

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
September 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm

A. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Sarah Doherty, Scot Mazur, and Lou Garapolo
ABSENT: Andrew Elders
STAFF: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

B. AGENDA

Motion by Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Mazur. Motion approved 3-0.

AYE: Doherty, Mazur, and Garapolo
NAY: None

C. MINUTES

Note that Committee member Mazur was not in attendance July 27 and Committee member Doherty was not in attendance August 24. Voting was done to accommodate this.

Motion by Doherty to approve the agenda. Second by Garapolo. Motion approved 2-0-1.

AYE: Doherty and Garapolo
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Mazur

Motion by Mazur to approve the agenda. Second by Doherty. Motion approved 2-0-1.

AYE: Mazur and Garapolo
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Doherty

D. HPC2023-34: 131 N Taylor Ave (131 N Taylor LLC): Final review of Certificate of Appropriateness to build a two-story rear addition, alter windows on the side elevations, and restore the siding and front porch (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview and said the project was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on September 14, 2023, with the condition that the ARC provide final approval. This was due to requested changes in the project including restoration of the historic wood clapboard siding and retaining the bay at the rear corner of the house.

Present on behalf of the project were architect Doug Clark and owner Nelly Taromina. Mr. Clark said the stucco piers were added in the 1960s and the original Doric columns were inside. The neighboring house is very similar to what this was. There are several similar houses nearby. There was nothing in the knee wall, suggesting there was historically a railing. The stucco is in bad shape, and is falling off the sides of the house. The addition will blend in well with the siding. He said they understand the HPC wants to see what is original and what was added, so they may reduce the overhang of the new roof to also reflect this.

Motion by Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Mazur.

Committee member Doherty said she actually knows the neighbors at 134 N Taylor Ave, the reference for the porch. They have old pictures and she will try to get copies.

Chair Garapolo asked if there is an existing center column. Mr. Clark said there is not, but the stone pier below suggests there was one. He said staff shared that some other houses have had issues with deflection and supporting the porch roof. Chair Garapolo said it makes sense to add a column.

Chair Garapolo asked about the materials being stained rather than painted. Mr. Clark said there are stains that look like paint but breathe better. There would be a solid color look. Committee member Doherty said they haven't seen this before and asked about the cost difference. Mr. Clark said a stain is more expensive, but paint creates a moisture barrier. On a railing, it doesn't really matter, but if they're doing it on the house, it makes sense to match to railing. Mr. Clark offered to apply a test and show the Committee. The Committee agreed.

Committee member Doherty said she appreciates the sensitive changes they've made and that they're keeping the octagonal bay.

Planner Trexler suggested that the applicant provide photos of the stain to staff and she could distribute.

Motion by Committee member Mazur to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Committee member Doherty. Motion approved 3-0.

AYE: Doherty, Mazur, and Garapolo

NAY: None

- E. 631 Forest Ave (Anthony & Candice Drew):** Discuss project to add a second floor and side addition (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the ARC on August 24, 2023. At the recommendation of the ARC, the applicant changed the addition to a hip roof, removed the front porch addition, further set back the addition from the street, and expanded to the side.

Present on behalf of the project were Jim Vanderheyden, the architect, and Candice Drew, the potential owner. Mr. Vanderheyden explained the changes they made. He showed the ARC the all-stucco solution and said this is preferred.

Committee member Doherty said she appreciates the effort to reduce the overall scale and volume with the setback and she approves of the banding. She said her concern is that bungalows are very modest. It's hard to maintain that. She said she's still worried this will visually overwhelm the original structure. There are a lot of examples, including bad examples outside the historic districts. There are a couple of really good examples, like 312 N Taylor Ave. Mr. Vanderheyden said he thinks with the setback, people won't see it driving by. He said they could make the side-facing gable into a hip roof. He said looking at the homes on either side, this is the odd one. Committee member Doherty said she understands but it was added to the district as a bungalow. Mr. Vanderheyden said the future of this house depends on whether you want to allow a family or keep it as a starter home. Committee member Doherty said that's not entirely true, you live with what you have.

Chair Garapolo asked if the modifications help address concerns and Committee member Doherty said maybe, but there's a driveway. Per the Guidelines, landscaping can't be used to obscure massing.

Chair Garapolo asked about the roof height on the second floor. Mr. Vanderheyden said the code minimum is 7' ceilings and they've designed for 8'. He said he doesn't think one foot will make a big difference. A hip roof all the way around would soften the façade. Stucco with the banding will do a good job reducing the scale. The 25' setback is substantial.

