

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
May 12, 2022 – Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

Planner Trexler said that Chair Weidner is absent but has recommended Commissioner Roush as Acting Chair. She requested the Commission make a motion accordingly.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo recommending Commissioner Roush as Acting Chair. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Napper, and Commissioner Roush

NAY: None

Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Asha Andriana, Sarah Doherty, Andrew Elders, Lou Garapolo, Nicole Napper, and Daniel Roush
Absent: Chair Noel Weidner and Commissioner Monique Chase
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

Agenda Approval

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

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

Minutes

Commissioner Garapolo said on page 5, in the second to last paragraph, it says “rear” but should say “real.” Planner Trexler said this revision would be made.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for April 14, 2022. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 6-0.

Regular Agenda

- A. Advisory Review: 701 N Marion St (Richard Barker):** Advisory Review for construction of a new garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the existing garage lacks historic integrity so the review is Advisory Review of the proposed garage only.

Richard Barker, the homeowner, explained that the garage is in disrepair and he wants to replace it with something with more space. The new garage will add 3 feet in width and 1 foot in length. He said he tried to pull in the aesthetics of the house but brick was expensive, so he went with a Tudor look.

Commissioner Garapolo asked why they can't use stucco rather than Hardie board. He said the octagonal window is a foreign object and isn't recommended. Mr. Barker said the contractor recommended the Hardie over stucco for durability reasons. The garage is next to the neighbor's garden and is regularly hit by a sprinkler. It is also subject to insect-related issues.

Commissioner Doherty asked if the octagonal window will face the street and if the whole garage will also be closer to the street. Mr. Barker confirmed on both.

Commissioner Elders recommended considering a solid color that complements the brick on the lower parts of the walls, either a matching stucco or a brown clapboard similar to the current garage. He said since the house isn't half-timbered the whole way down, it may not be appropriate for the garage either. That's not something you see in a historic building.

Acting Chair Roush agreed that faux half-timbering on a one-story structure does not look appropriate. The most appropriate option would be clapboard.

- B. HPC2022-23: 318 S Humphrey Ave (Bryan & Michelle Scheffers):** Certificate of Appropriateness to infill one window and raise the sill of a second window as part of a kitchen renovation (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Bryan Scheffers, the homeowner, said they bought the house two years ago and love it but the kitchen is underwhelming. This is what they came up with as best for the home.

Motion by Commissioner Elders to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Andriana.

Commissioner Garapolo said they typically recommend retaining some element of the window but the effect would be minimal in this case, so it's not needed. He said the window should be clad wood rather than vinyl. He mentioned the chimney. Acting Chair Roush clarified the chimney is for the next project and agreed with the window comments. Commissioner Elders agreed about the clad wood window. Commissioner Doherty asked about the price difference and if inflation was a consideration. Mr. Scheffers said it was considered.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the window be clad wood. Second by Commissioner Elders.

Mr. Scheffers asked that they be permitted to move forward with vinyl. Commissioner Elders said given that this is allowed by the Guidelines, he's ok with it. Commissioner Doherty said they need to vote on the current motion first.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Garapolo, and Commissioner Napper

NAY: Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, and Acting Chair Roush

Acting Chair Roush asked if there is a second motion including a vinyl window as proposed.

Motion by Commissioner Elders to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Doherty.

AYE: Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, and Acting Chair Roush

NAY: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Garapolo, and Commissioner Napper

Commissioner Elders said he doesn't see the problem. It is so far back, it wouldn't be noticeable. The most noticeable difference will be the glass. He said he doesn't want to see people go through extra heartache because of a vinyl window that's near the rear of the house. Acting Chair Roush agreed. He said he dislikes vinyl but would vote for it in this case because it is so far back and vinyl is typically reviewable at a staff level.

Commissioner Elders asked for feedback from the Commissioners that voted no. Commissioner Garapolo said he's not sure there's a big price difference. It's on the side, but it is visible. Michelle Scheffers, the homeowner, said the price is significantly different. They want functional windows and this won't change the look of the house. Commissioner Garapolo asked what the price difference is and Mr. Scheffers estimated \$750-1000. Commissioner Garapolo asked about the full project budget and Commissioner Elders said he doesn't think this is in their purview.

Commissioner Andriana said the homeowner should come prepared to explain their choice and the Commission was not given the appropriate information to approve a vinyl window. Mr. Scheffers asked what more information is needed and Commissioner Andriana said the price. Commissioner Napper said price is important. If the price difference given was significant, she would be ok with vinyl.

