

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
March 15, 2023 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Roll Call

Present: Chair Lou Garapolo and Commissioners David Bates, Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Andrew Elders, Scot Mazur, and Nicole Napper
Absent: Commissioner Asha Andriana
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 7-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Elders to approve the minutes for February 9, 2023. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. Landmark Hearing: 1201 Fair Oaks Ave (Craig & Noopoth Stevaux):** Nomination of 1201 Fair Oaks Ave, the Swenson-Gottlieb House (1931).

Chair Garapolo introduced the public hearing and noted that the applicants, the homeowners of 1201 Fair Oaks Ave, were unable to attend. Planner Trexler summarized the nomination and significance. Chair Garapolo accepted the exhibits into evidence. There were no public comments.

Chair Garapolo stated that all evidence is closed and the Commission may begin deliberation.

Attorney Smith summarized the options available to the Commission: recommend Landmarking, request additional information, or do not recommend Landmarking.

Commissioner Elders said the integrity of the house is terrific and it's a great example of one of Oak Park's most common building types. He said he has no reservations. Commissioner Doherty agreed and said it meets the criteria in multiple categories. She said the Pearson bungalows are nicer, they have a lot of details. Commissioner Doherty said there is also the association with the Gottlieb hospital, which is very beneficial to the community. Chair Garapolo said it's in good condition and is a great example of a bungalow. He said he is in favor.

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve the resolution recommending 1201 Fair Oaks Ave as an Oak Park Landmark to the Village Board. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

- B. HPC2023-11: 228 Forest Ave (Mike Barrett):** Certificate of Appropriateness to alter the front porch railing design (Oak Park Landmark; Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She explained that the applicant has attended two Architectural Review Committee meetings, most recently on February 23, 2023. At the ARC meeting, Commissioner Elders provided photos from the 1950s that show that while the existing railing may replicate the historic design, it is not historic itself, and what the historic railings on the back porch looked like. The ARC recommended matching the historic back railings would be appropriate.

Chris Bremer, the architect, and Mike Barrett, the homeowner, were present. Mr. Bremer showed the historic photo of the rear porch and said the current railing is made of plywood. He said the source for the original design is questionable and they think the modifications are in keeping with the Victorian nature of the house. He said they will keep the bones of the porch and add finials to the newel posts and a spindle spandrel. He showed the rendering.

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

Chair Garapolo asked if the spandrel is in the rendering and Mr. Bremer said it's more visible in the 2D elevation. Commissioner Elders said the porch looks appropriate and asked if it's due to code that the rail will be above the turned part of the posts. Mr. Bremer confirmed. Commissioner Elders asked about the wider posts in the middle of the railings and Mr. Bremer said they can remove them but would need to add a block below so the railing doesn't sag. Commissioner Elders said that would be more appropriate. Commissioner Chase asked if everything will be wood and Mr. Bremer confirmed it will be painted wood. Commissioner Elders asked if they will be turned balusters and Mr. Bremer said they will be square 2x2s. Commissioner Elders said turned would be acceptable as well but he wouldn't make this a condition. Commissioner Doherty said this is a great improvement and incredibly sensitive. Chair Garapolo said he appreciates the response to the ARC comments and this is much improved. He thanked Commissioner Elders for the historic photos.

Commissioner Napper made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that the railings have a block support rather than a middle post. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

- C. HPC2023-12: 213 S Euclid Ave (Frank Heitzman):** Certificate of Appropriateness for tower addition to accommodate an elevator (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the HPC meeting on July 15, 2020, and received a COA for a similar project. They have since modified the application, retaining the existing stair so they do not need to add an exterior stair. The portion of the project requiring review is the small tower addition needed to accommodate the elevator. She said the applicant was not able to attend.

