

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
September 9, 2021 – Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

**Roll Call**

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

Chair Weidner welcomed the two new Commissioners and said they will do introductions at the end of the meeting. Commissioner Andriana arrived following the first agenda item so was not present for the initial votes.

**Agenda Approval**

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

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for April 8, 2021. Second by Commissioner Will. Motion approved 7-0.*

**Regular Agenda**

- A. HPC2021-39: 207 S Ridgeland Ave (Parke and Patricia Brewer):** Renew Certificate of Appropriateness previously approved on October 8, 2020, for expansion of existing front porch (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said COAs last for one year. The applicant delayed their project due to the pandemic and is requesting a one-year extension.

Mr. and Ms. Brewer, the homeowners, were present.

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

Commissioner Garapolo asked for confirmation that all elements will be wood except the decking. Commissioner Houze said she had the same question. Mr. Brewer confirmed that only the decking would be composite. Commissioner Sokol said nothing has changed and it has already been approved, so they should move forward. Chair Weidner recommended that the same condition be included in the approval as previously.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that all materials be wood with the exception of the decking, which may be synthetic. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-1.*

Commissioner Garapolo said he was denying the COA due to the wrap-around of the porch. He said this is consistent with his previous vote on the project.

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

*NAY: Commissioner Garapolo*

**B. HPC2021-37: 134 S Taylor Ave (Peter Byer and Deepa Gupta):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish existing garage and build a coach house (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview and said the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee in July. The Committee felt the proposal to be appropriate but suggested exploring a stucco railing for the second-floor deck.

Chris Goode, the architect, and Deep Gupta, the homeowner, were present. Mr. Goode said they explored stucco for the railing but as the balcony projects beyond the roofline, they were concerned about deterioration. The other concern was blocking visibility into the yard. He said it would be painted or stained to match the house and coach house. He said they would reuse the windows from the historic garage on the lower story of the coach house if possible.

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

Commissioner Garapolo said the balcony will be visible from the street and is not relating to anything on the front of the house. Mr. Goode said they tried to pick up the arches from the front entry and use stucco at the support elements for the balcony, which were previously wood. He said they used elements from the front pilaster on the house. Commissioner Garapolo asked if there is a way to carry the stucco supports upward. Mr. Goode said he thinks so.

Commissioner Sokol asked if there is an elevator. Ms. Gupta said there is not. Mr. Goode said there is a straight run stair, the idea being that they could put in a stair lift if necessary. Chair Weidner said that seems like a good solution.

Commissioner Doherty said carrying up the stucco columns seems like a good compromise. She approved of the reuse of the windows. Commissioners Houze and Sokol agreed. Commissioner Will asked who determines if they're salvageable. Ms. Gupta said they've talked to two contractors and one has looked and said it's possible. They will do their best.

Chair Weidner said it makes sense to get rid of the garage due to the driveway issue. He said he likes the design of the coach house the way it is and noted that there is a column on the front porch that is wood. Commissioner Will agreed and said the stucco doesn't need to be a condition of approval. This is an entirely new building and it is picking up some of the detailing of the wood on the house. She said the design is appropriate.

Commissioner Garapolo said his suggestion was to bring in more stucco and he is against the wood railing as drawn. Commissioner Houze said she agrees that visually from the street, stucco would

harmonize better with the house, but as this is an entirely new structure, it may not be important to dictate the railing. The design is generally very thoughtful. She said her personal preference would be stucco but either wood or stucco would work. Commissioner Sokol said he does not see a need to make it a condition but hopes the applicant looks closely at that option as well as the reuse of the windows. Commissioner Napper agreed.

*Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that the homeowner consider the stucco railing alternative. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- C. HPC2021-38: 221 N Cuyler Ave (Molly Greenwood Whalen):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish existing garage, new garage will not be visible from the street (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

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

Present on behalf of the project were Molly and Nate Whalen, the homeowners, and Dotan Amir, from Danley's Garages. Mr. Whalen said they don't take tearing down the existing structure lightly but they have safety concerns. The walls and roof shake every time they open the door. He said he would be happy to answer questions.

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

The Commission discussed the siding on the proposed garage and recommended LP Smartside rather than vinyl. Planner Trexler said the scope is just the demo of the existing garage as the proposed new garage will not be visible from the street.

Mr. Amir said the garage is failing and does not meet current code. The slab is beyond repair and even with a new slab, there will be separation between new and old concrete. The roof is caving in certain areas and the garage is a safety hazard. Chair Weidner said the estimate doesn't include the slab and siding. If you consider these items, the difference is \$5,000. Commissioner Doherty said she hates to see the loss of historic garages but this one looks to be at the end of its lifespan. Commissioners Sokol and Will agreed. Commissioner Will recommended saving the windows for future use. Mr. Amir said all products that are recyclable are donated as a company rule.

