

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
December 8, 2016 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers – Room 201, 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Christopher Payne, Jennifer Bridge, Rebecca Houze, David Sokol, Aleksandra Tadic, Noel Weidner
ABSENT: Greg Battoglia, Laura Jordahl, Don McLean, Dan Moroney
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, AICP, Urban Planner

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Sokol to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Second by Tadic. Motion approved 6-0.
AYE: Bridge, Houze, Sokol, Tadic, Weidner, Chair Payne
NAY: None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MINUTES

Motion by Houze to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2016 meeting as submitted. Second by Bridge. Motion approved 6-0.
AYE: Bridge, Houze, Sokol, Tadic, Weidner, Chair Payne
NAY: None

REGULAR AGENDA

- B. HPC 2016-74: 733 N. Kenilworth Avenue (Buoscio): Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a two-story south side addition on a two-story house (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District)**
Property owner Phil Buoscio was present.

Planner Kaarre presented the staff report. The proposed side two-story addition is compatible with the house in size, scale, set-back, materials, and character. The addition is modern in design, yet is reflective of the overall shape and massing of the main house and much reduced in scale. The addition is set back significantly from the front façade of the house. Although the house is clad in stucco, and the addition in cedar siding, the historic house has original wood siding underneath the stucco, and wood siding is a compatible material to stucco. The owner met with the Architectural Review Committee four times over the course of a three-month span and has worked diligently to incorporate the Committee's comments into the design. The Committee felt that the project was compatible in size, scale, setback, massing and character with the house; that the issues with the design relationship with the house had been resolved; and that the overall intent to make a compatible addition that is different in design had been achieved. The project as proposed appears to meet the New Addition Policy and staff recommends that the Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted, per Section 7-9-13(E) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Phil Buoscio stated that the property is a two-flat and most buyers would have added a large addition. They are keeping the two units and a relatively small addition which is 70 feet back from the front sidewalk. The addition will increase the footprint by about 550 square feet by adding a family room on the south side of the existing Victorian structure that was built in 1885. The current structure is stucco with a lath plank underneath. It has banding and lines that they have tried

carefully to incorporate into the new addition to achieve harmonious character. They are trying to create a long-term living space while maintaining the second floor unit as rental in its current form. The addition will have a main level for a living room and a spiral stairway to a small lofted area on a suspended "open air" second level den/office and an interior stairway to an unfinished storage basement. The materials to be used have been found in the historic homes nearby: Cedar lap siding. Cement board siding will be used but in a color to match the cedar front (similar to the new Austin Gardens Environmental Center). The trellis in front will all be made of cedar and decorative elements in the trellis will have copper. The roof will be asphalt shingle with a color to compliment the cedar. The enclosed entrance "hides" the access to the front and encases it in the spirit of many homes in the community. These elements do not mix with, or confuse the passerby as to the modernity of the ideas when juxtaposed against the Victorian nature of the original structure create interest while also keeping a two-unit multifamily on the block. Keeping the two-unit itself is a preservation goal being met. He believes the styles compliment respectfully - by using design concepts that have Prairie style themes while offering air and light functionality. They also tried to do this while linking the banding and heights and bays and windows sizes and shapes of the original structure carefully.

To summarize how the addition fulfills the requirements:

The scale is complimentary, The windows shapes, number and sizes are complementary. The materials are safe and similar to the community and complimentary to the main structure. The size is complimentary and does not challenge or overwhelm the main structure (the footprint of the addition is about 30% of the main structures). The setback is generous and choose a logical, balanced and visually pleasing "break" to compliment the bay (about 70' from the sidewalk, 35' from the front porch facade to the addition's facade, and 25' from the facade to facade). The materials of cedar lap front, cedar framing around the windows, glass to connect the structures and copper for fascia and copper for decorative elements within the trellis will offer local character and creativity. The overall character of the building is different to the Victorian structure but complimentary. It does not try to be Victorian but understands it is standing next to a large Victorian structure and submits to its beauty while offering its own presence. They believe the benefits of the addition are great for the reasons specified here, and hope the Commission approves the Certificate of Appropriateness quickly so they can move forward with building the structure in the coming year.

