

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
August 10, 2023 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

Roll Call

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

Agenda Approval

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

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Weiner to approve the minutes for June 8, 2023. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

Commissioner Bates arrived at 7:33PM

- A. HPC2023-31: 115 S Grove Ave (Webster):** Certificate of Appropriateness for a two-story, rear addition and alteration to windows on the existing building (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the addition will continue the existing house back and will match materials and design details. She recommended the Commission discuss whether a vertical piece of trim should be used to mark the location of the addition.

Present on behalf of the project were Bill Scholtens and Roman Munoz, the architects. Mr. Scholtens described the siding plans. He said the first floor has historic, 10-inch, Dutch-lap siding. The second floor has Boreal Dutch lap closer to 9 inches. They will use wood siding to match on the north elevation, first floor and repurposed wood siding from the rear elevation on the south elevation, first floor. The screened porch and the second floor will have Boreal siding. They will use a vertical piece of trim on the first floor, north elevation only.

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

Commissioner Doherty said generally when there's an addition, they like to see clear delineation. In this case, it's so far back and the buildings are close together so it is ok not having a vertical line. The back porch is a natural delineation of what's new.

Chair Garapolo asked why they didn't put the vertical piece of trim on the second floor of the north elevation. Mr. Scholtens said they can. He said as the siding is not original, they were going to feather it in. Chair Garapolo said since they're doing the trim on the first floor, they should use it on the second floor. Mr. Scholtens agreed to do so.

Chair Garapolo said the project meets the Guidelines and he doesn't have concerns other than the vertical demarcation.

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the condition that the vertical trim be added to the second floor, north elevation. Motion approved 8-0.

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

NAY: None

- B. HPC2023-32: 838 N Elmwood Ave (Vreeman):** Certificate of Appropriateness for side addition (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

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

No one was present for the project. Planner Trexler said they may consider the item at the digression of the Chair. Chair Garapolo asked the Commission for their thoughts. Commissioner Doherty said someone should be here to represent the project. Commissioners appeared in agreement. Chair Garapolo said they can consider this item at the end of the agenda if the applicant shows up; otherwise it will be tabled until the next meeting.

- C. HPC2023-33: 738 N Marion St (Elizabeth Hoffman):** Certificate of Appropriateness to repair front porch and alter railing design from knee wall to railing (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She explained that the current porch design is from the 1920s and is considered historic as it was built within the period of significance. This project was reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee.

Kim Smith, the architect, was present. She said she doesn't have pictures of the rot because the new owners haven't been there very long and the previous owners repaired it. She said the problem will keep happening and mentioned 828 Gunderson Ave, which had the same issue. She said water gets trapped on the floor by the wall and creates mold and rot. She said the railing change was approved at 828 Gunderson but the client ran out of money. Ms. Smith said she talked to contractors and it would cost \$25,000-45,000 to tilt the floor and add scuppers.

Ms. Smith said she would like to speak to the issue that this porch is reflecting what was happening in the 1920s and the fascination with Frank Lloyd Wright. She said this is not Frank Lloyd Wright. It's completely inappropriate to have this wall on an 1880s farmhouse. She noted that asbestos siding was previously a trend; there are things we did in the past that led to issues. Just because it's

historic doesn't make it right. She said she is a huge preservationist but this is completely inappropriate for the house. Ms. Smith said she discussed other options with the ARC, including using siding for the porch skirting. They are keeping the columns and brackets. This house is one of four owned by four brothers, all carpenters who did something similar. The house across the street changed their railing before the HPC decided it was something worth keeping. There's a beautiful bay window on the front that is not visible from the street. They homeowners also have little kids that like to play in the yard and they can't see them.

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

Commissioner Doherty said the district is not just Frank Lloyd Wright houses. A big part of it was the "Prairie-fication" of the local environment. Yes, it looks out of context. But it's significant in its own right. She said we could say the same thing about the columns because this was originally a stoop. This is different from Gunderson. Gunderson was a place where buyers walked in and picked something different and there was a mixture on the block. This is a different context.

Commissioner Peterson said because the porch isn't original, something contemporary to the 1920s would seem appropriate, but Commissioner Doherty has a good point.

Ms. Smith said the four houses are almost identical and they did different things. If you want to call this little enclave a development, it's similar. She said she tried to find other houses they did, but couldn't. They weren't architects, they were carpenters. The four, as a collection, have different treatments. Chair Garapolo asked if there are four and said he saw three. Planner Trexler said she believes there are three. Ms. Smith agreed.

Chair Garapolo said he reviewed the material from the ARC and went by to look at them. He said he stands by his comments. When you see the house and the house next to it, they really are cohesive. To take away the horizontal banding of the porch is a mistake. He said he's not a fan of the garage addition, but even that is cohesive. Ms. Smith said she listened to the ARC and that's why she did the design with the siding for skirting. Chair Garapolo said he would not be in favor.

Commissioner Napper asked what other homeowners do to deal with the water. Chair Garapolo said they have scuppers. Ms. Smith said you spend a lot getting the floor to drain towards a few scuppers. The Gunderson house has scuppers and still had rot issues. Commissioner Doherty said all wood will eventually rot. Ms. Smith said this design traps the water between the wall and the floor.

Chair Garapolo asked if Ms. Smith looked at other options, like cutting the floor short of the knee wall. Ms. Smith said there's storage below the porch so they wouldn't want water draining there. Chair Garapolo said it might be a solution if it's questionable storage. Ms. Smith said she appreciates the comments and she did the new drawing as a discussion point to create a horizontal element. Chair Garapolo asked if they could replace the vertical railings with horizontal siding, leaving an opening at the bottom like a continuous scupper. Ms. Smith said she tried that and it looked completely inappropriate. She said the proposal is more appropriate to the time the farmhouse was built and still has a nod to the horizontal lines with the skirting.

Commissioner Weiner said he will recuse himself. He previously mentioned he worked with this architect for a project on his own house.

Chair Garapolo suggested a motion with the condition of using the horizontal siding for a skirting. Commissioner Peterson said this is her least favorite design, it doesn't solve either problem.

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the project use the balustrade and matching skirting. Second by Commissioner Napper. 3 in favor/4 opposed/1 abstention. No action.

AYE: Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Napper, and Commissioner Peterson

NAY: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, and Chair Garapolo

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Weiner

OTHER BUSINESS

HPC Upcoming Events: Planner Trexler provided some updates:

- The Historic Preservation awards panel will occur in October. Commissioners are welcome to nominate properties and can email staff.
- The 2024 Work Plan will be provided in the next month or so. The Work Plan is approved by the HPC and the Village Board and guides the Commission's efforts.
- Guide Book: looking for Commissioner interest and feedback. Hoping to establish what the Guidebook will look like over the next year.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.