



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – STAFF REPORT Public Hearing

HPC2025-41

Address: 1035 South Boulevard
Meeting Date: August 28, 2025
Property Owner: Sachem Building LLC
Project Architect: JCSA
Historic Designation: Oak Park Historic Landmark, 2007
Historical Name: Boulevard Arcade Building
Zoning: DT-3: Downtown - Pleasant Sub-District
Project Description: Appeal denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a 10 – Story addition behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park
Requirements: 7. New Construction and Addition Projects



2024 Google Photo

Architectural Review Guidelines

The purpose for architectural review is to protect the unique visual qualities of a building and its site that define their sense of history from inappropriate proposed alterations that will reduce that sense.

The relevant standards from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation include the following:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Relevant standards from the Requirements for New Construction, Addition, & Demolition Projects include the following:

Additions

Maintaining Historic Character

- An addition shall not change the historic character of the historic building.
- An addition shall be compatible with the historic building to which it is attached, including siting, massing, scale, materials and street rhythm.
- 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.
- Exterior finish materials of the addition shall be compatible with that of the historic building.

- An addition shall protect the historic character of the building by making a visual distinction between the historic building and addition.

Size and Configuration – Vertical Additions

- The size, configuration and massing of all additions shall be such that when viewed from the street, the addition does not visually overpower the historic building.
- Additions shall be constructed only on a rear or side façade so that the historic building retains its prominence as the primary structure viewed from the street.
- The shape and slope of roofs on an addition shall be compatible with those of the historic building.

Applicant's Proposal

The applicant intends to appeal denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a ten-story addition in Art Deco Architectural Style behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park. The addition will consist of 6 levels of residential space (24 units) and a top floor community room above 3 levels of parking (plus one level of parking in basement). Exterior façades of the addition will have metal panels on light gauge framing. The applicant has submitted the same drawings and documents with no revisions for this HPC meeting (August 28, 2025), which were reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission on July 24, 2025.

The applicant previously attended the following HPC meetings:

- HPC meeting on **December 12, 2024** for a preliminary discussion of the proposed rear addition. The Commission stated that the proposal does not meet the Architectural Review Guidelines.
- HPC meeting on **January 09, 2025** for a formal COA application. The Commission stated that the proposal does not meet the Architectural Review Guidelines, and denied the COA application.
- HPC meeting on **March 27, 2025** for a formal COA application. The applicant postponed the COA application to a later date.
- HPC meeting on **May 22, 2025** for a formal COA application. The Commission stated that the proposal does not meet the Architectural Review Guidelines, and denied the COA application.
- HPC meeting on **July 24, 2025** for a formal COA application. The Commission stated that the proposal does not meet the Architectural Review Guidelines, and denied the COA application.

The applicant requested a public hearing on July 30, 2025, to appeal denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness. Notice of the August 28th public hearing was mailed to the applicant on August 12, 2025 and was mailed to the property owners within 250 feet on August 11, 2025. A legal notice was published in the Wednesday Journal on August 13, 2025.

Minutes of the previous HPC meeting are attached at the end of staff report. The meeting recordings may also be found online, here: <https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-commissions/commission-tv>

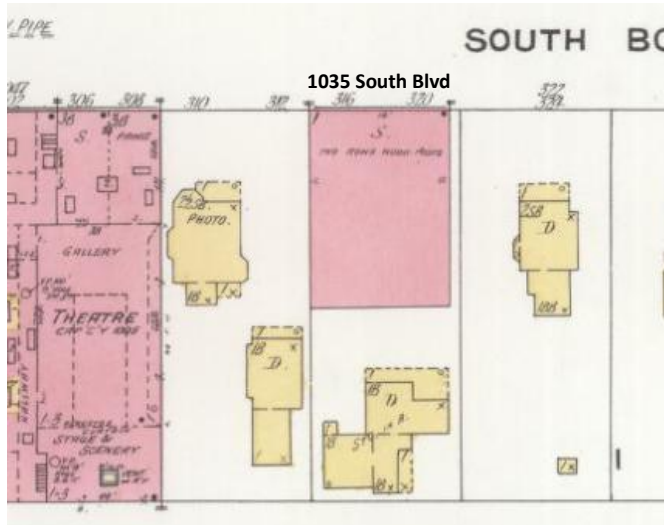
Historical Summary

1031-35 South Blvd known as The Boulevard Arcade Building is a 2-story brick commercial building in the 20th Century Commercial style. The building was designed by the prominent Oak Park architect Eben E. Roberts in 1906 as a one-story, one-tenant retail structure, but with the capacity to add a second story if needed. In 1922, a local entrepreneur hired Chicago architect Arthur Jacobs to remodel

