



## Agenda Item Summary

---

**File #:** ORD 18-367, **Version:** 1

---

### **Submitted By**

Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director

### **Reviewed By**

LKS

### **Agenda Item Title**

**Concur with the Historic Preservation Commission and Adopt an Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 ("Building Regulations"), Article 9 ("Historic Preservation"), Section 7-9-8 ("Designation of Historic Landmarks and Interior Historic Landmarks") of the Oak Park Village Code to Designate the Exterior of the House Located 400 North Kenilworth Avenue as an Historic Landmark**

### **Overview**

The property owner has applied for Local Oak Park Landmark status. The Historic Preservation Ordinance enables the Historic Preservation Commission to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Village Board through the adoption of an Ordinance approving a Resolution for landmark designation.

### **Recommendation**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval of the designation.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Village staff recommends acceptance of the Historic Preservation Commission findings and recommendations by Resolution and approval of an Ordinance designating 400 North Kenilworth Avenue as an Oak Park Historic Landmark.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The amount of \$250 (account #1001-46200-332-530662) has been budgeted for this item through the Historic Preservation Commission for a bronze plaque and is also the current amount requested.

### **Background**

The property at 400 N. Kenilworth Avenue is known as the John J. Schmidt House. The two-story frame house was constructed c. 1872 in the Italianate style of architecture. Architect Eben E. Roberts designed a side addition, new front porch and interior alterations in 1908. The significance of the Schmidt House lies in the way it thoroughly encapsulates Oak Park's long history, illustrates the progressiveness of Oak Park's turn-of-the-century citizens, and exemplifies Oak Park's broad contributions to American residential architecture. The original 1872 house typifies the early development of Oak Park because it was built in the Italianate style during the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire for a commuting Chicago manufacturing executive on land purchased from Joseph Kettlestrings. Like much of Oak Park, the original one-acre property was subdivided by its owner in the 1880s to make room for three more residences as the area transitioned from wide country

estates to a more populated suburban neighborhood.

Thanks to its 1908 expansion and interior renovation by local architect Eben Ezra Roberts, the Schmidt House illustrates how unusually progressive the citizens of Oak Park were, including Dr. David Hare, the home's sixth owner (1908-1952), who commissioned E.E. Roberts. Evidently, Dr. Hare at once appreciated the traditional European-inspired exterior while also desiring a modern interior in the style of many of his more radical Wright-designed neighbors. The harmonious integration of the Prairie style interior remodeling work within the predominantly Italianate exterior exemplifies E.E. Roberts's unique ability to make progressive architecture palatable to a wider audience. While less responsible for the direction of the Prairie style than his contemporaries such as Frank Lloyd Wright, architect E.E. Roberts had a greater impact on the spread of its ideas.

The property is significant for its association with owner John Schmidt and E. E. Roberts. The property meets the following criteria under section 7-9-5 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance "Criteria for Designation of Historic Landmarks and Interior Historic Landmarks":

- (1) Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park;
- (3) Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States;
- (5) Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen;
- (6) Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, craftsman, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

### **Alternatives**

The alternative would be to take no action or deny the recommendation for Historic Landmark designation. This would save the Village \$250 but would fail to provide long-term protection for what the Historic Preservation Commission considers to be an important historic resource within the Village.

### **Previous Board Action**

N/A.

### **Citizen Advisory Commission Action**

On February 12, 2018 the Historic Preservation Commission received a completed application to designate their property at 400 N. Kenilworth as an Oak Park Historic Landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission conducted a preliminary determination of eligibility on the completed nomination report on March 8, 2018 which determined that the property met at least one of the criteria for designation contained in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Commission held a public hearing on April 12, 2018. Legal Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the Wednesday Journal on March 28, 2018, and hearing notices were mailed to Village property owners within 250 feet of the site. The Commission approved the nomination as the Findings of Fact and recommended approval of the property at 400 North Kenilworth Avenue as an Oak Park Historic Landmark by the attached Resolution on April 12, 2018 as is mandated in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments**

N/A.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities**

N/A.

**Performance Management (MAP) Alignment**

A Governance Priority established for the Planning Division of the Community and Economic Development Department is Long Range Planning - Historic Preservation Plan.