



MEETING MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, May 11, 2021
7:00 PM
Via Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Beth Bodan, Ken Itle, Mark Simon, John Jacobs
Stuart Cohen, Suzi Reinhold, Jamie Morris, Sarah M. Dreler

Members Absent: Aleca Sullivan

Staff Present: C. Sterling; C. Ruiz

Presiding Member: M. Simon, Chair

Notes Taken By: C. Sterling

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

- A quorum of 8 members being present, Chair Simon called the meeting to order at 7:05pm

2. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES: Members participating electronically or by telephone

Action:

- A motion to suspend the rules passed 7-0

3. SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS

A. 2715 Hurd Avenue - Landmark Nomination - Public Hearing - 21PRES-0054

Andrew Nebel, resident, submits for nomination of the property commonly known as 2715 Hurd Avenue, for designation by ordinance as a Landmark.

The applicant nominates the property under the following criterion: 2; 3; 4, and; 6.

Public Hearing:

- A motion to open the public meeting passed unanimously.

Applicant Testimony

- The applicant Andrew Nebel presented testimony primarily focused on the importance of Larry Perkins as an Evanston resident, and his prominence as a regional and nationally acclaimed architect. The applicant nominated the property under three criteria: 2, 3, and 4.
- The applicant presented background information on the structure including the Church of Christ, Scientist, who created a building fund for a new church in 1929 due to capacity issues at their main location at Chicago Avenue and Lake Street
- In regards to criterion 2, and 4, the applicant presented testimony on the life and work of Evanston resident Larry Perkins including his work with Eliel and Eero Saarinen for the Crow Island School in Winnetka (1941), for which he would receive the American Institute of Architects 25 Year Award. The work Perkins undertook at Crow Island was unprecedented, where the form of the school was a result of the

internal function and needs of not only adults, but more importantly of the children. Perkins continued to have a successful career designing schools across the country until his retirement in the early 1970s.

- The applicant made a case that the work at Crow Island and collaboration between the Saarinins influenced the work at the subject property although it was later more accurately stated that the work at Crow Island and the work at the subject property were simply representative of Perkins commitment to design and his abilities as a modern architect, including his collaboration with other architects of the time exploring similar trends.
- The applicant went on to describe the life of Larry Perkins outside of his architectural legacy, including his being a native son of Evanston, and son of influential prairie school architect Dwight Perkins. The applicant noted many of Larrys civic achievements including being associated with many structures in Evanston, Chicago and the nation, member and chairman of the Plan Commission, member of the Cook County Building Codes Commission, and ambassador for Evanston.
- The applicant cited the late Mayor Joan Barr who called Perkins, “an individual and an institution in our City.” Perkins was voted Chicagoan of the Year in 1963, received the American Association of School Administrators Distinguished Service Award in 1975, authored two books, (*Schools* in 1949 and *Workplace for Learning* in 1957) and after his retirement continued his legacy by sharing his deep knowledge and desire to teach with future architects as a professor at the University of Illinois – Chicago, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and at the University of Arizona.
- At the time of his death, Evanston’s City Council honored Larry Perkins with resolution R-97 noting his significance to the city.
- Notable commissions of Perkins, Wheeler & Will include:
 1. Adlai Stevenson home in Libertyville
 2. First National Bank in Chicago
 3. The US Gypsum Building in Chicago
 4. Rockford Memorial Hospital in Rockford
 5. The Dawes School in Evanston
 6. Washington School in Evanston
 7. Chute Middle School in Evanston
 8. Notes School addition in Evanston
 9. First Congregational Church in Evanston (remodel)
 10. Methodist Building in Evanston
 11. Foster Field House in Evanston
 12. Phillip Will, Jr. Home in Evanston
 13. The Leonard Wall House in Evanston
 14. Skiles School Additions in Evanston
 15. ETHS Additions in Evanston
- The applicant stated that, It can be said, although debated, that no greater and more influential architect has called Evanston home than Larry Perkins. His firm went on to become the second largest in the world by 2019 with offices and commissions worldwide.
- In regards to Criterion #3, the applicant described the structure as a unique representation of mid-century and classical architectural influences, which are uniquely conveyed due to the condition of the church’s exterior design intentions and material applications. These include its original cruciform shape, what the applicant called a typical western church form, more aptly identified as the Gibbs church typology, and its ability to represent reverence through common and simplified materials – primarily brick, glass, and wood. The applicant supplied the following key features:

1. Greek key reliefs on panels
 2. Original wood windows
 3. Recessed bay windows
 4. 84-foot-tall steeple
 5. Acroteria on all corners and mirrored in the steeple
 6. Prominent columns and front entry
 7. Original inscriptions, and lighting fixtures
 8. Brick hue as treated with soda ash
- The applicant and consultant Susan Benjamin stated that the bricks are a “Chicago Common Brick” crafted from clay from the Chicago River.
 - The applicant continued noting that other significant individuals had contributed to the design of the church including Ragnar Benson Construction, LLC. The workmanship of Ragnar Benson has been maintained in excellent condition.
 - Additionally, the Landscape Architect for the project, Franz Lipp, completed a significant project at the subject property in 1968-1972 including the general site plan seen today. Unfortunately, other than some of the property’s larger ornamental trees, the landscaping has not been maintained to the same standard as that of the building.

