

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
Architectural Review Committee
May 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Room 215, 7:30 pm

A. Roll Call

PRESENT: Chair Rosanne McGrath, Greg Battoglia, Regina Nally, Chris Payne
ABSENT: Tom Sundling
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

B. Minutes

Motion by Nally to approve the April 22, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Payne. Motion approved 4-0.

C. 201 N. Scoville Avenue (School District 200): Demolish a brick chimney (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*)
Robert Zumallen, Director of Buildings and Grounds, was present.

Oak Park River Forest High School is listed as a Contributing Resource within the Historic District. The building was constructed in 1906 with multiple later additions. The 155-ft. boiler chimney was constructed in 1921-22, though the decorative top was replaced in 1988. 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 involves demolishing the chimney as it is no longer used, needs significant repair work and is expensive to maintain.

Robert Zumallen provided an overview of the request. In November of 2006, Oak Park and River Forest High School replaced their old and inefficient boilers with a new heating plant. The high efficiency boilers only required a smaller stainless steel exhaust fume located in the middle of the building that is not visible from the perimeter of the school. With this upgrade of the District Heating Plant, the 93 year old masonry boiler chimney serves no purpose. Since the chimney was constructed, the District has continued to pay for maintenance and repairs of the chimney. In 1978 repairs were made and again in 1988 extensive repairs and demolition was done to the chimney. The top 50 feet was removed and replaced. Because of both the age of the chimney and new OSHA safety requirements, cost for repairs has greatly increased. Attached are two estimates. One estimate to restore the chimney is \$825,000.00 and the second estimate to demolish the chimney is \$335,000.00. The District wishes to demolish the chimney therefore eliminating any additional long term financial burden. If approved, this work would be scheduled for the summer of 2016.

The Committee had the following comments:

- The chimney falls within the period of significance of the historic district.
- The chimney has significance beyond ornamentation at the top. It helps to define the complex as an institutional building. It has more engineering than architectural significance.

- The size and scale make it unique it Oak Park.
- Demolition may be supported due to its utilitarian purpose and previous alterations.
- Provide additional documentation on the changes that were made, as well as additional bids on restoration, demolition and stabilization.

D. **921 Chicago Avenue (Benson-Custard)**: Demolish a one-story garage and construct a two-story garage (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*) Property owners Makesha Benson and Mark Custard and contractor Brett Williams were present.

Brett Williams provided an overview of the application. They would like to demolish the existing garage and construct a new two-story garage, located at the back of the lot. The new garage will provide additional parking and space. The design is compatible with the house.

The Committee discussed whether the existing garage was a Contributing or Non-Contributing Resource within the historic district. The house was constructed in 1890 and the garage in 1931. It was built within the period of the district, but is a plain wood frame garage. The new garage will be much larger and visible from the street, but is set at the back of the lot and includes details from the house making it compatible.

E. **103 S. Ridgeland Avenue (Zaritz)**: Reconstruct brick and terracotta parapets (*Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District*) Property owner Ben Zaritz was present.

Mr. Zaritz noted that there are safety issues with the brick and terracotta parapet on this two-story commercial building. His family has owned the building since 1972. The parapets are leaning and tiny pieces have fallen. He does not have the funds to restore them, and would like to remove them and rebuild with concrete block and brick. He would also like to remove the brick chimney located at the rear of the roof.

The Committee noted that the parapets are a character-defining feature of the building, which is a Contributing Resource within the historic district. The brick parapets have terracotta panels which include griffins, urns and other decorative elements. The Committee recommended looking at other options, such as stabilization using straps, which may be cheaper. It would protect the terracotta panels and the brick could be repaired. Staff will look into any Village assistance, as well as grant sources. This type of work was done at the Santa Maria to preserve the terracotta elements until funds for restoration could be found. Scaffolding would also help with liability. They recommended coming back with more information on a stabilization option. If rebuilding is still proposed, a narrative on how it meets the Guidelines should be submitted. They understand and appreciate the position of the owner, but removal should be a last option.

F. Architectural Review Guidelines

The new contract with Dominique Hawkins, Preservation Design Partnership, has been signed and a draft of the last two sections should be available for review soon.

G. Other Business

Hulbert Houses Historic District – update on public outreach process

ADJOURN

Motion by Battaglia to adjourn. Second by Nally. Motion approved: 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Minutes prepared Douglas Kaarre.