

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
November 12, 2020 –Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:00 pm**

Roll Call

Present: Interim Chair Rebecca Houze and Commissioners Jennifer Bridge, Monique Chase, Lou Garapolo, David Sokol, and Noel Weidner
Absent: Commissioner Sandra Carr
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Attorney: Patrick Collins, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

Agenda Approval

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Sokol.
Motion approved 6-0.*

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for October 15, 2020. Second by Commissioner Bridge. Motion approved 6-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. Advisory Review: 820 S Elmwood Ave (Eileen Deamer):** Advisory Review of proposed new garage in the Gunderson Historic District (no garage currently existing).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She recommended that a wood clapboard siding be considered to match the house, or a synthetic that matches in profile, typically 3 inches for historic siding.

Eileen Deamer and Rick Nagle, the homeowners, and Hector Castillo, the architect, were present. Mr. Nagle said they will match the colors to the house and will look into wood clapboard options as recommended.

Commissioner Garapolo agreed with the siding recommendation and noted the dramatic roof on the house. He recommended more of an overhang on the garage eaves. Mr. Nagle said they would consider this. Mr. Castillo said they can do this but will need to meet setbacks.

Commissioner Sokol said either siding option works but wood is preferable. If synthetic, it should have the same profile as historic siding. Commissioner Weidner asked what the previous garage looked like and Planner Trexler said they do not have a photo in Village records. Commissioner Weidner agreed with Commissioner Garapolo about the roof.

Commissioner Bridge agreed with the previous commissioners. Chair Houze agreed and said wood siding would be preferable, and at the minimum, a historic siding profile with synthetic materials.

- B. Preliminary Determination of Eligibility: 609 Linden Ave (Anthony and Dietra Millard):** Preliminary determination of eligibility for potential landmark at 609 Linden Ave, the MacArthur House (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She summarized the statement of significance and explained the criteria the house has been nominated under and why, including Criteria 1, 3, 5, and 6.

Anthony and Dietra Millard, the homeowners and nominators, were present on behalf of the project. Mr. Millard thanked the Commission and explained their interest in landmarking their house. He said they are the third owners of the house; the second owner was Robert C. Borwell, whose family lived there from the early 1930s until 1995. Ms. Millard said the coach house is on a side lot from the house, which was purchased by Borwell. They explained that they have 200 feet of street frontage and do not want another building built adjacent in the future. They said Borwell was interested in trees and planted a wide variety of trees on the property.

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

Commissioner Sokol said it is seldom that the Commission sees a property that meets so many different criteria. He noted the architect, Charles White, and the association with MacArthur as important elements. Commissioner Garapolo said it is a gracious house on a larger lot, and he appreciates the homeowners' willingness to preserve that. He agreed that the property meets the criteria listed.

Commissioner Weidner said the house retains integrity and agreed it meets the landmark criteria. He said he supports the nomination. Commissioner Chase asked staff if landmarking would prohibit building something in front of the coach house. Planner Trexler said the coach house has been included in the nomination and a map should be added to ensure the landmark is the full property. This would mean that the HPC would have to approve any proposed new construction. Ms. Millard said it is their wish that the landmark includes the full lot. Ms. Millard noted that the coach house has a lot of architectural details matching the originally associated house on Euclid. Mr. Millard said the coach house predates the house.

Commissioner Bridge said this is a great property, it has a lot of historic integrity, and it checks a lot of boxes for the criteria. She said she is happy to see the landmark submission.

Commissioner Weidner asked for confirmation on next steps. Planner Trexler explained the next step would be a hearing, then a recommendation to the Village Board. Commissioner Weidner and Chair Houze agreed the coach house should be included. Ms. Millard said the house and coach house are on a single property at 609 Linden. The properties were combined in the 1940s.

Ms. Millard thanked the Commissioners for their work.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol that the nominated property likely meets one or more criteria to be listed as an Oak Park Landmark. Second by Commissioner Weidner. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

- C. **HPC2020-39: 1118 Wenonah Ave (Floyd Mohler):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage and build a new garage with a hip roof and vinyl siding with 3-inch profile (Gunderson Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She explained that a similar COA was approved at the October 8 meeting of the HPC, with the condition that the garage have a hip roof and wood clapboard siding. The applicant has since found the wood siding to be infeasible due to substantial additional cost and has requested that vinyl siding be permitted in a 3" profile to match historic siding. She recommended that the Commission consider the Siding and Soffit Policy, which allows for replacement of wood siding with synthetic if the homeowner can demonstrate that the cost of repair is substantially greater than replacement. She also noted past COAs approved: of 13 garage COAs approved 2017-2019, 11 were approved with synthetic siding.