Questions for the applicant

- Commissioners asked for the applicant to clarify the reasons for nominating for both criteria 2 and 4 and asked how he felt they differed
- The applicant provided some additional information regarding Perkins association with the church but they continued to be associated with him as designer of the structure. Commissioners agreed that criteria 2 was not intended for this purpose and rather for associations with an individual and a property that are outside of a formal design commission. The applicant agreed.
- Commissioners asked the applicant about the referenced style of the structure, specifically the mention of a neo-colonial style and where that came from.
 - The applicant stated that he had consulted with many individuals and they all had different takes on the style. Specific reference to a spare/modern neo-colonial style came from Cade Sterling of the Evanston planning division.

Property Owner Testimony

- A representative for the owner of record, Garry Shumaker, provided testimony against the nomination noting that the applicant had not discussed the nomination with the owner of record, that designating the structure a Landmark was unnecessary, and that the designation criteria were not met.
- Mr. Shumaker alleged that in regards to criterion 2 and 4, the work at 2715 Hurd Avenue was not significant in the formulation of Larry Perkins’s career or body of work as an architect who rather focused primarily on the design of educational resources, and that the church did not represent or expand on broader movements in religious architecture.
- In regards to criterion 3, Mr. Shumaker stated that the refined classicism of the church was not unique but was representative of larger design movements during the mid-20th Century including the International Style and later successions still popular today, but were not significant in their formulation or evolution.
- Additionally, Shumaker stated that the nominations reference to the Saarinens’ work at the Cranbrook Educational Community, and 2715 Hurd Avenue and any continued collaboration between Perkins and Saarinen which may have influenced the design of the church, was conjecture. Shumaker continued to argue that the structures common materials, forms, and refinement were influenced not by thematic design movements, but by a cost conscious Second Church of Christ, Scientist and their

preference to reduce emphasis on ornamentation, liturgical objects, and sacred spaces.

- The church is not unique in this respect with similar design treatments and philosophies for Church of Christ, Scientist structures constructed across the country. The design, materials, and means and methods of construction were common for both Larry Perkins, the architect, and Ragnar Benson, the contractor, and remain in common use today.
- Finally, Mr. Shumaker stated that the owners object to any additional oversight and the protections sought for the property and afforded through the Preservation Ordinance and that they were unnecessary and unwarranted.

Deliberation:

- Commissioners agreed after little debate that criteria 2 was not applicable.
- In regards to criteria 4, it is very clear and not possible to argue that the designer of the church was Larry Perkins of Perkins, Wheeler, and Will, and that the individual and firm were highly significant locally, regionally, and nationally. With little debate, it was agreed that criteria 4 was clearly met.
- In regards to criteria 3
 - Commissioners noted that the style of the structure was important but that it had larger significance than the style itself, as it relates to the general typology and archetype of the structure and its associations with the Gibbs church of St. Martin in England which was imported to American in the 18th century and became very prominent.
 - Commissioners noted that the Perkins example of this easily recognizable typology may be the best they had ever seen and was highly significant as a modern representation of traditional classical form. The church is certainly one of a kind in Evanston, there is nothing like it elsewhere, but it is also likely a very rare example regionally and potentially nationally as an excellent modern neo-colonial Gibbs typology.
 - Commissioners noted that this was not a mistake, Perkins was a highly influential and trained architect who knew what he was doing. The form, use of vernacular materials, and application of spare ornamentation is purposeful, and intentional and the resulting composition is outstanding.
 - Commissioners mentioned some of the unusual and key features, including that the ornamentation of traditional classicism was not entirely removed but applied strategically and sparingly, the prominent Greek Key Motifs, and prominent temple front brick piers with interior vertical cladding resembling entryways or portals.
 - The integrity of the building was found to be excellent and the condition remarkable with nearly all original features intact and unaltered.

Action:

- The Commission made a unanimous determination upon the testimony and evidence provided that the nominated Landmark met criterion 3 and 4 for designation by ordinance. A motion to close the public hearing passed unanimously initiating proceedings under Code section 2-8-5 (E). The Commission's formal report and resolution shall be completed and adopted within 70 days.

