

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
June 13, 2013 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers/Room 201, 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Agenda as submitted. Second by Palese.
Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MINUTES

Motion by Heitzman to approve the April 24, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Palese. Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None

Motion by Heitzman to approve the May 1, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Palese.
Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None

Motion by Battoglia to approve the May 9, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None

REGULAR AGENDA

A. **Historic Landmarks: Public Hearing for 745 S. East Avenue**

Motion by Heitzman to accept the nomination report for 745 S. East Avenue as the Findings of Fact under criteria (1), and (5). Second by Sundling.
Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None

Doug Freerksen, Von Dreele-Freerksen Construction Company, stated that the owner was unable to attend as he is out of town. His company has been restoring the unique eave system on the house. This is a great family and a great house and he supports the designation.

There was no other public testimony in support or opposition to the nomination.

*Motion by Sundling to forward a Resolution and the Findings of Fact for 745 S. East Avenue to the Village Board of Trustees for approval . Second by Heitzman. Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battaglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None*

*Motion by Battaglia to close the public hearing. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 8-0.
AYE: Battaglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris
NAY: None*

Commissioner Nally arrived at 7:40 p.m.

B. HPC 13-14: 541 Woodbine Avenue (Banholzer) – Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear two-story addition, garage, rehab (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District)

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The house is a Contributing Resource in the Historic District. The cottage at 541 Woodbine was likely constructed prior to 1895 based on building permit archives and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. It appears that the cottage has been altered at some point in the mid- to late 20th-century based on the existing window openings and front porch configuration and materials. Even the stucco was likely a later addition based on the age of the house, though it may be a historic one. As a result, the important character-defining features of the cottage are its shape and size within the streetscape and the exterior materials. The proposed changes to the house will significantly alter the appearance of the house, but will not detrimentally affect the historic character, as the shape and size of the house at the front will not change, and the new wood porch and front window openings are characteristic of the building type.

Although the rear two-story addition is taller than the existing ridge-line, it is set well back from the front. The side-facing gable also allows the roof to slope back away from the front of the house, assisting in reducing the scale of the addition. Due to the significant setback from the front of the house (approximately 35 feet), it will not alter the character of the streetscape. The existing house to the south at 539 Woodbine is a large 3-story Queen Anne, which will remain taller than the proposed addition. The house to the north at 543 Woodbine is a 1-1/2 story cottage similar in size and scale to the house at 541 Woodbine, and the proposed addition will be approximately 5 feet taller at the rear. Again, the significant setback of the addition from the front will not impact the streetscape.

The proposed window materials, design and configuration are compatible with the style of the building. The new garage will be compatible with the house in terms of size, materials, roof slope and design.

Staff is recommending approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted as it meets the Architectural Review Guidelines as outlined above.

Mark Banholzer, property owner, stated that they currently live on the block and are looking to downsize but still need more room in this small house. They are adding architectural detail in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and setting the addition back from the street.

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 541 Woodbine Avenue as submitted. Second by Niermann.

Commissioner McGrath noted the proximity of the house to the north lot line and whether there would be building code issues. She recommended the applicant contact the Building Department.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the design of the addition was well done through the use of a cross gable, which maintains the scale and doesn't compete with the house. The new porch roof is appropriate. He recommended the applicant reconsider the design of the proposed front door, as well as the design of the new front porch railings, and the window composition on the front façade. Typically second floor windows are smaller than first floor windows in a gable front.

Commissioner Nally stated that she has great appreciation for how they are improving this house. She also agrees that the new garage will be a big improvement. She agrees that Commissioner Eakin's comments are valid and could bring the composition together. Overall it is a great approach to a building that's lost a lot of character.

Commissioner McGrath stated that this is a really good example of an addition to a small house, which leaves the character of the house and streetscape intact.

Motion approved 9-0.

AYE: Battaglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris

NAY: None

C. HPC 13-15: 208 S. Cuyler Avenue (Connelly) – Certificate of Appropriateness for altering the roof slope and dormer additions (Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District)

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The proposal to alter the roof slope and raise the ridge line of the house will alter the historic character of the house and the streetscape. The block includes a row of two-story houses with hipped roofs, mainly American Foursquare in design, that match in shape and height. Retaining and repairing the existing dormer, and altering the design of the proposed new dormers to match the existing, would meet the Guidelines. Staff does not recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted as it does not meet the Guidelines. Maintaining the original roof slope and front dormer design, and altering the side dormers to match, would meet the Guidelines, and receive a Staff recommendation for approval.

Mike Parker, project contractor and partner, stated that they are altering the roof slope based on the building code for usable space. They are not taking off the entire roof of the house, just creating a broken hip. Their intentions are to maintain the character of the house. The space already has stairs to the attic and they want to use the space. He discussed insulation and codes.

Laura Connelly, property owner, stated that there are other types of houses on the street and some with alterations. The house next door altered their front dormer. The house across the street has also been altered. They have the right intentions in maintaining the historic character of the house rather than adding a box on the back.

