

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
November 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers, 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Rosanne McGrath, Joerg Albrecht, Fred Brandstrader, Garret Eakin, Frank Heitzman, Regina Nally, Drew Niermann, Gary Palese
ABSENT: Greg Battaglia, Tony Quinn, Tom Sundling
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, AICP – Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Albrecht to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Second by Heitzman. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MINUTES

Motion by Albrecht to approve the October 10, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Palese. Motion approved 7-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

REGULAR AGENDA

Commissioner Nally arrived.

A. HPC 13-27: 241 S. Elmwood Avenue (Cotter) – Certificate of Appropriateness for garage alterations (Historic Landmark)

Property owner Carrie Cotter and architect Drew Nelson were present.

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The two-story stucco house (originally a two-flat) was constructed in 1909 by Charles Anderson for William J. Ehlers, and was designed by architect E. E. Roberts. The Prairie style structure is a Contributing Resource within the *Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*, was designated an Oak Park Historic Landmark on July 2, 2012. Exterior work visible from the street requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. The house sits on the northwest corner of Elmwood and Randolph. The one-story stucco garage was constructed in 1910 for Mr. Ehlers and incorporates geometric wood trim matching the house. A second one-story frame garage was constructed in 1960 and is a non-contributing resource.

The proposal is to demolish the 1960 garage, and move the existing garage door of the 1910 garage from the south (facing Randolph) to the west (facing the alley), as well as replicating the geometric wood trim on the northwest corner of the garage, removing the south concrete driveway and constructing a new west concrete driveway to allow for safer access to the garage and consolidate the back yard into one usable space. The existing west-facing wood windows will be removed.

The Architectural Review Committee provided the following preliminary review comments which support the application:

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- Moving the garage door to the west would maintain the important characteristics of the garage (placement, decorative details, relationship to house) but allow for a safer, more useful use of the property.
- The proposal is a logical solution for safety concerns and improved use of the property.

Carrie Cotter, property owner, stated that the proposal will improve the safety of the site so they don't have to back out onto Randolph Street, reduce the amount of pavement in the yard, and maintain the historic design of the garage.

Motion by Albrecht to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 241 S. Elmwood Avenue as submitted. Second by Brandstrader.

The proposed project would maintain the overall historic character of the garage visible from the street and would meet the Guidelines. Retaining the four wood windows and moving them to the south elevation is recommended to retain the historic fabric and appearance. Therefore, Staff is recommending approval of the COA application as submitted, with a recommendation to retain the four wood windows and move them to the south elevation.

Commissioner Albrecht felt that moving the door to face the alley would meet the Guidelines.

Chair McGrath confirmed that the ghost outline of the original door would remain in the new stucco wall, and that moving the door to orient to the alley is characteristic of the period.

Commissioners Eakin stated that historically houses have their garage doors face the alley and this was a good solution for improving the site; Commissioner Palese agreed

Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

B. HPC 13-28: 125 S. Scoville Avenue (Blakesley) – Certificate of Advisory Review for construction of a new single-family home on a vacant lot (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)

Property owner Don Blakesley and architect Dave Muriello were present.

Commissioner Niermann recused himself from the discussion as he is involved with the project.

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The existing vacant lot is located within the *Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*. The demolition of the previous house was approved by the HPC as it had been moved to the site in 1965 and was considered a non-contributing resource in the historic district. The vacant lot is flanked by a 3-story historic brick multi-family building to the north, and a 2-1/2 story single-family house to the south. The other homes on the block range from the 1890s through the early 20th century, the majority being 2-story gable front homes clad in stucco or wood clapboard siding. The existing 3-car detached frame garage is accessible from the alley at the rear of the property, is clad with vinyl siding, and is a non-contributing resource. The HPC's review is advisory as the lot is currently vacant.

The proposal is to construct a 2-1/2 story gable-front single family house with a full-width front porch. The house will be clad with 4-inch horizontal cedar siding, with cedar shingles in the front and side gables. The double-hung windows will be aluminum-clad with simulated divided lights (4-over-1).

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The basement windows will be vinyl sliding windows. The front porch will have wood columns, railings and stairs with a vertical cedar skirt. There are two chimneys on the south elevation clad in a stone veneer. The roof will be asphalt shingles. A two-story bay is situated asymmetrically on the front façade. A two-story bay is situated asymmetrically on the south façade. Large wood brackets are placed at each corner under the eaves. The proposed detached garage will be clad with a 4-inch horizontal cedar siding and stone veneer base. The front and side gables will be clad with cedar shingles. The design and materials of the garage will match the house, and the garage will be accessible from the alley.

The proposed new single-family house is compatible with houses on adjacent and surrounding blocks in terms of size, scale, set-back, massing, material, and character, and will not change the historic character of other houses on the block. The house will be oriented to the street and will be compatible yet visually distinct and will meet the Guidelines. The detached garage will face the alley and match the house in terms of materials and character. Therefore, Staff recommends an advisory recommendation of approval for the project as submitted.

Commissioner Brandstrader agreed with the Staff recommendation.

