

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
July 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

A. ROLL CALL

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

B. AGENDA

Committee member Elders stated that 331 N Taylor Ave and 118 Home Ave are tabled until August as the applicants for these projects were unable to attend this evening.

Motion by Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Elders. Motion approved 2-0.

AYE: Doherty and Elders

NAY: None

C. MINUTES

Motion by Doherty to approve the minutes from June 22, 2023. Second by Elders.

AYE: Doherty and Elders

NAY: None

D. **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).**

Committee member Elders introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the Architecture Review Committee meeting on May 25, 2023. They followed up on the requests of the ARC and are requesting additional feedback. She read written comments from Chair Garapolo, who could not attend. Chair Garapolo wrote that the stucco knee wall should remain and there might be a more creative approach to the drainage, like multiple openings in the knee wall instead of one.

Mike and Michele Bibbey, the homeowners, were present. Mr. Bibbey explained the issues and said they spoke with Kim Smith, the architect from the project at 828 Gunderson Ave

that the ARC referenced. He said they also had another architect and their builder take a look. All of them recommended against the knee wall. It's not possible to tilt the porch flooring without sending the water back to the house.

Committee member Doherty asked if the entire porch will have to come off or if they can retain the stucco at the bottom. Mr. Bibbey said they're going to brace up the top and rebuild the whole bottom. Committee member Doherty said they should keep as much stucco as possible, like the columns.

Committee member Elders said this is an original part of the design and the Guidelines say to replace in kind. At the same time, if you have a form that doesn't work, it's hard to hold you to it. He said adding two large drainage slits could serve the same purpose. He said the columns should stay stucco.

The Committee discussed the columns. Two are historic and a metal support was added later. They agreed effort should be made to have just two columns, but if a third is needed, closer to the stairs would be better. Committee member Elders noted that the cap on the knee wall carries around the column and said it would be nice if they can continue that detail. The Committee agreed the blue house on Scoville provided is a good example of an appropriate railing.

The Committee further discussed the option of two drainage slits. Mr. Bibbey agreed to ask the architect about that. Committee member Doherty said the HPC will want to see due diligence has occurred.

The Committee discussed the stairs and agreed stucco posts at the bottom like the Scoville example are appropriate and could be what was there historically. The Committee and staff agreed the current front stairs are not historic.

- E. 850 Fair Oaks Ave (Mark Bouman and Mary Jane Keitel):** Discuss project to replace historic decorative window on front elevation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Committee member Elders introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She read Chair Garapolo's comments which included the existing window is clearly damaged but the proposed multiple casements do not match.

Mary Jane Keitel and Mark Bouman, the homeowners, were present. Mr. Bouman explained the deterioration and the issues in replacement. He said it rests on a base that projects from the façade and has a little roof, so they're being careful to preserve those elements. Mr. Bouman said there are about 150 panes of glass in various configurations on the house.

They are trying to improve sustainability while matching the design of the window. They have cost considerations, as well. He said a full custom rebuilt window would be about \$27,000 as compared to the \$15,000 for the Andersen window presented.

Kim Smith, an architect present on behalf of another project, asked if she could contribute to the conversation. She suggested trying a new window that is flat instead of bowed. She said she thinks Marvin could make this. Committee member Doherty said she likes the idea of checking to see if you can create the window without the bow.

Committee member Elders said the proposed casements are divided into seven lights but there's six in the windows on either side. Making casements with six would make them too rectangular.

The Committee agreed the applicant should look into a flat window option. They also discussed the option of an interior storm window and how that might fit.

- F. 738 N Marion St (Elizabeth Hoffman):** Discuss renovation of existing porch including altering railing design (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Committee member Elders introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She read Chair Garapolo's written comments. Chair Garapolo wrote that the existing porch should be kept and scuppers might solve the drainage problem.

Kim Smith, the architect, was present. She explained the issue and the issue previously with 828 Gunderson Ave. She said it's ridiculous to save a 1920s porch on a Victorian house. She said they will save the posts and brackets. There's a bay window on the front that is currently blocked by the porch knee wall.

Committee member Elders said he disagrees. He noted the Burnham & Root house on Forest Ave where Frank Lloyd Wright added a bigger Prairie style porch. That was not original but should be saved. Ms. Smith said this is not Frank Lloyd Wright and it's inappropriate. She said out of context, you'd think this wall is odd. Committee member Elders said there are some other examples. Alterations take on their own significance. It's one of the Standards. Ms. Smith said it's hard to maintain. Committee member Elders said it's historic. He said it was originally a stoop and maybe they could restore the stoop.

Committee member Doherty said with the Gunderson property, Gunderson houses were built so you could pick and choose. Ms. Smith said that's the same with this case. This owner built several houses and he picked and chose what he wanted with each. If someone wanted to put the wall back in later, they could. She said they could keep the wall up to the porch level instead of the skirting.

Committee member Elders said the other option would be a design with more scuppers. The Commission will want to see if that is a possibility. Based on the Standards, this is historic whether or not it is original. Ms. Smith said the porch floor would have to be redone to go with scuppers. It would be quite a bit of work to drain to the scupper and then the water would go down the siding.

Committee member Doherty asked if there is visual evidence of rot. Ms. Smith said the homeowner can contact the previous owner to see if they documented it. Committee member Elders said historic houses aren't supposed to be maintenance-free.

Ms. Smith said this is problematic across the Village. The wall looks incongruous and creates a visual barrier. For 828 Gunderson, the wall was original. This is not. She said she will take a look at the scuppers and get some pricing.

- G. 331 N Taylor Ave (Laura Gerace):** Certificate of Appropriateness to alter window pattern on side elevation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

The applicant was unable to attend and previously notified staff. This item was tabled until the August meeting.

- H. 118 Home Ave (118 Home Corp.):** Discuss project to add a rear, four-story addition and restore the front porch as part of a larger renovation and expansion project (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

The applicant was unable to attend and previously notified staff. This item was tabled until the August meeting.

- I. Other Business:** None

- J. Adjourn**

Motion by Doherty to adjourn. Second by Elders. Motion approved 2-0.

AYE: Doherty and Elders

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:40PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.