the structure into a multi-tenant shopping destination to serve the expanding shopping district which would soon be the lead shopping district of west Cook County. The Village Board designated the Boulevard Arcade Building as an Oak Park Historic Landmark on June 4, 2007. In 2008 the building was restored to approximate the 1922 exterior appearance, including restoration of the original 1906 cast iron posts and replication of its distinctive transom glass. Its defining interior features remains the same, including a central skylight and light court, terrazzo floors, and an ornate central staircase. The building has exterior brick walls, a mansard roof with parapet walls clad in replacement clay tiles, and replacement windows in aluminum clad wood, 1/1 double-hung sashes.

Historic Permit Summary:

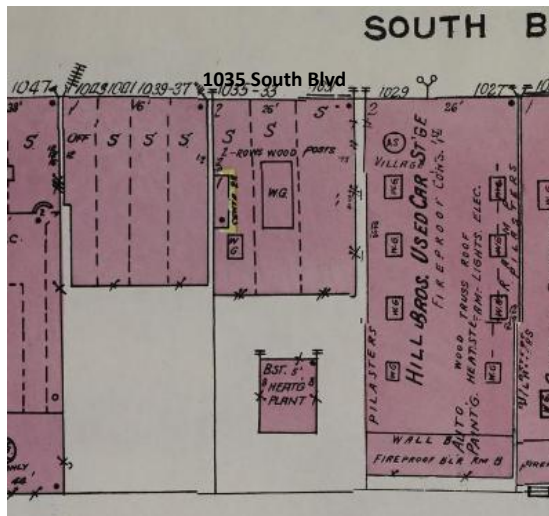
- 1906 Construction of first floor
- 1922 Construction of second floor
- 1942 Permit for Boiler room
- 1947 Lowering in-store ceiling height by 2 ft
- 1962 Removal of boiler room and constructing a new smaller boiler room on the rear of building.
- 1966 Partitioning offices
- 1974 Application for Business License (Crown Health Equip.)
- 1977 Permit for 8 ft of mansard style roof at top of building and 4-6 ft around on sides
- 2006 Two-story rear addition for mechanical and bathrooms
- 2007 Designated as an Oak Park Historic Landmark
- 2008 Major exterior restoration completed
- 2013 Stairwell and exhaust system
- 2016 Installed of skylight



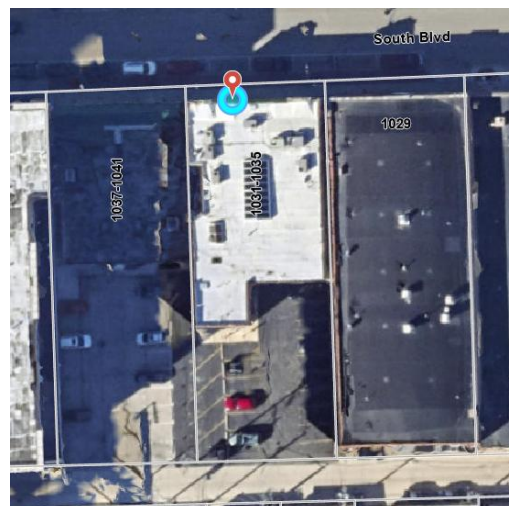
1908 Sanborn



1930 Sanborn



1947 Sanborn



2024 Existing Condition

Staff Comments

The applicant intends to appeal denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a ten-story addition in Art Deco Architectural Style behind an existing landmark building located in Downtown Oak Park. The applicant requested a public hearing on July 30, 2025, to appeal denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness. Notice of the August 28th public hearing was mailed to the applicant on August 13, 2025 and was mailed to the property owners within 250 feet on August 13, 2025. A legal notice was published in the Wednesday Journal on August 13, 2025.

The Historic Preservation Commission should evaluate the project based on the Guidelines. If the Commission determines that the project does not meet the Guidelines, they should provide the specific Guidelines that are not met, why they are not met, and how the project might be altered in order to meet the Guidelines.

Should the HPC deny the COA, the applicant will have the following options:

1. Appeal the HPC's decision to the Village Board, OR
2. Apply for a Certificate of Economic Hardship (COEH) from the HPC (may not be applicable in this case), OR
3. Revise the proposal based on HPC's recommendations to meet the Architectural Review Guidelines, OR
4. Withdraw the COA application.