Samantha Mohler, the homeowner, was present on behalf of the project. She said they spoke with a lot of contractors, which is documented in the submission, and they have had difficulty in obtaining wood siding. A number of contractors were unable to get it or found it cost-prohibitive. There is currently a lumber shortage and based on work done by a neighbor, the cost is almost double this year from last year. She noted pictures of a nearby garage with the 3" vinyl siding for comparison.

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

Chair Houze noted that the applicant has taken the request to use a hip roof rather than gable. Commissioner Sokol said he has no way of countering the reality of the current wood shortage. Wood siding would be preferred, but under the circumstances, he can live with the vinyl as long as the profile matches. Commissioner Weidner said there was a shortage in treated lumber this year but he has installed wood siding. He noted the previous approvals of Hardie board and a concern that it is creeping into the Village. He said it does not have the character of wood, and if consumers stop buying wood, it will continue to decrease in availability. He said the proposal is fine with him.

Chair Houze agreed with Commissioner Sokol and said the applicants have looked at different options. Wood is available but it is more expensive. She said she would support the vinyl siding, but this is something that should be dealt with in a more comprehensive way for garage reviews in the future.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project to demolish the existing garage and build a new garage as proposed. Second by Commissioner Bridge. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

Commissioner Garapolo and Chair Houze discussed adding a discussion to the agenda. Planner Trexler recommended that this be included with the Guidelines and Ordinance update, which will likely occur at the beginning of next year.

- D. HPC2020-40: 201 N Elmwood Ave (Vicki and Mark Matranga):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish historic garage and build a new garage on a corner lot (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Vicki Matranga, the homeowner, and Dorota Betancur, the architect, were present on behalf of the project. Ms. Betancur said while this is a corner lot, the garage is not right on the street. She mentioned some of the issues with the current garage. They would have to replace the foundation and deepen the footings. She said they also encountered an increased cost with wood siding.

Ms. Matranga said she takes the corner lot and historic preservation very seriously. The garage is really not visible due to the fence and tree. She said it would cost more to repair the garage than replace. She said the garage was built 20-30 years after the house and does not match it architecturally.

Ms. Betancur said if 3" siding is needed, they will have to use vinyl, but if 5" is permitted, they would prefer the LP Smartside, which could match the color of the house. She said they cannot change the color of vinyl.

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

Commissioner Weidner clarified with the architect that LP is compressed wood with glue. He said the Commission should discuss this material in the future when discussing siding further. He said durability and what it's like to replace it are important factors. He said he would prefer the 5" LP over vinyl. Commissioner Garapolo agreed. He asked if the LP is paintable and Ms. Betancur confirmed that it is.

Commissioner Sokol said the color match is not important in terms of historic integrity. He said he has no problem with what Commissioners Weidner and Garapolo have said.

Chair Houze asked what the siding profile is on the house. Ms. Matranga said it's 3" clapboard on the first floor and shingles on the second floor. Chair Houze said the paintable material is probably more appropriate. She said wood siding would be best. Commissioner Weidner said the shingles on the second floor are closer to 5".

Ms. Betancur said original clapboard was old growth wood so was more durable than what we have today. Commissioner Weidner asked if they can reuse any of the materials on the historic garage. Ms. Betancur said they would have a patchwork of materials. Even the interior structural pieces would be difficult to reuse as they do not meet current building codes.

Motion by Commissioner Bridge to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the garage as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

- E. **HPC2020-41: 1109 Paulina St (Thomas Simmons):** Certificate of Appropriateness for renovation including window alterations, chimney demolition, and front door move and replacement (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Peter Harlan, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. Mr. Harlan said his client purchased the property this summer and it was previously vacant for 1.5-2 years. They are renovating, which includes a number of repairs. He explained the project and work involved.

