

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
January 27, 2016 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers/Room 201, 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Rosanne McGrath, Greg Battoglia, Laura Jordahl, Don McLean, Dan Moroney, Vice Chair Gary Palese, David Sokol
ABSENT: Fred Brandstrader, Regina Nally, Chris Payne, Tony Quinn
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Palese to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Second by Sokol. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Battoglia, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Palese, Sokol, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REGULAR AGENDA

- A. HPC 2015-59: South + Harlem Development (OP South Boulevard LLC): Advisory Review of revisions to a Planned Development application to construct a 12-story mixed-use building to replace parking and vacant lots along South Boulevard from Harlem Avenue to east of Maple Avenue (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)**
Joe Segobiano, Lincoln Properties, was present.

Chair McGrath provided an overview of the Commission's advisory review process.

Joe Segobiano, Lincoln Properties, provided an overview of the revisions that have been made to the exterior design since the last review by the Commission in November 2015. They have since met with the Plan Commission twice, and will again on February 4. The revisions result in a more traditional design in terms of the window openings and materials. The base will be masonry. The storefronts have been expanded along South Boulevard and Harlem Avenue. The rear podium (along Maple) will be all brick, including perforated areas to help break up the massing. The south wall of the pedestrian walk-through will incorporate public art and will be open to the public to connect Maple Avenue and South Boulevard. The side wings have been set back 15 feet above the podium and they have added windows on the south. They created an entire 12th floor rather than half a floor. They are considering recessing the first floor of the west façade 2-4 feet for the bus stop. This will provide 10 feet to the curb. The materials will be cement panels, brick, perforated metal and glass. He provided an overview of the floor plans.

Jeffrey Sobek, attorney for Barbara Parrilli, noted that there will be a 5-story wall adjacent to Mrs. Parrilli's 2-story building. The building goes lot line to lot line. The building will impact the neighborhood with loading and parking. The renderings are deceptive as to how it will really look next to the existing buildings on Maple.

Commissioner Sokol stated that the massing and scale are out of harmony with the buildings to the south. No other highrise in Oak Park sits so close to another building. It is totally out of character with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Palese agreed that it is out of scale with the neighborhood.

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Joe Segobiano responded that the podium is four stories, not five. They are providing parking for the neighborhood in the development. He noted that the rendering for the east end of the south façade is inaccurate as the building will be cantilevered. There will be 17 feet between their building and the adjacent building at 109 S. Maple.

Chair McGrath noted that they did address some of the design comments the Commission had in November, including the storefronts. Another positive is that the façade is more contextual. They can't do anything about the scale of the building. The larger "grid" areas do not help to break down the scale with the balconies on the east façade. The south façade is friendlier.

Joe Segobiano noted that they are re-evaluating the balconies and the east façade.

Commissioner McLean noted that the garage screening areas are ripe for graphics or visuals.

Commissioner Moroney inquired about the width of the walkway. He noted that it should be as wide as possible. The Commission discussed alternative designs for the auto ramp entry with Mr. Segobiano and determined it would not work in another direction. The applicants will be working with the Public Art Commission for this area.

Barbara Parrilli, property owner of 109 and 111-115 S. Maple, stated that she wants to see what the developer will do to resolve the numerous insults to her property. This project doesn't make sense to the neighborhood. There will be problems for her building to function, for people moving in. These buildings have been in her family for four generations. She agrees with a comment made by the Commission in November that the development is less than sympathetic to adjacent buildings. In response to a question on how they lost the rear of the property at 109 S. Maple, she noted that her grandfather lost it. It became part of a bicycle shop business, then the Village owned it. She tried to purchase it back, but it didn't happen.

The Commission will forward the following comments to the Plan Commission for consideration at their February 4 meeting:

- The Commission remains concerned about the scale, massing and siting of the building in relation to the adjacent historic buildings to the south. Although the Commission appreciates the revisions that have been made to the planning and design of the project in this revised scheme, these issues of scale, massing and siting remain problematic.
- The Commission questioned the areas of the design that directly abut the northernmost historic properties on South Maple. At the southwest corner, while they appreciated the fact that the residential portion of the building above has been setback from the property line, there is still a four-story high solid brick wall directly abutting 109 S. Maple's west and north property lines. At the Southeast corner, the Commission questioned the need for the four-story high covered drive. Since it appears that the residential units above could cantilever over the drive without needing the "roof" at the forth level and the solid masonry wall at grade, the elimination of those elements would effectively pull the building face further away from the adjacent historic property.
- The Commission asked the Applicant to consider ways to further improve the pedestrian experience along the walkway that extends through the building where South Maple Avenue currently sits, including expanding the width. They questioned whether the garage entry drive could be relocated so that there would be a direct view through from South Maple Avenue to South Boulevard.

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- The Commission appreciates the steps taken towards creating a positive pedestrian experience along Harlem Avenue, which include extending the storefronts along all of the ground floor, and the potential to provide setbacks to widen the sidewalk. The Commission also appreciates the addition of storefronts to the first floor façade along South Boulevard. The Commission asked the applicant to continue to study how to accommodate the bus stop and pedestrian traffic at the corner of South and Harlem.
- The commission appreciated the revisions to the façade including the elimination of the blank facades facing the historic residential areas to the south. The Commission also appreciated the revision to more 'punched windows' in lieu of bands of windows, and the elimination of the 'supergrids' from the previous scheme. Both of these revisions help to bring the scale and rhythm on the façade down to be more in keeping with the scale and rhythm elsewhere in the district. However, the Commission felt that the breaking down of the scale on the elevations was not applied consistently as the northeast corner of the building still contained long balconies and an over-scaled brick grid.
- The Commission noted that the masonry perforated screens provide an opportunity to incorporate a graphic or artistic element on the south façade.

CONSENT AGENDA

OTHER BUSINESS

St. Edmund's School: Chair McGrath noted that this school will be closing at the end of the school year. It is important that they promote the importance of preserving this building. They should start with their Board Liaison, Trustee Bob Tucker, and then meet with the Mayor. She would like some volunteers to help in reaching out.

ADJOURN

Motion by Battaglia to adjourn. Second by McLean. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Battaglia, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Palese, Sokol, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Douglas Kaarre, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation.