

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
August 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

A. ROLL CALL

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

B. AGENDA

Motion by Mazur to approve the agenda. Second by Garapolo. Motion approved 2-0.

AYE: Mazur and Garapolo

NAY: None

C. MINUTES

Chair Garapolo said he and Committee member Mazur were not present for the last meeting. Planner Trexler recommended tabling approval of the minutes until the next meeting. The Committee agreed.

D. HPC2023-34: 416 Washington Blvd (Lisa Pintado Vertner & Ryan Vertner): Certificate of Appropriateness to enlarge three existing basement windows on the side elevations to meet light and vent requirements (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview and said the windows will be a composite material which meets recommendations. She read comments submitted by Committee member Doherty, who was unable to attend. Committee member Doherty wrote that the window alterations appear to meet the Guidelines and she supports including muntins to match the historic windows.

The homeowners, Lisa Pintado-Vertner and Ryan Vertner, were present. They said they had nothing to add.

Motion by Committee member Mazur to open for discussion. Second by Chair Garapolo.

Committee member Mazur said he agrees the muntins should match the rest of the windows. Chair Garapolo said he has no problems. He asked for clarification on the

mentins. Planner Trexler put the elevations on the screen and said they are included in the drawings. Chair Garapolo said they look good.

Motion by Committee member Mazur to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Chair Garapolo. Motion approved 2-0.

AYE: Mazur and Garapolo

NAY: None

E. 207 S Cuyler Ave (Cate Reading): Advisory Review for solar panels proposed for front slope of roof (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She read Committee member Doherty's written comments, which included that solar panels should not be on the front slope. Committee member Doherty wrote that the sides and back of the house should be further explored, as well as the garage.

Present for the project were Chip Reading, the homeowner, and Robert Koson, the contractor. Mr. Reading said their intent is to offset energy cost. He said he's read the packet and understands. He asked about the Village's stance and if more homeowners are using solar. Chair Garapolo said the Village's stance is through these regulations. In the historic district, they are against solar panels on the front. He said he applauds the use of solar, but the concern is that the reflectivity changes the view of the house. Once you put the panels on, it looks different. He said he hopes there's some alternatives to the four on the front and asked about options.

Mr. Koson said the four panels wouldn't fit on the garage with the fire setbacks. The panels are 3x5 feet. The garage doesn't have its own breaker box, so they'd have to do trenching. He said if they remove the four panels on the front, they'd go from 90% offset to 60% offset. They try to put the least amount of panels with the most amount of efficiency, and this is the best they can do. Chair Garapolo asked about the fire setbacks and Mr. Koson said they are a state requirement.

Chair Garapolo said they make a difference on the fronts of houses. Mr. Reading said he understands the concern and will take it under advisement.

Committee member Mazur said he agrees with Chair Garapolo and recommends finding another solution.

Mr. Readling said he works with wind power, and the wind turbines eventually fade into the background like powerlines. He suggested the same may become true of solar panels.

F. 631 Forest Ave (Anthony & Candice Drew): Discuss project to add a second floor and side addition (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She also read Committee member Doherty's notes. Committee member Doherty wrote that the the project does not maintain the historic character of the house because with the additions, it no longer reads as a bungalow. The original home is completely overwhelmed by the scale and massing of the addition and the screened in porch also detracts from the original structure. Explore ways in which the addition does not feel oppressive or diminish the original structure. Take a look also at previous bungalow expansions that the HPC has approved such as 324 N. Taylor and 711 Woodbine. The challenge is to maintain a sense of the original home style which is a modest bungalow and the project as presented does not feel harmonious with the historic character of the existing property.

Jim Vanderheyden, the architect, and Candice Drew, the prospective owner, were present. Mr. Vanderheyden passed out a packet with dimensions included. Ms. Drew said they live on the block and the couple that owns this house moved out a year ago. They have a contingency offer based on their desire to expand the house.

Mr. Vanderheyden explained the project and some of the design decisions. He said the porch creates a transition point. He said he's tried to be sensitive to the original structure, and the first-floor plan is classic bungalow. The inspiration for materials is 614 S Kenilworth Ave, which has stucco on the first floor and shingle siding on the second floor. He said it would contrast with but compliment the bungalow.

