

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
January 11, 2024 at 7:30PM – Meeting Minutes**

Roll Call

Present: Chair Lou Garapolo and Commissioners Asha Andriana, David Bates, Monique Chase, Amy Peterson, and Mark Weiner
Absent: Commissioner Scot Mazur
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Attorney: Caitlyn Culbertson, Elrod Friedman LLP

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 6-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Andriana to approve the minutes for December 14, 2023. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion approved 6-0.

Regular Agenda

A. Advisory Review: 329 S Euclid Ave (Michael & Katherine McDonald): Advisory Review for proposed new garage (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said there are two garages on the property and the historic garage on the north side will remain. The non-historic garage on the south will be replaced. The property owner has received a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to retain two garages on the property.

Katherine McDonald, the homeowner, was present. She explained that the garage is dilapidated and they will retain the historic garage but tear down the 1956 garage. She said they want to preserve the historic nature of the garage. They have discussed using a Hardie board siding that is meant to look like stucco. She said they have a stucco garage and house, and are trying to be consistent with that. She said she would like to maintain large eaves, but they need to consider the space between their garage and their neighbor's garage. Ms. McDonald said the new garage will mirror the color, roof pitch, and shingles of the historic garage.

Commissioner Peterson said Ms. McDonald addressed many of her questions, which were about the stucco and the wider eaves. Commissioner Weiner asked why the fake stucco rather than real stucco. Ms. McDonald said it's less expensive and easier to maintain, but she said they haven't priced it. She said they should price stucco as well. Commissioner Weiner said the fake stucco comes in sheets that require a vertical seam. He said they should look at how the seams will look. Ms.

McDonald said they re-stuccoed their house and it was pricey, but she doesn't know what it would cost from scratch.

Chair Garapolo agreed with Commissioner Weiner that they should review a drawing of the stucco panels with seam covered as it will look like a patchwork quilt. He said he hopes they shift to actual stucco. There is maintenance involved, but there will be regardless. The boards expand and contract.

The Commission discussed the windows in relation to the existing window on the historic garage. They recommended considering matching windows and raising them up if concerned about break-ins.

B. HPC2024-1: 746 Gunderson Ave (Harrison Harada): Certificate of Appropriateness to alter windows on the side elevation of house on corner lot (Gunderson Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant attended an Architectural Review Committee meeting in November 2022 and made some project changes to reflect the recommendations of the ARC.

Harrison Harada, the homeowner, was present. Mr. Harrada showed photos and described the projects. He said the two existing windows aren't the same and they will be adjusting them to match. The top of the windows will align with the other windows on the floor and the width is proportional to those on the sides of the adjacent bay. He said these are casement windows and they are happy to center the muntin.

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

The Commission discussed the project and clarified that no work will be done on the bay, though this was previously proposed at the ARC meeting. Chair Garapolo said the house has double-hung windows and recommended a centered muntin to match.

Commissioner Andriana made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the muntin be centered. Second by Commissioner Peterson Motion approved 6-0.

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

NAY: None

C. HPC2024-2: 412 Clinton Ave (Jesse & Feighanne Hathaway): Certificate of Appropriateness for dormer addition on side elevation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

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

Jesse Hathaway, the homeowner, was present. He said he is a longtime resident and they love this house. They have done a lot of work on the interior and have four children, so want to finish the attic as an additional bedroom. He said the obvious solution would be to match the existing dormers, but they felt that wasn't in keeping with other E.E. Roberts houses. He showed some examples and explained the details. He said due to the proximity to the lot line, they have to use special steel windows, but they will paint them to match existing. The dormer will be stucco.

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

Commissioner Peterson asked if the detail between the windows is meant to match the front pillars and Mr. Hathaway confirmed.

Chair Garapolo said he likes this approach rather than matching the dormers. It's in keeping with the house and a good idea. He said they are putting three windows over four existing windows and asked why not match the four. Mr. Hathaway said the new construction won't match exactly, so they were trying distinguish it. One of the other E.E. Roberts houses also shows different windows on different floors.

Chair Garapolo said they solution is well though-out and they had a lot of discussion and research. He said he has no concerns.

Commissioner Bates made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 6-0.

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

NAY: None

D. Public Hearing: HPC2023-44: 430 S Taylor Ave (Janelli Barrow): Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish contributing building within the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District.

Chair Garapolo introduced the public hearing and Attorney Culbertson swore in the witnesses. Planner Trexler provided the staff report. She said the property is contributing within the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District and therefore approval is not recommended. However, the applicant may pursue a Certificate of Economic Hardship or appeal denials to the Village Board.

Present on behalf of the project were the applicant, Anthony Garland, and architect Brian Hungerford. Mr. Garland said he was born and raised in Oak Park. He bought this property with his wife last year and their goal was to move into the house. They wanted to renovate the property. The property caught fire in June. He said he got a call from the fire marshal, who said they may have to demolish and build new. The fire marshal said there was a hole from the basement all the way up to the roof. Mr. Garland said they boarded up the house and started dreaming what they could do. They reached out to an architect before they knew they'd have to go through this process. Mr. Garland said they've had a structural engineer look at the property and they did an inspection with Mr. Cutaia. Mr. Garland said Mr. Cutaia found the property could be repaired, but Mr. Garland disagreed and said he brought his architect who can speak more to this.

