

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
June 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers – 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

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

MINUTES

Motion by Niermann to approve the May 14, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Heitzman. Motion approved 8-0.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

A. **252 and 256 Lake Street (Patel)** – Request for a third one-year extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness approved on July 20, 2006 and extended through July 20, 2009 (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*)

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 8-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

B. **Public Hearing for Historic Landmark Designation:**

Chair Bassett-Dilley opened the public hearing and provided an overview of the process.

1) **1139 Woodbine Avenue (Gustaf Benson House, George [Gustav] Pearson, 1929)**

Larry Armstrong, property owner, stated that he has lived in the house for 49 and one-half years. It is a great house, great architecture and he is happy about the designation. He introduced Ted Benson who is the grandson of the original owner.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that he is impressed with the story behind the house and the architectural style of the house. He asked for public testimony in support or opposition to the landmark designation. There was no public testimony.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the whole neighborhood was designed as an idealistic community with Kenilworth Boulevard as the focal point. There were monuments at each corner. It would be great to restore them back. Some are still there but some are missing. It is a harmonious neighborhood with various styles. It is very historic.

Commissioner Heitzman asked if the house was being nominated to the National Register.

Planner Kaarre stated that it had not been discussed. It was currently being nominated as a local landmark only.

Motion by Heitzman to accept the landmark nomination report for 1139 Woodbine Avenue as the findings of fact. Second by Diamond. Motion approved 8-0.

Motion by Eakin to forward the findings of fact and resolution to the Village Board of Trustees recommending approval of 1139 Woodbine Avenue as a Historic Landmark. Second by Limberg. Motion approved 8-0.

2) 1019 Chicago Avenue (Robert Parker House, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1892)

Planner Kaarre noted that the property owner would have been present this evening but had a last minute work function that he had to attend. The property owner is in favor of the designation. In response to a question, he replied that landmark designation does not impact the property taxes of neighboring properties. He also responded that there are currently 33 designated landmarks, including the twin of this property at 1027 Chicago Avenue, which was designated in 2002.

Chair Bassett-Dilley asked for public testimony in support or opposition to the landmark designation. There was no public testimony.

Commissioner Eakin stated that this is an important house by a master architect when he was in his early twenties. It is transitional in style – Queen Anne but definitely by Wright. It has elegant details and is a mature piece of work.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that it looks Queen Anne yet is becoming Prairie; it has horizontal elements. It is not typical of Wright, but more like E. E. Roberts. It is a unique and beautiful house.

Motion by Eakin to accept the landmark nomination report for 1019 Chicago Avenue as the findings of fact. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 8-0.

Motion by Eakin to forward the findings of fact and resolution to the Village Board of Trustees recommending approval of 1019 Chicago Avenue as a Historic Landmark. Second by Diamond. Motion approved 8-0.

Motion by Eakin to close the public hearing. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 10-0.

- C. **HPC 08-60: 123 N. Taylor Avenue (Niksich)**: Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear two-story addition, side gable and attached garage (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**
Property owner Matt Niksch, architect Debbie Kent and contractor Mark Meagher were present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the Architectural Review Committee reviewed the application in October 2008. He is glad to see the project is able to move forward.

Debbie Kent, Hutter Architects, stated that they are proposing a two-story addition with one-story attached garage on the back of a Victorian house. It will be visible from Taylor and Lake Street. The new side dormer has been separated from the existing dormer as requested by the ARC. The existing house has aluminum siding with clapboard and cedar shake underneath. The owners would like to install Hardi-board on the addition to match the original 3-inch clapboard. The aluminum siding will be removed in phase II of the project and the original siding restored.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that Hardi-board is not angled like cedar. It will look different. You're not saving much money by using one over the other.

Ms. Kent stated that there is a one-story one-car garage with a roof deck. The addition and garage step down towards the back. She reviewed the proposed plans and elevations.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that it appears that a vertical trim and downspout will provide the visual break between old and new.

Commissioner Diamond asked for clarification on the use of cedar versus Hardi-board.

Ms. Kent stated that the original wood siding underneath the aluminum would be retained and restored and Hardi-board is only proposed on the addition.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the Hardi-board siding won't look the same as the cedar when they are next to each other. He noted the window over the garage door seemed an odd proportion.

Ms. Kent stated that it is to let light into the garage. It is the same size as an art glass window elsewhere on the house.

Commissioner Eakin suggested putting windows in the garage door itself.

Chair Bassett-Dilley reviewed the Garage Policy of the guidelines and determined that the New Addition policy is more appropriate in this situation. Additions must be compatible yet not match exactly. The guidelines call for a visual distinction between old and new. He asked if they looked at setbacks for the addition.

Matt Niksch, property owner, stated that there is not a lot of space on the lot.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the addition could be set back 6-inches to 1 foot to provide a visual distinction. It could also allow for two separate materials to be used next to each other.

Mr. Niksch stated that they could use cedar siding on the addition instead of Hardi-board.

Commissioner Diamond stated that they would likely be happier with cedar as it will look better.

Mark Meagher, contractor, asked if they would still be opposed to Hardi-board if they removed all the wood siding and installed it on the entire house.

Commissioner Niermann stated that they could evaluate the condition of the original wood siding once the aluminum is removed, but you shouldn't plan for the removal of the original wood siding at the start of the project. That must be approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that he is okay with the window over the garage door. He likes how the dormer and garage step down towards the back.

