

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
May 13, 2021 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

Roll Call

Present: Chair Noel Weidner and Commissioners Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Lou Garapolo, Rebecca Houze, and David Sokol
Absent: Commissioners Sandra Carr and Rachel Will
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 Houze.
Motion approved 6-0.*

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Commissioner Houze said she had a minor edit and will send it to staff.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for April 8, 2021. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. HPC2021-22: 614 N East Ave (Kevin & Gerrienne Hartman):** Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear addition and deck (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the Commission previously reviewed and approved this project on September 12, 2019. Due to some minor alterations, including the removal of a second-story deck and a portion of the second story of the addition, and as COAs are only valid for one year, the applicant has returned to the Commission for a new COA. Ms. Trexler said the applicant altered the proposed design earlier today; in the new design, the roof of the addition will be flush with the roof on the existing house rather than inset.

Douglas Gilbert, the architect, was present, as were the homeowners and general contractor. Mr. Gilbert explained that they will keep the roof planes in order to allow for a solar panel at this location. They will still step back the eaves and there will be a one-foot-wide reveal on the south elevation, at least one inch deep, for differentiation. The belt course will be broken at this reveal. He said the south elevation is the only place where the addition will be visible as the north elevation has a bump-out and is close to the neighboring house.

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

Commissioner Garapolo asked where the solar panels would be. Mr. Gilbert explained they will be on the south side of the roof, at the location of the dashed line on the drawings.

Commissioner Houze asked for clarification on the size of the addition as compared to the current addition. She asked if it will be inset. Mr. Gilbert said the new addition will be bigger and the walls will continue straight back. This is why they have a one-foot reveal on the south elevation, where the addition will be more visible. Commissioner Houze said the addition would likely be difficult to see. Commissioner Sokol said the proposal looks good and he has no questions. Commissioner Garapolo said it meets the Guidelines and was previously approved, so he supports the project.

Chair Weider said it looks like a lot of the details are carried through and he likes the updated roof plan. He said he has no concerns. Commissioner Doherty said she has no issues since it was already approved and the changes are within the Guidelines. Commissioner Chase said she appreciates the detail on the back porch.

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

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

NAY: None

- B. HPC2021-23: 401 N Cuyler Ave (Sarah Gripshover & Tim Froehle):** Certificate of Appropriateness to add three skylights on the rear roof slope of a house on a corner lot (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Tim Froehle, the homeowner, was present on behalf of the project. He explained that other than the windows on the gable end, there is no natural light in the space. The proposed skylights will be visible from N Cuyler Ave when going south, but will not be visible from Superior St, which is more trafficked. He said that because of the trees, most of the year the skylights will be minimally visible. He said their intent is to have minimal impact on the historic character of the house.

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

Commissioner Garapolo asked how the skylights will sit in relation to the roof slope. Mr. Froehle said they will sit flush and will match the slope of the roof. Commissioner Garapolo asked for the color of the skylight trim. Mr. Froehle said they intend to match the roof color to have as little impact as possible. Commissioner Garapolo said this would be his recommendation. Commissioner Sokol said he has no problems with the project.

Chair Weidner asked for confirmation that the skylights will not be on the front roof slope. Mr. Froehle said that is correct, they will be on the rear-facing side, not the Superior St side. Commissioner Houze said she had the same question. She agreed that it would be difficult to see. She said this is a beautiful house and she was concerned about the idea of the skylights to begin with. She asked if the house originally had a clay tile roof. Mr. Froehle said he has looked into the history of the house and has not found evidence of tile. Commissioner Houze thanked Mr. Froehle for taking good care of the house and said it is a good example of the Arts & Crafts style. She said she does not have any problems with the skylights as proposed.

Chair Weidner asked if the windows are replacements and Mr. Froehle said they are the original casement windows and are very inefficient. He said they will be replaced to match in every way but will be more efficient. Some of the windows have broken pieces. Commissioner Houze asked the applicant if the windows will be replaced in kind. Mr. Froehle confirmed. Commissioner Houze asked how they will be more efficient. Mr. Froehle said the wood on the inside has warped. The new casements will still be wood.

