

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
August 8, 2019 - Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers, 7:30 pm

Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Tom Abrahamson, Jennifer Bridge, Sandra Carr, Lou Garapolo, Darrick Gurski, Laura Jordahl, David Sokol, and Noel Weidner
Absent: Chair Christopher Payne and Commissioners Rebecca Houze and Aleksandra Tadic
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Attorney: Gregory Smith, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Gurski; Motion approved 8-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

Alexandra Heitzman said she is against the proposed Frank Lloyd Wright Trust visitor center. She said the architect selected by the Trust is known for destroying architecture to build new buildings.

Attorney Smith informed the Commission they can only consider evidence at the hearing on August 27 in their vote.

Paul Harding said he is an architect, owns a Frank Lloyd Wright house, and has been a resident of Oak Park/River Forest for 40 years. He said he would like to submit a graphic analysis to the HPC. Attorney Smith said documents can be submitted to staff prior to the hearing on August 27 and anything given to the Commission must also be provided to the applicant. Village staff will assist with this.

Mr. Harding said both houses in question were built by 1905, the year to which the Home & Studio was restored. He said the proposed plan will demolish 40-50% of Anna Lloyd Wright's house and the scale of the proposed building is much larger than all nearby buildings with the exception of the elementary school. He said this is not a binary choice and he proposes an alternative scheme. Having Frank Lloyd Wright's house in comparison with contemporary houses is rich and authentic. He said that a large building can be added while keeping the Anna Lloyd Wright House intact. If this project is approved, it will set a terrible precedent for Oak Park as well as other communities.

Minutes

Commissioner Garapolo said he did not attend the meeting on July 22, 2019, but that he watched the video of the meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Abrahamson to approve draft minutes for July 11, 2019; Second by Commissioner Bridge; Motion approved 8-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. HPC2019-46: 131 S Ridgeland Ave (Ameen and Aisha Salahudeen):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the chimney on the north roof slope to accommodate an interior renovation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Ameen Salahudeen, the homeowner, and Amanda Miller, of Amanda Miller Design Studio, were present. Mr. Salahudeen introduced himself and Ms. Miller. Ms. Miller explained that they plan to remove the chimney to provide better living opportunities on the interior of the house.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Garapolo.

Commissioner Garapolo said he feels the turret is a character defining feature but the chimney is not. He does not have any concerns about the project. Commissioner Weidner said removing the other chimney would be an issue, but he agreed this one is not.

Motion by Commissioner Carr to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the internal chimney as proposed. Second by Commissioner Weidner. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: None

- B. HPC2019-47: 637 N Euclid Ave (Donald Adeli):** Certificate of Appropriateness to restore the front porch, demolish the existing coach house, and build a new garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Bill Scholtentz, the architect, and Donald Adeli, the homeowner, were present. Mr. Scholtentz said there are two components to the project, the porch and the garage. He explained the project, including the two options for the second floor porch railing in order to meet building codes. Mr. Scholtentz explained the deteriorated state of the existing coach house and said it would be impossible to repair without causing further damage. They propose replacing it with a 3-car garage. Design cues are taken from the front of the house.

Motion by Commissioner Weidner to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Garapolo.

Commissioner Sokol asked about the height of the decking on the second floor porch. Mr. Scholtentz said it will be 4.75" at the railing but set back from the railing.

Commissioner Garapolo noted that the floor on the first floor of the porch will be stained and asked if the stairs will be stained as well. Ms. Scholtentz said a solid stain is preferred because it wears better than paint because it doesn't peel. Mr. Scholtentz said he has used this stain previously on a porch project that was approved by the Commission. A photograph of this porch was included in the submission.

Commissioner Weidner asked if the brick piers will be retained. Mr. Scholtentz said they will. Commissioner Weidner, Commissioner Carr, and Interim Chair Jordahl agreed that they like option one for the railing.

The Commission agreed that the coach house is in poor repair and not salvageable. Commissioner Carr asked if a coach house replacement was considered. Mr. Scholtz said the owner determined they did not need the additional space. The homeowner, Mr. Adeli, added from the audience that the coach house used to be servants quarters and it is extra space that they do not need.

