

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
June 10, 2021 – Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:00 pm**

**Roll Call**

Present: Chair Noel Weidner and Commissioners Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Lou Garapolo, Rebecca Houze, and David Sokol  
Absent: Commissioner Rachel Will  
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 Garapolo.  
Motion approved 6-0.*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for April 8, 2021. Second by Commissioner Houze. Motion approved 6-0.*

**Regular Agenda**

- A. HPC2021-25: 810 Ridgeland Ave (Chris Payne):** Renew previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness to build a rear addition (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on June 13, 2019. The Commission approved the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) at that time with a vote of 6-0 and no conditions. As COAs last only one year, the applicant has returned for a new COA. The proposed project remains the same.

Chris Payne, the homeowner and architect, was present. He explained the project and said they intend to expand the house while keeping the existing character. They will match existing siding and trim and will reuse the window.

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

Commissioner Sokol said it is a sensitive approach and was already approved. Commissioner Garapolo asked if there was some wood replacement in the front and Mr. Payne said some replacement was done but it is not part of the COA. Materials were repaired to match existing. Commissioner Doherty said the project meets the Guidelines and she appreciates the reuse aspect.

She said the scale is appropriate for the house and the lot. Commissioner Houze agreed and said this is a nice model for a bungalow addition that is appropriately scaled.

Chair Weidner agreed with Commissioner Sokol that this was previously approved and nothing has changed.

*Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness extension for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 6-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- B. HPC2021-26: 733 Woodbine Ave (Yasmine and Rod Gharavi):** Certificate of Appropriateness to move stairs from front of porch to north side (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) meeting on May 27, 2021. The ARC felt the project was appropriate but recommended submitting some additional materials including renderings showing the roof relationships and clarifying the plan for the railings. Two-inch baluster spacing was recommended as consistent with the historic districts. The applicant has updated their submission materials for the Commission to meet the recommendations of the ARC.

Chris Wollmuth, the architect, was present. He said one of the reasons for the shift of the door is that the interior door is at the north end, so currently the entire porch is circulation. This plan would make the southern portion of the porch occupiable.

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

Commissioner Garapolo thanked the applicant for the additional illustrations. He said the applicant has followed through on what the ARC discussed and he has no further comments. Commissioner Sokol said the proposal is appropriate. Commissioner Houze said if the ARC feels their questions have been answered, she is fine with this proposal as well. Chair Weidner said he appreciates the roof rendering as the roof appearance which was his main question at the ARC.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- C. HPC2021-27: 232 N Scoville Ave (Alex and Larissa Leibowitz):** Certificate of Appropriateness to alter historic garage including moving the garage door from the street-facing elevation to the alley-facing elevation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the ARC meeting on December 1, 2020, to discuss their concerns about safely

accessing their garage, which is rotated 90 degrees from the alley. At that point, the applicant was considering demolishing the existing garage and building a new garage. The applicant is now proposing retaining the existing garage and altering to meet their needs. The garage door would be moved from the north elevation to the east elevation, so it faces the alley. They intend to reuse the existing garage door in the new location.

Alex and Larissa Leibowitz, the homeowners, were present. Mr. Leibowitz said they are available for questions.

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Houze.*

Commissioner Garapolo said he applauds saving the garage and reusing the garage door. He recommended having a trim board installed where the garage door is currently to indicate that there was something there. Mr. Leibowitz said their concern is the depth of the wall because they need room to make the stucco flush. He said he is not opposed to an indication of the door but would prefer not to use trim. He suggested painting a line. Commissioner Garapolo said if the opening is infilled, you can still install a trim board that will be forward of the stucco. That would be pretty easy to install. Mr. Leibowitz agreed to do that.

Commissioner Houze asked if the homeowners considered replicating the windows where the door is currently. Ms. Leibowitz said if they put windows in, they might not look good with the trim. She said there are also windows on the yard side. Commissioner Houze said the trim board is nice and follows the precedent set by the HPC for infilling historic doors and windows. Ms. Leibowitz asked for a Commission preference. Commissioner Garapolo said he feels strongly about the trim but not the windows. Commissioner Houze said she is fine with the trim board. Commissioner Sokol said the windows should be up to the homeowners, but the trim is a good idea.

*Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for project with the condition that trim be used to mark the former location of the garage door. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- D. HPC2021-28: 417 Clinton Ave (Karen Yarbrough):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace cedar shingles with asphalt shingles (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Karen Yarbrough, the homeowner, was present. She said the roof is very old and is leaking and she really needs to get the new roofing approved.

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

Commissioner Garapolo asked if the roof has been reviewed to determine if spot repair is an option. Ms. Yarbrough said the roof is over 30 years old and she had a few different estimates. She said it needs to be replaced. There is no water shield.

Commissioner Sokol asked if there is a sample and Ms. Yarbrough said it is part of the packet. Chair Weidner asked about a color preference and Ms. Yarbrough said she was thinking gray but has no preference. Chair Weidner said the existing is a weathered gray. Commissioner Houze asked if we know what the original material was. Planner Trexler said this has not been confirmed. Commissioner Houze said real cedar shakes would look golden to begin with and would weather to gray. Other examples in the Village were discussed.

