

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**  
**May 11, 2023 – Meeting Minutes**  
**Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

*Minutes are a summary only. A full recording of the meeting is available on Commission TV:  
<https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-commissions/commission-tv>*

**Roll Call**

Present: Chair Lou Garapolo and Commissioners Asha Andriana, David Bates, Sarah Doherty, Andrew Elders, Amy Peterson, and Mark Weiner  
Absent: Commissioners Monique Chase, Scot Mazur, and Nicole Napper  
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

**Agenda Approval**

Chair Garapolo said in response to the number of people present regarding 505 N Ridgeland Ave, he would like to move that item to the beginning of the agenda.

*Motion by Commissioner Weiner to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 7-0.*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

Commissioner Elders said at the bottom of page 1, the minutes say “second my” instead of “second by.” Planner Trexler said she would make this change.

*Motion by Commissioner Elders to approve the minutes for April 11, 2023. Second by Commissioner Bates. Motion approved 7-0.*

**Regular Agenda**

**A. Advisory Review: 505 N Ridgeland Ave (Ambrosia Homes):** Discussion of proposed new building at the corner of Ridgeland Ave and Chicago Ave (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item. He explained that this is an Advisory Review but that public comments will be permitted following the applicant’s presentation. Planner Trexler provided an overview of the project and noted the applicant attended the Architectural Review Committee on February 23, 2023.

Present on behalf of the project were: Tim Pomaville, the developer, and Dennis Kulak, the architect. Mr. Pomaville introduced himself and explained the changes made to the design since the Architectural Review Committee meeting. These include that the building is now proposed to be four stories with additional brick and recessed balconies. He said they are looking at yellow brick as

that's the main material in the commercial district near there. They were planning on Hardie siding but are open to LP Smartside as they understand the Commission likes that alternative. The windows on the first floor would be aluminum casing; the other windows are vinyl. There will be recessed cedar decks and a roof deck. The building still has 1-to-1, indoor parking. The setback on the north was increased to 17 feet and all gas and electrical meters have been hidden in the garage.

The Commission took public comments. Comments were received from eleven members of the public: Frank Lipo, Nicholas Sahm, Elise Dysart, Ken Kirsch, Bob Reisinger, Mark Maidlow, Mary Garit, Daniella Juarez, and Claudio Martinez. All comments were against the current design and many requested alterations. Comments included opposition to the scale, massing, and minimal setbacks, and concern about the building's shadows. Commenters asked for masonry cladding, landscaping to hide the parking, a commercial space on the first floor, stepping down the height where the building is adjacent to single-family dwellings, and increasing sidewalk setbacks.

The Commission began discussion. Commissioner Elders said he appreciates the changes. He recommended using entirely brick on the various towers of the façade. He said the siding should be the same color as the brick to reduce contrast; he recommended against color-blocking. Commissioner Elders recommended paired or triple openings and referenced the sketches provided by former HPC Chair Chris Payne.

Commissioner Doherty said the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District is known for the Prairie style and there are a lot of Victorian buildings. She asked what aesthetics were drawn from the historic district. Mr. Pomaville said they looked at building something smaller but it wouldn't work. He said the single-family homes are mostly siding and there's not a lot of cues on the commercial side. He said there are a lot of single-story buildings that are yellow brick. They reduced the building to under 45 feet, which is allowed by zoning. He said this is a very busy intersection and they think this use fits.

Chair Garapolo asked where the units previously on the fifth floor went and Mr. Pomaville explained that a lot of the units were large but they're now down to just 2-bedroom and 1-bedroom units. By doing that they were also able to add a roof deck, which they couldn't do based on building code previously.

Commissioner Elders said that former Chair Payne is very knowledgeable about the architectural aesthetics of the Village. He recommended taking Mr. Payne's recommendations, including banding at the top of the upper floor windows that suggests a cornice and using brick all the way up. He said there are more things that could be done to soften the impact of the massing, but they don't have purview over the zoning.