Commissioner Eakin stated that it is a handsome project and the stone helps to differentiate the house as new.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that the house does not look contemporary enough – it looks historic. The Secretary of the Interior's Standard No. 9 says that new construction should be differentiated from historic buildings yet compatible with its surroundings. It must be frustrating for the applicant who has worked hard to have the house fit in and not replicate a style.

Commissioner Nally stated that there is room for interpretation in that standard, which is the most difficult. It is purposefully not too prescriptive. You can insert new construction within the historic fabric and differentiate that it's new construction. The materials are all new, though there are some details that mimic old houses. They did a fine job on this house.

Commissioner Brandstrader stated that the massing of the new garage also discerns it as new.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that the architect Robert Stern Architects in New York are masters at integrating new construction in a historic environment.

Commissioner Eakin stated that it is easier to work in the existing fabric on the street. It has a positive relationship, which takes skill.

Dave Muriello, architect, stated that it is an impossible question to answer. It is hard to get to that magical place of new differentiated from old without standing out too much.

Commissioner Nally stated that the Guideline is meant to be vague so there is a reasonable amount of latitude. She suggested that the color palette of the project can help to differentiate it as contemporary.

Mr. Muriello stated that it will be restrained.

Chair McGrath stated that there is general support for the proposal as meeting the Guidelines.

C. HPC 13-29: 124 S. Taylor Avenue (Baronger Group) – Certificate of Appropriateness to move the side entrance of a two-flat conversion to single-family (*Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*)

Property owner Mitch Goldstein, Baronger Group, was present.

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The two-story stucco two-flat was constructed in 1912 by E. Johnson for Harry S. Smail. The Prairie-influenced two-flat is a Contributing Resource within the *Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*, and exterior work visible from the street requires Historic review. The scope of work meets the definition of demolition in the preservation ordinance, and therefore the project will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The proposal is to convert the building into a single-family residence, and move the main entry side porch closer to the front façade to improve safety, retain the side porch characteristic, and create one main entry hall on the interior. The proposal will retain the historic character of a two-flat, maintain the original front façade, and allow for the interior conversion to a single-family home.

The applicant met with the Architectural Review Committee on October 23 proposing to remove the main entry side porch and create a new front porch in the existing front enclosed porch. The ARC recommended retaining the historic front façade of a two-story enclosed porch, and retain the character of the main entry side porch common in two-flats but to allow it to move forward towards the front façade to allow for a safer entrance closer to the street and a new interior main entry hall. They agreed that the revised proposal would meet the Porch Policy of the Guidelines. The submitted proposal revised the original proposal to meet the recommendations of the ARC.

The proposed project would maintain the overall historic character of the two-flat visible from the street and would meet Standards 4 and 6 of the Guidelines. Removing the original main entry side porch does not meet Standard 1 of the Porch Policy of the Guidelines. However, the proposed new porch is characteristic of the style of the building, and retains its character as a two-flat by using a main entry side porch while meeting the adaptive reuse needs of the project. Therefore, Staff is recommending approval of the COA application as submitted.

Motion by Niermann to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 124 S. Taylor Avenue as amended. Second by Palese.

Chair McGrath stated that the Architectural Review Committee felt that this approach was preferable to altering the 2-story enclosed front porch. This is a response to the ARC's comments and the challenges to the existing entry. She suggested visually maintaining the corner of the building by moving the porch back 6-inches to 1 foot.

Mitch Goldstein, property owner, stated that they can't alter the interior layout, and moving the porch back would result in the door be offset from the center of the porch.

Commissioner Eakin stated that would be okay in order to maintain the corner and not merge the side porch with the front porch.

Commissioner Brandstrader asked if they would reuse the front door.

Mr. Goldstein stated that they are looking into it.

Commissioner Nally asked if he explored keeping the porch locating and creating a veranda in front.

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Mr. Goldstein stated that they did not explore that option. He originally wanted to create an open front porch with front stairs. They also looked at opening the side of the front porch, but he went to the ARC's recommendation of moving the side porch forward. He is okay with moving it back 6-inches to 1-foot.

Motion by Niermann to amend the original motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 124 S. Taylor Avenue to move the porch back 6-inches to 1-foot to allow for the articulation of the corner of the building. Second by Palese. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

D. HPC 13-36: 824 N. Elmwood Avenue (Baronger Group) – Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear two-story addition (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District)

Property owner Mitch Goldstein, Baronger Group, was present.

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The two-story stucco house was constructed in 1911 by O. Burkland for owner N. Larson. The stucco American Foursquare house is a Contributing Resource within the *Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*, and exterior work visible from the street requires Historic review. The scope of work meets the definition of demolition in the preservation ordinance, and therefore the project will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The proposed project involves alterations to the front porch which are compatible with the style of the house. The proposed rear two-story addition, mainly visible on the south, is compatible in style, massing, scale, set-back, materials and character with the house. Therefore, Staff is recommending approval of the COA application as submitted.

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 824 N. Elmwood Avenue as amended. Second by Albrecht.

