

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
October 10, 2019 - Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers, 7:30 pm**

Roll Call

Present: Acting Chair Rebecca Houze and Commissioners Tom Abrahamson, Jennifer Bridge, Derrick Gurski, Laura Jordahl, David Sokol, and Noel Weidner
Absent: Commissioners Sandra Carr, Lou Garapolo, and Aleksandra Tadic
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Attorney: Gregory Smith, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

Agenda Approval

Acting Chair Houze requested that the hearing for 408 N Kenilworth Ave be moved to the beginning of the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Jordahl. Motion approved 7-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Jordahl to approve the minutes for September 12, 2019. Second by Commissioner Gurski. Motion approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

- H. 408 N Kenilworth Ave Landmark Nomination (George & Myrtle Mason):** Public hearing for the historic landmark nomination for 408 N Kenilworth Ave (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

The witnesses were sworn in by Attorney Smith.

The homeowners, George & Myrtle Mason, and the report preparer, Jack Lesniak, were present. Mr. Lesniak gave a brief overview of the history of the house.

Acting Chair Houze noted that no public comments were provided.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Sokol reiterated his comments from the previous meeting and noted the importance of the house and the architects involved. He said this is an unusual and important building.

Commissioner Weidner requested the applicant to list the criteria recommended for designation. Mr. Lesniak said he recommends the building eligible under Criteria 1, 3, 5, and 6. Commissioner Weidner agreed that the house meets all of these criteria.

Commissioner Abrahamson thanked the homeowners for pursuing landmark process, noting that it is voluntary. Commissioner Gurski said he lives nearby and expressed approval. Commissioner Bridge said the nomination was thorough and she enjoyed reading it. Commissioner Jordahl concurred and said the story of the remodeling is interesting. Chair Houze said she appreciated the amount of research and said that the nomination enriches the history of these architectural firms and Oak Park, including how this building relates to the current Oak Park landmarks. The thanked the nominators.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the resolution recommending the building as an Oak Park Landmark to the Village Board; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Mrs. Mason thanked the Commission for the work that they do.

A. Advisory Review: 420 S Grove (Jay Dias): Advisory Review for solar panels on roof (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Jay Dias, the homeowner, was present. Mr. Dias said that he wants to be eco-friendly and meet the Guidelines.

Motion by Commissioner Weidner to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

Commissioner Abrahamson asked if trimming the trees is an option and if the solar panels have to be on the front face of the roof. Mr. Dias said due to the light, the east, south, and west sides are the only spaces available to get the light needed. Commissioner Weidner said that in a perfect world, they would not be on the street. He recommended avoiding putting solar panels on the front, particularly as the front does not get the best light. Acting Chair Houze said the Guidelines state that the street is not preferred. Commissioner Jordahl noted that the sides will also be visible.

B. HPC2019-60: 611 N Kenilworth Ave (Samantha Lotti): Certificate of Appropriateness to replace front patio doors and add storm windows (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Tom Bassett-Diley and Denny Burke, the architects, and Doug Fredrickson, the contractor, were present. Mr. Burke gave an overview, stating that this is a multi-phase project. They plan to add a mixture of exterior and interior storm windows and replace the patio doors. In surveying the house, they found differing door profiles. Mr. Burke said that all of the doors have been modified to some degree. He showed the Commission photos of damage and explained the differences in the doors and the plans for replacement.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Weidner asked if there were storm windows originally. Mr. Fredrickson said there is no evidence of storms originally. He said that the original fabric of the house needs to be protected. Commissioner Weidner asked how the storms will be attached. Mr. Burke directed the Commission to a cross-section in their packet.

The Commission discussed the use of a combination of interior and exterior storm windows. In response to a question from Acting Chair Houze, Mr. Burke said that the 20 windows with interior storms will open but those with exterior storms will not. Commissioner Jordahl said they should use all interior storm windows to show the art glass and Mr. Fredrickson explained that the

exposed windows need to be protected. With some exterior storm windows, the art glass can also be enjoyed from the interior.

Mr. Bassett-Diley explained that the homeowner was unable to heat the house above 50 degrees last winter. The homeowner also wants to be net zero. They ultimately intend to remove the 2001 addition and need to take care of the windows; condensation is destroying the interior wood. He said they originally planned to do all interior storm windows, but in places with corner windows this was challenging. They are currently working with Anthony Rubano at the State Historic Preservation Office and are aiming to get a tax freeze.

Commissioner Abrahamson said he owns a Frank Lloyd Wright house and has storm windows. He said the make a big difference and the combination of inside and outside storms is a sensitive, good solution. Acting Chair Houze agreed that this is a thoughtful approach. She expressed concern that the storms be removable. Mr. Bassett-Diley said the storms are designed so the glass may be removed and replaced with screens.

The Commission discussed the window hardware to be used and Mr. Fredrickson passed around sample hardware. It was confirmed that all the windows will be wood.

Commissioner Weidner asked about the door profiles and Mr. Burke said they believe "type B" as shown on page 3 (door 134) is the oldest of the doors on the front. Mr. Fredrickson explained the different door profiles and said there are no known original doors.

Motion by Commissioner Jordahl to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as shown in the drawings. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

- C. HPC2019-61: 818 N Euclid (Jessica Myers):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace front door (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. There was no one present on behalf of the applicant. Commissioner Sokol said he would like to discuss the item.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Abrahamson.