The Architectural Review Guidelines allow for vertical additions as long as they are set back so that they do not visually overwhelm the primary façade of the building. The size, configuration and massing of additions shall be such that when viewed from the street, the addition does not visually overpower the historic building. Additions at front façades are generally prohibited and rear additions are generally most appropriate. The overall massing and scale of a vertical addition shall be compatible with the scale of the neighboring buildings, and contemporary design compatible with the historic buildings and their surroundings is encouraged.

Attachments

- COA and hearing process steps (based on the Historic Preservation Ordinance, summary provided by staff)
- Minutes from previous HPC meetings (provided by staff)
- 1035 South Blvd –appeal request submitted by the applicant
- 1035 South Blvd proposed rear addition site plan, plans, elevations, 2D and 3D renderings, shadow analysis, and photos

COA & Public Hearing Process in Oak Park Historic Districts

Following is the process for reviewing a COA request in all of the Oak Park historic districts. This process is specified in Sections 7-9-12, 7-9-13 and 7-9-14 of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance (Article 9, Chapter 7 of the Village Code).

The current stage of this project (the August 28th HPC Hearing) is in bold.

1. Upon receipt of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application, the HPC will review the project at a regular meeting and (1) approve the COA if they find it in accordance with the Architectural Review Guidelines or (2) take no action.
2. If the Commission takes no action on a COA application, the applicant has the following options:
 - a) Withdraw the application;
 - b) Request a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission;
 - c) Alter the application to meet the Commission's guidelines (*not applicable to full demolition requests*)
3. If the applicant desires to request a public hearing, they must make that request within 15 days from the HPC meeting where no action was taken.
4. Upon receipt of the request for a public hearing, the Commission must hold the hearing within 45 days of the request. The hearing date must be noticed in the newspaper, and all property owners within 250 feet must be notified by certified mail.

5. **At the public hearing, the Commission takes testimony from the applicant and all interested parties on the COA application. Following the public hearing, the Commission has 15 days to issue or deny the COA.**
6. If the Commission denies the Certificate of Appropriateness, the applicant has the following options:
 - a) Withdraw the application;
 - b) Request an appeal to the Village Board;
 - c) Submit an application for a Certificate of Economic Hardship.
7. If the applicant desires to appeal to the Village Board, it must do so within 15 days of receipt of a final denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness.
8. The Village Board must hear the denial with 45 days of the request. The Board may affirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission. Failure by the Board to take action with 45 days will result in a denial of the appeal and an affirmation of the Commission's decision.
9. A Certificate of Economic Hardship may be submitted after denial of the COA by the Commission or denial of the appeal by the Board. The public hearing process for the Certificate of Economic Hardship is similar to the process for a Certificate of Appropriateness. A denial of the Certificate of Economic Hardship by the Commission may also be appealed to the Village Board.
10. The applicant has the ability to file suit in Circuit Court upon denial of an appeal by the Board.

HPC Meeting Summary, July 24, 2025, COA was denied.

- Proposed scale, height and width exceeds the scale and height of the historic building and overpowers the historic building.
- Proposed form has no relationship to the historic building.
- A real front entrance does not exist.
- Alignment, rhythm, spacing, and proportion of the front façade does not relate to the historic building.
- Proposed material i.e., metal is not compatible.

HPC Meeting Summary, May 22, 2025, COA was denied.

- Proposed scale, height and width exceeds the scale and height of the historic building and overpowers the historic building.
- Proposed form has no relationship to the historic building.
- A real front entrance does not exist.
- Alignment, rhythm, spacing, and proportion of the front façade does not relate to the historic building.
- Proposed material i.e., metal is not compatible.

HPC Meeting Summary, March 27, 2025

- COA application was postponed to a later date.

HPC Meeting Summary, January 09, 2025, COA was denied.

- Proposed scale, height and width exceeds the scale and height of the historic building and overpowers the historic building.
- Proposed form has no relationship to the historic building.
- Setback requirement is met.
- A real front entrance does not exist.

- Alignment, rhythm, spacing, and proportion of the front façade does not relate to the historic building, and other three elevations does not relate to the front façade.
- Proposed material i.e., metal is not compatible. Majority of the buildings on the South Blvd and behind the South Blvd are masonry.
- A clock which is intended to draw attention to it, will draw attention away from the historic building.