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

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

NAY: None

- C. HPC2021-24: 423 N Kenilworth Ave (Judy Seals):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the existing garage and build a new garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Weidner introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

The meeting was attended by the following on behalf of the applicant: Nohemi Garcia, the contractor and project applicant, Raul Garcia, the general contractor, and Judy Seals, the homeowner.

Ms. Garcia said the only changes from the design of the existing garage will be the addition of a pedestrian door (or party door) on the south elevation and a vinyl window on the north elevation. She said the window will not be visible from the street.

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

Commissioner Garapolo said the existing 8-over-1 light window is nice and he would prefer to see something more in character with this existing window. Ms. Garcia said the homeowners are proposing the party door in that location. Commissioner Garapolo said he does not have a problem with the south elevation but for the window on the north, he recommends a window similar to that which is there currently.

Commissioner Houze said she likes the plan for cedar siding. Ms. Garcia said they wanted to keep it as close to the original as possible. Commissioner Houze said she likes the detail on the gable end and Ms. Garcia said it will match what is there currently.

Chair Weidner said the materials and design are appropriate. He said it is unfortunate to lose some of these original garages, but otherwise he has no objections. Commissioner Doherty said she is fine with it and agrees with Commissioner Garapolo on retaining the window style.

Motion by Commissioner Houze to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for project with the condition that the new window match the eight-over-one light double-hung sash historic window. Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 6-0.

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

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Architectural Review Guidelines Update**

Chair Weidner introduced the item and Planner Trexler gave a staff report. She explained that following HPC approval, the Guidelines and Ordinance must be adopted by the Village Board. Ms. Trexler said staff supports the Guidelines as presented. The HPC may request minor changes and are encouraged to send any requested edits to staff over the coming month. She said staff is currently discussing options for notifying the public of the changes.

Commissioner Sokol said he likes the idea of the “best practices” sections and think these are a good addition to the Guidelines.

Chair Weidner asked the Commissioners to read the Guidelines through and to send over any corrections. He said at this point we’re just looking for small edits as large edits would effect the formatting. Commissioner House said she appreciates the changes and will look it over in the next few weeks.

- **Oak Park Post Office**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. Commissioner Sokol said the Post Office is an architectural treasure inside and out. He said the prior postmaster put some money into updates, but the building has since gone into a slow decline. He said we need to work with the postmaster to help make sure the building serves a purpose for the citizenry. He said it is an example of a major art deco structure.

Commissioner Sokol recommended the Commission provide whatever expertise and thoughts they have and work as an advisory group to the Village board. For example, private/public partnerships can fill the upstairs spaces. Brad White, at the Alphawood Foundation, was noted as a possible resource.

Chair Weider said it is tough because this is a federal building. Commissioner Sokol said the Commission may help advise or think of ways to use the space. Commissioners Garapolo and Houze said they would assist.

- **Preservation Award Signs**

Chair Weidner introduced the item. He invited Frank Heitzman, a member of the public in attendance, to address the Commission. Mr. Heitzman explained their idea and shared a draft sign created by Chris Payne. He said this year, they would raise funds privately and with the Commission’s permission would invite award winners to put them in their yards.

The Commission Commissioner Sokol asked how long the signs would stay up. Mr. Heitzman said the signs could be used by the new award winners each year. Commissioner Garapolo asked about the material. Mr. Heitzman said it would be like a political sign, it’s a corrugated

plastic material. They are about \$15 each. Mr. Heitzman said they have gotten some pledges from people for this year if the Commission wants to proceed.

Commissioner Houze asked if anything more permanent has been done for awards previously. Commissioner Garapolo said there are signs for the block awards. Commissioner Houze said this is a beautiful design and Chair Weidner agreed. Chair Weidner said they should set parameters for who gets them and how long.

The approval process was discussed. The Commission discussed timing and agreed the signs should be put out in spring or summer and they should start with the 2019 award recipients. Chair Weidner agreed to help coordinate with Frank.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Sokol to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Garapolo. Motion approved 6-0.

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

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.