its deteriorated condition and numerous alterations and additions, and that the HPC approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition. If approved, the applicant will propose working with the HPC on the design of a new single-family house.

While there are many indications of deterioration and alterations, it is the Staff opinion that further research is needed to determine its physical condition and more specifics on what is required to rehabilitate it to habitable condition. While the appearance of the house is not an ornate style, there are other Vernacular building types found within the historic district and the immediate neighborhood. The numerous rear additions could be removed and replaced with new additions in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the older front portion of the house. Staff would suggest taking no action at this time to gather additional information on its condition, feasibility for rehabilitation, and the possibility for members of the Commission to meet on site to tour the property.

*Motion by Nally to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 527 Belleforte as submitted. Second by Moroney.*

The Commission discussed the condition, design and character of the house based on the submitted information. In order to make a decision and reverse its Contributing status, additional information on its condition should be submitted, such as an inspection report by a Village structural engineer, and the property should be viewed in its context through a site visit by Commission members.

Bryan Balk stated that the property lacks character and integrity. Grandview Capital has done 20 rehab projects in Oak Park and 350 in Illinois. There are issues with interior loads. They are happy to have the Commission and Village structural engineer tour the property.

*Motion amended by Nally to table the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 527 Belleforte pending a site visit by the Commission and inspection by a structural engineer. Amendment seconded by Moroney. Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Education Committee: Update on June 23, 2014 meeting

Architectural Review Committee: Update on June 25, 2014 meeting

Staff Approvals: Staff provided a report on the 120 Staff permit approvals for July 2014.

#### **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Quinn to adjourn. Second by Payne. Motion approved: 6-0.*

*AYE: Moroney, Nally, Payne, Quinn, Sundling, Acting Chair Battoglia*

*NAY: None*

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m. Minutes prepared by Douglas Kaarre.