

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
September 14, 2023 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Roll Call

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

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Chase to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Bates. Motion approved 7-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Commissioner Peterson said the vote for 738 N Marion St should be edited to 3 in favor, not 2 in favor. Planner Trexler confirmed and said she will make this edit.

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the minutes for August 10, 2023. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

Commissioner Andriana arrived at 7:36PM.

- A. HPC2023-32: 838 N Elmwood Ave (Vreeman):** Certificate of Appropriateness for one-story, side addition (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 was Chris Wollmuth, the architect. He said he is happy to answer any questions.

Motion by Commissioner Chase to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Mazur.

Chair Garapolo said the addition height shows the new roof meeting the building at the location of an existing window. Mr. Wollmuth said to keep the roof pitches the same, they are removing one window. It will be replaced by two windows in the back to meet the light and vent requirement as it's a bedroom. He said it will be a casement window with a false horizontal to mimic the double-hung

while meeting the egress requirements. Chair Garapolo asked if the first floor will have double-hung windows and Mr. Wollmuth confirmed.

Chair Garapolo said the project appears to meet the Guidelines.

Commissioner Elders said it looks a little too large; it pulls the orientation of the house in a different direction. Mr. Wollmuth said a little of that is the perspective view. Commissioner Elders agreed and if the dormer will remain. Mr. Wollmuth confirmed it will.

Commissioner Weiner made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion approved 8-0.

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

NAY: None

- B. HPC2023-34: 131 N Taylor Ave (131 N Taylor LLC):** Certificate of Appropriateness to build a two-story rear addition and alter windows on the side elevations (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

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

Present on behalf of the project were Doug Clark, the architect, and Nelly Taromina, the owner. Mr. Clark explained the project. He said the house has multiple additions already. The rear of the house was an old porch that is not standing the test of time. They will replace the rear porch and build an addition. They will use clad wood windows.

Motion by Commissioner Chase to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weiner.

Commissioner Peterson asked for an explanation of the roof change and how much is existing. Mr. Clark said it's a seamless roof plane. He pointed out the location of the addition on the screen.

Commissioner Elders said there's too much siding on the addition, and it's too much of the volume of the house in a different material. He said they don't approve the stamped wood grain. Mr. Clark said it would be smooth. Commissioner Elders said the windows should be one-over-one, as drawn. He said removing the back of the octagon is a mistake, and it is visible from the alley, which is a public right-of-way. Mr. Clark said the octagonal bay is not original and is sagging. They want to introduce patio doors and a deck.

Chair Garapolo asked why they are using wood siding on the addition. Mr. Clark said it was a staff suggestion. He said he understands the stucco has a history, but the original building was lap siding. The stucco is in extremely poor shape. He said he would prefer the house were unified in siding. Chair Garapolo said the Commission has also approved additions in the same material with a vertical demarcation. He asked if a stucco addition is an option. Mr. Clark said yes. Commissioner Peterson said stucco might be the way to go.

Mr. Clark asked if they could return the house to its original siding and said 90% of the block has narrow-exposure clapboard. Commissioner Peterson asked if there is documentation, and Mr. Clark distributed photos to the Commission showing siding under the stucco. Commissioner Peterson said because there is evidence, she would support it. Commissioner Elders said given the evidence of the

2.5-in siding, 4-inch would not be appropriate. Chair Garapolo asked if they would go back to wood, and Mr. Clark said he thinks so.

Chair Garapolo asked about the south elevation. The north shows stone at the foundation but the south shows clapboard. Mr. Clark said this is due to the nature of the addition. On the south, that's the part of the addition that will stay and the roof steps back.

Commissioner Elders said he feels strongly the rear addition keeps its octagonal shape. Mr. Clark said they could. They would have to look at the structure as it just hands out over the dirt.

Chair Garapolo said these changes would require review of the updated drawings. Commissioner Chase suggested the Architectural Review Committee or staff.

Planner Trexler asked for clarification about whether the Commission is approving wood siding or LP Smartside. Commissioner Elders recommended against mixing wood and LP. Mr. Clark agreed. Chair Garapolo asked the applicant to attend the ARC meeting for final approval.

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions of restoring the 2.5" wood siding and retaining the back bay, to be reviewed by the ARC. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion approved 8-0.

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

NAY: None

C. HPC2023-35: 126 S Harvey Ave (Byron Lanning & Leslie Sutphen): Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

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

Present on behalf of the project were architect Debbie Kent and homeowners Leslie Sutphen and Byron Lanning. Ms. Kent said the garage was built as a carriage house and is not suitable for cars. It is not the right size and is in poor condition. They are worried the roof will collapse with snowfall. She said the homeowners are willing to try to keep the windows and incorporate them into the new garage and they're willing to donate the siding. The garage leans and has no foundation. It has been pushed through in the front and extended in the back.

Motion by Commissioner Weiner to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Chase.

