

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
November 24, 2020 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:00 pm**

Roll Call

Present: Interim Chair Rebecca Houze and Commissioners Jennifer Bridge, Sandra Carr, Monique Chase, Lou Garapolo, David Sokol, and Noel Weidner
Absent: None
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Attorney: Greg Smith, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

Agenda Approval

*Motion by Commissioner Sokol to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Garapolo.
Motion approved 7-0.*

Non-Agenda Public Comment

Frank Heitzman, Frank Lipo, and Heidi Ruehle attended to provide a non-agenda public comment.

Mr. Lipo introduced himself. He said they attended the Plan Commission earlier this month to talk about adaptive reuse as a long-term goal for Oak Park. Ms. Ruehle gave some historical information on the Hill Motor Sales Building and the significance of the building and showed some examples of successful adaptive reuse. She presented two schemes showing how a grocery store could be built while retaining a portion the historic building. She provided a cost savings analysis for reusing the building. Ms. Ruehle mentioned the Oak Park Comprehensive Plan, which supports preservation, and suggested a mural option for the windows, which could involve community partnerships.

Mr. Lipo said the commission structure in Oak Park hampers preservation issues; one option might be to have an adaptive reuse committee. He said we should consider the sustainability of adaptive reuse, for example. Mr. Lipo said this should not be a partisan issue. He said the Village Board agenda last night included a second amendment to the redevelopment agreement for the Hill Motor Sales Building and they voted to allow demolition. He said this was not the procedure they understood would be followed. He said they need collective efforts for adaptive reuse and should not wait until a crisis. Mr. Heitzman said the preservation community was accused of always coming too late to the game, but the preservation effort has gone on for years, at least since 2006 when the Madison Street Corridor Plan was developed. He described the ongoing preservation efforts. Attorney Smith reminded the commenters that the length of their comments after three minutes is at the discretion of the Chair and asked that they focus on what this commission can actually do.

Chair Houze thanked the commenters for bringing this issue to the Commission's attention and that she is looking forward to working in a cross-disciplinary way. Commissioner Garapolo said he would be interested in participating. He asked how the suggested committee would work. Mr. Lipo said the Comprehensive Plan encourages reuse but said they need to apply it. For example, they could find real-world examples to have further discussion about. Mr. Heitzman said they should put together a list of buildings that might be affected by future development and looking for reuse options. Chair Houze asked staff how they can continue this discussion. Planner Trexler recommended adding it as a

discussion item under Other Business and said she would look into the options available to the Commission.

Minutes

Commissioner Weidner asked that these minutes be brought back to the Commission when a conversation is held on siding, as this has a good case study. Commissioner Carr said her name was listed following the motion to adjourn but she did not attend the meeting. Planner Trexler said she would fix this error.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for November 12, 2020. Second by Commissioner Bridge. Motion approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. Advisory Review: 634 N Ridgeland Ave (Randy Kelso and Meg Lanfear):** Advisory Review for new garage, existing garage not historic (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

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

Chris Bremer, the architect, and Randy Kelso, the homeowner, were present on behalf of the project. Mr. Bremer gave a presentation summarizing the proposed project. He said they are using a synthetic siding and will look for a profile close to three inches. He said they will be adding trim similar to the house.

Commissioner Garapolo said the green roof is a good idea. He recommended a siding profile appropriate for historic siding, as mentioned. He said the trim should be on the top and sides, similar to the house, rather than just the top. He asked if at some point in the future, the green roof would be abandoned and said the flat roof will not be consistent with the rest of the district. Mr. Bremer said he is not prepared to address this.

Chair Houze asked if a green roof can be done on a pitched roof. Mr. Bremer said it is difficult to put on a pitched roof. There are potential complications. Commissioner Carr agreed and said green roofs are heavy and can slide. It would be a risk and would cause structural issues. Commissioner Sokol said he appreciates the concern but this is an Advisory Review. They have to give their best advice based on what is presented now.

Commissioner Weidner agreed with previous comments on siding and trim. He said since it is not a historic garage, he is fine with something modern. Mr. Bremer said they are open to modifying the trim.

- B. HPC2020-43: 151 N Taylor Ave (Ryan Levy):** Certificate of Appropriateness for a side addition (Ridgeland Oak Park Historic District).