Chair Weidner said he wanted to address Commissioner Garapolo's question. The shingles in the worst condition are in the back. He said this is a valid question that should be entertained. Ms. Yarbrough said this is a two-flat building and water is leaking into her tenant's apartment. There is no water shield under the shingles. Commissioner Sokol said the idea that the shingles could be saved and put back after adding a water shield is problematic. He would ordinarily support reusing what is there. Chair Weidner asked if effort has been made to repair. Ms. Yarbrough said there has. Chair Weidner asked for further information and Ms. Yarbrough said there is no vapor shield.

Chair Weidner asked the applicant to consider repair. He said a lot of people got water damage due to ice dams last year. The rear roof has a lower slope. The main roof might not have to be touched. Ms. Yarbrough said she would love that but the shingles are falling off. She asked about the life-expectancy of a cedar shingle roof. Chair Weidner agreed that the roof may be near the end of its life expectancy, but this should be explored.

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the color receive final approval by staff. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion ended in no action 3-3.*

*AYE: Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, and Commissioner Sokol*

*NAY: Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Houze, and Chair Weidner*

Attorney Smith confirmed that this motion did not pass.

Ms. Yarbrough said she is concerned. She asked why the Commission doesn't believe she's done her due diligence. Commissioner Houze said the Commission had a similar case a few months ago where the owner was asked to go back and do more research to figure out the nature of the leaks and if the entire roof needs to be replaced or just portions.

Ms. Yarbrough said if she was to repair now and later replace the whole roof, when that would happen. She said she has to consider the expense down the road as well. Chair Weidner said the roof may be close to the end of its life span but there are cedar roofs that have lasted longer than the average life span. He asked for clarification on the location of the leaks. Ms. Yarbrough said they are on the south. Chair Weidner requested photos of where the leak is happening. Commissioner Garapolo said a contractor can evaluate the location and reason of the leaks. This approach has typically been taken and Ms. Yarbrough may attend the ARC for more feedback. Ms. Yarbrough said there is no water shield and Commissioner Garapolo said they need to have the contractor report.

- E. HPC2021-29: 715 S Elmwood Ave (Carolyn & Clyde Lundgren):** Certificate of Appropriateness to alter windows on the front elevation as part of an attic renovation (Gunderson Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant initially brought a proposal for a set of three casement windows to the ARC on May 27, 2021. She noted the items discussed and said the permits were reviewed for 721 S Elmwood Ave, as

requested. The windows at that address have been replaced but the shape and type are historically accurate and were not altered.

Amanda Miller, the interior designer, and Clyde Lundgren, the homeowner, were present. Mr. Lundgren said they are finishing the attic. They understand the importance of the Guidelines and their hope is to keep with the aesthetics on the block. Their window proposal matches the windows of a house two doors down.

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

Commissioner Garapolo thanked the applicant for providing alternatives and said this address the concerns of the ARC. He said the single window is a better proportion for the house. Commissioner Houze asked about the research on 721 S Elmwood and Planner Trexler explained. Commissioner Houze said sticking strictly to the Guidelines, the window configuration should not be altered even if the windows themselves are not historic. However, any of the proposed options are appropriate based on precedent in the neighborhood. She said the proposal is not the same as not altering the façade as long as the shape of the trim is kept and it mirrors the trim at the bottom of the gable.

Commissioner Sokol said if this were an isolated building, he would push to keep the one window. However, given the neighboring examples and the need for additional light, he has no problem as long as the shape of the molding is kept.

Commissioner Houze asked Commissioner Garapolo if he feels strongly about the single window and Commissioner Garapolo said he does not.

Commissioner Doherty asked if skylights were considered on the north roof slope and Mr. Lungren explained that there is a staircase in this location. Skylights here would encroach on the stairwell and the headspace that is currently grandfathered in. Adding skylights would open the need for a dormer to add headspace, which they want to avoid.

Commissioner Chase said she prefers the three windows for neighborhood consistency, but all of the options look appropriate. Chair Weidner said the ARC felt the three windows would overwhelm the gable. He said he would prefer the option on page six, which is simply taller and not wider. Commissioner Doherty asked if there is any precedent for altering a front window in this way. Chair Weidner and Planner Trexler said they are not aware of any precedent.

Commissioner Garapolo and Chair Weidner recommended adding windows in the rear. Mr. Lungren said the chimney and stack would block the light from the back. In terms of enjoyment and aesthetics, the front would be preferred. Commissioner Houze said she likes all three proposals and all are in character, however, the Commission did have a similar proposal previously to change a street-facing window that was denied because the window was a character-defining feature.