Planner Trexler explained next possible steps and Ms. Scheffers requested that they move forward in some way tonight. The Commission agreed to take another vote.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with the condition that the window be clad wood. Second by Commissioner Elders.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Roush

NAY: None

- C. HPC2022-24: 724 Belleforte Ave (Terv & Coley LeClair):** Certificate of Appropriateness to remove a chimney and infill four windows as part of an interior renovation (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Roberta Solorio Arellano, the architectural designer for the project, introduced herself and noted that Katmerka Ramic, principal, and Coley LeClair, the homeowner, are also present. Ms. Arellano explained that this is a deconversion. The windows will be removed because of interior alterations that have to do with the new staircase and moving bedrooms. The chimney is no longer needed for ventilation and cuts through the house.

Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Elders.

Commissioner Garapolo said he agrees with the staff report and doesn't see a problem with the windows being infilled as proposed or the removal of the chimney. He asked about the window shutters on the front elevation. Mr. LeClair said they are more than happy to fill out the shutters; they purchased the house this way. It has been neglected. Commissioner Garapolo asked if the house had shutters original. Mr. LeClair said the Sanborn maps indicate it was not originally cemented so the stucco and shutters were likely added later. Acting Chair Roush said the front elevation is not part of the scope of work. He said the Commission's unsolicited recommendation would be to consider the shutters moving forward but the work of this permit is primarily interior with the exception of the windows.

Commissioner Elders asked if the contractor has experience infilling with stucco. He said this can be a give-away as the texture never quite matches. Mr. LeClair said they are looking at a few local companies. The stucco is old, stained, and cracked, and will need a lot of work. Acting Chair Roush agreed they will be tricky to hide but he understands stuccoing over these openings. Commissioner Doherty asked if the homeowner would be re-stuccoing the whole house at some point. Mr. LeClair said he would love to say yes but they haven't gotten there yet. Commissioner Doherty said this would resolve the issue.

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

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Roush

NAY: None

- D. HPC2022-25: 312 N Taylor Ave (Molior Inc):** Certificate of Appropriateness for a second-floor addition, reopening the enclosed porch, demolishing the chimney, altering windows, and altering the front stairs to wood as part of a larger renovation project (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Christina Townsend, the architect, said her client bought the house earlier this year. It has been in a state of disrepair. The front porch has been damaged over time and they are hoping to do justice to what was intended by reopening it. The second-story addition is proposed to accommodate this family of five. It will be set back 15 feet and goes with other renovations on the block.

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

Commissioner Doherty said overall, the second-floor addition looks appropriate. There is a precedent within this block. Commissioner Garapolo agreed and said he is concerned about the siding. The larger dimension will appear out of scale with the other elements of the house. He said the diamond shape on the gable seems awkward and he feels strongly that the windows be clad wood. He said opening the porch is great and it will be a nice addition.

Ms. Townsend said they have talked to a number of suppliers and the 3" LP Smartside seems to have been discontinued in the Midwest. The client wants to use composite of some sort. The only narrow option is a 4" Hardie board. Wood is not affordable. She explained that the diamond is a vent and was made to match the diamond elements on the porch columns, but they are open to changing this design. Commissioner Garapolo said he understands and asked if the porch roof will

be new. Ms. Townsend said they will keep the existing roof profile but may reroof to match the house. Commissioner Garapolo expressed concern that the roof is directly under the windows and may cause snow build-up there in the winter, but this isn't part of the review.

Commissioner Elders asked about the two-over-one window pattern and if the attic windows are original. Ms. Townsend said the attic windows may be original but they are the only historic windows on the house. They are open to doing one-over-one, but don't know what the original windows looked like.

Acting Chair Roush asked if all the windows will be vinyl. Ms. Townsend said that is the hope of the client. All window openings on the first floor will be replaced in kind. The second-floor windows would be new. She said they can keep the attic windows if recommended. All of the neighboring properties have vinyl windows.

Commissioner Garpaolo said he is not in favor of vinyl. Acting Chair Roush asked about precedent for fiberglass and Planner Trexler said composite has been considered an appropriate alternative to wood. She said the first-floor window replacements would be advisory only as they will not change in size.

Ms. Townsend explained the price differences between the vinyl and clad wood windows. The clad wood would cost over \$50,000. She noted the other items the owner is taking on and the cost concerns. She also pointed out the additions on the houses to the north also have vinyl windows.

Acting Chair Roush said the broad strokes are acceptable on this. Given the circumstance that the first-floor windows are all replacements and not in the Commission's purview, as much as he dislikes vinyl windows, he would invite a motion to move forward.

Motion by Commissioner Napper to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 4-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, and Commissioner Napper

NAY: Commissioner Garapolo and Acting Chair Roush

- E. HPC2022-26: 312 N Euclid Ave (Abe and Sarah Coleman):** Certificate of Appropriateness to restore original wrap-around front porch (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Present on behalf of the project were Kim Smith, the architect, and Sarah Coleman, the homeowner. Ms. Coleman said she and her husband have been enthusiastic and faithful stewards; they have restored a lot of the house and coach house. Since they first saw the historic photo, they've wanted to restore the porch. She said the porch will include twelve columns and they are proposing composite with wood capitals as doing the full columns in wood would cost \$23,000 more and would be cost-prohibitive. The wood columns are \$4,174 each and come to almost \$55,000 including shipping.