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 8-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Houze, Commissioner Napper, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Will, 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 and noted the new materials provided by staff and the homeowner since the previous Commission review.

Karen Yarbrough, the homeowner, was present. She said she has owned this home for a little over two years and has no idea how old the roof is. She said there is currently no water protection and this is mentioned in the estimate from the contractor. In terms of preventative maintenance, they want to make sure there is protection.

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

Chair Weidner said he appreciates the material gathered, including that at one time the roof was asphalt shingles. Once a roof goes to asphalt, it typically doesn't go back. He said he felt it was up to the Commission to fight for replacement with wood shingles or repair if those options were possible.

Commissioner Will asked when the district was designated. Commissioner Sokol said the district was created in the 1980s and one of the important things in this district was the diversity of materials. He said he doesn't think the issue was really being raised in the sense that we are asking it now. Commissioner Will said we don't know what the original material was. We can guess but it is conjecture to say wood shake should be put back because that was original. Commissioner Sokol said he has been unhappy at the thought of replacing slate or tile with asphalt but doesn't think this is the same situation if we have documentation that it has previously been asphalt. Odds are good that it did have wood shake, but it could have been tile or slate. He said he finds it hard to be convinced that the Commission can tell the homeowner they must use wood, but he wishes they would.

Chair Weidner agreed with Commissioners Will and Sokol. He asked the Commission if they have preferences related to color. The Commission discussed and agreed the color should be similar to the current weathered wood color. Commissioner Andriana recommended the slate or weathered wood colors. Commissioner Houze said any of the browns or grays would be appropriate.

*Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- E. HPC2021-40: 200 S Ridgeland Ave (Nicholas Niedospial):** Certificate of Appropriateness to add doors and a deck at the rear of a building on a corner lot, including the replacement of a leaded glass window with doors (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on August 26.

Nick Niedospial, the homeowner and architect, was present.

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

Commissioner Sokol said he does not have a problem with removing the leaded glass window as it is on the rear and part of an addition to the original structure. Commissioner Doherty said she doesn't have an issue either as the pattern is repeated around the house and the windows are not right in front on the street. Chair Weidner asked if the brown frames are storm windows and Mr. Niedospial said they are glass storm windows put in by the previous homeowner. The windows on the sides are aluminum triple track storms on the outside of the windows. Commissioner Will said with the deck and the rail, the door will read similar to the arrangement of the windows now. She said she doesn't have an issue with the design proposed.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Houze. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- F. HPC2021-41: 224 N Elmwood Ave (Kim and Don Vander Griend):** Certificate of Appropriateness to restore the original open porch and wood clapboard siding as part of project to restore an existing 2-family house to the original single-family use (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview and said the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on August 26.

Bill Scholtens, the architect, was present. He explained the project to the Commission. He said it is a deconversion project and explained the porch and entry changes. He said the house was stuccoed over, not in a historically sensitive way, including many of the details like the water table band. The stucco over the foundation walls is not preferred as it creates a vapor barrier. The owner would like to finish the basement in the future, which will include an internal vapor barrier.

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

Commissioner Sokol said the historic changes referenced by staff are something to be taken seriously, but looking at the comparison of current and proposed, the designer pointed out graphically how it currently looks like an enclosed back porch. He said the proposed changes look appropriate and he is impressed by this project.

Commissioner Garapolo agreed with Commissioner Sokol and asked about the porch roof slope. Mr. Scholtens said the beam was lowered about 12 inches and he tucked the roof right under the sill, so it is now a true 3/12 slope. Commissioner Garapolo said he is in favor of this project.

Chair Weidner asked about the window being added on the bay and Mr. Scholtens said there was likely a window here originally that was removed when the second story of the porch was added. When the porch is removed, there is a long, flat wall. So he added a double-hung sash window to correspond with the clearstory window above. Chair Weidner said that makes sense. He said this project is a good solution to an imposing and heavy addition. He said it is clear they have done their research and included a lot of nice elements, and he is in favor.

