

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
January 25, 2023 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

Roll Call

Present: Acting Chair Lou Garapolo and Commissioners Asha Andriana, David Bates, Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Andrew Elders, Scot Mazur, and Nicole Napper
Absent: None
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

Motion by Commissioner Elders to elect Commissioner Garapolo as Acting Chair. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 8-0.

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 8-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the minutes for December 8, 2022. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 8-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. Historic Landmark: Preliminary Determination of Eligibility (Craig and Noopoth Stevaux):**
Nomination of 1201 Fair Oaks Ave, the Swenson-Gottlieb House (1931).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the homeowners nominated their property. They were unable to attend the meeting but have supplied a letter of support. She summarized the significance of the house, noting that the Swenson-Gottlieb House is significant as an example of a design by prolific local architect George E. Pearson and owners/builders George Ellefson and Arne Bentsen. It is also notable both as a well-preserved example of a 1930s bungalow with Renaissance Revival and Craftsman style detailing, as well as for its being the primary residence of the Gottlieb family for over 40 years. David Gottlieb became a millionaire through the manufacture of pinball machines. He gave large donations to fund such enterprises as the Gottlieb Memorial Hospital on North Ave.

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Chase.

Commissioner Elders said this is terrific, it's a beautiful house. He said he likes that it's not rare and anything can be significant when it is well-cared-for. He said he is fully in favor. Commissioner

Doherty said beyond the house, there is the association. Gottlieb is an important community hospital. Commissioner Chase said this is a no-brainer. Acting Chair Garapolo said this is a very nice example of the bungalow style and is in good condition. The fact that the homeowner has come forward is tremendous. He said he is in favor.

Motion by Commissioner Elders to that the property is likely eligible as an Oak Park Landmark. Second by Commissioner Napper. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

- B. HPC2023-02: 316 Home Ave (Chhaya & Robert Patel):** Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a historic garage, application revised from previous meeting per recommendations of the Commission.

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. Robert Patel, the homeowner, was present. He said he has nothing to add.

Motion by Commissioner Napper to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Andriana.

Commissioner Chase said she appreciates the photo showing the level to see how out-of-plumb the structure is. There's no saving this garage. Acting Chair Garapolo said visually it is in poor condition. He said work is currently occurring at the house and asked what it is. Mr. Patel said they are putting lap siding on the home. The stucco was applied over lap siding. The stucco is on the eaves and everywhere else. Acting Chair Garapolo asked if it will be wood. Mr. Patel said they tried to get LP but are putting on Hardie board. Acting Chair Garapolo said that is disappointing. Mr. Patel said even the Hardie board was hard to get. Acting Chair Garapolo asked if this was approved by the Village and Planner Trexler confirmed.

Commissioner Napper made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

- C. HPC2023-03: 317 N Scoville Ave (Berg):** Certificate of Appropriateness for two-story rear addition and alteration to windows on the side elevation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. Joel Huffman, the architect, said he has nothing to add but is available for questions.

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Napper.

Commissioner Elders said above the current rear wing there is a door with two flanking windows which likely means there was a sleeping porch there. This would explain the low pitch of the roof. He said this caused him to wonder if the rear wall should read as a sleeping porch. He asked staff if

there is concern about the skylight. Planner Trexler said the skylight is consistent with previous approvals. Acting Chair Garapolo said the proposal follows the guidelines, is compatible, and he has no concerns. Commissioner Elders suggested the windows be 4-over-1 so the wing looks more porch-like. Commissioner Chase said she doesn't have a strong feeling about the windows but likes the idea. Mr. Huffman said he hadn't considered this. He said it's hard to tell in the photos because a lot of the existing windows have screens, but this could be a good idea. Commissioner Elders said for a sleeping porch, they would have been divided light and probably casement windows. It might help add a little visual interest and differentiate more from the main body of the house. Mr. Huffman asked about rules for muntins and if they can be applied. Commissioner Elders asked staff to respond. Planner Trexler said the Commission has approved applied muntins.