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

Commissioner Elders said a street-level perspective would be helpful as the tower would probably recede more. It looks vast. He said he understands the utility of it but hopes it will be less obvious when viewed from the sidewalk. Chair Garapolo said looking straight on, it does look like it's overpowering the cupola, but it's hard to tell if it will really be that way from the street. A perspective would be helpful. Commissioner Elders said the architect has likely exhausted all the possible iterations on this. The house is a beautiful place. There's an inevitability in it. Chair Garapolo said looking at what's being presented, they need to feel comfortable. They can't just assume it'll be acceptable.

Commissioner Doherty said the fact that the project was reworked to not have the exterior stair is much better. Commissioner Chase said based on the photos, it feels like it will not look so large. She said they shouldn't delay any sort of ADA accessibility need. Commissioner Napper agreed and said looking at the picture from the front angle, she doesn't think the back tower will be overpowering. Commissioner Elders asked if he can abstain as he would like to see a rendering from the sidewalk. There were no objections to his request.

Commissioner Napper made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 6-0-1.

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

NAY: None

Abstain: Commissioner Elders

Chair Garapolo asked staff to request renderings for vertical additions in the future.

- D. HPC2023-13: 312 N East Ave (Brad Bare & Lucia Marker-Moore):** Certificate of Appropriateness for two dormer additions (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the HPC discussion should in particular address the size of the south dormer and the location of the skylights.

Bill Scholtens, the architect, was present. He walked the HPC through the project. He said they're trying to add two bedrooms without expanding the footprint and are respecting the original ridge and clipped gable. He said there is a precedent for stained wood shingles on the home. The north gable is smaller; this will accommodate the attic stairs, light, vent, and ceiling height. He said they drew inspiration from the existing west three windows and stacked about the windows on the second floor to blend it in. He said there will be aluminum-clad-wood windows and painted wood siding. The south dormer will be behind the chimney. He said they have done walking studies in the neighborhood and have not been able to see the location of the skylights. He showed a comparison

of the 60% dormer with a 50% dormer and said there is very little impact to the visuals. The increase in the dormer size will provide an egress window to the west bedroom and additional light and air.

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

Commissioner Elders said the changes are pretty major. He said he was more inclined to approve the south dormer except that it will very visibly change the view of the north elevation. This is larger than the average American house and it feels unnecessary to make this many modifications. It's too much. Mr. Scholtens asked which dormer and Commissioner Elders said both. Mr. Scholtens said it's not a corner lot, it's an open side yard.

Commissioner Chase asked why they are using a shed dormer rather than keeping the existing clipped-roof dormer. Mr. Scholtens said there's not enough head height. Commissioner Chase said they're talking about how much the front façade is represented by that front, clipped gable, and this really changes it. To remove that detail is concerning. Chair Garapolo said the south elevation is a dramatic change to the roofline. The existing elevation is really quite nice. He said he doesn't have a problem with the north elevation, which is in-keeping with the examples in the photos.

Commissioner Chase said it looks like they've increased the roofline back and are going beyond the existing end of the roof. Mr. Scholtens confirmed and said that's included in the 60% calculation. The rationale is to provide bedrooms that are 7ft 6in in height, which is the minimal for a habitable bedroom. He said when you walk past the house, it's very difficult to see anything in this area. The visual impact would be the one dormer on the open side yard. The larger dormer will have little impact on the neighborhood. Commissioner Chase said the roofline is visible in the photo on the screen. She said she understands but she doesn't think this plan is it.

Mr. Scholtens asked if the Commission would prefer a dormer with a clipped gable and Commissioner Elders said that would make it even larger. It's altering the roofline, which is a character-defining feature. Chair Garapolo asked if the south dormer is for a second bedroom, if they could not add that bedroom. Mr. Scholtens said there's not enough head height, that's why they pulled it to the back of the house. Chair Garapolo said this is very close to raising the roof, visually, which is against the Guidelines. Commissioner Elders said if it was a two-bedroom house he would get it, but it's a large house.

Commissioner Doherty said she loves cedar shakes but it looks like these were used for window infill and aren't historic to the house. She asked if a different material could be used. Mr. Scholtens said they can explore other materials like wood siding. Commissioner Doherty said the material doesn't make or break the project for her.