Chair Garapolo suggested they could prepare some sort of sketch to show what it would look like in 3D. Committee member Doherty said some applicants have brought street views. They need to show that the original house will not be overwhelmed. Chair Garapolo agreed this would be helpful.

Committee member Doherty said she likes the change of the addition siding to stucco or wood. She said she likes wood shake, but it draws the eye. Chair Garapolo said he prefers the stucco. Mr. Vanderheyden said he likes shake but agreed it would call attention to itself. He said the stucco is the way to go.

Mr. Vanderheyden said he has tried to keep the floor plan in the spirit of the bungalow and asked if the dining room extension 8' into the side yard should be reduced. Chair Garapolo said that's hard to answer, but there are other side additions on the block that were set back to where they weren't objectionable. He said it would be good to see the perspective view.

- F. 411 N Oak Park Ave (Cedercreutz & Le Poole):** Discuss project to alter historic dormers on south elevation as part of attic renovation project (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the project. Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Present on behalf of the project was Errol Kirsch, the architect. Mr. Kirsch said this was made into a two-flat in the 1960s. He said he has prepared another scheme and passed it out to the Committee. He said he thinks the front dormer was built to support the chimney. There are many different roof angles on the house. He said the new idea is to put the bathroom on the north side instead of the south. They can replace the "chimney support" dormer on the south with a lesser sized dormer and lift the north gable approximately four feet.

Chair Garapolo said this is a good idea. The existing dormers are a little strange. The proposed new dormer and gable solution is the way to go. He said he's having a hard time seeing the dormer height on the south side. He said it shouldn't match; there is no symmetry to the house. It should be minimized.

Committee member Doherty said she's having trouble visualizing how the dormers on the two sides will line up. Mr. Kirsch said if you look closely at the photo, he tried to sketch out two dormers. But when he drew the elevation, it was too much. Chair Garapolo said the south view is pretty obvious from the street but the north is less obvious and further back.

Committee member Doherty asked how the new front dormer will compare to the existing one. Mr. Kirsch pointed to the drawings and said it will be a little wider than drawn. Chair Garapolo said the drawings are helpful as they include an existing dashed line and the proposed one on top. He asked if the shed dormer would be kept as-is and Mr. Kirsch confirmed. Chair Garapolo asked if they could change it to match the new one. Mr. Kirsch said the symmetry doesn't work and it's original. He said the new dormer is the only one

that's needed. They will use a casement window with a false bar [to simulate a sash], and all will be wood.

Planner Trexler noted the siding and suggested keeping the trim on the north elevation and adding a second trim line to demarcate the addition. Mr. Kirsch said they haven't added trim details yet.

G. Other Business:

Architectural Review Guidelines: structural engineer letters. Committee member Doherty said she thinks the Commission has to accept what's presented if there's a structural engineer's stamp. Some people will not give as much detail. Others are a paragraph. Chair Garapolo said he agrees and is less concerned with having a structural engineer write the letter, and more concerned with it being a third party.

Public Education: Realtor presentations. Planner Trexler explained that the Commission previously created a working group and had one meeting with realtors prior to the pandemic. None of these Commissioners are still on the HPC. She recommended the HPC consider starting an annual realtor presentation event, and maybe a separate one for homeowners, that explains the historic districts and requirements.

Committee member Mazur asked if realtors are required to share if a house is in a historic district and Planner Trexler said they are not. The Committee discussed.

Committee member Doherty said Oak Park needs starter homes; every house can't be large. Committee member Mazur agreed and mentioned the housing survey. He said there are homes that have such large additions, they aren't even recognizable. Committee member Doherty said some of those changes you can't do now.

Historic Preservation Ordinance definitions: demolition. Planner Trexler explained the definition as it currently stands. Committee member Doherty noted the historical materials part and character defining features. She said they have to keep coming back to the Guidelines. That is the Commission's charge. Chair Garapolo said this should be on the agenda for the full HPC.

Committee member Doherty described the fair housing project she has been working on and said she will bring it up at the HPC, too. She said they looked into the history of housing discrimination and created a digital exhibition and a curriculum for teachers. The project just won a major award.

H. Adjourn

Motion by Doherty to adjourn. Second by Mazur. Motion approved 3-0.

AYE: Doherty, Mazur, and Garapolo

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.