

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE  
May 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

**A. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Sarah Doherty, Lou Garapolo, and Scot Mazur  
ABSENT: Andrew Elders  
STAFF: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

**B. AGENDA**

*Motion by Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Mazur. Motion approved 3-0.*

*AYE: Doherty, Garapolo, and Mazur  
NAY: None*

**C. MINUTES**

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the minutes from April 27, 2023. Second by Commissioner Mazur.*

*AYE: Doherty, Garapolo, and Mazur  
NAY: None*

**D. HPC2023-22: 800 N East Ave (Brent Showalter): Certificate of Appropriateness for rear, second-story addition above existing first-story, non-historic bump-out at house on corner lot (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).**

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said Committee member Elders is absent but provided comments by email that she will read for each project. She said Committee member Elders was concerned about the lack of windows making it look like an elevator shaft; he suggested filled recesses to make it look like an infilled porch.

Brent Showalter, the homeowner, was present. He said he and Planner Trexler discussed a window and he's open to putting something. He said they take great care in making sure everything fits. If they add something, it would make sense to do it on the south-facing side. There's a kitchen window they can duplicate.

*Motion by Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Mazur.*

Committee member Doherty said in the past, they've recommended a remnant of a window be left to give the illusion of a window. Chair Garapolo said the banding is important and a good detail. He suggested an outline of a window that's filled in. Mr. Showater said he would carry the banding around and duplicate the south window above it with the same trim. Chair Garapolo recommended a slight recess to give the shadow, so it looks like a window that was filled in. Mr. Showalter agreed.

*Motion by Committee member Doherty to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Committee member Mazur. Motion approved 3-0.*

*AYE: Doherty, Garapolo, and Mazur*

*NAY: None*

- E. HPC2023-23: 509 Fair Oaks Ave (Karen & William French):** Certificate of Appropriateness to restore front door location and window originally located next front door based on historic photo (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said Committee member Elders recommended the upper portions of the window either repeat the mullions of other windows or be an adaptation of the leaded glass window.

Denny Burke, the architect, was present. He said the homeowner found this historic photo and wanted to restore the historic window location. About five months ago, the interior was demolished and you can see the existing header and the infill framing. The homeowner is doing this work to bring the house back. They assume the door was to the south of the photo. He said they don't have a great understanding of how wide the window was; they're taking an existing window around the corner and matching that. The trim and everything will match.

*Motion by Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Mazur.*

Committee member Doherty said these projects are always easier when there is photographic evidence. She agreed with Committee member Elders on the mullions. Committee member Mazur agreed.

Chair Garapolo asked why the door isn't centered on the stairs and Mr. Burke said he has no idea. Someone in 1975 decided to center it, but for whatever reason the 1902 photo doesn't show it that way. It creates some oddities in the floorplan.

Chair Garapolo asked if the peak of the porch roof is original. Mr. Burke said the homeowner believes everything was shifted to the south, but he doesn't know if the stairway shifted or not. Chair Garapolo asked if the doorway will be placed as marked on sheet 0.4. Mr. Burke explained their assumption is the width from the north edge of the window to the south edge of the door was centered on the cross-gable. Chair Garapolo asked why they can't center the door. Mr. Burke said in the historic photo you can't see any of the door trim or the door, but they're willing to center the door if needed. Chair Garapolo said it looks awkward not centered. Committee member Doherty agreed it looks odd and said they have previously approved centering windows that were historically off-center. Chair Garapolo said there's no historical evidence of where they're suggesting the door go, so they should center it.

Mr. Burke said the photo also shows round columns, which they assume were covered up. If they are still there, the plan is to expose and fix them up. Planner Trexler said that can be administratively approved.

Chair Garapolo strongly urged the door be centered and Committee member Mazur agreed. Committee member Doherty noted that since this is restoration, the ARC can approve it.

*Motion by Committee member Mazur to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that the door be centered. It may share the trim with the window and the window will duplicate the south window. Second by Committee member Doherty. Motion approved 3-0.*

*AYE: Doherty, Garapolo, and Mazur*

*NAY: None*

- F. Advisory Review: 807 Woodbine Ave (Jack Diamond):** Advisory Review of proposed new garage, previous garage not historic (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said Committee member Elders recommended a hipped roof as more appropriate but it looks appropriate.

Jack Diamond, the homeowner, was present. Mr. Diamond said the current garage is a small, one-car garage. Due to the rear addition on the house, it's now too tight to get to the garage. He said their plan is to build a new garage at the back of the lot and continue the existing driveway back. They tried to mimic architecture features of the house, like the dormer. The biggest question is materials. He said they want to match their home as much as possible; the dormer siding is currently stained a maroon color. Their plan is to change

the siding and roof in color and they want the garage to match. Planner Trexler said changing the dormer material would be an administrative approval since it's not historic, but the ARC can provide recommendations as to what would be appropriate.

Chair Garapolo agreed with Committee member Elders' comment that a hip roof would be more appropriate. Mr. Diamond said they selected a gable to optimize storage. There's a pull-down stair. Chair Garapolo said they would lose a little space but the visual change would be dramatic; it would mimic the house roof, which would be a positive.