Commissioner Diamond reiterated that there should be no removal of the original wood siding that is underneath the aluminum without Commission approval.

Commissioner Niermann stated that he likes the massing and shape of the addition overall. He feels that there should be more distinction between old and new. The new dormer prevents the addition from being set back. There is no great solution here.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that he is fine with it as proposed.

Commissioner Vitello agreed.

Commissioner Hickman also agreed and stated that he liked the window over the garage as well.

Commissioner Limberg stated that he always struggles with the New Addition Policy that requires an addition to be compatible yet distinctive. This will look very good in the neighborhood.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the guidelines ask for a visual distinction, not necessarily a change in style. He provided an example of a rear addition on a foursquare that turns it into a rectangle as an example of why distinction is necessary.

Commissioner Vitello stated that the proportion of the addition looks good.

Mr. Nicksch stated that his architect did a great job.

Commissioner Diamond stated that it had good balance.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that he can't wait to see the restoration of the house. He noted that exemptions can be granted for historic porch railings.

Ms. Kent stated that they will not be touching the front porch.

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 123 N. Taylor as submitted with the condition that the addition be sheathed in wood clapboard to match the original house. Second by Hickman. Motion approved 8-0.

- D. **HPC 09-15: 822 Fair Oaks Avenue (Meeker):** Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear two-story addition (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**
Property owner Daniel Meeker was present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley introduced the application. The Architectural Review Committee reviewed the application for a rear two-story addition and recommended approval as submitted.

Daniel Meeker, property owner and architect, stated that he provided visual distinction by creating “notches” or setbacks. It is a simple home and he went perpendicular to the roofline. He initially proposed adding two windows to the original house, but has removed those. The house has an easement with Landmarks Illinois. They have added solar tubes on the back of the gable which will not be visible. He changed the window massing on the south side of the rear addition to reduce areas of blank stucco wall. He also added windows in the notches.

Commissioner Diamond stated that the ARC felt the notch was a nice visual distinction due to the size of the addition.

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 822 Fair Oaks as submitted. Second by Diamond. Motion approved 8-0.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the house is very worthy of landmark designation.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that the addition will change the massing.

The Commission discussed zoning and size of additions. Form-based code could help in regulating more appropriate addition sizes in general. Massing is a big issue when determining compatibility. An example would be a new coach house on N. East. The New Addition Policy could discuss contextual massing. They discussed the policy on floor additions.

- E. **Architectural Review Guidelines** – Discussion of Potential Updates Continued from the May 14, 2009 meeting.

Commissioner Heitzman reviewed the changes he made to the Window Policy. He tried to make it an easier read with visuals. He added window alteration under demolition.

Planner Kaarre suggested including the source under each of the visuals.

Commissioner Eakin asked whether they wanted to allow for clad windows.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that Roger Keys had discussed at the window workshop how the cladding hides the rotting wood so you don't realize your window is falling apart.

Commissioner Eakin discussed shutters on page 12 of the Guidelines. He felt they should be proportional to the window size.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that not all shutters are proportional, such as those found on Colonial Revival houses.

Commissioner Eakin suggested adding language about not screwing shutters into the brick. He likes the illustrations and U-value chart.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that he divided saving windows that are 50 years old, and 75 years for storm windows.

The Commission discussed whether they should use the 50/75 year period or the Period of Significance for the historic districts.

Chair Bassett-Dilley didn't feel a year was necessary. They should state that "historic" windows should be repaired. The HPC is hoping to require a COA for window replacement.

Commissioner Limberg asked if the 50-year requirement would rule out judgment calls.

Commissioner Heitzman did not think it would, as not all windows would be documented.

Planner Kaarre handed out a flyer from the National Trust titled, "*Window Know-How: A Guide to Going Green.*"

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that this is a big issue to get around. Graphics due date the document a bit. The graphic on replacement costs is very important. The dollar amount per therm and energy tax credit may not stay the same.

It was decided that additional window photos were needed for the guidelines, both historic and replacement. The HPC discussed creating a brochure on how to do window repair.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that he proposed the 50-year rule to be clear on what they want people to restore. Decorative windows cannot be replaced. This requires mandatory repair of windows that are original or 50 years old.

Chair Bassett-Dilley suggested using windows prior to 1941, since that is the latest date for Contributing properties in a historic district. The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that they could change the 75-year rule for storm windows to 1941 as well. They discussed changes to section 9 on closing up windows. He changed the term "policy" to "requirements".

The Commission discussed roof windows versus skylights.

Commissioner Heitzman felt there should be no visibility at all on historic buildings or additions.

Commissioner Eakin felt that they should be okay on additions.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that they will discuss the New Building Policy (to be reviewed by Commissioner Eakin) at their next meeting on July 9.

OTHER BUSINESS

Architectural Review Committee: Report on May 27, 2009 meeting. Chair Bassett-Dilley reviewed the items discussed at the meeting. The meeting notes were provided to the Commission.

Day In Our Village: Chair Bassett-Dilley thanked those Commissioners who volunteered to work at the HPC booth.

Education Committee: The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 25.

HPC Educational Workshops: The next workshop will be held on Tuesday, June 16 at Pleasant Home. The speaker will be Jo Stavig discussing Historic Interiors.

ADJOURN

Motion by Eakin to adjourn. Second by Niermann. Motion approved: 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm. Minutes prepared by Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner.

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