

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
November 12, 2009 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Room 101 – 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

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

MINUTES

Motion by Eakin to approve the October 8, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 9-0.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

None

REGULAR AGENDA

- A. **HPC 09-19: 743 N. Elmwood Avenue (Sell/Allison)** – 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 David Allison and architect Sahba La'al were present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley introduced the application. The proposal is a rear two-story addition which is contrasting in style with a flat roof and rectilinear in nature. The owners met with the Architectural Review Committee several times, a majority of whom ultimately felt that it met the Guidelines.

Mr. La'al, architect, outlined the changes they made to the rear curtain wall design.

Commissioner Eakin noted that the roof height of the addition seems four feet higher than the roof on the house.

Mr. Allison noted that it has been lowered quite a bit.

Mr. La'al stated that the ceiling height of the first floor in 9'6" and 8'4"-8'-6" on the second.

Chair Bassett-Dilley asked by MDO panels were being used on the north rather than stucco.

Mr. La'al stated that stucco might make the addition appear too heavy and too similar.

Chair Bassett-Dilley reviewed the New Addition Policy in the Architectural Review Guidelines. Compatibility with historic character was the biggest disagreement on the ARC. It appears to meet the other points in the policy regarding materials, location, not changing character of building and providing a visual distinction.

Commissioner Albrecht stated that it is a fine addition, sensitive and clearly distinct.

Commissioner Niermann stated that the original house is plainly visible. The addition is very distinct but doesn't overwhelm or take away from the character of the house.

Commissioner Morris stated that she appreciates the owners working with the ARC. The addition clearly meets the Guidelines and is visually distinct.

Commissioner Limberg stated that the addition stands out and is not compatible with the character of the building. Although it is in the rear it will be visible from the street as its on a corner. He feels it doesn't meet the Guidelines.

Commissioner Vitello stated that the addition is distinct and meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Diamond stated that it has simple massing and is set back. The owners have done a lot of work to meet the Guidelines and yet keep the modern style. They solved some sleeping porch problems as well. She feels it meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Eakin stated that it is a great improvement. There are a lot of things about the project that he likes. But the massing is competing with the house and it looks awkward due to the roof cricket. There is no resolution of the edge. He likes the glass façade. They should keep the design simpler. The south elevation is the most resolved where the mass pulls away from the house. He doesn't mind the fenestration. The scale is wrong and the project doesn't meet the Guidelines.

Commissioner Lempera stated that the addition is not compatible with the historic character of the house. It is improved, though. Design by committee should not occur. This is harder to judge. The balcony is out of character and there are too many different elements added haphazardly. An addition should be able to stand alone as well.

Mr. La'al noted that these drawings are schematic and that details will be added to the drawings when submitted for permit.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the elevations may be refined through the process, but the Architectural Review Committee should be consulted if that happens. He applauds the owners for sticking to their concept. While the addition stretches the limits of compatibility, he feels it meets the Guidelines.

Motion by Albrecht to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 743 N. Elmwood Avenue based on plans and elevations dated November 3, 2009. Any significant changes to the plans or elevations during the permit review process must be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 6-3.

AYE: Niermann, Vitello, Morris, Albrecht, Diamond, Bassett-Dilley

NAY: Limberg, Lempera, Eakin

Mr. Allison stated that they are not supportive of design by committee either, but he and his wife both feel that the project has gotten better after review by the ARC.

B. HPC 09-41: 325 N. Cuyler Avenue (Iminovici) – Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear two and one-half story addition and new north dormer (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee

Property owners Ioan and Elisabeth Iminovici were present.

Planner Kaarre introduced the application. This home suffered a fire in March 2009. The proposal is to replace the two-story enclosed back porch with a three-story enclosed back porch and add a dormer to the north side of the roof to match the one on the south. The Architectural Review Committee reviewed the application at its September and October meetings. The ARC was supportive of the rear addition and dormer pending submittal of detailed drawings indicating materials, new windows and a dormer detail. More detailed drawings were submitted.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that there is no number on the north elevation. Also the north dormer and wall plane are the same but the soffit and fascia should extend across with more roof.

Ms. Iminovici stated that they will match the other dormer exactly.

Chair Bassett-Dilley emphasized that this needs to be reflected on the drawings.

Planner Kaarre noted that expansion of the front porch is not part of this project though it is shown on the plans. He recommends they either remove the porch from the drawings or note that it is not part of the scope of work.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the rear sunroom walls inset on the sides but the roof plan continues. The eave line will continue with a bigger overhang. This should be noted on plans.

