

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
January 14, 2021 –Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:00 pm**

**Roll Call**

Present: Interim Chair Rebecca Houze and Commissioners Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Lou Garapolo, David Sokol, Noel Weidner, and Rachel Will  
Absent: Commissioner Sandra Carr  
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner  
Attorney: Greg Smith, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

**Agenda Approval**

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

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for December 10, 2020. Second by Commissioner Will. Motion approved 6-0-1 (Commissioner Sokol abstained as he was absent for the December meeting).*

**Regular Agenda**

- A. HPC2021-1: 828 Gunderson Ave (Matthew Eade):** Certificate of Appropriateness to alter front porch and move a window on the front façade (Gunderson Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She explained that the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on December 1, 2020. The ARC approved the window alteration on the side elevations at that time as they were determined to have limited effect. The ARC discussed the other proposed alterations and found them appropriate. They recommended 2x2” balusters with 2” spacing to be used on the porch in order to be consistent with historic railings on Gunderson houses.

Kimberlee Smith, the architect, and Matthew Eade, the homeowner, were present on behalf of the project. Ms. Smith introduced herself and the homeowner. She explained the project and said they will do the balusters as recommended. She said she is available for any questions.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.*

Commissioner Garapolo said he doesn’t have any problems with the proposed changes but said there is a philosophical problem: the project is not historically accurate for the house but is historically correct for the historic district and the type of house more broadly. He said he doesn’t have a problem with the railings as shown. He asked about the end columns and said he thought

they would remain with siding, as they are currently. Ms. Smith confirmed they will keep the piers and existing detailing.

Commissioner Sokol said he understands Commissioner Garapolo's point and this seems highly unusual. He said it seems like a good solution to give the homeowner what is wanted but in a sensitive way and as part of a substantial restoration. Ms. Smith explained the damaged created by the current knee wall design and said they don't want to perpetuate that. Commissioner Doherty said the porch goes well with the rest of the block. She asked if the window will be reused. Ms. Smith confirmed they will reuse the window and will replace a vinyl dormer window to match the historic wood windows with the diamond pattern.

Commissioner Weidner asked about the detail at the top of the piers. Ms. Smith said this will be restored and she can provide updated drawings. She confirmed that the siding will be retained and patched as needed. Commissioner Weidner said this should be indicated on the drawings but otherwise the project looks good.

Chair Houze asked if there is another house with the same front porch configuration. Mr. Eade said he is not aware of any with this combination. Following a question from Chair Houze, Ms. Smith confirmed that the reason for the balustrade is due to water damage. Chair Houze noted that there is precedent for both front window locations and asked if this is due to the floorplan. Ms. Smith said she has been inside about a dozen Gunderson houses and they all have two bedrooms at the front. There is no reason not to center the window. Chair Houze said given that both window designs exist in the district and it doesn't signify something like a difference in floor plan, it seems appropriate.

Commissioner Will said she is concerned this is conjecture. There is a precedent for each of the details, just not all together in one house. Chair Houze agreed.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the porch and window alterations as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 7-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, Commissioner Will, and Chair Houze*

*NAY: None*

- B. HPC2020-50: 315 N Euclid Ave (Stephen and Mary Jo Schuler):** Approve balcony railing design for as required by 2020 Certificate of Appropriateness approval (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said that the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on December 1, 2020, and the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on December 10, 2020. The Certificate of Appropriateness was approved on December 10 with the condition that the applicant return to either the ARC or the HPC for final approval of the railing. The HPC requested that the railing design be lighter than the design of the existing porch railings.

Tom Bair, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. He described the changes made to the railing.

*Motion by Commission Garapolo to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Sokol.*

Commissioner Garapolo thanked the applicant, said the proposal responds appropriately to the request, and he does not have any issues with it. He said it would help to have the update shown on an elevation drawing. Commissioner Weidner said the drawings were not updated. Mr. Bair said the change in the railing would not show at the scale of the elevations. Commissioner Sokol and Chair Houze agreed that the new design is appropriate.

*Motion by Commissioner Weidner to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the updated railing design as proposed. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 7-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, Commissioner Will, and Chair Houze*

*NAY: None*

- C. HPC2021-2: 839 N Oak Park Ave (Marty Noll):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace tile roof with asphalt shingles (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

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

Marty Noll, the homeowner, was present on behalf of the project. He said he is here to answer any questions. He said the required materials were submitted and he included a narrative explaining how this shingle was selected.