HPC Meeting Summary, December 12, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the plans and elevations for this project and had the following specific recommendations to assist in making the proposed rear addition compatible with the historic landmark building:

- The Commission liked the idea of the clock and lighting the façade, stated that another apartment building in Oak Park will bring more density to the town, and parking garage is well-incorporated into the façade design.
- Remove the community room on the top floor to reduce the building height by approx. 10 feet.
- There is no real front entrance to the building and people have to go through an 80 ft long alley that seems like a hidden entry. An entrance from the rear alley to the residential building could be more interesting.
- The design of the façade is overwhelming and distracts from the primary building, and there is no echo of the primary building in the residential portion.
- Top of the art deco façade ends with a blank box which architecturally could be handled more differently. In other Art Deco buildings in Oak Park like Medical Arts Building or Oak Leaves Building, top of façade ends more elegantly and are good design examples.
- The front elevation has verticality emphasis versus the side elevations have horizontal expression. A verticality emphasis on front and side elevations is recommended than having two different facades.
- The existing and new buildings are considered one structure as they share elevators, there will be connections between two buildings and people can go from one building to another, and the proposed roof deck on roof of the landmark building is considered an alteration.

Minutes of Previous HPC meetings

HPC Meeting, July 24, 2025

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.

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 (4) oral public comments and one (5) written comment opposing to the COA.

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

Commissioner Weiner stated: "Mr. Baur raises a good question here. I wish we had the Village Attorney here. I don't know if Urban Planner Ghaznawi has an answer to this. If I and all other Commissioners abstain from voting, does the COA somehow get passed or not?" Urban Planner Ghaznawi asked if passing means approving the COA. Commissioner Weiner stated that passing means approval. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated: "In order to approve the COA, the Commission needs six affirmative votes. In the absence of vote, there is no approval. The Historic Preservation Ordinance does not specify how many times a COA can be reviewed by the Commission. Maybe there is some ambiguity there, and in the future we may want to do a text amendment to clarify. At this meeting, I think the Commission need to make a decision either approve or not approve the COA." Chair Garapolo stated: "In light of that, we should proceed as we were hoping to, and that is to consider this resubmittal, and vote yes or no. Abstaining would be your privilege, but we need to take a vote because the Ordinance is clear that the applicant has a right to resubmit." Commissioner Roman asked if there was a limit to the number of times that a COA can be resubmitted. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated that nothing is mentioned in the Ordinance. Chair Garapolo stated that it is a good point, and it could be something that the Commission will take up at a later date. Commissioner Peterson asked if the applicant was familiar with the Oak Park Comprehensive Plan. The applicant stated that he is familiar with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Peterson stated: "The Plan is the result of ton of work, surveying the residents of the Village, bringing together workshops, interviewing people, etc. to understand what they care about in Oak Park. What did they want to invest in. What is the Villag's vision for Oak Park. There is an entire section in the Comprehensive Plan about historic preservation. About making sure that we preserve the historic resources that we have, and we fund that. Making sure that we have a support mechanism for that. I assume when your clients first purchased this building, renovated it in 2007, they took advantage of the sentiment of the community to preserve and fund historic preservation as it was mentioned they received tax breaks. I am interested to understand why your clients seem to completely ignore the Village's focus on historic preservation. You have not addressed that in any of these materials, and we repeatedly explained how this does not fit the Ordinance. Why are you trying to ignore them?" The applicant stated: "The simple answer is we are not ignoring them. In our opinion, we are actually enhancing. We believe that we are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Guidelines which has been reflected during all the conversations." Commissioner Peterson stated: "I have not seen any logical argument in any of the materials that you have submitted, going back to December that articulates how these fit the Guidelines. You are not adhering to the street rhythm, you are overpowering the building, you are ignoring all the fundamental aspects of historic preservation, and you are not providing any specifics about why this project actually fits them." The applicant stated: "In the original write up we did. I took all the standards and wrote it." Commissioner Peterson stated: "I recall it very well; there was no actual evidence. It was more like I think this fits the landscape. When in reality, it is three times as big as the buildings adjacent to it." The applicant stated: "The standards are subjective and not objective. For example, the standards say no building shall be more than three stories tall. We presented a five-story building. Yes, you are correct, and that is factual. I sat in your chair for three and half years. I am familiar that the Standards have not changed. We have an interpretation of those, and clearly the Commission has a different opinion. That's the best answer I can give you." Chair Garapolo stated: "Let's focus on the discussion rather than posing questions to the applicant. I don't want to get into this debate at this point." Commissioner Roman stated: "In support of moving to a vote, we have allowed a lot of votes lately for COAs that have expired. People were unaware that there is an expiration date, and we allowed them to have their request heard again. Even though this is a negative vote, I think it should be heard again." Commissioner Andriana stated: "I don't see a need for four levels of parking, especially considering the proximity to the Green Line, and being part of the project." Commissioner Michelin stated: "I want to refer to two items from the Secretary of Interiors Standards that I specifically object to: One is adding conjectural features to the addition that