Motion by Palese to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 208 S. Cuyler Avenue as submitted. Second by Sundling.

Chair Morris asked about Commission precedent in approving changes to roof slopes.

Planner Kaarre noted only one approval in 2005 at 715 Columbian Avenue.

Commissioner Battaglia asked if altering the roof slope would affect its contributing status.

Planner Kaarre stated that it would not, in his opinion, as the house would still retain much of its original character in terms of size, scale, massing, materials and location.

D. HPC 13-16: 221 S. Harvey Avenue (Oak Homes Corporation) – Certificate of Appropriateness for a second floor addition (*Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*)

Planner Kaarre presented the Staff Report. The 1-1/2 story frame cottage was constructed in 1909. The small gabled dormer on the north elevation was constructed in 1958 and the rear one-story frame addition was constructed in 1967. The building is a Contributing Resource within the Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District. The proposal is to construct a second-floor gable-front addition on the rear half of the house to be clad in 4" fiber cement board siding and shingles in the gable end; and construct a second floor side gable addition above the rear/side one-story wing to be clad in 4" fiber cement board siding. The proposed rear two-story/second floor addition to the house will alter the overall appearance of the house, but will not detrimentally affect the historic character, as the original front 17 feet of the house will remain intact. Although the rear two-story/second floor addition is taller than the existing ridge-line, it is set well back from the front. The side-facing gable also allows the roof to slope back away from the front of the house, assisting in reducing the scale of the addition. Due to the significant setback from the front of the house (approximately 17 feet), it will not alter the character of the streetscape. The existing house to the south at 225 S. Harvey is a large 2-story American Foursquare with hipped roof, which will remain slightly taller or the same as the proposed addition. The house to the north at 217 S. Harvey is also a large 2-story gable front Victorian, and will remain slightly taller or the same as the proposed addition. Again, the significant setback of the addition from the front will not impact the streetscape. Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted.

Motion by Niermann to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for 221 S. Harvey Avenue as submitted. Second by Palese.

Commissioner Eakin asked about the change to the front porch railing and new column.

John Spillane, property owner, stated that there is physical evidence the column was there, and the railings are not historic.

Chair Morris asked about the existing siding on the house and how new siding will meet old.

Marek Salamon, project architect, stated that the existing siding is 3-inch wood clapboard. The siding on the addition will be 4-inch fiber cement board. The existing wide siding on the rear wing will be removed and replaced with fiber cement board.

Commissioner Eakin discussed window proportions. Casement windows can be made to look like double-hung windows for egress purposes.

Commissioner McGrath noted that a three dimensional view would be helpful. The massing of the house changes with the additions and overwhelms its simplicity.

Commissioner Heitzman suggested toning down the siding on the front of the addition and lowering the height to lessen the impact.

The Commission discussed previous precedent for approving this type of addition.

Chair Morris stated that the addition they reviewed earlier on Woodbine was set further back from the front and had a lower roof slope. They should consider ways to lessen the impact of the addition on the character of the house without redesigning it for the applicant. The addition should be simpler and deferential to the original house.

Commissioner McGrath suggested turning the gable of the addition on the main house sideways as the earlier addition on Woodbine was. This would lower the massing from the street.

Marek Salamon stated that he could provide two alternatives for review – turn the gable and lower the ridge line.

The Commission conducted informal polls regarding the existing submittal (none in favor), for turning the gable sideways (6 in favor) and for lowering the front-facing gable (5 in favor). They recommended providing several revised alternatives at their July 11 meeting. They also noted that the Architectural Review Committee is available to provide feedback at their next meeting on June 26, and that a perspective view would be very helpful. The item was tabled until July 11.

E. Architectural Review Guidelines

Chair Morris and Planner Kaarre provided an update on the Guidelines process. Kaarre will be reorganizing the remaining sections to forward to the consultant.

OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Approvals: Planner Kaarre provided a report on the 143 Staff permit reviews for May 2013.

Envision Oak Park: The Plan Commission will hear a presentation from the Comprehensive Plan consultants at their July 11 meeting on the current status of the process.

QR Plaque Program: Commissioner Heitzman provided an overview of a QR coded plaque program completed by an Eagle Scout in River Forest. The Commission agreed it was a great idea and will discuss placing it on their 2014 work plan.

Architectural Survey Along the I-290 Expressway Corridor: The project is awaiting review by the Village Board and an update will be provided once that occurs.

Village Hall National Register Nomination: Commissioner Heitzman will be preparing the nomination on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Village of Oak Park. The goal is have a draft submitted by the end of July.

Citizen Involvement Commission "Chair of the Year" Award: Chair Morris will receive the Chair of the Year Award from the CIC. The recognition event will occur in July and all commissioners are welcome to attend. A notice of the date will be provided.

ADJOURN

Motion by Niermann to adjourn. Second by Nally. Motion approved: 9-0.

AYE: Battoglia, Eakin, Heitzman, McGrath, Nally, Niermann, Palese, Sundling, Chair Morris

NAY: None

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