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

Ryan Fieberg, the architect, was present on behalf of the project. He gave a summary of the proposal and some of the design decisions. He said they priced out two options; wood was \$17.50 per square foot and Hardie board was around \$10.00 per square foot. The Hardie board would also match the existing rear elevation. he said the new windows are casement but are similar proportion and will have a rail to simulate a double-hung.

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

Commissioner Weidner asked what the existing windows are. Mr. Fieberg said the existing windows are replacement double-hung windows from 2006. He said they prefer casement windows for their energy efficiency and as a better way to ventilate but the rail will simulate the double-hung. He asked if they priced the LP and Mr. Fieberg said they had not. Commissioner Weidner said it should be considered. Commissioner Carr agreed. She said it is fine as an addition but she would be interested to see pricing on the LP to compare the products. She said the addition is a perfectly good solution.

Chair Houze asked the Commission for material preferences and why. Commissioner Carr said the LP can be lapped differently and with less exposure. She said the Hardie board has a fake wood grain. It is easier to get the historic profile with the LP. Commissioner Weidner agreed and said they need to have a bigger discussion but LP seems more like wood. He said LP is sawdust and glue, while Hardie board is cement.

Motion by Commissioner Carr to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

C. HPC2020-44: 1111 Erie St (Sergiy Zamula): Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear addition (Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She recommended the Commission discuss the proposed vinyl siding on the fourth floor addition and whether all windows on the addition should have arches to match.

Victor Drapzo, the architect, were present on behalf of the project. Mr. Drapzo gave a summary of the project and said they would consider arched windows on the west and are open to discussing the material on the fourth-floor addition.

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

Commissioner Weidner said he understands the weight concern with the fourth floor but supports a thin brick veneer. He said he would like to see a rendering from the sidewalk. He said the arched windows are not a sticking point, but if arches are done on the east, they should be done on the west. He said all new windows could also have a square top. Chair Houze said she likes the arches and Commissioner Sokol agreed.

Commissioner Garapolo agreed about the arched windows. He said he thinks the fourth-floor addition will be visible and should have a brick veneer and metal railing. Commissioner Carr said the railing match the existing railing on the second-floor balcony. She agreed with using brick on the fourth floor. She said this project has come a long way and she appreciates the applicant coming back and making changes. Commissioner Weidner agreed that this project has come a long way and said he appreciated the architect's work.

Motion by Commissioner Carr to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with three conditions: (1) that brick be used on the front elevation of the fourth-floor addition, (2) that the metal railing on the fourth-floor addition match the existing metal railing on the front elevation, and (3) that all new windows be arched windows to match. Second by Commissioner Sokol. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

- D. Preliminary Architectural Review Committee Review: 203 S Marion St:** Preliminary review of proposed new building in the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District and within 250 feet of an Oak Park Landmark.

Interim Chair Houze introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant is looking for a preliminary review and will return to the Commission for a full Advisory Review after considering initial feedback.

The following people were present on behalf of the project: Tim Anderson, from Focus; Courtney Brower, from Focus; David Mann, from Booth Hansen; and James Young from Booth Hansen. Ms. Brower summarized where they are in the process. She said they have presented the design to the condominium association to the west and provided a neighborhood meeting. She said the package they have submitted addresses some of the comments received. For example, they have lowered the building by one story. She said this is their first meeting and they plan to return to review the design one more time before submitting their Planned Development Application.

Mr. Mann explained some of their design decisions. He said one of the key components of the historic district is that it is a combination of multi-family and single-family dwellings. There is an interesting compatibility of different building types. He noted that Carleton Hotel has a combination of light courts, a variation on the courtyard typology, and vertical groupings of windows. Across the street there are storefronts with larger windows below and smaller above. On the Carleton, the face brick wraps around the corner but common brick is found in the alley; this is typical in Oak Park. He said the proposed new building is the edge of the current business district and supply new residents to support the local businesses. Mr. Mann explained the proposed building, including that the 7th floor is stepped back and lighter in color.

