

Hello. I'm Lucia Marker-Moore. I'd like to thank Village staff and counsel who have been available and helpful since we were last here in March. And I thank the Commissioners for their time. I, along with my husband, Brad Bare, are the homeowners of 312 N East Ave., a single family home located within the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture Historic District. It is not a landmark, and we receive no tax benefits of any kind for owning a house in a historic district.

I am before you today to seek your approval on our proposed dormer project. Before I get into the reasons why our project fits within the parameters of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Commission's guidelines, I will reiterate the objection I've made to staff and counsel that the Certificate of Appropriateness process (aka COA) is inapplicable to our project, and that we should instead be proceeding under Certificate of Advisory Review.

At a high level, the Historic Preservation Ordinance makes plain that construction, alterations, relocations, demolitions and removals are all distinct concepts. For contributing resources within historic districts, COA is only applicable to demolitions. Our project, by contrast, is an alteration:

- "Any act or process that changes one or more of the exterior architectural features of property"

Demolition, as defined in the ordinance and as used in context in both the statute and guidelines, is what the average person would expect it to be: getting rid of a house, or so much so that the house has effectively been "demolished." Our dormers will alter our roof, they will not demolish our home.

However, as a public hearing before you on the merits of our proposal under COA is our current means of appeal, I am here to separately show you how our project fits within the ordinance and your guidelines.

For background, I am from this community. I'm a proud OPRF grad, and my parents, family and friends still live here. I brought my family back here because this is the exact community in which I want to raise my kids (ages 8, 6 and 2) and that I want to be a part of. We have put down roots, we are active in our public school, and we are deeply involved in our immediate neighborhood.

Brad and I fell in love with 312 N East the moment we first walked in. Hopefully you were able to attend the recent Historical Society of OPRF's house-walk and walked through our first floor. If you did, you no doubt understand how this house was love at first sight for us. As we walked through for the first time, we were both flooded with visions of our family growing here: of milestones witnessed, celebrations hosted, and everyday life taking place within its comforting walls. For us, this house is the anchor for our family. Our children will grow up, but they will always be able to return to this house, and as they grow their own families it will welcome them in as well.

Currently though, our kids are little people, and our oldest two are able to share one of our four modestly sized bedrooms. This is necessary because I work from home fulltime and need one of the rooms as my office. Brad also works from home 2-3 days a week, but when he does, he works from a desk positioned on a small stretch of wall between the bottom of our basement stairs, a bathroom and a pantry because it's the only workable space for a desk. We do not have any space for guests to stay, although Brad's family is all out of state.

I share this information not because you're entitled to it - you aren't - I share so you can see that there is a family living here. This is not simply "a contributing resource", it is our home. It's one that is deeply personal and special to us, and where we intend to live for the next 40 years. These renovations are necessary

for us to be the loving stewards of 312 N East for the arc of that time. The house, at 100 years old, is facing substantial maintenance projects and at a time when labor, materials and costs are higher than ever before. We are prepared to take that burden on, but we also need to be able to accommodate modern life.

Turning to the project itself. We are seeking to add two dormers to our third floor: a small three window dormer on the north-side (which this body took no issue with and was not referenced as needing revision in the response letter following the March meeting) and a larger dormer on the south-side. The necessary first step to reviewing these proposals is to understand the property as a whole and the house's orientation on the lot. It was clear from our last meeting that the Commission did not understand the positioning or the sightlines. So, to set the record, the lot to the north of us, is a lot and a half with an open side yard that provides a beautiful sightline down the northside of our home. Our "front door" is midway back on this north side. The result is that our house presents itself to, and welcomes the community from, its public north-side. Anyone looking to take in our home's beauty would stand to the north of it and gaze at the north and west sides.

Additionally, our house is positioned at the far south end of the lot, and the two-flat to our south is shifted towards us on its lot. The result is a slim corridor between the two buildings, with little visibility of the south-side of our house. This presents as a private space, akin to the back and is very inconspicuous from the street and sidewalk.