Chair Garapolo said there isn't vinyl siding on the house and they typically recommend a wood product. He said he understands clapboard is expensive, but there are other wood products that would give a nicer effect than the vinyl. Mr. Diamond asked about a composite siding that mimics the style of the siding on the house [dormer] and Chair Garapolo said as long as it's not Hardie board impressed with a wood grain. Committee member Doherty suggested LP Smartside or Boreal TruExterior. She said a 3-inch reveal is more appropriate for historic siding, rather than 4. She recommended the windows on the dormer mimic the historic windows on the house. This is minimally visible but will tie into the house nicely.

- G. 618 N Ridgeland Ave (Michele Bibbey):** Discuss porch repair project including altering the knee wall to a balustrade to address water drainage issues (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview and noted that a similar project to alter a railing as part of a larger restoration project was approved in the Gunderson Historic District, but the homeowner ultimately decided to restore the railing's original design. She said Committee member Elders recommended if the original porch is there and it must be removed, it should be replicated.

Mike and Michele Bibbey, the homeowners, were present. Mr. Bibbey said the porch is falling off the front of the house. It's sinking down. Water collects and has rotted out the wood. It was not constructed very well. He said they would like a balustrade so the water can flow through. There's a house on their street that looks the same but has this alternate railing design.

Committee member Doherty said she remembers the discussion for the Gunderson example and wondered how they fixed the water issue. Chair Garapolo recommended the applicant look at the Gunderson example. They rebuilt the original design. He said unlike the example two doors down, [618 N Ridgeland] is stucco on the first floor and the upper floor is wood. The porch design relates because it has stucco cladding all the way around.

Changing the porch to wood doesn't relate. He recommended rebuilding with stucco while addressing the drainage problem.

Mr. Bibbey pointed to their alternate proposal with stucco columns and a wood railing. Committee member Doherty said if it were to change, that would be her preference. Committee member Mazur agreed. Chair Garapolo urged keeping the stucco, at minimum on the vertical elements. He said maybe they can do further research with their contractor. He asked about the damage to the porch and if the whole thing is sinking. Ms. Bibbey said a lot of water accumulates. The wood is rotting, it's sinking and coming off of the house. More than half has to be rebuilt. It makes sense to not fix it. The last thing they want is to have the same problem again.

Chair Garapolo said it's hard to tell what the problem is. The contractor should give more information. They should check out the Gunderson house because they had a similar problem and it was rebuilt. They won a preservation award.

Committee member Doherty said she thinks there would be strong opposition at the Commission to removing all stucco elements. Chair Garapolo said the house is nicely proportioned and it would be nice to keep that.

- H. HPC2023-24: 163 N Ridgeland Ave (Marlon Smith):** Certificate of Appropriateness to restore original curved sides to porch as part of a porch restoration project (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said Committee member Elders provided a few comments: it is a fine concept but the details need to be correct. The rails should meet the pilasters directly, not posts. The balusters should be no farther apart than the width of the baluster itself and the railing should be thicker. Committee member Elders also provided a photo of 5915 W Race in Austin which was provided to the homeowner and the Committee. He said this house may have its original railings.

Marlon Smith, the homeowner, and Ray Martinez, the contractor, were present. Mr. Smith said he moved in in 2008 and shortly after, Miss Lois Westen came by. Her parents lived in the house from the 1910s up until 1970. She came by to see the home and wrote descriptions; she had her sister both got married on the porch. He said you can see the marks where the railing was connected. The porch needs to be rebuilt, so this is an opportunity. He said he lost the historic photo and Miss Westen passed away. He noted that the garden shape matches the curve.

*Motion by Mazur to open for discussion. Second by Doherty.*

Chair Garapolo asked if they checked with the Historical Society and Mr. Smith said he did. Committee member Doherty noted the street files and Mr. Smith said prior owners reviewed those. Planner Trexler said she also checked with Rachel Berlinski at the Historical Society and didn't find anything. Mr. Smith said the historic photo that he saw was taken between 1913 and 1951.

Chair Garapolo said Committee member Elders' comments were good in terms of the design of the railings. Mr. Smith said he would be open to doing the historic appearance of the railing; what's there now is not historic. He said the historic photo also showed egg-shaped finials at the bottom. Committee member Doherty said the railings on the Austin house look like the 1979 photo of N Ridgeland, so they should look at that. Chair Garapolo said he doesn't want to hold up the project but it would be good to go to the full Commission. Mr. Smith said he doesn't have time to wait. Planner Trexler suggested the ARC can approve the restoration and the project can be shown to the HPC for reference. Chair Garapolo said that would be helpful. He asked Mr. Smith if he is open to the railing design comments. Mr. Smith confirmed and said even if he rebuilt it the same size, he would use those recommendations. Chair Garapolo agreed and said the updated drawings should be provided to staff. he said the ARC can approve the project with the condition that the details discussed be changed.

*Motion by Committee member Doherty to approve the project with the condition that the railing details be revised per Committee member Elders' recommendations. Second by Committee member Mazur.*

*AYE: Doherty, Garapolo, and Mazur*

*NAY: None*

I. **Other Business:** None

J. **Adjourn**

*Motion by Mazur to adjourn. Second by Doherty. Motion approved 3-0.*

*AYE: Doherty, Mazur, and Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

Meeting adjourned at 8:40PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.