

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**  
**March 12, 2009 Meeting Minutes**  
**Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers – 7:30 pm**

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Bob Lempera, Tom Bassett-Dilley, Carmen Vitello, Frank Heitzman, Kristen Diamond, Kyle Hickman, Garret Eakin  
ABSENT: Jeff Limberg, Kate Susmilch, Drew Niermann  
STAFF: Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner

**MINUTES**

*Motion by Eakin to approve the February 12, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Diamond. Motion approved 7-0.*

**NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **HPC 09-02: 314 S. Humphrey Avenue (Testore)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for a one-story and two-story rear addition (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee.**

*Motion by Heitzman to approved the Consent Agenda as submitted. Second by Diamond. Motion approved 7-0.*

**REGULAR AGENDA**

B. **HPC 09-01: 820 N. Grove Avenue (O'Shea/Sturtevant)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for side and rear additions and front porch stair restoration (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee.**  
Property owners Laura O'Shea and Bert Sturtevant; and architects Carol Barrett and Elizabeth Scrafano were present.

Acting Chair Bassett-Dilley introduced the application. The applicants amended the rear roof connection/eaves and pulled the window away from the corner on the side addition. The Architectural Review Committee was okay with the changes; however, they had a general question on the overall massing of the rear addition.

Bert Sturtevant, property owner, stated that they moved the window and narrowed the scope of the rear roof. The roof color will match that of the house, which will be gray. They brought samples of the standing seam metal roof. The existing house and one-story addition will be asphalt shingles.

Carol Barrett, Scrafano Architects, stated that the rear roof slope is 2.4/12.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that asphalt shingles would work on a roof slope of 2.5/12.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that they want a metal roof for durability and long-term low maintenance.

Chair Bassett-Dilley outlined the process and noted that they will hear from each commissioner to clarify their positions.

Commissioner Eakin stated that he wanted clarification on the roof materials. There will be three different materials on the house and additions.

Chair Bassett-Dilley asked the commission to comment on whether the project meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Lempera stated that he has problems with the back addition; it's not compatible with the house. The Guidelines state that new additions must be compatible with the character of the building. This addition is contrasting, not compatible. There are three ways to construct an addition – matching, contrasting or compatible. Our Guidelines require compatibility. He provided examples from Historic Preservation by Tyler. He referred to the Guidelines and stated that the massing and roof shapes are not compatible. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards stated that new work should be differentiated from the old and compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features. It doesn't meet the basic Guidelines.

Mr. Sturtevant stated that these concerns have not been fully addressed by the Commission before tonight. The addition is compatible yet differentiated. It will have no impact on the integrity of the house if removed in the future. They made clear what is new and historic. They had the Guidelines in mind during the design. It is different from the house, meets their desired goals and is compatible. They used similar materials and a modern roofline for differentiation. There are different ways to do that. They tried to achieve the goal of a clear difference using a modern design, which is a fairly common approach for additions to historic buildings. He referred to a handout of examples provided to the commission.

Ms. Barrett stated that the Standards don't recommend duplication. The National Register does not discourage changes to buildings.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that they appreciate the attention given to this by the applicants.

Commissioner Eakin stated that they are dealing with an art, not a science. There is a lot of interpretation. There are some inconsistencies with the project. There is only a setback on one side of the rear addition, which is flush on the other. There are three different roof materials which is not consistent with the Guidelines, despite the color match. The window change works fine. A shed roof has been introduced to the building. He appreciates the roof change but it is not an elegant scheme, the rear roof issue is not really solved. He is 99% in favor of the project and is just sharing his thoughts.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that this is a good work of art but not a good work of architecture. The addition needs to be compatible. Tampering with the form takes away

from the integrity. It is an interesting sculptural image, but it fails as historic architecture. It changes the historic character even though its on a tertiary façade due to the roof line and fenestration. You are mixing different architectural vocabularies. He is opposed to the scheme.

Commissioner Diamond stated that she agrees with Commissioner Eakin. It does push the limit on what is appropriate for historic additions. She agrees with some concerns on the roof materials. The window placement is fine; she prefers the side shed roof. She likes the modern interpretation using historic materials and is in favor of the project. Bringing the roof line in helped. She appreciates them doing a newer design. She struggled with the compatibility but doesn't want to stifle architecture.