He also requested that the Commission consider approving an alternate window design for the front façade due to some construction requirements and costs of steel. Economically he may need to add additional windows in front and back. He may need to use more windows along the second floor. Everything else would remain the same. He provided both elevations.

Motion by Sokol to open the application for discussion. Second by Weidner.

Commissioner Houze asked how he knew it was originally a two-flat.

Phil Buoscio stated from Village zoning and historic preservation staff. There is a lobby with two original doors inside.

Planner Kaarre stated that there are no original permits on file and nothing stating that it was originally a two-flat. The Zoning Officer also does not have documentation on whether it was a two-flat in 1885. Also, he does not have any original records and there is no 1895 Sanborn map for the area.

Commissioner Sokol stated that he wanted to hear from the Architectural Review Committee members on the request for an "either/or" approval, since they reviewed the project several times. He doesn't think he has a problem with either of them, but wanted to hear from them.

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Chair Payne stated that only two of them who reviewed it are present. What is proposed is not a major deviation from where they were. The alternate version is compatible with the main proposal. The Architectural Review Committees was more concerned with the gable front design, the front porch entry, the way the addition connected to the building and the use of cedar siding on an addition to a stucco building.

Commissioner Tadic stated that she agreed that all the major recommendations were taken into consideration.

Commissioner Houze asked if there are any precedents for other additions on the side, almost like another little house. She hasn't seen one like this before.

Planner Kaarre stated that there have been a few that have been approved by the Commission. Every addition is different, but there have been some. South Maple.

Chair Payne stated that points of discussion were to have respect for the defining features of the original home. As long as it was set back far enough as you still read the street rhythm a certain way. This side yard was large enough that this addition was appropriate enough for this home. It might be treated differently on another home. Those were important factors here.

Commissioner Houze stated that it sounds like it went to the Committee a few times. (four)

Motion by Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for a two-story frame addition on the south side of the building, including the alternate front façade design, as submitted. Second by Tadic. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Bridge, Houze, Sokol, Tadic, Weidner, Chair Payne

NAY: None

- B. **HPC 2016-77: 238 S. Kenilworth Avenue (Gill): Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a two-story side addition on a two-story frame house (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)**
Architect Chris Wollmuth was present representing the property owner.

Planner Kaarre presented the staff report. The proposed side two-story addition is to extend the south bay out into the side yard along the back of the wrap-around porch, which was added in 2011 and is not original to the house. The existing south bay has diagonal bay walls on the first floor and squared walls on the second floor. The house is clad in wood clapboard with wood shingles in the gable ends. They are proposing to use three types of siding – wider at the base – to delineate that it is a new addition. The architect met with the Architectural Review Committee on November 26. The ARC recommended that they delineate the side addition in materials and use trim board, and add a base/water table in different in materials to make the addition more grounded. They also suggested using the same detailing like wood trim and trim around the windows on the addition to mimic a more covered bay. The applicants have done this by using a wider siding at the base, a narrower siding on the first floor of the addition, and shingles on the second floor. The extension of the bay outwards significantly alters the proportion of the bay, removes the historic angled characteristic on the first floor, and changes the historic character of the house. The project as proposed does not meet the Architectural Review Guidelines. Staff recommends that the Commission take no action on the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Chris Wollmuth, CW Design, stated that he is the architect for the project. Michelle Gill, one of the property owners, is also present. He will walk you through to see how they got to where they did. Obviously they were hoping to come in with staff approval. They were hoping to go back to the ARC a

second time, but that coincided with Thanksgiving. They would like to be fluid with suggestions. They have a certain flexibility with suggestions. The side bay is on a secondary façade. The front porch is existing, and does provide a degree of shielding of the bay. He reviewed the existing interior plan. The kitchen is divorced from the living spaces. The front porch is actively used and the connection is through the front door and they would like to maintain that connection. The second floor is chopped up. They want to rectify some of these conditions. The side walls are load-bearing with a column down the middle. This house is unique as the load-bearing walls are north-south and the joists are east-west, which suggests a more natural expansion of the bays.