Commissioner Peterson said she sees the changes but don't think they're enough. One of the suggestions was to step down the north and west facades. She said there's still opportunities to make the height smaller and how it's sitting on the lot. Additional considerations in terms of the size are important as well.

Commissioner Weiner referenced the architectural styles of the neighborhood and said he doesn't see these in the design, he just sees the two buildings the developer has already built in Oak Park, which aren't historical in any way.

Chair Garapolo said the building doesn't meet the Guidelines in terms of scale, height, and width. The massing doesn't relate to the neighborhood. The sketches [from Chris Payne] help, but we're still dealing with a pretty large building. There is basically no setback. It's overwhelming. The

Guidelines talk about orienting on the principle street, which would be Ridgeland. Chair Garapolo said in terms of the Guidelines, we fall short. Architecturally, it doesn't relate to the other buildings on Ridgeland and Chicago. The façade proportions are a mixture of various openings, windows, doors, and balconies; there is no theory behind it. The materials are important. Maybe the brick should be from bottom to top. Wood is seen in the neighborhood. Chair Garapolo said he doesn't see a theory behind the design, and of ten Guidelines, nine have not been met.

- B. HPC2023-19: 614 N Ridgeland Ave (Jeffrey & Heather Nelson):** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a historic garage (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo introduced the item and Planner Trexler provided an overview.

Heather Nelson, the homeowner, was present. She said they've lived here for 20-some years and focused their attention on the house. Now they're focusing on the garage, which they haven't been able to use and she does not think is safe.

*Motion by Commissioner Bates to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Elders.*

Chair Garapolo asked if the architect who prepared the sheets is separate from the architect of the proposed garage. Ms. Nelson confirmed and said they've gotten proposals from Grosso Construction and Blue Star. They're waiting for demolition to be approved. Commissioner Bates asked if the footprint will be wider and Ms. Nelson confirmed.

Commissioner Elders said based on the photos, it's clear the garage is heaving pretty badly. He asked if it was this bad for a long time. Ms. Nelson said no, they just focused their efforts in other places.

Commissioner Doherty said she hates losing garages, but the photos and the architect's statement are compelling. She said the Commission often recommends keeping some historic materials, but the windows don't look salvageable. When designing a new garage, consider replicating some of this one in the design.

Commissioner Garapolo asked Ms. Nelson to submit a new version with a signature over the architect's stamp for the record. Ms. Nelson agreed to do so.

*Commissioner Elders made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Andriana. Motion approved 7-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Weiner, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: None*

- C. Public Hearing: HPC2023-13: 312 N East Ave (Brad Bare & Lucia Marker-Moore):** Certificate of Appropriateness for two dormer additions (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Chair Garapolo opened the public hearing and explained the process. Attorney Smith swore in the witnesses and Planner Trexler presented the staff report.

Lucia Marker-Moore and Brad Bare, the homeowners, were present, along with Amy Shouder from Elements Architecture. Ms. Marker-Moore made a presentation to the Commission. Her presentation included the following comments.

Ms. Marker-Moore said they receive no tax benefits for being in a historic district. The COA process is not applicable to their project and they should be proceeding with Advisory Review. For contributing resources, COAs are only applicable to demolitions and their project is an alteration. However, as a public hearing is their only means of appeal, they're here to see how the project meets the Guidelines. She explained their need for the additional space. She said the house at 100 years old is facing substantial maintenance projects, but they are prepared to take those on. Ms. Marker-Moore said it is clear the Commission did not understand the sight lines. The house welcomes the community from its public north side. It is positioned to the far south of the lot. She said the current dormer is mostly obscured from view. For COA reviews for non-landmark buildings, they look at the effect on the district. She said casual passers-by will not notice the change and the district as a whole is a community of dormers. The Guidelines cannot impose requirements or standards above the Ordinance. Flexibility is necessary to apply the Guidelines in context. She went through several of the specific Guidelines. She said the proposal checks all the boxes and the only open question is whether the HPC will permit a 10% variance in size.