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

Commissioner Garapolo said he is disappointed that this project is coming to the Commission now since the shingles have already been paid for. He said it is almost a foregone conclusion and he doesn't appreciate being put in that position. He said he understands the cost and other elements but the house looks very nice with the current roofing in place. Mr. Noll said he didn't know this kind of review would be needed when the project was started. He said they are sad to lose the roof, but it makes economic sense and if not addressed, it will be an ongoing problem. He described some of the repairs done previously.

Commissioner Will asked if the quote for repair is for a portion or the roof in full. Mr. Noll said there are two repair quotes. The first quote they got was for a portion; after that they decided to look at replacing the full roof. Repair in place would exceed the full asphalt shingle cost. Commissioner Will said they need to look at whether the roof actually needs to be fully replaced. Mr. Noll said the roofer said the tile is no longer manufactured. What is left is brittle and easily damaged. Replacement tiles, when they have been able to get them, have been in different colors. The tile to repair is brittle and not readily available. This is why they looked at full replacement.

Commissioner Chase asked if the garage had a tile roof. Mr. Noll said the garage has asphalt shingle. They have lived in the house for 42 years and their garage was never tile. Commissioner Sokol said he understands the issues as he had a house with a slate roof. He said his concern is that raised by Commissioner Garapolo, that a shingle has already been selected. He asked about the proposed shingle. Mr. Noll described the shingle chosen and why.

Chair Houze said it is unfortunate that the tile roofs are expensive to replace. This is a Spanish style house and the roofing material is a distinctive characteristic of that style. Replacement requires us to think about the materials. She said asphalt shingle is the fourth and least preferred option in the Architectural Review Guidelines. It is the least expensive but concrete tiles last longer and are a

more sustainable option. Chair Houze said there must have been something they liked when they bought the house and asphalt shingles will detract aesthetically. However, architectural shingles seem to be the best asphalt substitute.

Commissioner Weidner said the asphalt shingles will be flat. He agreed with Chair Houze and said without the tile roof, the house won't really be in the Spanish Colonial style anymore. He described the lifecycle of materials and said the tile is a better investment. Asphalt shingle will take away from the character of the house and may affect later sale of the house. Mr. Noll said the guarantee of asphalt is over 25 years. He said they were attracted to the house by the roof but they really chose it for the interior and layout. He said two or three tile roofs in their neighborhood have been replaced in the last 20 years and it has not deterred sale of those homes.

Commissioner Sokol said he understands the concerns of Commissioner Weidner, but they only have some moral suasion to convince the homeowners. He said he does not think they can say no, but he pointed out that there are intermediary roofing options in the Guidelines that have not recently been discussed. Commissioner Sokol said he hates to see it go, but on the grounds presented, the Commission cannot say no.

Chair Houze agreed and said the Commission has approved asphalt shingle roofs when there is a significant financial disparity. Commissioner Weidner said unless there is a grant program, all tile roofs will be gone. Commissioner Will said they need to look at the necessity of what needs to be replaced. She said we need to salvage as much material as possible and that should be reviewed.

Commissioner Sokol said the homeowner looked for the tiles and they are not available; we have to take their word. Commissioner Weidner said we have had applicants find cement tiles. Mr. Noll said he has dealt with the same roofer for 40 years and trusts them. They have done a lot of work in Oak Park. They said the tiles are 100 years old, are brittle, and cannot be walked on, which would be required in order to do reroofing. They are not easily replaced.

Chair Houze said it is unfortunate that there seems to not be demand for tiles in the area as they are less expensive in California. She said she is prepared to support this COA even though it is unfortunate to see the tile go. She said she agrees completely with Commissioner Weidner and Will's comments.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for roof replacement project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 5-2.*

*AYE: Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, and Chair Houze*

*NAY: Commissioners Weidner and Will*

- D. Advisory Review: 318 S Harvey Ave (Brougham Reo Owner LP):** Advisory Review for new house and garage. Existing house to be demolished is not historic and is a non-contributing resource in the historic district (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the HPC should, in particular, discuss the siding material and the porch railing. The applicant should consider a wood clapboard or similar synthetic material with a 3" profile for the siding and 2" spacing for the porch balusters, to ensure compatibility with the historic district.

Mark Meagher was present on behalf of the project. He explained that they looked to the neighborhood in designing the house.