It is on this concealed south-side where we would like to add the larger dormer on the back 2/3rds of the roof. The dormer will replace a current dormer with a clipped roofline, but it will be behind a chimney and mostly obscured from view by the tall two-flat. For these same reasons, the current dormer is mostly

obscured from view, contributing very little to the aesthetics of the house, and barely noticeable as compared to the larger and prominent clipped gables facing the street to the west and side-yard to the north.

For COA reviews of non-landmark buildings, the ultimate standard for review as stated in the Historic Preservation Ordinance is what, if any, effect the proposed project has on the architectural features and on the historic, aesthetic or architectural value, characteristics and significance of the designated historic district.

Yes, we are looking to alter an existing dormer, but for the reasons already mentioned, this dormer does not contribute to our house's public presence. Casual passersby do not notice it is there, and will not notice it has changed. Our home's character will remain unaltered, it will still proudly showcase the two large public clipped gables, and it will still present to all who view it as the same building that led to it being a contributing resource.

As for the district as a whole, Oak Park and the FLW Historic District is a community of dormers. Considering that the proposed south dormer barely changes the street view of our home, it certainly cannot be said to have a negative impact on the district as a whole.

While the standard in the Historic Ordinance is the legal standard of review, the commission has adopted guidelines to assist its evaluation. Critically, however, the guidelines cannot impose requirements or standards above and beyond the scope of the Ordinance. Additionally, as a general legal principle, guidelines are a practice that allow leeway in their interpretation. It makes sense that the Ordinance permits the Commission to establish "guidelines" and not

“requirements” because houses and changes to them are unique. Flexibility is necessary to apply the guidelines in a manner that makes sense in context.

As the staff report points out, there were three guidelines that the Commission discussed at the March 15 meeting. And I’d like to point out that all three come from the “Additions” section of the guidelines and not the “demolition” section:

1. Dormer roof design shall be compatible with the slope of the main roof or be a slope and configuration characteristic of the style of the house.
2. An addition shall not remove character-defining features, historic windows, historic siding or other historic material from the historic building that are visible from the street.
3. Any individual dormer visible from the street shall not cover more than 50% of the roof plane on which it sits.

I can assure you that our proposed south dormer is compatible with all three:

1. The dormer roof is compatible with the slope of the main roof as it starts below the peak so that it is not visible from the public northside of the house. It is characteristic of the neighborhood, there are numerous shed-style dormers on roofs in the area. Additionally, it is positioned on the back $\frac{2}{3}$ of the south roof plane so that there is little visibility of it from the street. What is visible from the street in line with other dormers in the area, which supports our position that this is compatible with similar historic buildings.
2. No character defining features will be removed. The character defining exterior features such as the large clipped gables on the north and west facades will all remain.
3. While this dormer is visible from the street and is 60% of the roof plane, it is mostly obscured from the street and what is visible will be the same whether it is scaled at 50% or 60%. The additional 10% is necessary to provide an egress window for the west end of the house. Currently, the

only window is the small historic window in the west facing gable, which is not large enough for egress. We can leave that window as currently designed if we can incorporate an egress window within the new dormer. Because practically a 10% reduction has no impact on the street visibility but means everything to our project, we ask that you keep in mind that guidelines are meant to be flexible in instances like these, and permit the 60%.

Ultimately, with the exception of the 50% guideline, as Planner Trexler stated at the March meeting and as reflected in those minutes, the details of the dormer meet the Guidelines and are consistent with two recent shed-roof dormer approvals.

312 N East Ave is our home. It is beautiful and it is old, but it is not a landmark and it is not a time capsule. We have, at great expense, commissioned a renovation proposal that preserves its character, does no harm to the district, and brings it into modern life. Perhaps on a personal level you would make a different choice if this was your home. But in your professional capacity, I ask that you keep in mind that our proposal checks all the boxes and meets the ultimate standard set forth in the ordinance. Truly, the only open question is whether this commission will accommodate a 10% variance from guidelines for the south dormer, which is very material to the function of our project but entirely inconsequential to how it presents to the public. As you consider this, please keep in mind that this is our home and that this project will allow us to remain in our home for decades to come, and to care for it with the love it deserves.