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

Commissioner Weidner said this house was on the market for a while. He said he has no problem with the chimney. He asked if the windows are all double-hung currently. Mr. Harlan confirmed and said they will replace the windows to match but will repair the attic window, as it has a unique glass pattern. Replacement windows will be clad wood. Commissioner Weidner asked about the current siding. Mr. Harlan said it is currently wood.

Commissioner Garapolo agreed with Commissioner Weidner. He asked why the wood siding will not be repaired. Mr. Harlan said it was a cost issue. The cost of repair was approximately \$20,000 more than new siding. Commissioner Garapolo said putting the insulation and vinyl on top of the wood will harm the historic wood siding.

Mr. Harlan said the owner was unaware that this was in a historic district and asked when the district was expanded. Planner Trexler said the expansion was around 2004.

Chair Houze asked for clarification on the siding process. Planner Trexler said the practice of the Village has been that if new siding is installed on top of historic wood siding and the wood siding is retained, this is not considered demolition and can be approved administratively.

Mr. Harlan asked for clarification on the concern about the siding and if the concern was water getting to the wood. Commissioner Garapolo said both the insulation and vinyl would have to be attached to the wood. He recommended repairing the wood siding.

Commissioner Sokol said they cannot change the definition of demolition in the Ordinance for this one case. He said to cover historic siding has not been considered demolition and this is not the purview of the Commission. Chair Houze asked if the Village has information on best practices for installing insulation over historic siding. Planner Trexler said the Village does not have this but recommended looking to the National Park Service Preservation Briefs. Chair Houze reiterated that it is not in the purview of the Commission to make decisions regarding the siding if the historic siding will not be removed, as this is not considered demolition. She asked if Commissioners had comments on other project elements. There were no further comments.

Commissioner Sokol asked if the siding discussion was purely economic. Mr. Harlan confirmed. Commissioner Sokol asked how much of the siding is bad. Mr. Harlan said the siding would need to be replaced on the entire south side, around the windows on the east side, and 2-3 feet above the foundation. He said they can forego the insulation on the exterior.

Chair Houze asked about the process and cost estimates. Planner Trexler said a cost would be required if the historic siding is to be removed. Chair Houze said she can work with staff to provide additional recommendations on the appropriateness of insulation and best practices.

Commissioner Weidner asked if they can approve everything but the siding. The Commission discussed the references to the siding replacement in the drawings and how to best make the motion. The Commission discussed the information included on the drawings.

Commissioner Garapolo said it sounds like approximately 30% of the wood is not in good shape. Mr. Harlan confirmed. Garapolo asked how the vinyl siding would be applied over the damaged wood. Mr. Harlan said in locations such as the foundation line, they would have to replace to attach new siding. Mr. Harlan said he would make a note on the drawings that the historic siding should not be removed at all.

Commissioner Sokol asked staff how this relates to demolition. Planner Trexler explained the process used previously for historic siding projects. She recommended that the Commission discuss the handling of siding separately, outside of this project, and that for this project the applicant replace any portions that must be removed with wood siding to match before adding the vinyl. Commissioner Garapolo said if you are going to do that, he recommends just keeping the wood siding. Commissioner Weidner said this should be used as a case study when they discuss the Ordinance and Guidelines update. He said it is a false narrative that you could remove that vinyl siding and have good wood siding underneath fifty years later. Commissioner Garapolo expressed concern that inspectors may recommend removing historic siding.

Chair Houze said they can't change the Ordinance right now, so they should move forward, but it should be kept in mind that covering siding may contribute to the demolition of the historic siding underneath. Commissioner Sokol asked if they can still ask the homeowner to replace the bad wood with good wood, then they may move forward as proposed.

Commissioner Weidner recommended that the applicant attend the Architectural Review Committee. Planner Trexler said attendance should be a recommendation only.

Commissioner Sokol asked how this meets administrative approval if 30% is removed. Planner Trexler agreed and said she was unaware of this 30% number and would take this to Village staff to confirm. Mr. Harlan said the 30% would just need to be replaced if they were restoring all of the wood siding.

The Commission discussed whether the siding needed to be included in this COA or not. Chair Houze suggested taking no action and having the applicant return with additional information. Planner Trexler asked that the Commission provide more detail as to what the applicant should provide to answer their questions. Commissioner Sokol said a written statement with more clarity on how much siding would be removed. Commissioner Garapolo recommended the applicant attend the ARC. Commissioner Weidner noted the details in the eaves and the trim and asked for updated drawings.