Mr. Iminovici stated that all materials, siding and windows will match existing.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the concept of the addition and dormer is good, but they need more detail on the trim, materials, etc. The drawings need to be clearer.

Commissioner Lempere noted that the windows are mis-drawn; they don't all match.

Mr. Iminovici stated that the windows on the addition will be the same size and match.

Commissioner Morris was concerned that replicating every detail will prevent a visual distinction to determine what is new. The addition should be new yet sensitive. She feels this is pushed too far to matching.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that a roof distinction on the rear would be good.

Ms. Iminovici stated that would be okay to do.

Commissioner Albrecht stated that it would be difficult to add a visually distinct addition to this house and not look awkward. He agrees intellectually with providing a visual distinction, but he's not sure it can be properly done here.

Commissioner Diamond stated that she struggled with that as well. You are limited in what you can do some cases. She is not as bothered by the dormer as shown. She fears the design could be strange and damage the character of the house as a whole. Possibly the cladding could be different – shakes vs. siding.

Commissioner Morris noted that she was not suggesting it be redesigned; it could be subtle.

Commissioner Lempera stated that the ARC should see the final construction drawings with details added.

Motion by Morris to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 325 N. Cuyler Avenue with the following conditions: a) Final construction drawings must be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee; b) The west elevation should be amended to match the plan; c) The roof of the rear addition should be set back from the main roof to match the eave depth; d) The proposed front porch expansion should be removed from the plans prior to submittal of final construction drawings; e) All windows should be drawn in their accurate proportions; and f) Accurate soffit and fascia details for the proposed new dormer should be shown on the final construction drawings. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 9-0.

C. **Architectural Review Guidelines:** Discussion of New Addition Policy and the Masonry Repair Policy: Continued from the August 13, 2009 meeting

Both revisions were prepared by Commissioner Heitzman, who was unable to attend the meeting. Due to the importance of the addition policy, it will be delayed until he is available. It was determined to continue with the Masonry Repair policy.

The Commission had the following comments on Commissioner Heitzman's proposed revisions to the Masonry Repair policy:

- Begin the section with a preamble as discussed with other sections of the Guidelines. Include item 1 in the preamble plus additional information. The preamble should philosophically state why.
- Include photos or illustrations.
- Organize the policy into sections by topic like "cleaning," "coating", etc. The material provided is good but scattered. This will help to find duplications.
- Some points are repeated, such as items 21 and 30, 28, 34 and 35. Combine these points into one where appropriate.
- Consider just referring certain things to the NPS Preservation Briefs.
- Don't be too detailed or specific in case things change on how to do something.
- Generalize where possible.

- Formatting will come later. Add website links at the end of each chapter.
- Include live links to the National Park Service or IHPA.
- Item no. 3 should not add 150%. It sets a dangerous precedent. Change the definition of “technically infeasible” rather than define economics. People can prove if something isn’t feasible.
- The current process for economic hardship works.
- Leave “technically infeasible” in item no. 4 as well.
- Items 19 and 27 push hand-raking joints.
- Items 22 and 31 refer to stucco which is not masonry. Commissioner Niermann will add stucco to the Siding Policy.
- Generalize the statement about water-repellent coatings in item no. 25. There was not consensus on whether these are good or bad for buildings.
- Identify which terms require a definition, which will go in the definition section and will be determined at the end of the process.

OTHER BUSINESS

Architectural Review Committee: Report on October 28, 2009 meeting. The meeting notes were provided to the Commission. Chair Bassett-Dilley provided an overview of the projects discussed, which included new glazing at 710 Augusta (Historic Landmark) which was approved, façade alterations at 215 S. Lombard (Ridgeland HD) which was not approved, a rear second floor addition at 414 N. Ridgeland (Frank Lloyd Wright HD) which was approved, a new pavilion at Pleasant Home (Historic Landmark) which was approved, garage demolition and new construction at 325 N. Elmwood (Frank Lloyd Wright HD) which was approved, and a new dormer and rear addition at 325 N. Cuyler (Ridgeland HD) which was forwarded to the HPC.

Commissioner Status: Kyle Hickman resigned from the Commission due to his work commitments. Commissioner Limberg stated that he will resign following the December meeting due to personal commitments that conflict with commission meetings.

ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. Minutes prepared by Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner.

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