

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
June 8, 2023 – Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

**Roll Call**

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

**Agenda Approval**

*Motion by Commissioner Elders to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 7-0.*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to approve the minutes for May 11, 2023. Second by Commissioner Weiner. Motion approved 7-0.*

*Commissioner Bates arrived at approximately 7:40PM.*

**Regular Agenda**

- A. HPC2023-25: 117 S Ridgeland Ave (Stacy & James Pfluecke):** Certificate of Appropriateness for 1-story addition and new windows on side elevation of existing 2-story house (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She explained the project has two portions, a one-story addition on the north side elevation and window alterations on the south side elevation.

Chris Bremer, the architect, was present. Mr. Bremer said it's on the north side near the rear. There are a couple of rooflines due to the existing rear addition. Window proportions will match existing. The roof slope matches existing. They will use either real cedar siding or the TruExterior polyash product. Windows will be aluminum-clad wood with mullions to match historic windows.

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Andriana.*

Commissioner Elders said there are a lot of different window configurations and asked about the reasoning. Mr. Bremer said most of those are existing. They're proposing mostly 4-light windows; the kitchen will be 1-over-1 to relate to the nearest windows. Commissioner Elders asked if any of

the windows are original and Mr. Bremer said the first floor, front windows are, but he doesn't think the second-floor windows or windows are the back are original. Commissioner Elders recommended picking a window pattern and sticking with it. He said a hip roof might also soften the addition. Mr. Bremer said their concern was there are no hips currently on the house.

Chair Garapolo agreed about keeping the windows consistent. He said the roof shape relates to the other roof shapes and he's not concerned about it. Commissioner Doherty said she likes the roof shape as presented, it blends nicely.

Chair Garapolo said the one-story seems appropriate and the windows are basically matching. The wood product siding is a positive. He said it's conforming with the Guidelines. He recommended 2-over-2 windows. Commissioner Elders agreed this is probably the historic configuration. Chair Garapolo said adding a mullion on the basement windows to match other windows is important. They can be applied mullions. Mr. Bremer agreed and said he's happy to make the family room 2-over-2 windows.

*Commissioner Elders made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that new windows be 2-over-2 light and basement windows have applied mullions. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 8-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

**B. HPC2023-26: 327 S East Ave (MaryLou & Mark Tawney):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic coach house (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Denny Burke, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. Mr. Burke said the previous plan was to raise the existing couch house and put a foundation underneath. However, so much of the existing woodwork was deteriorated and so much bracing would be created that it would crumble on itself when lifted. The new coach house is still in design but would be about the same size. It would be 2 extra feet in width and 2 in depth. It would be moved further off the alley to meet zoning guidelines.

*Motion by Commissioner Mazur to open for discussion. Second my Commissioner Andriana.*

Chair Garapolo said the original architect [of the restoration] is here. Mr. Bremer, the restoration architect, said the clients really wanted to save the coach house. A number of general contractors didn't want to touch it. It's leaning in. It's scary to be in there.

Chair Garapolo said there's a report from the structural engineer, but it doesn't address the safety concerns. The contractor's letter is very short and he concludes it's not safe. Chair Garapolo asked how the contractor reached this conclusion. Mr. Bremer said they couldn't figure out how to shore up and repairs safely without spending \$200,000 shoring it up. Chair Garapolo said this is hearsay; there's nothing anyone has said about why it's unsafe or how expensive it would be.

Commissioner Andriana said from the photos, it is deteriorated pretty significantly, but there's nothing about the cost or safety issues. She said even though it does seem to be deteriorated

significantly, she can't say that with certainty based on the letters. Commissioner Peterson said the one letter noted the roof, floor, and walls may be salvageable and asked about plans. Mr. Burke said they will set aside usable materials for reuse on the interior as shelves, trim, etc. He said the homeowners are also interested in having Blue Earth, a deconstruction company, visit to see if material can be donated to Reuse Depot.