Commissioner Carr and Interim Chair Jordahl agreed that they liked the proposed garage. Commissioner Gurski said he appreciates the reduction in size. Commissioner Weidner agreed and said that the existing coach house is unsafe.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate the porch using railing option 1, demolish the coach house, and build a new garage. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: None

- C. HPC2019-48: 217 Home Ave (Park District of Oak Park):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the concrete front steps and a portion of the sidewalk (Oak Park Landmark in Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Frank Heitzman, the architect, was present. Mr. Heitzman said that the front steps are deteriorated. The budget doesn't allow replacement with limestone, which was likely the original material, but the concrete proposed will look like limestone and be more durable than the current concrete. The driveway had to be excavated during a project last year and is deteriorated. A decorative concrete specialist was consulted to ensure that the new concrete will match historic as closely as possible. A mockup will be used to ensure it matches.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

Commissioner Carr noted the care taken to find an appropriate aggregate mix and said she supports the project. Commissioner Gurski agreed and said he appreciates that the front steps will be squared off. Commissioner Garapolo inquired about the size and process for the mockup. Commissioner Weidner asked if the lip on the current stairs had a function and Mr. Heitzman said it was a popular design feature in the 1970s but had no function.

Motion by Commissioner Abrahamson to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to restore the concrete steps and driveway as proposed. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: None

- D. HPC2019-49: 116 Lake Street (Claude L'Heureux):** Certificate of Appropriateness to build a new front porch and alter a window on the front elevation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Greg and Sue Burnett, the contractors, were present. Mr. Burnett explained the project. The current doors were likely put in 10-15 years ago and the trim may be from the 1950s; the details, such as the fluting, are not in keeping with the style of the house. The proposed doors were selected as they match some of the interior doors. Ms. Burnett added that the selected square, linear railings to go with the house, as it does not have a great amount of ornament.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Weidner said that the architectural drawings do not have measurements. He questioned the distance between the top of the porch roof and the bottom of the altered second floor window. Commissioner Carr asked if the proportions of the house will be kept on the porch and Mr. Burnett said that the trim sizes will all match. Interim Chair Jordahl asked if the porch will be open underneath and Mr. Burnett said the space would be open with shrubs on either side.

Commissioners Gurksi, Weidner, and Sokol agreed that the drawing is not precise and there are planned changes that are not shown. Commissioner Sokol suggested that staff provide final approval of measured drawings.

It was confirmed that the new window will be half the size of the existing window and the doors will be stained.

Motion by Commissioner Weidner to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to build a new front porch and alter the window above, with the condition that staff approve final drawings. Second by Commissioner Abrahamson. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Gurksi, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: None

- E. HPC2019-50: 212 N Harvey Ave (Brett and Sarah Williams):** Certificate of Appropriateness to build a rear, second story, one-room addition (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

David Walker, the architect, was present. He explained the proposed windows, stating that high windows are required since the space will be a closet and bathroom, and there are currently lots of casement windows at the rear of the house. The homeowner is willing to change the east side gable end. They hip roof design was selected to be less obtrusive and not get too close to the neighboring house.

Motion by Commissioner Carr to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Weidner.

Commissioner Carr asked if there is a drawing of the proposed changes from the west. Mr. Walker said there is not. Commissioners Weidner and Carr agreed they would like to see a drawing. Commissioner Garapolo said this project should be reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee, in particular to discuss the roof shape and window, as well as to see a drawing of the front elevation.

Mr. Walker asked for feedback on the west window. The Commission agreed that it is up to the applicant what they want to propose but the horizontal window band may not be appropriate. The

Commission explained that new construction should be differentiated from old but they should draw on elements of the house to ensure it is compatible. Interim Chair Jordahl recommended breaking up the horizontal window. Commissioner Carr noted the small rectangular windows on the front façade of the house and recommended using several similarly shaped windows.

The Commission requested that the applicant attend the Architectural Review Committee meeting on August 28 and submit both a front rendering and a roof plan.