Commissioner Weidner said staff brought up the items he would like the applicant to consider.

Commissioner Sokol said these details need to be on the drawings. Commissioner Weidner said the applicant can label the drawings as needed.

Chair Houze clarified that the siding will be Hardie board and asked if the applicant considered wood. Mr. Meagher said the Hardie board is more cost effective and he likes the longevity. Commissioner Garapolo said the Commission has not approved Hardie board recently and he would recommend using a siding material that is truly representative of the area. He agreed with the balustrade comments and said over all, the size and scale of the house are appropriate.

Chair Houze said on the roof plan it looks like the gables don't line up. Mr. Meagher said they are aligned. Chair Houze asked about the height of the house compared to the neighbors and Mr. Meagher said it will be about the same. The Commission discussed the siding on the side bay and Mr. Meagher explained that it is also Hardie board. Chair Houze asked about the setbacks and Mr. Meagher said they have to average the setback of the adjacent homes so it will align with them.

Commissioner Sokol asked for additional information about the siding on the bay. Chair Houze recommended against Hardie board and Commissioner Weidner asked if LP Smartside was considered. Mr. Meagher said it is hard to get siding currently and some contractors only work with one siding type. He said he always uses Hardie board and has not had any issues. Chair Houze said the Commission has approved LP Smartside over Hardie board as it better simulates wood. Mr. Meagher said he would look into it. The Commission discussed LP Smartside and siding types in depth. It was agreed that Hardie board is not appropriate. Mr. Meagher agreed to follow-up with staff to get more information on LP Smartside.

- E. Advisory Review: 203 S Marion St (203 S Marion St Corporation):** Advisory Review of proposed new building in the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District and within 250 feet of an Oak Park Landmark (the Plaza Hotel).

Chair Houze introduced the project. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant attended the Historic Preservation Commission on November 24, 2020, for initial recommendations and is now returning for a full Advisory Review. The applicant has responded to the November comments in an attached letter and submitted updated plans.

Present on behalf of the applicant were: Courtney Brower and Justin Pelej from Focus, and David Mann and James Young from Booth Hansen. Ms. Brower introduced the attendees. David Mann provided a presentation, describing the revisions made.

Commissioner Sokol said the changes made are helpful and humanize the building more. Commissioner Garapolo said he disagrees and finds the size and scale of the project to be too big. He said work has been done on the pedestrian side, but it is still a massive wall. Commissioner Weidner agreed with Commissioner Garapolo and said they are being asked to look at long-term compatibility. In size and scale, the proposed building is not compatible. For the setback, the courtyard was discussed. There is no relief on the ground level from the courtyard as designed. He said the building is not compatible.

Ms. Brower said when designing the courtyard, they looked to the light courts at the Carlton Hotel, which are above ground level. So there is precedent for that. She said they cannot take it to grade because there are two levels of parking garage in that area. She said the comments on height were expected but this was an economic decision. They cannot build a shorter building and believe there is a precedent for tall buildings in the area.

Commissioner Garapolo suggested bringing the courtyard to grade to break up the scale and bring some relief. Commissioner Chase said she commented previously about greenspace, and while she appreciates the added greenery, the point of greenspace is to have more space around the building. The building as designed is overwhelming.

Chair Houze said she could not immediately identify the changes in the new proposal. There is some improvement and she said she appreciates the green roof. She said she was disappointed that so many of their points were dismissed. She asked if there is really no other option that a building that goes from lot line to lot line. She said this will be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood, in particular to the scale of the buildings in the immediate area. None of the character of the neighborhood, including the scale and decorative details, is reflected in the proposed development. She said she reiterated the comments from November, specifically concerning the size and scale of the building and the nature of the block. She agreed with Commissioner Chase that going from lot line to lot line is aggressive.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **The Single-Family Rehabilitational Loan Program:** Planner Trexler explained the program and said she confirmed that it would cover the replacement of historic windows to match in material. Chair Houze said this was brought to her attention because of an add that seemed to promote replacing historic windows over repair. The Commission discussed and Planner Trexler said she will look into this.
- Commissioner Garapolo said there are other topics they have been planning on discussing and asked when that would be. Planner Trexler said most of those items will be covered with the Commission reviews the guidelines this year.

#### **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 7-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, Commissioner Will, and Chair Houze*

*NAY: None*

The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.