He reviewed the site plan. The house is over 19 feet of the side yard lot line. The zoning setback is 6 feet. It can't be used as play space and neighbors are looking down on you so it can't be used to sit. A side yard is rare in Oak Park.

He reviewed the proposed interior plan to expand the family room and kitchen with a more open floor plan connecting to the front living room. Second floor master suite addition. The addition is set back behind the front porch. One of the strategies they added from the ARC meeting is a partial gable that mimics the partial gables on the front of the home. They've created an architectural element that mimics the style of the home. The existing home uses shingles in the gables. They used shingles on the addition to distinguish new from old. The trim board is being retained to suggest where the original home ended. There will be a slight return that will be siding before it transitions to the shingles. It's a subtle distinction. The bulk of the addition in the back is hidden behind the nice side addition.

Going through the Guidelines, the ARC did not have a lot of questions about 1, 3 and 4, regarding the massing, the secondary façade, and changing the historic character. Staff has raised some questions about changing the character and he'd be happy to return to that to answer questions. The primary piece is 5 on how to define new vs. old, through trim boards and by varying how the siding works. The other point of discussion is the side bay. One was retaining the angles. We decided not to do that, but would be happy to entertain that idea. The other question revolved around the gables. It's a big roof broken down by the gable additions.

There was also discussion about doing an addition off the back. There are challenges to that by pushing a patio right up the garage. The distances between rooms and to the front porch get magnified. You're passing through two or three rooms to get out there, and it compromises how you use those rooms. People end up not using some rooms. He does a lot of these additions and people tell him that after these additions people don't use these front rooms anymore. That is really unfortunate. He's excited about this addition in that the entire house will be used. They have access to the front porch that will get more remote. It will be more tied to the home. If the add off the back they won't be able to see out the front window from the kitchen.

Overall they appreciate the comments they've received. They've tried to make a nice addition that is respectful to the way houses need to be adapted now that retain the character of the neighborhood.

Motion by Sokol to open the application for discussion. Second by Houze.

Commissioner Houze asked about the ARC discussion of the retention of the gable.

Chair Payne stated that the entire ARC was not in favor of retaining it. He is of the opinion that it is a character-defining feature, but given the geometry of the ground floor plan and the bay window, and the gable, and the relationship between the gable and the side of the house – that it's such a close proximity – I personally saw that as a character-defining feature of the house. It gives it a particular kind of scale from that side or even three-quarter view that I felt was important and the new addition would completely alter that.

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Chris Wollmuth stated that they recognized some of those comments and why they got into those alternatives they explored. Different people will view that differently. It is a little bit of a gray area. It is on the side and it is partially hidden. We didn't go back and revise it because it made the most sense because of the overall plan to take advantage of the space, the side yard, and they feel their design is respectful.

Commissioner Tadic stated that they took most of the ARC's advice from the last meeting. The size of the addition doesn't bother her so much anymore now that the trim and detailing have been added. She recommends only using horizontal siding on the addition and shingles on the dormer. With the addition of the detailing, the gables and the dormers it looks much more appropriate to the house.

Commissioner Sokol stated that it seems that the concern is mainly that two guidelines 2 and 4 are overlapping. He doesn't have an answer on what to do. If everyone feels there must be another way, he would love to hear what another way might be. He doesn't want the applicant not to be able to expand the house to live in. He appreciates everything that's gone into the design and familial access, etc. He's not an architect and is hoping someone can suggest a respectful way to handle the issue.

Chair Payne suggested compromising part of the back yard and still use part of the side yard as long as it is behind the side bay.

Chris Wollmuth stated that anyone moving to Oak Park, not just them, is looking for a place that a family can gather and be together. The existing family room does not have the square footage to do that.

Chair Payne stated that not every house has to have 2,000-3,000 square feet. There is a careful way to add onto these homes where they're not all blown up to be super huge. At some point there is a compromise with living in these small historic homes. I know everybody wants a huge house. If you don't think the house works for you, why ruin the house? Why not just get a different house?

