

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
May 22, 2025 at 7:30PM – Meeting Minutes

A recording of this meeting is available on the Village of Oak Park Website: <https://www.oak-park.us/Government/Citizen-Boards-and-Commissions/Commission-TV>

Roll Call

Present: Chair Lou Garapolo and Commissioners David Bates, Scot Mazur, Jessica Paul, Mark Weiner, Ron Roman, Amy Peterson, Rachel Michelin, Asha Andriana (arrived at 7:35 p.m.) and Paul Ribera
Absent: None
Staff: Atefa Ghaznawi, Urban Planner

Chair Garapolo stated that after completion of the first agenda item for 1035 South Blvd, there will be a five minutes break for those who would like to leave the meeting.

Agenda Approval

Motion by Commissioner Roman to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Weiner. Motion approved 9-0.

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to approve the minutes from April 24, 2025. Second by Commissioner Weiner. Motion approved 9-0.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Chair Garapolo stated: "We have a number of people who signed up for public comment. If anyone intends to comment, please sign up on the sign-up sheet that is provided. We have a very long agenda this evening, and I would respectfully request the presenters to limit their presentation to fifteen minutes or less. we have received a lot of information from staff, and we had a chance to review all the information. For those who would like to make a public comment, please limit your comment to three minutes. We have a timer that will be set to three minutes. This is not a public hearing, but because all of you have taken your time to attend the meeting tonight, we will certainly entertain your comments."

Regular Agenda

HPC2025-11 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 1035 South Blvd Known as the Boulevard Arcade Building (John Schiess, Architect): Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a ten-story addition behind an existing landmark building (2007) located in Downtown Oak Park.

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application.

Chair Garapolo stated: "I would like to make a personal comment that I am somewhat disappointed in the material and submittal that we received for this meeting. We all including this audience, expected to have a presentation in March which was postponed at the owners' request because of revisions that were to be reviewed. From the submittal in March and the submittal in May 22, I have not seen any changes, and

the drawings are dated in March. We all spent a lot of time to review submittals. We don't have to go through all the information that you have presented. I would like to request you to please tell us what revisions you have made to come back before the Commission."

The applicant stated: "From the last submittal that you cited, none. That doesn't mean that we did not explore the possibilities of changes. I can go through the list of what we did, but in the end, it was an exploration that my clients asked us to do. It involved the leasing agent, construction consultant, and traffic consultant. Starting with the feasibility study of looking to see whether residential component was part of it, that was not feasible, and we came back to a residential component. Once we went there we started looking at the floor plans, we had some anecdotal evidence that 3-bedroom with 2.5 bath rental units were at a premium, renting around \$5,000 a month that lead us to thinking of combining units. We have four units per floor, we tried to combine to have one unit per floor which would reduce the unit count, building height, and increase the parking ratio. We went through all those exercises, and after doing that we came back to these plans. I apologize again for the last-minute request to pull the application from the last meeting. We tried in hope to have a different application in front of you."

The applicant provided an overview of the application, and Chair Garapolo requested the members of the public who signed up for public comment to provide their comments, and reminded the public to limit their comment to three minutes. There were five (5) oral public comments and one (1) written comment opposing to the COA. Chair Garapolo asked the applicant if they would like to provide a closing comment. The applicant stated: "I want to distinguish between the first application and the second application. I am not looking to elongate the process but I work for the clients who ask me to do what I do."

Motion by Commissioner Andriana to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Ribera.

Commissioner Peterson stated: "I recognize that these are two separate submissions. You have the Commission's recommendations about this submission regarding the proposed scale, height, and ornamentation issues which are not in line with the Guidelines. Even though it is a new submission with different material, it is ignoring the Commission's recommendations during all these three meetings. The proposal is significantly out of scale with respect to the landmark building and its surrounding. If there will be a future conversation, it is important that the owners should know that their building is located in Oak Park and should follow the Guidelines." Commissioner Roman stated that there is an error in the staff report about the height of the building. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that there is typo in the report. It should be 124 ft instead of 224 ft. Commissioner Ribera asked that if there was a precedent of a similar project in the past that the Commission approved a building of this height associated with a contributing resource. Chair Garapolo stated that there was no precedent. Commissioner Weiner asked if the tax abatement for the landmark building has expired. The applicant stated that the tax abatement has not expired yet but will expire soon, and it was not the driving force for this proposal and it was a component. Chair Garapolo stated: "Th proposal does not meet eight criteria out of ten criteria of the Guidelines. Scale, building form, site coverage, orientation, architectural elements, material, and façade proportion all of which are specified in the Guidelines and the project does not meet the Guidelines."

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a ten-story rear addition behind the existing landmark building. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion was denied unanimously by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: None

NAY: Commissioners Peterson, Andriana, Mazur, Bates, Weiner, Roman, Paul, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

HPC2025-12 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 827 N East Ave (Christina Townsend, Architect):

Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish and rebuild entire second floor and roof, and partially demolish and rebuild first floor that were damaged by fire (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*)

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application. The applicant provided an overview of the application.