Commissioner Houze said this is an interesting case. She said she is compelled on the one hand that the Commission has preserved "Prairie-ized" alterations previously. However, this project is so

carefully guided by the archaeology of the building, she supports the restoration back to the Queen Anne form. She said she is less sure about the more conjectural elements of the gable, but since there are such strong models throughout the Village, that seems like a good decision. Chair Weidner agreed and said if there was an area that makes sense to save some of the stucco as a nod to the house's history, that would be something to consider, but he would not make this part of the approval. Commissioner Sokol said no one but a historic preservationist would understand that, and it wouldn't be in harmony with the rest of the building. Chair Weidner agreed and said we do have a lot of documentation. Commissioner Will agreed and asked about the precedent for documentation. Chair Weidner said there is no precedent for it. He said he does not see stucco removal for similar projects happening often. Commissioner Sokol said the removal of stucco from the foundation makes him in favor of total uncovering.

Commissioner Will asked about any exploratory work under the stucco and Mr. Scholtens said he looked at the water table band, which is clearly wood, but did not take any stucco off the wall. Commissioner Will said as they start removal, that might inform the project more. Chair Weidner said if they uncover anything they're unsure of, they are welcome to attend an Architectural Review Committee meeting.

*Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- G. Forest and Ontario Intersection (Public Works):** Discuss traffic calming and landscaping project at Forest Ave and Ontario St, including new brick crosswalks and columns noting the historic district (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District and adjacent to the Nineteenth Century Club an Oak Park Landmark).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said this project received an initial review at the Architectural Review Committee meeting on August 26 and the ARC had two main recommendations: first, to incorporate a glass pattern local to Oak Park on the plaques and second, to coordinate with the Nineteenth Century Club and their proposed interpretive sign. Planner Trexler said Public Works has provided a new plaque design featuring glass patterns from the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio. She said they also reached out to the Nineteenth Century Club, who today responded that they do not wish to have any sidewalk work done in relation to their proposed sign.

Bill McKenna, the Village Engineer, said they got approval from the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust to use the design on the plaque and confirmed that the Nineteenth Century Club does not want Public Works to do any additional work in relation to their sign.

Commissioner Sokol asked for confirmation that there will be no change in the traffic. Mr. McKenna confirmed and said they are just adding an island in front of the Nineteenth Century Club.

Commissioner Garapolo said this will be a great addition to the area and he hopes it will go forward quickly. Commissioner Doherty agreed. Commissioner Will said she is glad they were able to use the tulip pattern, it looks good.

The Commission had no additional recommendations.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- **2022 Work Plan**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Planner Trexler explained the 2022 Work Plan and the updates from 2021. Specifically, a \$30 budget was added to replace yard signs as needed for the Historic Preservation awards program and an item was added to forward education and knowledge regarding Oak Park's Midcentury Modern architecture.

Commissioner Will said she likes the addition of Midcentury Modern. Commissioner Sokol said the updated Ordinance and Guidelines would be captured. Planner Trexler explained the language used for these items and said this wording was chosen to allow for updates to the Ordinance and Guidelines in the future as needed. Chair Weidner said he approves.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Will. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

- **Historic Preservation Ordinance**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Planner Trexler said the proposed Ordinance edits have been provided to the Commission and it is recommended that Commissioners review over the next month and vote to recommend adoption by the Village Board in October. The changes primarily reflect changes in language, precedents established by the HPC, and updated technology.

- **641 N Grove Ave**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Planner Trexler said this project was previously received and approved by the HPC in February. The applicant has since decided to diminish the side of the addition by one floor. As it will be less visible, it was determined that the changes were in substantial compliance with the approved COA and the permit was approved administratively. These details are provided for the HPC's reference but no action is needed.

- **Oak Park Post Office**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Commissioner Sokol updated the new Commissioners on the Post Office. He said the working group has reached out to someone involved with the restoration of Unity Temple and Congressman Davis, who used to be the Chair of the Postal Service Committee. Commissioner Sokol said he spoke with Congressman Davis. Congressman Davis said he would try to set up a meeting in August with the current Chicago area post master, but this did not happen. Attempts to follow up with Congressman Davis have not been answered.

Commissioner Will asked if the building can be landmarked and Commissioner Sokol said you can't landmark a federal building. Attorney Smith said generally speaking, the federal government has given themselves freedom from local governmental control.

Chair Weidner thanked Commissioner Sokol for his efforts. Commissioner Will asked if they have reached out to Landmarks Illinois to be on their endangered buildings list. Commissioner Sokol said as there is no jurisdictional, they may not want to waste one of their slots on this building. Commissioner Will said it may help to gain public support. Commissioner Sokol said he would reach out to Landmarks Illinois. Chair Weidner said they should be aware of the Commission's efforts.

- Chair Weidner welcomed the new Commissioners, Asha Andriana and Nicole Napper. All of the Commissioners introduced themselves.

**ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 8-0.*

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

*NAY: None*

The meeting adjourned at 9:40PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.