make it look like it is from a different time, and I think the clock tower and all other Art Deco elements align with that and are not appropriate. Second item that not compatible with massing, size, scale, and architectural features, to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.” Commissioner Bates stated: “I want to make a process comment. I understand the way that the Ordinances are written. It is at the discretion of the Village Board to overrule the Commission on certain decisions. I find it very insulting to be told from the beginning that it is the point of all this. When we have taken our time multiple times, to review this application and offer careful feedback, and basically be told that all this is laying the groundwork to ask the Village Board where presumably you think they better disposed toward the developer. It does not sit well with me. This is not what the process should be about.” Chair Garapolo stated: “My comments are the same from the last time. I reviewed ten guidelines. Only two out of ten were met, meaning eight of the Guidelines have not been met. Because of that in my review of these Guidelines, I cannot support the application.”

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a ten-story 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, Ribera, Michelin, and Chair Garapolo

HPC Meeting, May 22, 2025

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 led 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

HPC Meeting, March 27, 2025

HPC2025-11 – CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 1035 South Boulevard 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 stated that before she provides the project summary Mr. John Schiess, the project architect would like to make an announcement to the public and the Commission.

Mr. John Schiess stated: “I have a message from my clients. They are requesting that we reschedule this hearing tonight. We submitted an application in full and we are prepared. However, I have been directed to take a look at the building and review all the functions including the building height. At about 2:30 p.m. this afternoon I came to the Village Hall and delivered that message to the village staff. It was too late to email folks, and I and my team apologize personally to not give you notice soon enough. We have been directed to look at this not just today. We were directed by the investor group to look at it last week and there were comments prior to that, and certainly the comments that were made at the last hearing, and things that we continue to hear. We would like to reschedule it for possibly the next available HPC meeting. I will work with Village staff on that. I have to tell you turning a ship this big is not that very easy. It is not like designing townhomes. There are at least ten consultants that give us input. The drawings may look schematic and simple but there is quite a bit of input. There are structural consultant, automatic lifts consultant, parking consultant, etc. We have a whole group of folks. When you take a look at something like this it takes some time. Because of that I cannot promise a date. But we will work with staff to work on a date and give the notice to the public. This is something that came up two weeks ago but it gained momentum last week, we started looking at it and exploring that and it takes time. It wasn’t until this afternoon that my clients said to reschedule the hearing.”

Chair Garapolo stated that the Commission was not aware of the applicant’s decision, and Chair Garapolo asked for a motion to postpone this agenda item to a date uncertain.

Commissioner Weiner made a motion to postpone the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed 10-story rear addition to a later unspecified date. Second by Commissioner Peterson. Motion was approved unanimously by a roll call vote as follows:

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

NAY: None

HPC Meeting, January 09, 2025

HPC2025-02 – CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 1031-35 South Boulevard 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, and stated that the applicant previously attended the HPC meeting on December 12, 2024 for a preliminary discussion to receive feedback on the proposed rear addition. At the HPC meeting on December 12, the applicant asked the Commission whether this project will need a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Commission requested staff to consult with the Village Attorney regarding the same. The Village Attorney determined that the 10-story rear addition project at 1031-35 South Blvd meets the definition for a Certificate of Appropriateness, therefore a COA from HPC is required.

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. The Village Attorney reminded the public that they have three minutes to provide and conclude their remarks, and for those who have not signed up before, they will have an opportunity to participate in the public comment as well, and the Commission received the public input regarding this agenda item. There were fourteen (14) oral public comments and seven (7) written comments opposing to the COA. There was one (1) oral public comment and five (5) written public comments supporting the COA.