Motion by Commissioner Roman to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Michelin.

Commissioner Roman asked what was the rationale for expanding the front dormer. The applicant stated that the reason was to increase the living space on the interior. Commissioner Peterson and Chair Garapolo appreciated the applicant's efforts to incorporate the Commission's recommendations. Chair Garapolo asked what is the material for the stair railings at the side entrance. The applicant stated that they will use metal railing and match design of the existing side porch. It is not damaged by fire and will stay as it is to not increase the construction cost because the insurance will not cover the cost. Chair Garapolo asked if the applicant could find any evidence that a front porch ever existed. The applicant stated that they could not find a photo. The homeowners decided to maintain the side porch to not increase the cost and they preferred the side entrance. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that in the 1930 Sanborn map which was included in the staff report, it shows that a front porch existed at that time. The Commission stated that the project meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Michelin made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate the historic house as proposed. Second by Commissioner Mazur. Motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Michelin, Mazur, Andriana, Bates, Peterson, Weiner, Roman, Paul, Ribera, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

HPC2025-13 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 135 N Lombard Ave (Deborah S Levine, Homeowner)

Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a historic garage (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*).

- **Advisory Review: 135 N Lombard Ave (Deborah S Levine, Homeowner)** Advisory Review to construct a new 2-car garage (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application, and stated that the applicant's representative attended the HPC meeting in March for a COA application, and the Commission asked the applicant to provide a structural assessment report from a third-party licensed architect or civil engineer and come back to the HPC meeting for a COA application. The applicant provided an overview of the application.

Motion by Commissioner Roman to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Andriana.

The Commission stated that the documentations provided for demolition of the existing garage meet the requirements.

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the historic garage. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Peterson, Andriana, Mazur, Bates, Weiner, Roman, Paul, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

Advisory Review: Commissioner Peterson asked if the windows of the existing garage are original. The applicant stated that the windows seem original. Commissioner Peterson recommended using windows similar to the original windows instead of double-hung windows. The applicant stated that double-hung windows will match the windows on front of the house. Commissioner Roman asked if the applicant will change the grade. The applicant stated that they will change the grade to resolve the drainage issue. Commissioner Michelin recommended matching the color of vinyl siding with the stucco of the house. The applicant stated that the house stucco is dark green. The available colors without going for custom colors don't have dark green. They will use light green and will match the trim details of the house. Chair Garapolo strongly recommended to use cement fiber boards that has stucco finish or LP smart siding that is more compatible instead of vinyl siding.

HPC2025-25 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 332 S East Ave (Tracey J. Brewer, Architect): Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a rear corner addition, infill two existing windows, replace/repair decorative stained-glass windows, and add decorative pilasters to an existing dormer (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application. The applicant provided an overview of the application.

Motion by Commissioner Roman to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Ribera.

The Commission appreciated the applicant's efforts in incorporating the Architectural Review Committee's recommendations. The Commission stated that the proposal meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed rear addition and exterior renovation. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Peterson, Andriana, Mazur, Bates, Weiner, Roman, Paul, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

HPC2025-26 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 532 Fair Oak Ave (Amy Shouder, Architect): Certificate of Appropriateness to remove an existing one-story rear addition and enclosed side porch and build a one-story side addition and a side porch (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application. The applicant provided an overview of the application.

Motion by Commissioner Roman to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Paul.

Commissioner Peterson asked what type of shingles will be used. The applicant stated that it will be asphalt shingles. Commissioner Michelin stated that the gable roof option for side porch would be more appropriate as the original front porch in the historic photos had gable roof. Chair Garapolo stated that on the east elevation a number of different windows are used. What was the thinking for selecting those window types. The applicant stated: "The house has 6/1 double hung windows. We selected a cottage style window with fixed top sash with 6 divided lites and an operable lower sash with one lite." Chair Garapolo recommended to match the windows of the mudroom with the existing windows of the house. Chair Garapolo stated that either roof options for the side porch would be appropriate. The Commission stated that the project meets the Guidelines.

Commissioner Andriana made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an existing historic garage. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Andriana, Peterson, Mazur, Bates, Weiner, Roman, Paul, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

HPC2025-27 - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 540 Linden Ave (Elizabeth Moroney, Homeowner): Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a historic garage (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*).

- **Advisory Review: 540 Linden Ave (Elizabeth Moroney, Homeowner):** Advisory Review to construct a new 2-car garage (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided an overview of the application. The applicant provided an overview of the application.

Motion by Commissioner Peterson to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Michelin.

The Commission stated that the documentations provided for demolition of the existing garage meet the requirements.

Commissioner Andriana made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the historic garage. Second by Commissioner Roman. Motion was approved by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Andriana, Roman, Mazur, Bates, Peterson, Weiner, Paul, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

NAY: None

Advisory Review: Commissioner Peterson asked if the garage windows will match the double hung windows of the house. The applicant confirmed that the garage windows will match the windows of the house. Commissioner Michelin stated that the proposed siding is LP Smart siding and the existing garage has wood siding. The applicant stated that the house is stucco, and the garage will have LP Smart siding with a color matching the house. Commissioner Michelin recommended using wider windows to match the existing house. Chair Garapolo recommended using a plain LP Smart siding instead of the proposed wood grain pattern.