Mr. Young said this is a courtyard building that will have an amenity deck. The top floor is set back 10 feet. The ground floor also features a ten-foot setback at the center. There is also a setback between the sets of windows on the front elevation. He said the center includes two-story residences accessed from Marion St. The Marion St and Pleasant St corner will have a two-story café space. Mr. Mann said the detailing is critical and pointed to the details including the window surrounds. The idea is to provide a high-quality building with materials that reflect the district. Mr. Young said the existing planters on Pleasant and Marion will remain. They will continue the granite curbs to the south of the proposed building. A bottom floor, two-floor unit is also located on the south elevation and entered from the exterior. Mr. Young went through the floor plans and elevations. He said masonry is the primary material. The banding around the openings will create groupings of windows.

Commissioner Sokol asked how many units and Ms. Brower said 159. Commissioner Sokol asked how many have balconies. Mr. Young said about 30% of the units. There are also a number of

Juliette balconies that are French doors with railings but don't extend out. The 30% includes the terrace units.

Commissioner Carr said she likes the u-court as it helps break up the mass. She said the building is too tall. Zoning is 60 feet and that is appropriate for this location. She suggested that stepping back floors five and six, and a little more on seven, might help. This would make the building feel like four stories on Marion. She said she is also concerned about the two-story feeling at the first level. It reads as one massive story. She said they should bring down the pedestrian scale, even with more awnings, so it is not a big wall of glass. Commissioner Carr said she otherwise likes it. She said she likes the two-story window sections on the upper floors.

Commissioner Bridge agreed with Commissioner Carr and said it is too tall. She approved of Commissioner Carr's suggestions to mitigate the scale. Commissioner Chase said there is not enough greenspace around the edges of the buildings and that it feels overwhelming. Commissioner Garapolo said many of these comments are responding to the New Building Policy. He said the scale of the proposed building does not follow the Guidelines. He said this proposal is out of scale with the area. The u-shape courtyard is nice at the top but on the street, you get no relief at all from the scale. He said it would be better if the courtyard went to the ground. He said overall this proposal is just out of scale.

Commissioner Sokol said the use of brick is fine and is a unifying factor with the district. He said he is concerned about scale. He said he asked about balconies because they help break up the very solid walls. A greater quantity of balconies could help mitigate the substantial size of the walls.

Commissioner Weidner said he agrees with what has been said. He said the courtyard apartments in Oak Park are ground level and that is needed to provide relief at the street. He agreed with Commissioner Chase that it is claustrophobic. He said the street scale is lost.

Chair Houze said she had the same impressions. She said Exhibit D shows the new structure is massive in comparison to the surrounding buildings. She said she likes the way the top story is stepped back and she likes the courtyard type building, but a courtyard at the ground level would be more helpful. Chair Houze agreed with Commissioner Carr that the first floor is tall and should be more similar in height to the neighboring buildings. She said there are a lot of Revival styles and details in this area, and this is a massive structure that doesn't pick up on the delicacy that provides visual interest to other buildings in the vicinity. She said she likes that the plantings were incorporated.

Ms. Brower asked for clarification on the two-story first floor. Commissioner Carr said taking a look at the Carleton, there is a lot of glass but the height reads as one-story and friendlier for pedestrians. She recommended incorporating more brick to give a one-story feel. She said awnings helps but may not be enough of a break. Between awnings, the façade should be broken down more. She compared this to the feeling of walking by Coopers Hawk. The two-stories reading as one can be overwhelming.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **New Commissioners:** Chair Houze said she spoke with the Village Clerk and the CIC has been meeting infrequently. However, they have now been able to go through some of the applications, so this should be moving forward.
- **Board Meeting:** Chair Houze said the Board voted 5-2 to approve a second amendment to the redevelopment agreement for 640 Madison St, which will allow the developer to demolish the

building, rather than encouraging the preservation of its facade. The HPC recommended the building as an eligible landmark but the Village Board did not list it. She said historic preservation is a valuable asset for development and economic growth as well as a tool for sustainability. She said she supports forming a joint committee. She said developers want to invest in Oak Park because it is rich and vibrant. What makes Oak Park special includes the historic buildings, like Unity Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which people travel to see from around the world. She said it would be wise to preserve the historic architectural legacy of Oak Park.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Bridge. Motion approved 7-0.

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

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.