Commissioner Peterson said there is sufficient evidence. Chair Garapolo said a cost estimate was supplied to repair the garage and asked Ms. Kent if she reviewed and it made sense. Ms. Kent said yes, they walked through the project together and talked about what would need to be done. She said a new garage would be half the cost. Chair Garapolo said they're not reviewing the new garage, but the proposal assumes vinyl siding. Ms. Kent said even if it was wood siding, it wouldn't make up the cost difference.

Commissioner Chase asked if the windows will be salvaged and Ms. Kent confirmed. Chair Garapolo said the report was comprehensive and he doesn't have any concerns.

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 8-0.

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

NAY: None

D. 850 Linden Ave (Emily & Matt McNulty), Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District:

- a. **HPC2023-36:** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage.

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

Present on behalf of the project were homeowners Emily and Matt McNulty. Ms. McNulty said their structural engineer confirmed what they've known from the time of purchase. The foundation is substantially cracked, the wall is leaning, and there's no foundation. They are doing what they can to preserve the look of the garage in the new design.

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

Commissioner Peterson said the existing garage has nice little windows and asked if they can reuse them. Ms. McNulty said they hope to reuse as many materials as possible. Their intent is to include the curved windows.

Commissioner Chase said they have enough information to see the garage is leaning, like so many others. Chair Garapolo thanked the homeowner for hiring a structural engineer and said the Commission always feels more comfortable seeing that. Ms. McNulty said they were happy to have his point of view. Chair Garapolo said this meets the typical requirements.

Motion by commissioner Peterson 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 Chase, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

- b. **Advisory Review:** Proposed new garage.

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

Commissioner Chase asked about the siding on the house and if it was approved. Planner Trexler said the change to vinyl was approved because the historic siding underneath was retained. Chair Garapolo asked if they will keep the historic windows. He said they would like to see the final drawings, so these should be submitted to staff.

Commissioner Elders said there should be trim around the garage door, which isn't shown. He said the windows show as 6-over-6, but the house has 6-over-1. He said the garage should be 6-over-1 to match the house. Ms. McNulty agreed and said they love the matching set.

- E. HPC2023-37: 118 Home Ave (118 Home Corp.):** Certificate of Appropriateness 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 item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant has attended two Architectural Review Committee meetings and made some changes based on feedback. They have brought forward two options, "option 3" and "option 3a." She said the Commission should review the application with particular consideration of the scale of the addition as viewed from the street and the materials proposed. The Guidelines also state that the roof should be compatible.

John Schiess, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. Mr. Schiess explained the project, including the property details and history, as well as design decisions and changes. He said the intent is to restore the entire structure and remove the non-original additions. He explained the cupola and said these is something framed out in the attic with newer framing, possibly when a cupola was removed, but he can't be sure. He said he likes the cupola and it helps the rear addition disappear.

Motion by Commissioner Chase to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Weiner.

Commissioner Chase said she won't approve a 4-story addition. She says she understands the spirit, but it completely loses the character of the house.

Commissioner Elders said the addition aside, he would be softer to it if there are more things met on the historic house. There are ghosts of the corbels. There's evidence that the window surrounds had crowns similar to the one central one remaining. There's evidence the porch was covered the entire width of the house, because there's evidence of an engaged column at the southwest. The bump-out at the vestibule is not original but doesn't have to be removed. The balustrade on the second floor should go the full width. The center window is taller; he suggested putting in an elongated window or giving this impression through a panel. Commissioner Elders said the key is getting the details right. He said he's not wild about the size of the addition, but they have to go above and beyond on the front of the house. Mr. Schiess said he can meet those recommendations. The intent is to bring out the details.

Commissioner Elders said he appreciates that they've canted the bays on the back to make the addition less obtrusive. The cupola works to district, but should have paired arched windows. He said the cupola is conjectural but the porch is different. The trim on the windows and missing corbels are important. Mr. Schiess said the client actually wanted to do a full porch.

Commissioner Peterson said she's in agreement that bringing as much focus to the house and emphasizing the Italianate traits will be beneficial. She said it's set back far enough that the rest will fade in the background.

Commissioner Elders said the stone first step is original and should be retained.

Commissioner Chase said the Commission should be careful about implying that they're giving concessions. They need to keep the historic character. An addition that's bigger than the house isn't appropriate. Commissioner Elders said for the project on Home Ave, Commissioner Chase wanted more density.

Chair Garapolo said he appreciates what has been done with the existing house and he prefers the cupola. He asked if the size of the addition is absolutely fixed and if the front part could be lower and step higher. He asked if there is any way the addition could be smaller. Mr. Schiess said they are sensitive to the size, that's why the stairs are a buffer. The property allows 7 units, but they're proposing 5. They dropped the building 3 feet from what would be typical. The short answer is no.

Chair Garapolo asked if there is any way to make the building slimmer. Mr. Schiess said the living area could come down 1.5-2 feet. The north side is stepped in and there's very little visibility, so they could shift the addition north. Chair Garapolo said the HPC has approved additions that are in line with the house, that would be helpful. He asked if it can be lowered. Mr. Schiess said it can be dropped 1'6".