Chair Garapolo said he has walked by the house and it's the smallest he could see on the block. He said his impression is the houses are somewhat true to what they were originally. The proposal here is not just wider but taller. This is not the typically approach. He said it they were to not make it wider, and to set it back a little more, that would be much nicer.

Mr. Vanderheyden asked if this had a second floor what went straight up with a hip roof. Chair Garapolo said that would be better. He said he knows they are setting it back, but the bungalow guide suggests 20 feet and speaks to proportion. Ms. Drew asked if it would be more appropriate if the front stayed the same and the bump-out was further back. Chair Garapolo said that does meet the requirements. He said if it was a side addition, it has minimal impact to what you see on the front and there are other side additions on the block. He said there may be some creative solutions.

Committee member Mazur showed the Chicago Bungalow Association model for bungalow additions and said when you look at it, you still see a bungalow. Mr. Vanderheyden talked through dimensions and suggested starting the second floor 15 feet back and expanding more onto the back of the building. Chair Garapolo said that could meet the Guidelines.

The Committee discussed the proposed siding. Chair Garapolo said he is not sure about the cedar shingle and they will have to look further. He said the small shingle stands out much more than a clapboard. Mr. Vanderheyden said he's partial to the shingle. Chair Garapolo said they'd be open to looking at it further.

Mr. Vanderheyden showed the north elevation and said they would do a four-inch return to show the end of the existing bungalow. He said the banding detail is important and he likes the stucco on the lower portion. Chair Garapolo and Committee member Mazur agreed.

- G. 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).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She read Committee member Doherty's comments. Committee member Doherty wrote that she does not recommend the cupola if there is no evidence that one previously existed. Hopefully, the setback of the addition will not give it the appearance of completely overwhelming the original structure. Every attempt should be made to have the addition fade into the background and not stand out. It may be a European style (particularly post-WWII Germany) to boldly differentiate additions from historic structures, but this isn't harmonious with our local practices. In attempting to restore porch details on the primary façade of the historic structure, I recommend using the historic photo of the demolished structure at 922 North Blvd. for reference.

John Schiess, the architect, was present. Mr. Schiess explained the recent history of the building and the disinvestment. He said they have gone back and forth on the cupola. He thinks there is evidence in the attic. The cupola is also to help distract from the addition. He explained the lack of alley and the shared driveway issues that led to the design with the parking below. He said they removed the non-historic siding, and the historic siding is in good shape and will be restored. He explained some of the changes they made since the last ARC meeting, including adding bays, stepping in the addition, and changing the materials.

Mr. Schiess said one of the comments was to change the roofline. He said it would look odd to put a truncated pyramid on the back.

Chair Garapolo said Option 3 with the bays is a big improvement. Regarding the cupola, he would trust Mr. Schiess's research. Mr. Schiess said he thinks there was something there because you can see the old framing squared up. Chair Garapolo said additional research on that could go a long way. He recommended do another rendering with the cupola.

Chair Garapolo said it is difficult to see a lot of the addition when you stand at the sidewalk and this rendering shows that. It's much less of an impact than he thought originally. This is because of the bays and the material, which he assumes will be wood. Mr. Schiess confirmed they will do wood.

Chair Garapolo asked if the stair connector would be glass. Mr. Schiess said they will look at putting more glazing on the stair. Chair Garapolo said if so, it would almost disappear. He said it may or may not work and he's not necessarily opposed to what is shown. Mr. Schiess said his client's other project on Erie has "storefront" windows connecting the addition. Planner Trexler recommended including photos as an example.

Committee member Mazur said he likes the rendering and the third option. He said he is curious about the cupola and likes it. The property is so far back, he doesn't have a problem either way. He said he agrees with a lot of Chair Garapolo's comments. The glass would be interesting, but he likes it as-is.

Chair Garapolo said with a little more research, they can go to the HPC.

H. Other Business:

Structural engineer letters: Planner Trexler said this discussion item was requested by Committee member Doherty, who is not present. She suggested postponing the item until Committee member Doherty returns.

I. Adjourn

Motion by Mazur to adjourn. Second by Garapolo. Motion approved 2-0.

AYE: Mazur and Garapolo

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.