Chair McGrath has what the distance of the side addition was from the existing south bay. Their close proximity seems an awkward solution.

Planner Kaarre stated that the distance is 2 feet.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that the bay is right at the rear corner of the house. The addition makes the bay redundant from the interior, but it's okay from the street view. He suggested chamfering the corner.

Chair McGrath stated that the project would have benefitted from a perspective drawing.

Mitch Goldstein, property owner, stated that they are trying to maintain the back yard for use. He originally had the addition extending 6-8 feet into the side yard, but Staff recommended a smaller extension, and now it is 4 feet. They are removing the existing rear addition. The house is in terrible shape and probably would not have been saved if it wasn't in a historic district. It needs a new foundation. They will salvage as much of the house as possible.

Chair McGrath applauded the project as necessary to retain the usefulness of the house.

Commissioner Nally stated that it meets the Guidelines. She suggested bringing back the full open front porch as a way to increase the marketability of the house and would be more in keeping with its original character.

Mr. Goldstein stated that he hopes a buyer would be willing to do that. It affects the interior square footage. He noted that all the windows will be 1-over-1, as is existing.

Commissioner Eakin suggested a larger stucco porch post to be more proportional with the house. A porch upgrade would definitely improve the house.

Chair McGrath agreed that the addition with the south bump-out, a flush north wall, and the porch alterations meet the Guidelines.

Commissioner Albrecht stated that the south bump-out makes it obvious the rear is an addition, so a setback on the north façade is not necessary.

Motion by Heitzman to amend the original motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 824 N. Elmwood Avenue for a larger stucco porch post, 1-over-1 windows, removal of the shutters, and that Staff can approve a revised proposal if a full-width porch is proposed in the future. Second by Albrecht. Motion approved 8-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

E. Energy Audits and Historic Preservation – Presentation by John Porterfield of eZing

Commissioner Heitzman stated that he attended Mr. Porterfield's presentation on energy audits at the state preservation conference earlier this year, and asked him to present to the commission for informational purposes.

John Porterfield, eZing, presented on what energy audits consisted of, how they are done and by whom, why they are important for owners of historic houses to consider, and how much they may cost. A copy of the presentation is on file with Commission Staff.

F. 2013 Historic Preservation Awards – Preview of 2013 award recipients and event update

Planner Kaarre provided an overview of this year's Preservation Award recipients. The awards event will be held at the Nineteenth Century Club on Thursday, November 21.

301 Clinton Avenue – Brad & Lauren Wolven, S. Ryan Construction

Residential Porch Rehabilitation

213 S. East Avenue – Stephen & Stephanie Barnard, Midwest Design Group, K&B Construction & Remodeling

Residential Rehabilitation/Addition/New Construction

745 S. East Avenue – L. J. Tan & Lara Pullen, Von Dreele-Freerksen Construction Co.

Residential Soffit/Gutter Restoration

238 Forest Avenue – Alec Harris & Carollina Song, Vinci-Hamp Architects, Von Dreele-Freerksen Construction Co.

Residential Restoration

544 Forest Avenue – Alex Factor, Wicklow Development Group
Residential Restoration

306 S. Humphrey Avenue – David Pope & Beth Houle, Rosanne McGrath – Studio M Architects, Loop Construction & Development
Residential Restoration/Addition

214 S. Kenilworth Avenue – Baronger Development, Steve Ryniewicz – Studio R Architecture
Residential Rehabilitation/Porch Addition

238 S. Kenilworth Avenue – Thomas & Michelle Gill, Fox Design & Construction
Residential Siding Restoration/Porch Addition

840 N. Ridgeland Avenue – Mike Reust & Don Rutledge, Forest Park Stucco, Andy Sjostrom, Lindholm Roofing, Thomas Restoration Painting
Residential Restoration/Interior Rehabilitation

178 N. Taylor Avenue – Dan Moroney
Residential Siding Restoration

827 Woodbine Avenue – Mitch Goldstein, Baronger Group
Residential Rehabilitation

OTHER BUSINESS

Liaison with the Plan Commission: Commissioner Nally provided an update on her meeting with the Plan Commission earlier this evening. They discussed ways to better coordinate cross-over projects. They asked the HPC to present to them at a future meeting so that the Plan Commission can better understand the HPC objectives and relevant guidelines in regards to Planned Development applications, and “cultivate a shared language.” Chair McGrath noted that this coordination was called out in their Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. Commissioner Eakin agreed it would help them to directly advise the Plan Commission. Commissioner Heitzman suggested they push form-based zoning, as Oak Park resident Carol Wyant is an expert. Commissioner Nally added that they suggested looking at case studies from the objective of each commission.

Staff Approvals: Planner Kaarre provided a report on the 140 Staff permit reviews for October 2013.

ADJOURN

Motion by Nally to adjourn. Second by Albrecht. Motion approved: 8-0.

AYE: Albrecht, Brandstrader, Eakin, Heitzman, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Chair McGrath

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m. Minutes prepared by Douglas Kaarre.