Commissioner Vitello stated that the Guidelines allow for contrasting additions. It's hard to go through point by point and say it doesn't meet the Guidelines. Personally she's not in favor of the contrasting appearance but feels it meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Hickman stated that his concerns have been addressed. The Guidelines do say there should be a visual distinction between old and new. It is compatible, it does meet the Guidelines and he is in favor of the project.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are the basis for the Guidelines. The first example shown in the handout is a modern cubic addition on the back of a building. Their priority is preserving historic character and integrity of the existing structure and make sure the new is not taking away from the old. The character is not dramatically obscured here. The crux is whether there is a negative impact on the character of the house. He has some qualms about the design – he would prefer a flat roof on the back, but feels the project meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Hickman stated that the different roof materials is one thing, but he feels the project is within the Guidelines.

Commissioner Eakin asked what people thought about the side addition.

Commissioner Lempera stated that he's opposed due to the shed roof.

*Motion by Eakin to approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for 820 N. Grove with the condition that the roof material on the rear two-story addition be asphalt shingles to match the house. This will require a small change in the roof pitch. Second by Diamond.*

Mr. Sturtevant stated that they could remove the translucent panels from the trellis to avoid three different roof materials. However, they can do the asphalt shingles on the addition.

*Motion approved 5-2.*

*AYE: Eakin, Hickman, Vitello, Diamond, Bassett-Dilley*

*NAY: Lempera, Heitzman*

- C. **HPC 09-06: 325 S. Euclid Avenue (Van Ermen)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for a one-story rear/side addition (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**  
Property owner Tom Van Ermen and architect Troy Pavelka were present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley introduced the application. The proposal is for a rear one-story addition. The Architectural Review Committee had concerns about the addition wrapping around the side of the house and obscuring the angled face of the side bay. It removes a corbel and somewhat changes the architectural character. The applicants submitted two options: Option A is the original version (along with a perspective drawing) and Option B is a revised version with the addition pushed back on the side and back.

Troy Pavelka, Normandy Architects, stated that the rendering is of Option A. Option B does solve the applicant's needs but they are disappointed at losing the connection to the living room. Pushing the mud room to the back of the house is acceptable to them. They pushed the addition back six feet to keep the bay and second floor window intact.

Commissioner Lempera stated that he's very happy with the changes.

Commissioners Heitzman and Diamond agreed it was a much better proposal with the changes.

Commissioner Eakin asked about using casements on the rear of the addition rather than double-hung windows.

Mr. Pavelka stated that casements add extra ventilation to the room.

*Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 325 S. Euclid with the condition that the approval is for Option B of the submittal. Second by Lempera. Motion approved 7-0.*

- D. **HPC 09-05: 401 N. Kenilworth Avenue (Kelleher)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear second floor addition (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**

Chair Bassett-Dilley abstained from review as he is the architect representing the applicant. Commissioner Diamond will serve as the Acting Chair during review of the application.

Mr. Bassett-Dilley stated that they are proposing a rear second-floor addition and demolishing two out of six leaded glass windows on the north elevation and a baluster rail. The addition extends over the first floor addition. The finishes and trim will match. The Architectural Review Committee's only concern was the removal of the windows. The owner agreed to keep four out of six. They are extending the flat roof portion of the first floor to the rear and adding a baluster.

Commissioner Heitzman asked if they could slide all six windows down.

Mr. Bassett-Dilley stated that they would still need to demolish two windows. Sliding them down would not work with the exterior wall. Henry Fiddelke was the original architect of the house. Charles White remodeled and added on later.

Commissioner Lempera stated that the Guidelines specifically stated that historic decorative windows should be repaired.

Mr. Bassett-Dilley stated that the Guidelines are more relevant if windows are being replaced rather than removed. There are decorative windows all over the house and these are some of the least visible.

Commissioner Vitello noted that there are numerous rows of six windows on the house.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that he doesn't understand why they're being removed.

Mr. Bassett-Dilley stated that it's due to the function of interior built-ins. He tried to save all six windows but couldn't.

*Motion by Eakin to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 401 N. Kenilworth as submitted.*

*Second by Heitzman with an amendment to keep all six windows.*

*Commissioner Eakin did not agree to the amendment.*

*Commissioner Heitzman withdrew his Second and his amendment.*

*Second by Hickman.*

A straw poll of the commission show three in support (Hickman, Diamond, Eakin) and three in opposition (Lempera, Heitzman, Vitello) to the proposal as submitted.

Mr. Bassett-Dilley stated that he will offer to keep all six windows and they will take another look at the interior layout.