The Commission recommended that the applicant attend the Architectural Review Committee meeting and took no action.

- F. HPC2019-51: 158 N Taylor Ave (Derekh Cornwell and Melissa Schnyder):** Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of historic wood siding and replacement with Hardie Board on the front, north, and south sides of the house (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Derekh Cornwell, the homeowner, and Barry Nelligan, the contractor, were present. He explained the history of the project, noting that they were unaware that there was historic siding still existing. They previously (in 2016) renovated the kitchen and completed asbestos abatement and did not find historic wood siding on the rear elevation. They found grainy textured trim, which is why they selected the proposed Hardie board.

Mr. Cornwell said that when they began to remove the rest of the non-historic siding this year they found wood siding that was too rotten to install new siding over. They felt they could not wait until the next Commission meeting and decided to remove it and wrap the house. They called Village Hall the next day. The house has now been wrapped since May and they want a cost effective solution. They would prefer to use the Hardie board already purchase but are open to cost-feasible alternatives. Mr. Cornwell noted that there was no wood siding on the porch and the original wood siding on the dormer was about four inches.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

Commissioner Garapolo asked if it would be possible to exchange the Hardie board for a different size. Mr. Nelligan, the contractor, said it is likely not possible but they can try. Commissioner Garapolo said he recommends the 4" Hardie board. The 6" is too large. He said he does not have an issue with Hardie board overall. Commissioner Weidner said he does not think Hardie board is appropriate as it does not look like historic siding. Interim Chair Jordahl asked if they were able to swap for narrower Hardie board, if they would eventually replace the rear to match. Mr. Cornwell said they would. The price for this was not known.

Commissioner Sokol said he does not approve of Hardie board but is sensitive to the cost issue. He said matching the rear is not as important as having 4" siding in front. He supports 4" siding. Commissioner Gurski agreed. Interim Chair Jordahl asked if this would add to the original cost and Mr. Nelligan said this cost would be absorbed by the contractor. Commissioner Sokol said that it would be fine for the homeowner to wait to replace the rear as it is not visible from the street.

Interim Chair Jordahl asked about the 6" selection and whether the project had been before the Commission previously. Planner Trexler said the project in 2016 was approved administratively as it was not visible from the street and the project earlier this year was approved administratively as it did not, at the time, necessitate the demolition of historic materials. The permit required that the

historic wood be retained. Interim Chair Jordahl said she generally recommends retaining historic wood under non-historic siding in case a future owner wants to restore it.

Commissioner Carr expressed concern about the contractor absorbing the restocking fee. The Commission discussed the house across the street, which has the same 6" Hardie board. This was also approved administratively as the wood siding was retained underneath.

Attorney Smith informed the Commission that they may make an attempt to approve multiple motions. Five votes are needed in favor.

Motion by Commissioner Carr to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the historic wood siding and replace with 6" Hardie board siding. Second by Commissioner Gurski. Motion approved 5-3.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Gurski, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, and Commissioner Weidner

- G. HPC2019-53: 325 S Harvey Ave (Jay Rowell):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish chimney, demolish and infill two windows, and demolish a portion of wall to create a new window on the north elevation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Jay Rowell, the homeowner, was present. He explained that they are remodeling the house. The chimney is low and near the rear of the house, it is not visible if you look at the house dead-on. He said the chimney is also falling apart and a previous owner wrapped it in chicken wire to hold it together. For the windows he noted the proximity of the neighbor and the fact that there appear to have already been widow alterations on the side elevation. Two of the windows lack sills.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Bridge.

Commissioner Garapolo said he has no issue with the proposal. Commissioners Abrahamson and Weidner agreed.

Motion by Commissioner Bridge to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the chimney and alter the windows on the side elevation. Second by Commissioner Weidner. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Commissioner Abrahamson, Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Gurski, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Interim Chair Jordahl

NAY: None

- H. HPC2019-52: Oak Park Public Works:** Discussion of preservation and replacement efforts for sandstone/slate sidewalks.