Chris Wollmuth stated that was where he was going with that. By adding to the existing space they were trying to minimize the overall addition. To create a similar size space – which isn't an exorbitant space – they would have to replicate the addition in the back which is no longer connected to those similar spaces. There are some houses where there are no option but to go out the back.

Chair Payne stated that he doesn't necessarily buy the argument that if you are adding off the back you're not going to use your front room. If you're not going to use it, then you didn't need the square footage. If you're adding all this room that you don't need, I don't know what's going on.

Chris Wollmuth stated that what drives people is the connection between spaces.

Chair Payne stated that he just doesn't agree that that is impossible with an addition off the back.

Commissioner Houze stated that it is a very sensitively designed plan. She likes the interrelationship of those spaces. As a commission if they are considering that bay is a character-defining feature, and she agrees that it is, then they have to encourage a different way to think about an extension.

Chris Wollmuth stated that there is some interpretation about whether that is character-defining, because there is a large piece sitting in front of it. Whether it is new or not, it is obscured. Whether it is seen or not is important. The important features are the front porch, the gables, the siding. A lot of

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people would not notice it. There is a gray area that hopefully opens the door to other pros of the plan. The design respects the history and prominent features as best it can.

Commissioner Tadic asked if the design extruded the same shape out, would that help?

Chair Payne stated that the architect has done a great job picking up all the other details – scale, detail of the bay, the way the base was, etc. He has a bigger problem recreating the same thing, because it would replicate it and create a false sense of history making people think it was always there.

Chris Wollmuth stated that was why they added the shingles but kept some of the trim board.

Chair Payne stated that it's a question for the Commission on how many consider it a major issue towards the overall approval of this plan.

Commissioner Sokol stated that he's not an architect, but he would like to hear more discussion on other solutions on how not to damage the yard on the interrelationship of various living spaces which he agrees makes for a better used home.

Commissioner Houze agrees that it is a character-defining feature of that historical period home. It's a lovely design, but the addition removes the feature.

Commissioner Bridge agrees that the bay is a character-defining feature on the home.

Commissioner Weidner agrees that the bay is a defining feature on the home. The porch obscures it now. Originally it would have stuck out as a primary feature.

Commissioner Houze asked when the porch was added.

Chris Wollmuth stated that it was added in 2011 along with the removal of the aluminum siding.

Chair Payne stated that they have consensus on not moving forward with approval. The question is whether there are suggestions on how to modify it. He would recommend adding off the rear. There has to be a way to connect the three rooms along the south side of the house that gives you the graciousness of space that you're looking for without removing the side bay. It seems that you already have several spaces that could easily be connected into a single space. I don't know why that seems so difficult to achieve in the current plan. You're starting to do that. It's the oversized family room that seems to be pushing this more than anything else.

Chris Wollmuth asked if reducing the size of the addition to a smaller scale make a difference.

Chair Payne stated that he would not support any modification to the bay.

Commissioner Sokol recommended that they continue to think about the project and find a solution that respects the Guidelines.

He asked for a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. There was no second.

- C. **HPC 2016-77: 518 N. Marion Street (Piecha)**: Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the wood siding from a two-story house and install Hardi-board siding (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*)
Robert Wcislo was present representing the property owner.

Planner Kaarre presented the staff report. The existing building was converted into a two-flat in the early 1900s, and the front, two-story sun porch was added in 1922. That is most likely when the stucco was added, as there is no wood siding on the front porch. The owner was recently seeking approval to remove the stucco from the building and then remove the original wood siding. They believed that both the stucco and wood were not in good enough condition to retain and repair, and wished to install fiber cement board siding in the place of the siding. The stucco was then removed on November 22 and the original siding was exposed. Members of the Architectural Review Committee provided comments to Staff and visited the site. They noted that much of the siding is fairly damaged from the application of the wood lath, mesh and stucco, as well as holes from the fasteners. Wood siding should be replaced to match the original if they cannot save and reuse any of the existing wood siding. Consider placing the new siding on the south and rear elevations if new siding is approved.