Commissioner Elders said for the record, his previous comments are not saying he's in favor of the addition. It would help if the addition read as a roofline. He said he knows this would take away from the headroom of the upper units, but maybe they could be bedrooms. He said 115 Clinton is a good example of a sensitively handled, very large addition. In that case, there is parking underneath, which he understands is not workable here.

Chair Garapolo said he's hearing a request that the architect go back to the drawing board and return. Commissioners expressed agreement. Mr. Schiess said he's written the recommendations and he thinks his client would be in favor. He said time is of the essence. He agreed to return to the next HPC.

F. Public Hearing: HPC2023-33: 738 N Marion St (Elizabeth Hoffmann): 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 summarized the public hearing process. Attorney Smith swore in the witnesses.

Present on behalf of the project were Kimberlee Smith, the architect, and Elizabeth and Martin Hoffman, the homeowners. Ms. Smith said this porch design is seen all over the Village. It creates an issue by trapping water and causing deterioration. The homeowners can't sit on the porch and see their children in the front yard. It hides a beautiful bay window. They would like to replace the knee wall with an open rail. The wall is not original to the house. She said she understands what the Commission is saying about the "Prairification" in the 1920s, but it's not appropriate for this house.

Ms. Smith introduced the homeowners. Ms. Hoffmann said the picture window has beautiful woodwork they would like to showcase. For cost reasons, they are nervous about the water that collects and the continuous repair and upkeep. She said they have a 1.5-year-old and a 10-month old.

Planner Trexler read the evidence into the record.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the applicant has any evidence that there was previously a railing. Ms. Smith said there is no evidence they could find. She said staff research showed the house originally had a front stoop.

Chair Garapolo asked if they have evidence of damage or wood rot. Ms. Smith said the previous owners repaired it. There's some evidence on the north side. They have been in communication in the past with the previous owners and know it has been replaced over time. Chair Garapolo asked

how long the previous owners owned the house and Ms. Smith said a long time. Chair Garapolo asked if the deterioration took a long time. Ms. Smith said it does take time, but the water comes right to the joint where the wall hits the floor of the porch and creates rot. It is something that is always having to be maintained and repaired. Chair Garapolo said if this is going to take 25 years to be a problem, that repair will need to take place, but it isn't something that needs to take place tomorrow. Ms. Smith said they have other water issues with windows and flashing and they want to do the porch as part of the repair work because of the economy of scale. They've had issues with the window sills on the garage addition.

Ms. Hoffmann said they also have a leak at the front window sill and the railings of the stairs have deteriorated completely. Chair Garapolo asked if there is any possibility to create a relief for the water drainage like scuppers. Ms. Smith said she talked to two different contractors; it was \$35,000-\$45,000 to do a scupper project. 828 Gunderson has scuppers and it still rots. She said it's just a bad design and that may not solve the problem.

The Commission began deliberation.

Commissioner Peterson said it's pretty clear in the Guidelines that we should not be altering the design of the porch. Looking down the street, on that side of the street all the houses have knee walls except one.

Commissioner Weiner said he will vote this evening and can be objective [though he previously hired the architect].

Chair Garapolo asked Commissioners absent from the previous meeting to confirm they watched the video recording. Commissioners confirmed.

Chair Garapolo said this house and its neighbor act as a couple. It's pretty consistent visually. He said he walked up and down the block. He has a problem with changing the railing for the reason stated. Yes, it would be nice to see through it more, but those aren't reasons to simply make a change to what the front of the house looks like. He said he would not be in favor of going to a railing style for those reasons. He said the applicant said there's a water problem, but it still seems that a scupper or another solution could be done. The Commission has talked about these options, but they've all been dismissed. He said he is not in favor.

Commissioner Elders said alterations aside, he's frustrated that the public hearings have come down to the Commission offering alternatives that haven't been integrated. Commissioner Chase said the applicant mentioned prices for the scuppers but didn't provide them. She said she wishes this was in the packet.

Commissioner Andriana agreed with Commissioner Doherty's previous statements about the "Prairification" of the porch. She read the Guideline item: "If opening a previously enclosed porch, property owners shall restore historic porches to their appearance during the period of significance unless the enclosure, by nature of its age, architectural significance, or other special circumstance has achieved historic significance of its own." Commissioner Andriana said she would not approve this project.

Motion by Commissioner Weiner to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion denied 1-7.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Mazur, Commissioner Peterson, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: Commissioner Weiner

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the drafted Resolution denying the Certificate of Appropriateness with edits to be made by staff and the Chair. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 8-0.

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

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

- **2024 Work Plan:** Planner Trexler said a draft work plan was provided the Commission will vote on it in October.

Chair Garapolo said one item on the work plan is education. He said they should reinstitute or follow through with contacts with the realtor group. The Commission sees people coming in that don't know about the historic districts. He said they should also have a list of contractors available to homeowners. Planner Trexler confirmed and said she does have resources regarding contractors. She said she will send this information out to the Commission.

Commissioner Elders said the Commission is getting a lot of last minute updates, like the project that came tonight with the siding change. Maybe they should have Tuesday as a deadline for updates. Planner Trexler explained the deadlines and that project materials must be received seven days in advance of the meeting.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:46PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.