Mr. Harlan asked if they can move forward with their project in some way. Planner Trexler said the interior work can be put on a separate permit. She said if the Commission wants to approve specific items tonight, she would recommend they approve those items so the applicant can move forward on the project while the siding is decided. Chair Houze agreed that this would be appropriate and it should be recommended that the applicant attend the ARC to further discuss the siding.

Motion by Commissioner Weidner to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed with the exception of any work on the siding. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

- F. HPC2020-42: 141 S Scoville Ave (Michael and Kimberly Lenz):** COA for renovation including opening enclosed portion of front porch, expanding an existing rear dormer, altering windows, and remodeling a rear addition on a house on a corner lot (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Denny Burke, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. He said the main desire of the homeowner is to bring the house back by opening the porch. He said the dormer expansion will provide room for a mother-in-law suite in the attic. He noted the change to the mudroom roof and said the homeowners may want to keep the existing gable due to cost. He said all new windows will match in style. He said there is an existing AC unit on the south side that will be replaced and a new one will be added on the north. Vertical trim will be added to differentiate the addition as they will be changing the addition siding to stucco to match the house.

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

Commissioner Garapolo said the project looks good. He said he prefers the gable to the shed roof on the mudroom. Commissioner Sokol said the project looks fine. Commissioner Weidner agreed on the mudroom roof and said the porch looks great. He said overall he is supportive of the project. He asked for clarification on the roofs. Mr. Burke explained the existing roofs. Commissioner Weidner asked if the only change would be the dormer to a shed roof and Mr. Burke confirmed.

Chair Houze approved of the opening of the front porch. She said it is an interesting house and in general this seems like a good project.

Motion by Commissioner Bridge to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

- **2021 Work Plan:** Planner Trexler said she added the activities done by the HPC in January and February to the 2020 section. She said all of the previous initiatives have been carried across to 2021.

Commissioner Sokol said the educational issues have been hard recently but noted the preservation of the Post Office. He said this is one of the treasures of the community. He said all the Commissioners should look at the interior and exterior of the Post Office and should discuss this with the community. He said he does not want the Post Office to fall into greater disrepair. Chair Houze said they can put this on the agenda to discuss. She said they can reach out to

Landmarks Illinois for advice. Commissioner Sokol said he would be happy to do that. Commissioner Garapolo expressed his support.

Commissioner Garapolo asked about the garage and siding discussions and where this would fit in. Planner Trexler said this would fall under the Guidelines update.

Chair Houze said she has discussed issues of diversity with a number of commissioners recently. She said this might fall under education but maybe they can make it a separate item. Commissioner Sokol expressed support. He said the Commission has also historically not had many renters. He said they have also lost two members who represented the Wright houses and larger estates. Commissioner Chase said affordability is also an issue, and noted that tonight they heard from a developer who was trying to do a project as inexpensively as possible. She said getting priced out of the Village is a concern. Chair Houze recommended mentioning representation of the community on the Commission. Commissioner Sokol said they should have an item referencing diversity on the commission.

Commissioner Weidner said the outcomes column should be filled out with what they want to achieve. He said they should have more clarification. Chair Houze asked about a deadline. Planner Trexler said she was asked for it this week. She recommended they approve it with clarification from the Chair on specific items as needed.

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the Work Plan for 2021 as presented with some potential additions to be clarified by the Chair. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Sokol, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

- **1013 Erie St:** Planner Trexler provided an update on 1013 Erie St. Under advice of staff, the homeowner had a door restoration specialist review the existing door. They identified it as a half-view, 2-panel door made in the 1950s. In a report, they noted the tight profiles for the stile and rail construction and raised panels as associated with the Gordon-Van Product line of that period. In addition, the manufacturing process and construction techniques were found to be consistent with the 1950s. As such, the door was found to be non-historic and the project has been approved administratively as required by the Ordinance.

Commissioner Sokol expressed concern that homeowners can decide to not follow the Commission's regulations in this way.

- Commissioner Weidner asked about appointing new Commissioners. There were no updates. Commissioner Sokol recommended that they contact Trustees individually about their concern.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Weidner. Motion approved 5-0.

AYE: Commissioner Bridge, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Weidner, and Chair Houze

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:20PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.