Commissioner Elders said he doesn't see an outcome that could make it more workable. Planner Trexler said the Commission can either approve the COA or take no action; a negative vote is the same as taking no action. They need a public hearing in order to deny a COA. Commissioner Napper asked for clarification on the staff recommendation. Planner Trexler said the details of the dormer meet the Guidelines and are consistent with two recent, small, shed-roof dormer approvals. However, the scale goes against the Guidelines, which state that dormers should not be more than 50% of their roof plane.

The Commission took no action.

- E. HPC2023-14: 422 S Lombard Ave (David Richmond and Annie Roberts):** Certificate of Appropriateness to increase the roof overhang at the bay and replace tile roof with asphalt shingle (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said this project has two main elements: a bay was added prior to 1950 under the original roof, resulting in shallow eaves which have led to water damage. The applicant would like to add a small hip to increase the eaves at the bay. Second, the applicant would like to replace the existing tile roof with Grand Manor asphalt shingles.

Kim Smith, the architect, was present. She said the property has had a long history of bad repairs to the roof. The owners sent over some photos of tar, the entire sheathing has to be replaced. When tile is removed, it crumbles. The quotes are in the packet. The cost to replace in kind is extremely expensive. She asked the Commission to vote for the bay roof and the tile replacement separately. She said the bay is a nightmare and will have to be repaired, including tearing off and replacing stucco.

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

Commissioner Napper asked for a picture of the proposed overhang and Ms. Smith showed one and explained they would over-frame on top of the existing roof and repair the stucco. The roofing materials would match the rest of the roof. Commissioner Napper said they should discuss the overhang first. Commissioner Doherty asked if the depth will match the rest of the house and Ms. Smith confirmed. Commissioner Elders said there is historic precedent for extending the roof down, as well, which might be simpler and less construction. Ms. Smith said she tried that, but since they have to tear off all the roofing, this makes the most sense. Someone could easily remove the bay and over-frame if needed.

Commissioner Elders asked why this isn't in Ruskin and Planner Trexler said that's an error and it will be added. She confirmed that this is a contributing building within the historic district, though it is on the border of the district.

Commissioner Napper made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project to add a hip roof over the bay as proposed. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

The Commission discussed the request to replace the tile with asphalt shingle. Ms. Smith showed the samples of the tile and the proposed asphalt shingle. She said a lot of times, there is enough deterioration on the inside of the tiles, when they are removed they are more destroyed.

Commissioner Chase asked if they put any thought into the ridgeline decoration and Ms. Smith said they would consider it but she doesn't know what that would be. Commissioner Elders noted an example where they kept the clay tiles at decorative locations. He asked if there is a metal product that better approximates the tile and said he doesn't like to approve altering materials because it will never go back. Commissioner Chase suggested just keep the tile on the front dormer.

Ms. Smith said she has used simulated tile and slate materials. She said she doesn't think they've priced those out, but she doesn't think they would be less expensive than replacing the tile. Commissioner Bates said that would be worth investigating as the roof here is central to the character of the house. It might be worth pricing out other materials that might be a midpoint.

Commissioner Elders recommended looking at an example of metal that looks like tile. Ms. Smith said it could be expensive. She said there is so much character that has been lost to the house, for example, with the porch. The owners are intensely interested in doing a lot of work on this house. Chair Garapolo asked if the entire roof is a problem and Ms. Smith said the sheathing is destroyed and the entire thing has to come off. People have made patches but it can't withstand that any longer. Chair Garapolo said they are suggesting finding an intermediate material. Ms. Smith said she will bring samples to the ARC meeting.

Commissioner Doherty said she hasn't seen the synthetic material and Ms. Smith said it's shiny. This is a very matte finish clay terra cotta. The homeowners are willing to discuss but the cost was too great. Chair Garapolo said they would appreciate further research and Ms. Smith said she would attend the ARC next week.