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the three-part window be used with trim as shown on page 2. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 4-2.*

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

*NAY: Commissioner Garapolo and Chair Weidner*

- F. **HPC2021-30: 932-954 Pleasant St (Peter Couri):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an historic bench, planter, and portion of a trellis to add a parking lot within a courtyard apartment building; bench and planter to be replicated and relocated (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Attending on behalf of the project: Claudia Davalos, from Cruz Designs & Consultants; Mario Cruz, the architect from Cruz Designs & Consultants; and Peter Couri, on behalf of the owner. Mr. Cruz introduced himself and Ms. Davalos. He explained the proposal. Mr. Couri said he represents the owner of the building. He said they are trying to address an issue of parking availability in Oak Park while also trying to preserve as much as possible of the historic integrity of the building. He provided additional project details. He said there will still be ample green space. The proposal concerns about 3,800 of 22,000 feet of green space on the lot.

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

Commissioner Garapolo asked how the project will meet the Guidelines and Mr. Couri said they're trying to come as close as they can to meeting the Guidelines. They are maintaining the trellis and the bench will be replaced and there will be a similar planter. Commissioner Garapolo said the trellis can be repaired and the bench can be restored. He said the landscaped courtyard is instrumental to the district and he cannot support this proposal. Commissioner Sokol agreed.

Commissioner Chase said the planter looks neglected and asked why it is not being used. Mr. Couri said they have only owned the building since February 2019 and it has been under construction for most of that time. There are no tenants. He said if they maintained the courtyard, they would not get parking. The project was presented to Zoning in August or September and no issue was identified.

Mr. Cruz said the building has 79 units. Having 18 parking spaces at the rear is not enough. Chair Weidner said the Commission recently reviewed a project on the other side of Oak Park that requested to have less parking because they are close to transit. He said the Commission must focus on the historic features: the planter, bench, and trellis. Commissioner Garapolo said these elements are character-defining of the courtyard and need to be maintained, repaired if necessary, and restored. Commissioner Sokol said the location changes the essential character and appearance of the building and the setting in which it resides.

Commissioner Houze said she appreciates the thoughtfulness in how to try to repair and restore these elements, which are essentially the furniture of the courtyard; it is the courtyard as a whole that is the defining feature of the property. She said she would not support this project. Chair Weidner said when the district was created, part of the narrative was the variety of buildings, including the courtyard apartment buildings. The courtyard is a defining feature. Commissioner Sokol expressed concern about the number of courtyard apartment buildings that could become parking lots.

Commissioner Doherty agreed that the courtyard is the defining feature. Alteration would greatly alter the character and nature of the building.

Chair Weidner asked the Commission if they would like to take no action. Commissioner Garapolo recommended no action.

Mr. Couri asked for any recommendations to better meet the Guidelines. Commissioner Houze said there is a new development being planned that will have a large parking garage. She said she wonders if there is a way to have an arrangement with that project. Mr. Couri agreed. Commissioner Sokol mentioned adding parking at the rear and said this would not require Commission review as it is not visible from the street.

*The Commission took no action.*

- G. Architectural Review Guidelines:** Prepare a recommendation to the Village Board regarding the adoption of the updated Architectural Review Guidelines.

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She mentioned the recommended edits received by some of the Commissioners.

The Commission discussed the house pictured on page 126. Commissioner Houze said this was discussed as not being a good example of new construction due to the heavier stone at the top and lighter stone on the first floor. It was recommended that the Commission consider if there are any better options.

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to prepare a letter to the Village Board recommending the Commission's approval of the revised Guidelines, to include edits discussed. Second by Commissioner Houze. Motion approved 6-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **- Preservation Awards**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Planner Trexler said the Stewardship Awards program is returning this year. Nominations for Historic Preservation awards will be accepted through October 15 either online, by email to staff, or in person at Village Hall. We are looking for projects that have occurred in the last five or so years. There are five categories: adaptive use, new addition, rehabilitation, restoration, and sustainability. The awards ceremony will take place in early December.

Chair Weidner asked the Commission to submit nominations. Commissioner Sokol said these awards are important. We are isolated within the community and anything we can do to show what good preservation and restoration looks like really helps what we do. Commissioner Houze agreed and said the award recipients really appreciate it.

### **- Oak Park Post Office**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Commissioner Sokol summarized what the work group has been doing. He said they met with Brad White of the Alphawood Foundation. He said the newspaper article that appeared in the Tribune and Oak Leaves generated a lot of letters and phone calls. The work group was encouraged to contact our congressman, who used to be the chair on the postal committee. They have reached out but not yet received a response. He said

they also contacted our state senators. This building is extremely important. He said they are discussing utilization of the space and will check with other post offices to see what they have been doing.

- Commissioner Doherty asked about the process of taking no action. Planner Trexler and Attorney Smith explained the process.
- Attorney Smith introduced Caitlyn Culbertson. He said she may attend on occasion in Attorney Smith's stead. Chair Weidner encouraged the Commission to continue to ask if they have any procedural questions. Attorneys Smith and Culbertson are here to assist with those.

**ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Houze. Motion approved 6-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

The meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.