The Chair accepted the exhibits into evidence. Staff said that no public comments were received.

Chair Garapolo said the roof in the back is extended in a way that does not match the rest of the roof and he concludes that's a dormer. He asked about that addition to the roof. Ms. Marker-Moore showed the rendering from the northwest and said it extends back but the changes are not visible from the public right-of-way. Chair Garapolo said he walked down the street and could see the back. The visual is misleading. Ms. Shouder, the architect, showed a photo and said it's very difficult to see the ridgeline. Commissioner Elders said the back hip is very visible. Ms. Marker-Moore asked which Guideline does not allow altering the ridgeline. Commissioner Elders said the same Guidelines they're already discussing.

Attorney Smith asked staff for additional information and Planner Trexler said the same Guidelines apply to the dormer where it extends back. She confirmed that the proposal has not changed since the previous review. Mr. Bare said he thought they were here to discuss the dormer size being 50% vs 60%. Ms. Marker-Moore said the house will have the same visual impact and property owners need to be allowed to make alterations. She said she values the Commission and the feedback, and they put together a thoughtful proposal.

Commissioner Doherty said looking at 50-60%, the first bullet point states any dormer should not cover more than 50% and if more than one dormer, it should not have the visual of adding a floor as viewed from the street. She said on page 14 you get a glimpse of what this will look like. It looks like a whole other floor. Ms. Marker-Moore said she will defer to Ms. Shouder, but it is below the peak of the roof. Ms. Shouder said this topic was raised before they even came to the Commission. Originally the dormer was at the height of the roof, but they lowered it as much as possible while maintaining the code-required height on the interior. There is a foot or 18" below the ridgeline where the dormer begins. She directed the Commission to page 12 and said it's 3'11" where the wing walls occur. They're adding the shed dormer to meet the code-required height.

Chair Garapolo closed the hearing and opened Commission deliberation.

Commissioner Elders said 60% is outside the Guidelines, but they only get the 50% when they include the roof at the back. The shed dormers that are visible from the street have almost flat

roofs, which gives the impression of an entire other floor. Commissioner Andriana agreed. Commissioner Elders said in terms of demolition, the jerkinhead gable on the south is a significant feature of this house and Roy Hotchkiss's work in Oak Park. If it was a smaller dormer and they wanted to expand it, that would be different. This house was not meant to read as a three-story house.

Chair Garapolo said the dormer should be compatible with the main roof and does not meet that Guideline. The dormer should not be more than 50% of the roof plane. He said they're playing games with mathematics. You can call it an addition or a dormer; when you take 50% of that, it's not met. Chair Garapolo said the exterior material is not compatible in his opinion because you don't see any wood shingles on the front of the house. He said the skylights should not be visible from the front, and they're at or maybe forward of the chimney. He said walking along East Ave, he could see that portion of the roof.

Commissioner Doherty said the north dormer is in keeping with the character of the district and exists at the neighboring "sister house" [to the north].

*Commissioner Weiner made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion denied 6-1.*

*AYE: Commissioner Weiner*

*NAY: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Peterson, and Chair Garapolo*

*Commissioner Elders made a motion to approve the draft Resolution denying the Certificate of Appropriateness with the understanding that staff will collaborate with the Chair in finalizing the document. Second by Commissioner Andriana.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Peterson, and Chair Garapolo*

*NAY: Commissioner Weiner*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Day in Our Village:** Chair Garapolo asked the Commissioners to volunteer for Day in Our Village.
- **Acting Chair:** Chair Garapolo said the Commission needs to select an Acting Chair. This person would run meetings when the Chair is not available. Commissioners should think about if they're interested or want to nominate someone. This will be on the agenda for June.

## **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Elders to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Andriana.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.