Ms. Smith said the columns are architecturally correct and would be painted to match. The difference wouldn't be visible from the street.

Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion; Second by Commissioner Elders.

Commissioner Elders said he thinks there was a recessed balcony originally rather than a pediment. Ms. Smith said they couldn't see this in their version of the photo; Susie got it enlarged. The central window was discussed and Ms. Coleman felt it is original and there is no suggestion that it was previously a door.

Commissioner Elders said the balusters appeared turned, rather than square. He said he would be ok with eliminating the paired column at the end, as this was probably for the porte cochere. Ms. Smith said she is ok with this and said the current balusters have been there since the 1950s and at 1.5" square. The picture also shows stone under the porch but they will be continuing the square balusters below as a skirt. Ms. Smith said she believes the columns are original and the newel posts were based on the original ones. She said they may be taking some pieces from the original and some from the 1950s, they don't know. Commissioner Elders said they may know more when they remove the pediment. He asked if they will look for footings. Ms. Smith said they will investigate the pediment and footings. She said the Colemans have been wonderful stewards of the home and she doubts they would have a problem restoring the recessed balcony detail; she doesn't think it would be more expensive. Ms. Smith pointed out the pitch of the porch roof and said they will keep it under the window sills and flash properly.

Commissioner Elders asked what the porch piers will be covered with. Ms. Smith said a stone veneer. Commissioner Elders warned against using a stacked stone and Ms. Smith said they won't. Commissioner Doherty said this is a fantastic restoration and will bring a lot back to what is one of the best blocks in Oak Park. Commissioners Elders and Garapolo agreed. Commissioner Garapolo noted that the vertical holding the handrail did not historically go above the railing. Ms. Smith said this was due to lack of evidence in the photo but they would actually prefer to have it not interrupt the rail. This is a place water and rot can get in.

Acting Chair Roush asked about the exact material of the columns. Ms. Coleman said they were supposed to receive the brochure today but did not, just the quotes. They will be a cast fiberglass that has been used in other historic districts, including in North Carolina. The shape is extremely important. They will be painted to match the wood. Ms. Smith said when speaking to companies, they asked for experience with landmark districts. The capitals and bases are wood; the shaft will be composite.

Acting Chair Roush said cast and fiberglass columns, if done right, are a better long-term solution. But without having specifics on the materials, it's hard to know what it is. He said with the other due diligence done, he trusts them, and this might be an instance where a conditional approval is ok. Commissioner Garapolo agreed and suggested having the ARC do a final review. Acting Chair Roush recommended including the material under the porch.

Commissioner Doherty noted a previous project for column replacement that used an alternate material and asked staff. Planner Trexler confirmed there was a project on N East Ave that replaced deteriorated, two-story columns with a composite material. Commissioner Elders said he has less issue with that but he would like to see a turned baluster as that will make a stronger visual impact overall.

Commissioner Elders asked if the cost difference on the columns would make or break the project. Ms. Coleman said it would. They want to do this porch right and will be here for a while. Commissioner Elders said he understands. Acting Chair Roush said there are differing areas of concern for the Commission but they appreciate this project and he's inclined to give it conditional

approval with review of the baluster shape, cladding material on the piers, and a cut sheet of the column material. Ms. Coleman said they would be happy to meet these conditions. They want to porch to look as similar to the photo as possible. Acting Chair Roush said they appreciate that.

Motion by Commissioner Elders to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the condition that the ARC provide a final review of the baluster shape, column material, cladding on the piers, and possible second floor balcony. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Roush

NAY: None

OTHER BUSINESS

- **National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review:** Staff update on recent review for Austin CTA station ADA upgrades

Acting Chair Roush introduced the item. Planner Trexler said the CTA is upgrading CTA stations to be ADA compliant. The Village of Oak Park is a consulting party for the upgrade of the Austin Station, due to its location across the street from Oak Park and the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District. The station has been determined eligible for the National Register. It has been recommended that mitigation include preparation of a context statement for the east-west portion of the Green Line from downtown to Harlem. This would provide a framework for future reviews. It is anticipated that Oak Park's CTA stations will receive a similar upgrade.

- **Day in Our Village: Sunday, June 5, 2022 11AM-4PM**

Acting Chair Roush introduced the item. Planner Trexler said Day in Our Village will be returning this year after being canceled for two years due to the pandemic. The Commission will have a table. If Commissioners are interested in volunteering, they should reach out to Chair Weidner.

ADJOURN

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

AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Napper, and Acting Chair Roush

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.