Commissioner Doherty said overall this project is sensitive to the home and meets the Guidelines. Commissioner Elders agreed.

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Elders. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

- D. HPC2023-04: 638 N Elmwood Ave (Mike Cochran & Jessica Kahn):** Certificate of Appropriateness for two-story rear addition and added window on the side elevation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. Present on behalf of the homeowner were: Rosanne McGrath, the architect; Tom Walls, the contractor; and Mike Cochran, the homeowner.

Ms. McGrath walked the Commission through her submission materials and the project details. She said they included the original E.E. Roberts elevations. The existing house was likely built more simply than the elevations and has since been further simplified. The original elevations had a lot of triple windows this was scaled back to pairs of windows. She said they will match the existing character and will repeat elements like the water table and windows. She said they are adding a window to the northwest bedroom that will match. To separate the addition from the existing house, they are proposing a recess. The width was selected to match the width of the porch piers. On the south elevation, the only visible change is a basement window that will become an egress window.

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Chase.

Commissioner Chase said she appreciates the amount of history provided and it makes the decision much easier. Commissioner Andriana agreed and said she loved the original details that went into the proposal. She said you can tell the history of the house is important to the project and this is a no-brainer. Commissioner Elders asked about the chimney and Ms. McGrath confirmed it will be removed. Planner Trexler recommended this be included in the motion.

Commissioner Elders asked if any windows will be replaced and Ms. McGrath said no. Commissioner Elders said he appreciates all the references to the historic architecture. He said the only issue he has is the proportion of the triple windows on the north elevation and that they feel too short. He

suggested lengthening them. Ms. McGrath agreed and said this is a good suggestion. Commissioner Elders asked if they have considered a diamond pane to differentiate them and Ms. McGrath said if budget allows. Acting Chair Garapolo said what's proposed is certainly compatible and this was a good presentation.

Commissioner Elders made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the inclusion of the chimney demolition. Second by Commissioner Napper. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

E. HPC2023-05: 415 Linden Ave (Jeremy Daniel): Certificate of Appropriateness to replace slate roof with asphalt shingle (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. Present on behalf of the project were Greg Derry, the contractor, and Jeremy Daniel, the homeowner. Mr. Derry described the state of the roof and the proposed project details. He said this started when Mr. Daniel was having a problem with the gutter system. He said Renaissance is a restoration contractor and they don't take this decision lightly. The biggest factor is the condition of the slate. He said this is the thinnest slate you will find, and life expectancy ranges from 80 to 100 years. The slat is mostly original and is 110 years old. He estimated that at least 50 percent is showing signs of failure. When restoring these roof systems, it is labor intensive and very expensive. Mr. Derry said the slate doesn't have enough life left to warrant removal and resetting it. The built-in gutters, structural framing issues, rotten wood trim, damage to stucco, the roof flashing: all of these are at the end of their lifecycle. He said there is a significant difference in cost and compared this to a project at 741 Fair Oaks Ave. He said they will restore the built-in gutters and install a similar asphalt shingle. He said the roof pitch and clean straight lines of the eaves and soffits are important architectural features but converting to architectural shingle will have minimal effect on the historic integrity.

Mr. Daniel, the homeowner, said he loves this house and has great respect for it. He said the \$75,000 difference is significant in the greater context. They've been in the house two years. They have already put a lot into the house and have two kids going to college next year. He said you can't repeat history but you can echo it. They brought roofing samples.

Motion by Commissioner Chase to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Napper.

Acting Chair Garapolo said they mentioned the linear aspect of the roof edges and asked if those will be repaired. Mr. Derry said the goal is to restore the eaves, soffit, and framing back to the original.

Commissioner Chase said she has a problem with the Commission setting a precedent. She said the \$75,000 cost difference is less when you're spending \$200,000. This is a 30-year shingle vs a 100-year slate. She said she feels the restoration of the copper is more important than the slate, but it's the precedent. Commissioner Elders agreed and said on a million-dollar house, it's incremental. He said this is one of the most architecturally significant houses in town. He said he would rather see a regular 3-tab architectural shingle than a slate replacement that won't fool anyone.