The Commission stated that in terms of the context to the historic building and district rhythm the addition overwhelms the historic building in a number of ways: The proposed massing and scale; the proposed ornamentation will visually overpower the historic building; window sizing on the addition are significantly larger in scale than the historic building; proposed color palettes will significantly overwhelm the historic building; scale of the building would significantly overwhelm the entire streetscape, and it is more than 30 ft higher than the tallest building on the entire block. The two adjacent buildings are currently in proportion, this building will completely pull them out of proportion. Also, a clock which is intended to draw attention to it, will draw attention away from the historic building. Additionally, the Commission stated: "The proposed form has no relationship to the existing building. Setback requirement is the only requirement that was met. In terms of the orientation, a front entrance does not really exist, and the proposed entrance looks like a gangway. Maybe the technology of building a masonry building does not always make sense in terms of a tower, but we do see a number of towers being built that are masonry or made out of wood. To say metal is the only solution, is a tenuous argument. There really is no relationship to the existing building. In terms of alignment, rhythm and spacing, the façade proportion does not comply, the front façade does not relate to the historic building, and other three elevations does not relate to the front façade. In terms of material, metal is not compatible. Majority of the buildings if not all on the South Blvd and behind the South Blvd are masonry. When adding up all of these, we don't even come close to any of the guidelines".

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed 10-story rear addition. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion was denied unanimously by a roll call vote as follows:

AYE: None

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

HPC Meeting, December 12, 2025

DISCUSSION - Ten-Story Rear Addition to 1031-35 South Boulevard Known as The Boulevard Arcade Building (John Schiess, Architect) Construction of 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, and stated that the applicant is attending the HPC meeting to receive feedback on the current design prior to attending the HPC meeting in January 9, 2025, for a formal Historic Review.

Architect John Schiess provided an overview of the project and stated: "One of the things that I want to talk about is whether this project will need a Certificate of Appropriateness from Historic Preservation Commission, and I would like to start guiding that conversation. As per the ordinance a COA is required if there is an alteration, or construction, or relocation of a historic landmark, or the removal or demolition of an eligible or designated historic landmark, and this project does not meet these definitions, and I believe this project does not need a COA." The Commission asked the staff liaison regarding the COA question. Urban Planner Ghaznawi stated: "As stated by the applicant, no alteration or demolitions will be done to the historic fabric of the landmark building. Therefore, as per the HPC Ordinance Section 7-9-8 the proposed addition does not meet the definition of alteration, construction, demolition or relocation of the historic landmark. This proposal is presented to the Commission as a Planned Development Application as per the HPC Ordinance Section 7-9-9 Zoning and subdivision actions affecting any designated historic landmark. The Commission's formal recommendations will be

submitted to the Plan Commission. However, the Historic Preservation Commission will make the final determination that if a Certificate of Appropriateness will be required.” The Commission stated that the Commission would like to consult with the Village Attorney regarding whether this project will need a COA, and asked Urban Planner Ghaznawi to consult with the Village Attorney and inform the Commission regarding the same. The Commission stated: “An addition project is usually covered by a Certificate of Appropriateness. In garage projects although the two structures are separate they are on the same property, and we always require a COA for demolition of the historic garages. In this project the two structures share elevators, there will be connections between two buildings and people can go from one building to another. Also, the proposed roof deck on roof of the landmark building is considered an alteration.”

Mr. Schiess requested the Commission to provide feedback regarding the current design. The Commission said: “If the community room on top floor is removed how much of the height will be reduced?” Mr. Schiess said: “Around 10 feet.” The Commission stated that the design of the façade is overwhelming and distracts from the primary building, and there is no echo of the primary building in the residential portion. The connection between the two buildings will make it one structure. The proposed height is too tall for that street. There is no real front entrance and people have to go through an 80 ft long alley that seems like a hidden entry. An entrance from the rear alley to the residential building could be interesting. Top of the art deco façade ends with a blank top which architecturally could be handled more differently. In other Art Deco buildings in the town like Medical Arts Building or Oak Leaves Building, top of façade ends more elegantly and are good design examples. The front elevation has verticality emphasis versus the side elevations have horizontal expression. A verticality emphasis on front and side elevations is recommended than having two different facades.

Mr. Schiess stated that there is a possibility that an elevator will be added to the parking, and this will add more parking spaces and the building height will be reduced another 10 feet.

The Commission liked the idea of the clock and lighting the facade, stated that another apartment building in Oak Park will bring more density to the town, and parking garage is incorporated well into the façade design. The Commission requested the applicant to provide the shadow studies, renderings and views from street level, and 360 view of the proposed building.