Commissioner Sokol said he would like to discuss options with the applicant. Commissioner Weidner said it doesn't look like the door can't be repaired. If lead paint is an issue, that can be fixed. He recommended replacing the storm door if needed. Acting Chair Houze recommended that the door be restored.

- D. HPC2019-55: 321 N Harvey Ave (Rajani & Vijay Raghavan):** Certificate of Appropriateness to repair front porch using composite decking rather than wood with replacement wood railings (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Vijay Raghavan, the homeowner, was present. Mr. Raghavan said they took the comments from the Historic Preservation Commission (September meeting) into consideration. He said they do not

know exactly what was there pre-1950 but this is hopefully close. They plan to keep the Trex decking but replace the railing with wood to meet the HPC requests.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Gurski.

Commissioner Jordahl asked about the state of the former railing, if it was in disrepair, and if the homeowner noticed any sagging in the middle. Mr. Raghavan confirmed it was deteriorated and said he did not notice sagging in the middle. Commissioner Sokol said the proposal remedies the problem and suggested moving forward. He recommended adding support if needed without adding a post. Acting Chair Houze concurred.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed, with the condition that no post is added at the center of the railing. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

- E. HPC2019-62: 115 S Kenilworth Ave (Charles and Christi Ramond):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace porch deck with composite and restore railings to a square wood baluster design (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. The Architectural Review Committee reviewed the project at their September meeting and provided recommendations.

Christi Raymond, the homeowner, was present. Ms. Raymond said the existing porch is not historic and is in poor condition. She showed the Commission photos of the condition. Ms. Raymond said the stairs do not meet code and the railings are coming off. She showed the Commission a sample of the proposed railing.

Motion by Commissioner Bridge to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Weidner asked if the columns are round or square. Ms. Raymond said the columns are not being replaced. She said the adjacent houses have square columns and posts but there is variation on the block; the Architectural Review Committee recommended square posts. The Commission discussed the combination of round columns and square posts. Commissioner Sokol said his house had combined round and square and he does not think this is an anomaly or out of character.

Acting Chair Houze clarified that the railings will be wood while the decking and fascia will be Trex. Ms. Raymond confirmed.

Motion by Commissioner Bridge to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

- F. HPC2019-63: 730 N Kenilworth Ave (Gina and Justin Demes):** Certificate of Appropriateness rear addition and renovation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. Kim Smith, the architect, and Justin Demes, the homeowner, were present. Ms. Smith said the addition is all on the rear and will use Hardie board, which will differentiate from the historic brick building.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

Commissioner Gurski asked the reason for the difference in siding. Ms. Smith said brick would be cost prohibitive and they also felt it important to differentiate. The Commission and homeowner discussed differing colors of brick on the current house. Commissioner Weidner said he would like the addition to be masonry but understands the cost restraints. Acting Chair Houze asked if other siding types were considered. Ms. Smith said the homeowner did not want to maintain wood siding and stucco would not look appropriate. Commissioner Sokol agreed he would rather see a different shade of brick but the addition is in the rear. Acting Chair Houze asked if they can reuse brick from the existing addition. Ms. Smith said it is in bad shape but said they will mimic the stone band with the Hardie board on the addition.

The homeowner and Commissioners discussed the possibility to get a historic preservation tax incentive. Ms. Smith noted that it only counts for the original structure. Commissioner Sokol recommended that the homeowner look into it for future work.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Jordahl. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

- G. HPC2019-64: 303 N Cuyler Ave (Emily and Joe Shields):** Certificate of Appropriateness for attic removal including the addition of two hip-roof dormers (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. Kim Smith, the architect, was present on behalf of the homeowner. Ms. Smith said they are renovating the attic; the originally planned to add shed roof dormers but changed to hip roofs.

Motion by Commissioner Jordahl to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Weidner asked if the existing dormers have hip roofs and Ms. Smith confirmed that they do. Commissioner Jordahl asked about the visibility and Ms. Smith said they are near the rear but the house is on a corner.

Commissioner Jordahl noted that the design is in keeping with the original dormers with the exception of a slight change in angle. Ms. Smith said this was needed for interior head space. Commissioner Jordahl said the different likely won't be noticeable from the street.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

• **2020 Work Plan**

Planner Trexler gave a brief overview of the 2020 Work Plan and recommended that the Commission consider adding developing a processes for historic sidewalks with Public Works.

Commissioner Sokol said the Commission should look at historic sidewalks and brick streets with Public Works. He said a consultant may be needed to update the Ordinance and he would like the Ordinance to be user-friendly. The Commission discussed the Architectural Review Guidelines, Ordinance, and brick streets.

Commissioner Abrahamson said the Commission should educate and encourage landmarking. He said there is a misconception about what landmarking means. Commissioner Bridge said owners of potential landmarks may be overwhelmed by the nomination requirements.

The Commission discussed providing additional information about the landmark process and tax freeze. Commissioner Gurski said the brochures need to be updated. Commissioner Abrahamson said that landmarks are hard to identify on the Oak Park website.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the 2020 Work Plan with the condition that historic streets/sidewalks and brochure updates be added. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Jordahl, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Acting Chair Houze

NAY: None

• **Proposed Realtor Education Event**

Commissioner Weidner said he is interested in holding such an event. Commissioner Gurski said the Commission needs to have brochures and data. Commissioner Abrahamson said he is interested in participating but thinks they need to develop a program from a sales perspective. Commissioner Sokol said a lot of education can be done through conversation and handouts. Acting Chair Houze said she will work with Planner Trexler and Commissioners in developing the event.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Gurski to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Urban Planner Historic Preservation.