Acting Chair Garapolo asked if they would be able to reuse any of the elements if they replaced with slate. Mr. Derry said preserving some of the slate would not be wise as this would create a

conflicting life expectancy. When you get into removing and resetting, it is incredibly labor intensive and costly. The numbers sound large because this is a very complex and complicated installation. There is a lot of sheet metal work that will all be done in copper. There is a huge amount of staging. This is a way to minimize as much as possible the investment to deal with such a significantly large project.

Commissioner Elders agreed with the age differential. He said he's fine with full replacement, but asphalt fails and slate does not. Commissioner Chase agreed. Commissioner Napper said it was previously noted that the homeowner should have known, but she bought a historic home and didn't know. Commissioner Chase said that's a problem the HPC should focus on. Commissioner Elders agreed and Commissioner Napper said they would be sensitive to that. Commissioner Andriana said we're sympathetic but we can't act as if that's the bulk of the HPC's decision-making.

Commissioner Bates asked about precedent. Commissioner Case said when she referred to precedent she was referring to the cost. \$200,000 to replace a shingle roof is not a hardship. Commissioner Elders said there is precedent from Fair Oaks but architecturally they are on different planes. Mr. Daniel said he understands, but that's not a distinction anyone has made. Fair Oaks is in the district and not a landmark. His house is in a district and is not a landmark. He said he sees more similarities. He said this house sat vacant in the 1950s and 60s and there was a lot of deferred maintenance. The garage has no foundation and is leaning, it's too narrow of a view to say the cost is not a big difference. Part of the cost here is a home that has to have carpentry redone around the house that has to be lined in copper. It's there and it's a significant feature of the house. The dining features are the peaked window and the horizontal lines; those are most prominent from the street.

Commissioner Doherty said the cost estimate noted that it will actually cost significantly more with all these other things added.

Commissioner Chase made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Napper. Motion approved 6-2.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Garapolo

NAY: Commissioner Chase and Commissioner Elders

F. Advisory Review: 424 Pleasant St (Nick Schmuck & Cora Bruemmer): Advisory Review for proposed new garage (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the garage demolition was approved at the HPC meeting on December 8, 2022.

Joe Juhl, the architect, was present. Mr. Juhl said they made a couple of modifications to the design relating to finishes. They changed the gable end to white lap siding that matches the dormers on the house. He said they have a slight hip return on all four sides as a reference to the previous hip roof. They added a comparison of the eaves in the submission packet. He said they are proposing a smooth panel rain screen siding that they see as analogous to the stucco but better for water management. The windows will be salvaged from the main house; they are not original but are good condition, aluminum-clad wood windows.

Commissioner Chase asked if the solar array will have the same output as the one originally proposed. Mr. Juhl said they lost some output. To get similar output, they are going to add some

panels to the addition of the house, which has a low slope roof. It will end up being within 10% of the original proposal.

Commissioner Doherty said this design is much more sensitive. There is a lot of scrutiny as this is a corner lot. Commissioner Elders said he agrees and this fits much better with the neighborhood. He said he appreciates they will reuse windows from the house. He said they could carry over the quarter-round eave from the house to soften it a bit, but it is far more compatible and he is in favor.

Commissioner Chase said this is a good compromise with the solar panels and shows you can get the same output and not make it such a huge part of the design. She said she appreciates that.

Acting Chair Garapolo said the Commission appreciates this approach. He asked about the symmetry on the garage and said he doesn't see the same symmetry on the house. Mr. Juhl said the front of the house is sort of symmetrical but also asymmetrical and this is one of its unique qualities. The symmetry was discussed. Mr. Juhl said he understands there are priorities when balancing preservation and sustainability. This is a good study to see what you can get with solar with a more traditional roof form.