The Commission took no action.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Upcoming Events:

- o **Statewide Preservation Plan:** Planner Trexler said the State Historic Preservation Office is having a Chicago area meeting for input regarding the statewide preservation plan. She said the date has been moved. Commissioner Elders said it is scheduled for April 13.
- o **Sustainability Talk:** Planner Trexler said they will be hosting Mark Nussbaum at 6:30PM in advance of the regular April 13 meeting. Attendance to the talk is optional but encouraged.
- o **Day in Our Village:** Planner Trexler said the Commission typically has a table at Day in Our Village and volunteers should contact Chair Garapolo. The event will be Sunday, June 4, 11AM-4PM.

- Garage Review Process:

Chair Garapolo said the Commission has felt a couple of things are happening. One is that the architect of record is also the one saying the garage is the problem. The Commission is looking for a third-party evaluation. Commissioner Napper asked if it has to be a structural engineer or if it can be a contractor. Commissioner Elders asked if an inspector can be sent from the Village. Chair Garapolo said it would be good to check. He said the homeowner should be bearing the cost. It should be a structural engineer as opposed to the contractor doing the job. Commissioner Elders gave an example where they contracted an impact statement for the house when proposing demolition so the homeowner wasn't picking the person who will give the answer they want.

Attorney Smith said the Ordinance is the requirements of the Commission; the group doesn't legislate. When someone comes with a request to tear down a structure, the Commission can't create application requirements, but they can say they have a preference or in this case, additional background is needed. In some cases, it's obvious, no matter who is saying it. Attorney Smith encouraged the Commission to be flexible. For example, tell staff to say, if it's

not apparent, look for someone to bring more information. He said they can't require a letter from a structural engineer. Some projects need more vetting than others.

Commissioner Doherty asked if it's reasonable to ask for a third party. Attorney Smith said it depends on the case. For an architect, they stamp the document, their professional license is on the document. Commissioner Elders said they came across that with a recent architect and the review wasn't arms length. Some architects look more than others. The best case was the photos with the plumb-bob. Attorney Smith said to be careful questioning specific professionals at a meeting. He said he doesn't know if these go through the ARC or not, but the ARC can ask for additional information. Planner Trexler suggested bringing garages to the ARC for a while and seeing how it goes. Attorney Smith said ultimately it's up to the applicant what they want to bring. The Commission has to vote. They can vote and say they're lacking enough information. Commissioner Elders asked if they have to go to the ARC and expressed concern about creating additional work for the ARC.

Commissioner Napper asked about the new garage requirements. Chair Garapolo said once they're talking about something new, the review is advisory only. He asked Attorney Smith about legality and if there's any reason a new building can't have a COA. Attorney Smith said the Ordinance makes new structures advisory only. It doesn't mandate a COA process for new structures. The Village Board developed single-family design guidelines with the input of the HPC. The Ordinance could be amended to increase the HPC's role in how new buildings look.

Chair Garapolo asked if they can propose a revision and if there is legal precedent. Attorney Smith said yes, but there is an outer limit where the Village's authority to regulate new construction falls off. He said the Village limits construction in many ways. The Plan Commission sends suggestions to the Village Board from time to time.

Attorney Smith said the Commission can look at the Ordinance and send up recommendations to the Village Board. Chair Garapolo said his suggestion is to do away with the Advisory Review and make it just a COA. Attorney Smith said people want to have some freedom in the design of the structures they put on their property. Chair Garapolo said like with the railing, they had some very specific input. They are specific, and concerned, and will vote. He said he doesn't see how that's any different than if that were a new structure. They've had new structures before the Commission. Some people have been very interested in what they are talking about; others not. There's a pretty big impact when you drive around the historic district. Attorney Smith pointed the Commission to the single-family design guidelines. He said that is what we are doing right now to steer development. Maybe what the Commission is suggesting is a version of that. The Commission should make their case, show examples, and make analogies. Planner Trexler said she would provide the single-family design guidelines to the HPC.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.