Brian Hungerford introduced himself as the architect for the project. He said the fire marshal deemed the property un-occupiable and dangerous to human life and welfare. He said there is a big sticker on the side of the building. Most of the roof is significantly compromised. The most recent inspection didn't include the full building, assumed because it was unsafe. Mr. Hungerford said the house does not meet current codes and standards. There is more that should be investigated to evaluate what can be salvaged based on Mr. Cutaia's report. Mr. Hungerford said salvaging requires scientific evaluations and is not an easy process but can be done. It would be a selective demolition process.

Mr. Hungerford said the most likely solution is that this house remains in some form of disrepair until something else can be figured out. He said it's his opinion that it can be salvaged, but since 2005 it has been cited for multiple violations. He said he hopes they can consider demolition. Mr. Hungerford said this is a non-contributing structure, its significance is that it's of a time period and style. It's not designed by a significant architect. J.W. Farr, the plaster contractor who built the building, built it to show off his skillset of standardized plaster buildings. Mr. Hungerford said while they recognize the time period in which it was built and the fabric of the district, there is a significant amount of damage and it's not as significant as many of the others in the district.

Planner Trexler read the exhibits into evidence. Mr. Hungerford asked to add a photo of the fire marshall inspection building sticker and Chair Garapolo confirmed.

One member of the public, Josh Grishner, provided a comment. Mr. Grishner said he lives across the street at 431 S Taylor Ave. He said it looks like a teardown and they've been wondering what the hold-up is. They don't want to look at this for another two years while this gets strung along. He said this was a nuisance house and he looks forward to what the applicants can add to the neighborhood. He said the block is not architecturally significant and anything they can do will better the block. Rebuilding what is there would take longer and would hurt the block.

Staff stated that no written comments were received.

Commissioner Weiner asked the applicant if the expense would come out of their pocket, whether it's what's there or is new. He asked if a cost assessment has been done for repair versus new. Mr. Garland said they reached out to contractors who recommended demolition. He said it would take investigative reporting to determine what could be salvaged, and that would be very expensive. Mr. Hungerford said they have discussed costs like what it would take for a design fee to design back portions of the building. He said if you have an excessive amount of money to spend, you can do that. There are plenty of others in the Village who do take those projects on. He said they haven't done an exhaustive process to price it.

Chair Garapolo said according to the State Historic Preservation Office, this is a contributing building. He closed discussion and opened deliberation.

Commissioner Peterson asked staff about the criteria the Village Board would consider on appeal. Attorney Culbertson said the Board has the same information and criteria. As they are a legislative body, they have the power to move away from criteria if they choose. Commissioner Peterson said the evidence put forward illustrates that it will be very expensive to work with the existing structure.

Chair Garapolo said they have not seen analysis. They hear it's more expensive, but they need an analysis. Commissioner Chase asked if they can make assumptions. She said they're saying the building envelope is okay, but the interior is not. Chair Garapolo said he wouldn't make that assumption.

Chair Garapolo said the Ordinance is clear on the requirements for economic hardship, and that is available to the applicant. Based on the Ordinance, it is a contributing resource. The first goal is to repair, and he hasn't seen any evidence that there has been any approach to repair. He said they've also heard from the State confirming it's a contributing structure.

Commissioner Andriana agreed that no cost was received. She said in reading the memo from the Chief Building Official, she didn't understand it as either-or. She said she wasn't sure if he was making a decision about whether it was salvageable.

Commissioner Chase she can't approve tonight but wants to see how this project can move forward as quickly as possible. They keep sending things to the Board and she's trying to come up with ways to make this easier for people that live here. Commissioner Andriana said in the past, they've asked people to provide costs. Commissioner Chase said if they can get the Certificate of Economic Hardship and plans approved at the next meeting, that would put them in a good place.

Chair Garapolo said to remember plans will not materialize overnight. The economic hardship path could take place at the February meeting, but there's a very specific list of things that need to be prepared or presented, including cost.

Commissioner Peterson asked staff to provide more information about the specificity of the Certificate of Economic Hardship requirements. Staff directed the Commission to the Ordinance and read some excerpts. Attorney Culbertson said the applicant can meet one of the standards, it doesn't have to be all.

Chair Garapolo said the applicant has the option of taking this route.

Commissioner Weiner made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion denied 5-1.

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

NAY: Commissioner Weiner

Commissioner Andriana made a motion to approve the drafted Resolution with final edits to be made by staff and the Chair. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 6-0.

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

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Historic Resource Database:** Staff to provide update on new historic resource database now available to the public on the Village website.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Andriana

The meeting adjourned at 9:05PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.