G. Advisory Review: 316 Home Ave (Chhaya & Robert Patel): Advisory Review for proposed new garage (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on May 27, 2021.

Robert Patel, the homeowner, was present. He said they took the recommendations of the ARC and applied what they could.

Commissioner Elders asked if this will be an accessory dwelling unit and Mr. Patel confirmed. Commissioner Elders said it is very large and will be much more noticeable from the street. He recommended using a hip roof rather than a gable end. He said he is struggling with the siding. Mr. Patel said the house has 5" lap siding under the stucco. Commissioner Elders said he has never seen that before and asked for staff commentary. Planner Trexler said the siding on the house was approved administratively because the stucco is not historic. She said the house was originally Italianate and agreed the original siding was likely narrower.

Acting Chair Garapolo asked about other garages on the block and Mr. Patel said there are a number of 4-car garages on their alley. He said there is a 2-story garage one block down that is historic. Mr. Patel said they need wheelchair access and more depth to maneuver a wheelchair. Commissioner Napper asked about zoning and Mr. Patel confirmed they meet zoning requirements and said they are allowed to go bigger.

Commissioner Chase said she appreciates ADUs. She said there are so many competing things going on in Oak park. She doesn't have issues with the design. She appreciates that ADUs will get more people into the neighborhood and into Oak Park. Acting Chair Garapolo said this is going to be large and seems out of scale.

Mr. Patel asked if there are any recommendations on window placement. Acting Chair Garapolo said this is an improvement on the original proposal. Commissioner Elders said they could also use triple windows on the east elevation to mimic the ribbon of windows on the house. Mr. Patel agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **2022 Historic Preservation Awards:** Planner Trexler said the winners of the 2022 Historic Preservation Awards have been notified and the presentation is available on the website. She said there will be a press release soon.
- **Garage reviews:** Acting Chair Garapolo said he has a number of concerns regarding the garage memo and asked that this be added to the next agenda. Planner Trexler confirmed.
- **Commissioner Resignation:** Commissioner Elders asked that the ruling requiring complete resignation of Commissioners [due to conflicts of interest] be reconsidered. He said this is extremely narrow and ultimately destructive. It's a hard time getting Commissioners. Commissioner Chase recalled a previous time when a Commissioner recused herself due to association with the Wintrust Bank. Commissioner Garapolo said it would be helpful to have an attorney explain this.
- **Economic infeasibility discussion:** Commissioner Chase asked if there is a number for economic hardship. She said they need to better define that to homeowners. Acting Chair Garapolo said there was previously some outreach with the real-estate community. Commissioner Chase said brokers should be involved. Commissioner Elders said it's difficult because realtors don't just work in Oak Park. Commissioner Napper said build inspectors often don't know about historic homes. In many circumstances it's not said to the homeowner. She said they also need to figure out how to define economic hardship and asked staff. Planner Trexler explained that they may want to bring technical infeasibility back into the discussion and noted this was previously part of the Guidelines. She explained that there is also a Certificate of Economic Hardship that is clearly defined in the Ordinance. Commissioner Elders said when someone buys a house that maxes out their monthly payment, the house suffers and then the neighborhood suffers. He shared a story about a house at risk of demolition. He said it's hard to apply precedents evenly. He said this roof lasted a hundred years and arguably it will never be slate again. Acting Chair Garapolo said almost every meeting there is an item that is technically and economically infeasible. Commissioner Napper referenced 742 N Marion St. Commissioner Chase described what happened at the Village Board meeting [on January 17, 2023]. She said the Board recognized the importance of Historic Preservation and this was the best that could be done with what they had. Commissioner Elders said sometimes they have to vote no because it's what the Historic Preservation Commission does. Sustainability and zoning, for example, are not their purview. Commissioner Chase asked if they can get notified when the Board overturns decisions, like with the Home Ave project. Planner Trexler said she can do this.
- **Introductions:** The Commission had a round of introductions in welcoming a new Commissioner, David Bates.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Chase.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.