Interim Chair Jordahl introduced the application and Planner Trexler gave an overview. Planner Trexler explained that a Certificate of Appropriateness was originally submitted but the historic sidewalk portion of the sidewalk project has been delayed for this year due to budget constraints. It

was recommended that the Commission discuss acceptable options for replacing stone sidewalks in the Village in the future. A new COA will likely be submitted to the Commission next year.

Bill McKenna, from Oak Park Public Works, was in attendance. Mr. McKenna said the original project proposed to replace a lot of sandstone that is not appropriate to be replaced. Oak Park has approximately 200 miles of sidewalk, four miles of which is stone. An inventory of these four miles was completed in 2004 to identify trip hazards and squares beyond repair. Public Works is trying to address liability and ADA access. The sidewalk budget is primarily for non-historic sidewalks. The Village has in the past completed releveling projects but the Board has not recently approved this budget item. Mr. McKenna expressed wanting guidelines from the Commission moving forward for how Public Works should address historic sidewalk repair. He suggested that this be included in the 2020 work plan. Public Works has identified that the original stone came from a quarry near Cleveland that is still in operation.

Commissioner Sokol asked where the stone sidewalks are in relation to the historic districts. Mr. McKenna said there are a lot in the Gunderson Historic District.

Commissioner Carr said for concrete replacement, the Commission would want to review mockups. Mr. McKenna agreed and said Public Works can do this. He said there are several examples of efforts around town that they can direct the Commission to, as well. Commissioner Carr noted the importance of recreating a smooth finish with aggregate. The Commission inquired about instances of sandstone and instances of slate. Mr. McKenna said sandstone is most common but there are some instances of slate, such as near Cheney Mansion.

Commissioner Gurski asked if other communities have historic stone sidewalks and if they can be salvaged. Mr. McKenna said not many but they can reach out. The sandstone is brittle and can be difficult to salvage.

The Commission inquired about the costs for various work. Mr. McKenna summarized that leveling a square costs \$480, a square of colored concrete costs \$600, and new sandstone costs about \$1,000 per slab. He explained that leveling is effective. It is done by lifting the stone with straps and smoothing the sand underneath. Mr. McKenna did not believe any stones have been lost during releveling work.

Commissioner Abrahamson said there is historic stone in front of his house and some white concrete was put in. It was later stained and he doesn't notice it anymore. He also asked about the previous policy that allowed homeowners to request replacement with stone. Mr. McKenna responded that there have been various policies in the past but none were approved by the Board. Commissioner Abrahamson said he is interested in an option that allows homeowner input. He also asked about staining options. Mr. McKenna said using a color in the concrete mixture has a better depth of color and does not require as much maintenance. He also said that there has been some interest from homeowners in stone replacement but Public Works wants to establish priorities as the materials will be quickly used up. Planner Trexler said that using a pigment in the concrete mixture is also the recommendation of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Interim Chair Jordahl said she is interested in keeping/replacing stone where there are existing bands of sandstone. She did not find it as important for spots where there are one or two stone pieces between existing concrete. Mr. McKenna agreed and said Public Works has looked at this as well. They do not want to create a checkerboard pattern.

Commissioner Sokol recommended that this be discussed again, not during building season.

Commissioner Bridge said she would like to know more about what the State Historic Preservation Office would recommend. Planner Trexler summarized that the SHPO suggested re-grading any pieces that just have one crack, using pigment in the concrete to match historic stone, and using a fine aggregate and a finishing technique to match the texture.

Commissioner Weidner said that if there are any specific places that are problem areas needing routine attention, that these should also not be places they use replacement stone.

Mr. McKenna said he will work with Village staff on developing guidelines that may be part of Work Plan 2020. He will bring samples to the Commission in the first quarter of 2020.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planner Trexler said they may need to schedule a follow-up meeting to approve a resolution after the hearing. She asked for availability of Commission members on Wednesday, August 28, at 7PM prior to the Architectural Review Committee meeting. She said a formal request will be sent out if a meeting will be scheduled. A majority of those present appeared to be available.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn. Second by Commissioner Carr.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Urban Planner Historic Preservation.