Other Business

- **Volunteer Sign-Up for a Day in Our Village, June 1, 2025:** Urban Planner Ghaznawi requested Commissioners to sign up for a Day in Our Village, on Thursday, June 1, 2025 at the Scoville Park. The event will start at 11 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m. Staff and two volunteers will go to the location one hour early to set up the HPC booth.
- **Text Amendments for Solar Panel Guidelines:** Urban Planner Ghaznawi provided a summary of past HPC meetings and the Commission's recommendations regarding installing solar panels on primary façade of historic buildings. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that the following four mediation strategies were added to the solar panel guidelines:
 - Use solar panels and mounting systems that are compatible in color to established roof materials.
 - Use a sleek trim (or skirt) around the perimeter of solar panels array to hide components that are visible beneath the solar panels, and use flush-mounted solar panels that are installed directly on a roof, with a low profile and a clean aesthetic.
 - An alternative to conventional solar arrays is Solar Shingles system, also called photovoltaic shingles. Solar shingles are solar cells designed to look like conventional asphalt shingles.

If any of the abovementioned strategies are incorporated, staff can approve the project administratively. If the property owners don't follow the proposed guidelines, a certificate of appropriateness will be required to install solar panels on the primary façade of the building. The Commission should further discuss the following:

- How to define the primary façade of historic building when located on a corner lot, or if the historic building has two or more street facing facades.

Commissioner Weiner requested to change the *"shall need"* to *"shall obtain"* on page 124. Commissioner Peterson asked if the phrase *"If any of the conditions above are not met"* on page 124 refers to the best practice section or the entire solar panel guidelines. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that it refers to the entire solar panel guidelines. Commissioner Peterson stated that some of the bullet points are unambiguous, the first one bullet point on page 123 *"All efforts have been made to place the panels in areas that are not readily visible from the street..."* feels like it is open to interpretation and subject to staff review. For corner lots the project should get a COA. The primary façade totally depends on the individual house. There should be two lists: an easy list that staff can approve administratively and another list that the project will require a COA. For example, for a house that has front facing porch and they want to install solar panels on their porch, the project should be subject to interpretation and further discussion. Urban Planner Ghaznawi asked if further discussion means going through a COA process. Commissioner Peterson

confirmed that a COA should be required. Commissioner Michelin stated that the word “*best practices*” on page 123 should be replaced with “*requirements*”. Commissioner Ribera stated that solar panels are usually installed on south facing facades, and any south-facing house should require a COA. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that for other types of historic reviews the primary façade is determined based on where the main entrance is. Commissioner Paul stated that there are houses that have side entrance or have two street addresses. Commissioner Ribera recommended to ask a professional in solar panels to provide more guidance on where would be an optimal location to install solar panels. Commissioner Peterson stated: “Our responsibility as the Historic Preservation Commission is to preserve the historic buildings in historic districts. For corner lots alternative locations should be considered to install solar panels such as the garage or side elevations that are not facing the street.” Commissioner Michelin stated that the “*primary façade*” should be replaced with “*street-facing façade*” and “*side elevations*” should be replaced with “*secondary façade*”. Commissioner Weiner asked how many solar panels permit application the Village usually receives. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated: “It depends on the year. I looked into the number solar panel projects that were referred to the Commission from 2022 to present. In 2022, six or seven projects were reviewed by the Commission, in 2023 only one project, and in 2024 one project and rest of the solar panels were approved administratively in the past. In 2025 up until this date, I reviewed one solar panel project which was proposed on a non-contributing structure. If the Commissioners need more time to review the amended Guidelines, the Commission can continue the discussion at the next HPC meeting. Until the amended Guidelines are approved by the Village Board, any solar panel project will be treated as an Advisory Review.” Commissioner Roman stated that the Commission should vote and approve the Guidelines at this HPC meeting. Commissioner Michelin stated that the word “*should*” should be replaced with “*shall*” throughout the solar panel Guidelines. Commissioner Weiner recommended to review the revised Guidelines after the Commission’s recommendations are incorporated and then vote to approve the amended Guidelines. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that she will make the revisions and send the revised Guidelines to the Commission for review, and she will add the solar panel Guidelines to the agenda for next HPC meeting under other/old business item. The Commission decided to review and vote on the revised Guidelines at the next HPC meeting. Commissioner Ribera recommended to invite solar panel professionals to the Speaker Series to educate residents on how to install solar panels. Chair Garapolo requested staff to send the revised Guidelines to the Commissioners earlier than the regular HPC packet. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that she will send the revised Guidelines to the Commissioners two weeks before the HPC meeting.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Mazur to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion approved 10-0.
The meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.

Minutes prepared by Atefa Ghaznawi, Urban Planner.