Commissioner Elders said he agrees there wasn't a lot of information regarding specifics, but there appears to be a significant dip on the alley side. It was not built to be that open. Mr. Burke agreed. He said the door on the end wall was there, possibly a barn door. Even with underpinning, there's going to be a lot of unsupported wall. Commissioner Elders said on page 5 it looks like it's held together by siding. There's some really bad repair and very rotten wood. If you started tearing at it to restore it, the whole thing could collapse.

Chair Garapolo said they're drawing conclusions from photos. The structural engineer didn't say anything, it sounds like it's repairable. The letters from the contractor and structural engineer have two different conclusions and it's not fair to other applicants.

Commissioner Peterson asked about the soil stacked against the wall as noted by the structural engineer. Mr. Burke said this has been removed. Commissioner Elders said in the photo from the yard on page 3 there's a big slump in the ridgepole. Commissioner Peterson agreed. Commissioner Weiner said in this case, pictures are worth many words as to the integrity of the structure. Commissioner Doherty said they presented the documentation requested. Chair Garapolo agreed. Commissioner Elders asked if staff could approve given a more detailed structural report. Planner Trexler recommended the Architectural Review Committee. She also explained the recommendations previously provided by Attorney Smith, that the Commission can't require specific submission materials, but must determine whether enough materials have been submitted that they can make a decision.

Chair Garapolo said the applicant should go to the ARC with an expanded letter from the structural engineer. He said he sees in the photos this is about to fall down. Mr. Burke said he understands. He asked if they are looking for specific repair methods or specific concerns in the structural report. Chair Garapolo said some structural engineers are willing to do that and some are not. If he feels concerned, it would be important for the Commission to hear that.

*Commissioner Andriana made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that the ARC may approve given an expanded structural letter. Second by Commissioner Weiner. Motion approved 8-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

- C. HPC2023-27: 304 N East Ave (Jeannie Affelder & Jeff Weissglass):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Denny Burke, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. He said in 2019, the homeowner put a topping slab over the existing slab, effectively covering the bottom plate of the wall. This has

made it wetter and colder. The studs have dry rot. A minimum of two feet around would need to be removed. The cladding is providing the rigidity. The feat is how much can be salvaged.

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second my Commissioner Bates.*

Chair Garapolo asked why they didn't provide a letter from a structural engineer. Mr. Burke said it wasn't a good use of the homeowner's fee. It's a smaller garage and is too narrow to fit to cars. It's not very visible or architecturally exciting.

Chair Garapolo said looking at the photos, it looks a lot better than the other garage. This project is in the same category as the previous garage and they would request a letter from a structural engineer. Mr. Burke said staff brought this up. He suggested going to the ARC with the letter. Commissioner Andriana said this is not as poor shape as the other. Commissioner Doherty said they have an architect's letter, but it's the architect of the project. Chair Garapolo said they should not approve this to go to the ARC.

Commissioner Weiner asked how the 2019 project was approved. Planner Trexler said it is not visible so would have been approved administratively.

*The Commission took no action.*

- D. Advisory Review: 304 N East Ave (Jeannie Affelder & Jeff Weissglass):** Advisory Review of proposed new garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo asked staff for guidance. Planner Trexler said previously the Commission has waited until the demolition has been approved. Chair Garapolo said it can be brought to the ARC. He said they will defer action.

- E. HPC2023-28: 319 N Grove Ave (Bob Evans):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Present on behalf of the project were Brian Crothers, the contractor, and Krusha Patel, the homeowner. Mr. Crothers described the state of the garage and showed photos to the Commission. He said the bottom plate was deteriorated and there is just a wood floor in the attached shed. An architect letter was provided. He said the garage was built in a utility easement, so raising it would bring it closer to the powerlines. All four corners are rotted out. Ms. Patel said they purchased the home last year and the report said immediate action was needed. They are concerned for their children's safety. They haven't used the garage at all. The door doesn't work.

*Motion by Commissioner Elders to open for discussion. Second my Commissioner Doherty.*

Commissioner Elders said the specifics pointed out are more compelling in terms of hard documentation. The plywood addition certainly needs to come off. A photo with a level was included.