Staff Recommendations: The project as proposed should meet the Architectural Review Guidelines. Therefore, if the Commission determines that the existing wood siding is too deteriorated to retain and repair, then the replacement siding "*shall be the same color, texture and type of material as that which is being replaced,*" which is wood. The Commission could consider alternative siding on the south elevation as long as it matches the original siding. In addition, there is currently no siding on the front porch, and that will need to match as well.

Robert Wcislo, project manager and architectural designer, stated that they would like to replace the wood siding with hardi-board siding which would match the existing siding. It would be more beneficial for the homeowner. It has less maintenance and it will last longer. He reviewed the drawing. They want to add more trim to give it a better look. The existing trim and siding was damaged by the stucco that was installed over it.

Motion by Houze to open the application for discussion. Second by Tadic.

Commissioner Weidner stated that he agrees with the staff report. You should try to retain the wood siding. That's what was originally there. If there is any way to retain it or replace in-kind, that is what he would prefer to see.

Commissioner Tadic stated that the Guidelines are clear about this – replace in-kind. Wood would be much more appropriate. Hardi-board never looks historic enough. We're trying to maintain the historic appeal of our historic districts.

Robert Wcislo asked about the trim design he proposed.

Chair Payne stated that he was confused about the missing siding from the front porch.

Planner Kaarre stated that the front porch was added in 1922 and the stucco was most likely applied directly to it. It never had siding.

Chair Payne asked what would happen to the front porch – wood siding?

Planner Kaarre stated that they are proposing Hardi-board siding on the building. Staff recommendation is to meet the Guidelines – repair or replace with wood.

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Chair Payne stated that removal of stucco and replacement with stucco is another thing.

Planner Kaarre stated that the removal of the stucco was fine because it was not original. He also mentioned that the front porch stairs need redesign as they were moved from the side to the front without approval. The angled walls are not appropriate, though moving it to the front is fine.

Robert Wcislo stated that the angled walls were because it was stucco, but then they discovered the siding.

Chair Payne stated that the siding seems dirty, but not beyond repair. There are some areas that need replacement. It seems it could be saved. There would have been trim around windows, and reconstructing it seems appropriate. Corner boards also seem appropriate. He is not in favor of the added delineation at the second floor line.

Commissioner Houze asked if there were any historic photos of the building. Do they know if the stucco was added in the 1920s?

Planner Kaarre stated no, but they think the stucco was added then because the porch was built in 1922, and it had no siding and was clad in stucco.

Commissioner Houze agreed that salvaging as much of the wood as possible that's still usable would be the preferable thing to do and then replacing with wood where you need to.

Robert Wcislo stated that repairing the siding would cost three times as much as replacing it with wood. It has a lot of holes and it's not in very good condition. The boards are not even. This house was not maintained for many years. That's probably why they installed stucco. The trim was all in bad condition. It wasn't painted in many years. It was basically a teardown but we decided to save it.

Commissioner Sokol stated that he is not disputing anything. He hasn't seen it in person. If it is more expensive to repair he is fine replacing it with wood or with whatever the Guidelines allow.

Chair Payne concurs. What would they consider a comparable material to wood? They approved engineered or composite wood material on Forest Avenue. Hardi-board is cement board but the engineered material is a composite wood.

Motion by Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 518 N. Marion Street to repair or if not repairable to replace the wood siding with wood or engineered wood siding and trim. Second by Tadic. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Bridge, Houze, Sokol, Tadic, Weidner, Chair Payne

NAY: None

CONSENT AGENDA

OTHER BUSINESS

Historic Preservation Awards: Thank you to everyone to attend the event on December 7.

550 Forest Avenue: The bungalow floor addition project is well underway. The Commission approved repairing the windows and retaining the aluminum siding. All the windows and the siding have been removed. The owner has stated that the windows have been removed because they were too bad to be repaired. They removed the aluminum siding and wish to install either aluminum or Hardi-board. He just wished to inform the Commission of the new developments in the project.

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ADJOURN

Motion by Sokol to adjourn. Second by Tadic. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Bridge, Houze, Sokol, Tadic, Weidner, Chair Payne

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Douglas Kaarre, AICP, Urban Planner.