*Motion by Heitzman to amend the motion to require the retention in place of all six leaded glass windows. Commissioners Eakin and Hickman agreed to the amendment. Motion approved 6-0.*

#### **E. Architectural Review Guidelines – Discussion of Potential Updates**

Acting Chair Bassett-Dilley introduced the discussion. The Commission previously went through the preservation ordinance with comments, finalizing that review last year. They are now moving through the Guidelines to bring potential changes to the Board. They will start the discussion with the Preamble and Definitions. The objective is to clarify the Guidelines to put everyone in a good position to get work done in the historic districts.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that when this ordinance was passed in 1993 they talked extensively about definitions. They attached a bibliography for standard definitions in the field. They felt that Cyril Harris architectural definitions were sufficient.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that only one example of the definitions Staff sent out had a definition of demolition. The work “significant” has caused some grief. Another example doesn’t use this word.

Planner Kaarre noted that the Commission, in their review of the ordinance, hopes to alter how the ordinance works – requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for any exterior alteration. This would render the definition of demolition less important than it currently is in terms of the overall ordinance. Also, it was revised in 1999.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that the original definition of demolition included a quantity.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that they are looking for more teeth by requiring a COA for things that don’t require it now. He discussed potential changes to the ordinance, including demolition, vinyl siding, windows are the biggest issues.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that Cellular PVC really looks like wood.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the Preamble is meant to explain what the Guidelines are. It is very matter-of-fact. Should they add more about why preservation is important?

Commissioner Eakin agreed with adding more on the philosophical reasoning behind it.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the Guidelines are intended for all parties involved – owner, architects, contractors, designers, etc.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that some things don’t require a permit but would have an impact. Those are difficult to enforce.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the Guidelines are general, not exhaustive. Every project is unique. There is some concern with wording, which can be misleading. Maybe they can use the term “interpretive” which can be more objective. “General” is too vague.

Commissioner Hickman stated that they could remove that entire sentence. They could add that preservation is important and explain the benefits – maybe list incentives, value, etc.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that they should expand on compatibility – add examples and/or a definition.

Chair Bassett-Dilley read from the Tyler book.

Commissioner Hickman stated that a definition would be shorter than text.

Planner Kaarre stated that they could do both. They should go through the Guidelines and highlight which terms need definitions and/or illustrations.

Commissioner Heitzman suggested also giving examples of what to avoid.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated they should illustrate appropriate scale. They also need to update the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to 1995. Copy the HPC on the Standards booklet.

Commissioner Hickman suggesting adding internet web site addresses throughout the document, making it interactive.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that Section B is the beginning of the elaboration on establishing historic contextual character. It is the perfect space for an illustration.

Planner Kaarre suggested elaborating on what historic and contextual character is.

Commissioner Vitello noted that architectural features should not be listed under materials (B4). The list isn't really materials and should be changed.

Commissioner Lempera read the updated Standard #9, which added items.

Chair Bassett-Dilley suggested including that list plus "siting" and "street rhythm" to help explain Standard #9. Under B, keep Siting (1), Massing (2), and Scale (3) as is. Change Materials (4) to be Architectural Features and add Materials (5) separately. Keep Street Rhythm (6). Change the list in the Preamble to match. Item C is materials for submittal.

Planner Kaarre noted that they planned to create a list of submittal requirements for different project types as hand-outs.

Chair Bassett-Dilley suggested keeping possible general submittals and add a perspective or physical model and written response to the Guidelines.

Commissioner Lempera suggested adding cost estimates.

Chair Bassett-Dilley discussed the definition of Technically Infeasible, which includes an economic component.

Commissioner Heitzman recommended removing the definition altogether.

Planner Kaarre noted that the term is used frequently and suggesting changing it rather than removing it.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that they should include replacement materials if the Commission allows them. Leave all economic issues to the Economic Hardship process. Section D outlines what not to do prior to historic review. They should add not to remove windows or original siding without a permit.

Commissioner Hickman suggesting mentioning that certain types of work are irreversible and can result in fines.

For the next meeting the Commission members will go through the Guidelines and select terms that need definitions and/or illustrations.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Architectural Review Committee:** Report on February 25, 2009 meeting. The meeting notes were provided to the Commission. Note the discussion at the end about making the review process more explicit by identifying the fundamental issues with a project first before discussing details and making sure every commissioner provides their comments.

**Education Committee:** Report on February 19, 2009 meeting. The meeting notes were provided to the Commission.

**A Day In Our Village:** Planner Kaarre noted that the festival will be held on June 7, 2009. Several ideas the Commission has done in past years while hosting a booth at the festival include a house consultation and house history prize and architectural quiz. Commissioner Heitzman noted that years ago they hosted craftsman during the day who demonstrated their various skills. Commissioner Hickman noted that the brochure on how to research your house is always a big hit. They should do something more with that. The Education Committee will discuss these ideas further at their next meeting.

### **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Hickman to adjourn. Second by Lempera. Motion approved: 7-0.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 pm. Minutes prepared by Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner.

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