Chair Garapolo asked if the architect of the letter is also the architect of the new project. Mr. Crothers said he is the designer. Chair Garapolo said this is a little more compelling. The letter is clear. He said he doesn't have a problem approving. Commissioner Doherty said the letter is from a third party, which helps.

*Commissioner Andriana 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 Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

- F. Advisory Review: 319 N Grove Ave (Bob Evans):** Advisory Review of proposed new garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Present on behalf of the project were Brian Crothers, the contractor, and Krusha Patel, the homeowner. Mr. Crothers said there is a budget concern with the LP Smartside, it would be an extra \$10,000. They found a 3" vinyl siding and a vinyl shake that will match the home. They are using LP smart lap trim around the doors and windows to match the home and give it a flow that is not currently there.

Commissioner Elders said the window on the east elevation is too small. Two or three vertically-oriented windows would be appropriate. He recommended measuring the trim on the existing garage. More of an overhang would be more appropriate. Mr. Crothers said it's two feet from the lot line, so they're allowed a one-foot eave. He said he has no problem adding windows. Commissioner Peterson asked about the height and Mr. Crothers said it is 13 feet currently and they are proposing 16. Commissioner Peterson said the angles don't look proportional with the house. Mr. Crothers said this is due to cost and building code. This is the maximum height they can get without a foundation. It's an 8/12 pitch rather than 10/12 like the house.

Chair Garapolo said in addition to the window comments, he feels strongly the garage should not be vinyl. It should be a wood product. Mr. Crothers said he has attended meetings where vinyl was approved, but 3" reveal rather than 4". It's a great cost difference. For this job it was \$10,800 more to use LP Smartside. Commissioner Elders asked about the siding reveal on the house and Mr. Crothers said it is 3". Commissioner Doherty asked if LP was the only product they looked at. Mr. Crothers said they looked at Hardie, which was the same cost. He said he knows the Commission doesn't like Hardie. A big cost is the installation of the material; the material was \$6,000 and the installation was \$5,000. This is due to the trimming, cutting, more intense installation process. With the triple three, install is a lot easier, you get three pieces done in the same time.

Chair Garapolo said this is an Advisory Review.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Garapolo thanked Commissioners Weiner and Peterson for attending Day in Our Village. He said there was a lot of interest in what the HPC is doing.

Commissioner Doherty told the Commission about the porch project at 163 N Ridgeland Ave that was reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee.

Commissioner Elders noted that 304 N East Ave, previously discussed, was moved historically to make way for the highschool.

Chair Garapolo said they need to appoint an Acting Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission.

*Motion by Commissioner Andriana to appoint Commissioner Elders as Acting Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission. Second by Commissioner Weiner. Motion approved 8-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

Planner Trexler said that the PastForward National Preservation Conference is scheduled across the November meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission and she wants to gauge interest in moving the meeting. Commissioners expressed agreement. Chair Garapolo asked Planner Trexler to send out information about the conference to the Commission and Planner Trexler said she would.

Commissioner Peterson asked about National Register listed buildings owned by Oak Park and requirements. Planner Trexler explained that National Register properties are subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. She said there are three interior landmarks locally listed.

Commissioner Elders asked about house sales in the historic district and if the Village can ask that historic district information be included. People buy their houses and then said they didn't know. Planner Trexler said she believes it is typically mentioned but people might not know what it means. One of the items in the Commission's work plan is education to help this, like at Day in Our Village.

Commissioner Elders mentioned painting historic masonry and how it can have a negative structural effect on a building. It traps moisture levels and accelerates deterioration. He suggested they see how other communities are handling this. Planner Trexler said she wrote a piece about this for the OP/FYI, which is a mailing received by all residents in the Village. Commissioner Andriana said she saw this piece. Commissioner Peterson said this relates to the garage discussed earlier, where they put down a slab that caused additional deterioration. Planner Trexler said she has discussed with the Communications Department having a regular historic preservation education item in the OP/FYI and she welcomed topic suggestions from the Commission for consideration.

### **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Peterson.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.