

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

A. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Lou Garapolo, Rachel Will, and Noel Weidner
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

B. AGENDA

Motion by Garapolo to approve the agenda. Second by Will. Motion approved 2-0.

*AYE: Garapolo, Will, and Weidner
NAY: None*

C. MINUTES

Chair Weidner noted that the adjournment says “Weidner” instead of “Will.” Planner Trexler said this would be corrected.

Motion by Will to approve minutes of the September 23, 2021. Second by Garapolo. Motion approved 3-0.

*AYE: Garapolo, Will, and Weidner
NAY: None*

D. 228 Forest Ave (Michael Barrett): Discuss proposed project to alter existing railing design and wrap porch around north elevation of house (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the project and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Christopher Bremer, the architect, was present. He introduced the pending homeowners, Michael and Elizabeth Barrett, also in attendance. Ms. Barrett explained that they are in the process of purchasing the house. Mr. Bremer said they plan to do a rear addition and some interior remodeling, but are here to discuss the porch. They want to wrap the porch to add balance to the house. Nearby houses tend to wrap the porch around the turret. Mr. Bremer

said they want to use a simple 2x2 picket railing with historically appropriate spacing and an Indiana limestone base. He said the posts and columns seem fairly historical in nature so they will keep and repeat those. The gable over the entry would delineate the location of the addition to the porch.

Chair Weidner asked Planner Trexler how much was restored in the 1980s and what is original. Planner Trexler said her understanding was the porch mostly dates to the 1980s. She said preservation was different at that time and the current Guidelines did not exist. Committee member Garapolo said the railing is unique and asked why it would be changed. Mr. Bremer said for safety and aesthetics. The current railing is not code compliant.

Committee member Garapolo said he is struggling to see how the wrap-around porch meets the Guidelines. Mr. Bremer acknowledged that there is no evidence that it wrapped around to the north. He said they are arguing that it looks better and there is precedent elsewhere in the district. Committee member Garapolo said since the house never had a wrap-around porch in that direction, the proposal is beginning to change the history of the house visually.

Mr. Bremer asked if there are subtle changes that can be made, like offsetting the addition by four inches. He asked if they should make a distinction between old and new. Chair Weidner said this is not the hurdle for him and that while the examples show porches wrapping around turrets, they don't wrap around both sides. He asked for examples and Mr. Barrett suggested the Hemingway House.

Planner Trexler said she found the section of the Landmark Nomination that addresses the porch. It reads, "The property was restored by previous owners in 1982, including the... construction of a new front porch, the design of which is not original to the house." Chair Weidner said that helps a lot.

Committee member Will said the porch may not be original but the features of the turret and the Sanborn map show that the porch never wrapped around the turret. She said she struggles with adding something that is not original. The railing would be grandfathered in. She asked if the plan is to rebuild the entire porch. Mr. Bremer said it is. She asked if any of it would be reused and Mr. Bremer said so much of it is decaying, it would be wiser to rebuild from scratch than save this element or that element. Committee member Will asked if there are examples of porches that wrap around both sides and Mr. Bremer suggested some, including 325 S Grove Ave.

Chair Weidner said the turret has character, including a shingle apron that matches the eaves. These would be hidden if you put a roof in front. They also indicate that it was designed to be exposed and a complimentary element.

Committee member Will said the stone on the porch seems out of character and the precedents have wood. She asked if there was evidence of stone. Mr. Bremer said some evidence of a foundation was visible and he can dig around to see what the extent was.

Committee member Garapolo agreed with Committee member Will. He said there are some stone bases of porches but it is unusual and he is worried about skewing the historical story of the house. Investigating is a good idea.

Chair Weidner asked if the location of the roof would be the same and if they would be willing to do investigation there to determine the original location of the roof. Mr. Bremer said the applicants don't yet own the house, so they can't do too much investigation until they close in January. The project has already been broken into two phases so they may wait until February to do more investigating.

Committee members Garapolo and Will agreed investigation would be helpful. Committee member Garapolo said the Commission will want specific answers to these questions, for example, evidence of stone being under the porch before.

E. Other Business

None

F. Adjourn

Motion by Will to adjourn. Second by Garapolo. Motion approved 3-0.

AYE: Garapolo, Will, and Weidner

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.