Following action, commissioners and the staff liaison discussed next steps in the process, the ability to take action as late as the July meeting. Additional concerns were discussed related to whether it was appropriate or not to speculate what action City Council may take in regards to perceived concerns that the nomination was moving forward without owner consent. The staff liaison noted that it is good that an ordinance does not have owner

consent [as it only discourages otherwise worthy properties from remaining threatened and unprotected as was the case with 2715 Hurd], but that not having owner consent presented unique challenges as well that will need to be addressed in the Commissions Report.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2119 Sherman Avenue - Northeast Historic District - 21PRES-0053

Kirk Alexakos, architect, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a covered front porch, two-story rear addition, and alteration of the existing cladding from vinyl to wood on the primary elevation and fiber-cement on secondary elevations.

Applicable standards: Alteration [1-10]; and, Construction [1-15]

- The applicant provided information on the proposed scope of work including removal of the vinyl siding, wood siding on the front elevation and fiber-cement elsewhere, the new front porch, and rear addition.
- Commissioners applauded the front elevation treatment although it was noted that the porch would likely not look exactly like the rendering
- Commissioners questioned the transition of materials for the cladding and how the fiber-cement siding would meet the wood siding.
 - The applicant stated that the wood siding and fiber-cement siding would be mitered at the corners and that the fiber-cement siding would be ripped to meet the exposure of the wood siding which matches the original exposure found beneath the vinyl
- Commissioners questioned the transition between the original structure and the rear addition and suggested that the brick water table continue across and around the rear addition to create a more harmonious composition and transition
 - The applicant agreed
- Commissioners had concern with the rear additions roof form, specifically the “wings” on either side of the balcony which didn’t relate to the existing or any neighboring structure. It was suggested that these be removed and the roof form and transition areas simplified. A flat roof with balustrade.
 - The applicant stated this was discussed and shared some alternative plans for the rear addition which included something similar to what was suggested.

Action: A motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions passed 5-2. Conditions included matching the existing siding exposure for the wood and fiber cement, as well as continuing the brick water table.

B. 1005 Forest Avenue - Lakeshore Historic District - 21PRES-0057

Sam Kang, architect, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter all elevations, replacing original wood true-divided lite double-hung windows with aluminum clad wood simulated divided lite windows of similar profile and lite configuration; replacement exterior doors; removal of two windows and one door, and; construction of a new portico and entry door at the front elevation.

Applicable standards: Alteration [1-10]; and, Construction [1-15]

- The applicant provided a brief introduction on the project including the history of the structure, when it was significantly altered, and the current condition, specifically for the windows which necessitate the need for replacement. The new front porch is intended to create a sense of entry which hasn’t existed previously as the home was divided from its other half to the south and the entrance was originally located at the side.
- Commissioners questioned the window division at the front elevation and why it didn’t match existing or the other division.

- Applicant stated it was due to the size of the window but that it could be changed to match existing.
- Commissioner asked about the rear doorway and lite division at the transom ultimately determining that it wasn't necessary and it could remain as presented.
- It was suggested that the paneling below the front facing window adjacent to the main entrance be removed to match the existing front elevation first floor windows
 - This was agreed to
- On the south elevation, there was a single window on the second floor with no lite division.
 - Applicant noted this was a drafting error and it would match the rest of the proposed replacements
- Commissioners discussed the front porch and column spacing, noting that it was well done and the architects work was applauded.

Action: A motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions passed 7-0. Conditions included all double-hung window to be 6 over 6 lite division to match existing in general appearance.

C. 1112 Asbury Avenue - Ridge Historic District - Landmark - 21PRES-0057

Blake Galler and Daniel Nolan, owners of record, apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a detached two-car garage accessible from the alley.

Applicable standards: Construction [1-5, 7, 8, 10-13]

- The applicant presented a brief introduction on the project including the need for a garage, its placement relative to the principle structure, and the proposed materials and fenestration.
- Commissioners asked about the fiber-cement cladding and how the corners would be treated.
 - Applicant stated they weren't certain but were open to suggestions.
 - Commissioners noted that corner boards were most common for hardie board siding and the applicant agreed to this transition
- Commissioners discussed the fenestration on the east elevation facing the principle structure and noted the apparent attempt to mimic qualities of the home. It was suggested that the window's receive similar joinery to the homes fenestration.
 - Applicant agreed to look into this
- Commissioners discussed the placement of the garage in relation to the properties trees.
 - Applicant stated they were trying to save two significant trees, and that is why the garage was sited where it was instead of in one of the corners.

Action: A motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness as presented passed 7-0.

D. 1206 Hinman Avenue – Lakeshore Historic District – 21PRES-0054

Nathan Kipnis, architect, applies for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of two detached alley-accessible garages and construction of a two-story detached Accessory Dwelling Unit with first floor alley-accessible parking and second-floor living space.

Applicable standards: Construction [1-5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14]; and, Demolition [1-5]

- The applicant presented a brief introduction of the proposal, the demolition of two detached garages in poor condition, and construction of an ADU with similar materiality to the existing principle structure which recently received approval from the commission.

- Commissioners asked about the proposed cladding and if it would match the principle structure.
 - Applicant stated it would match the approved hardieboard exposure of the principle structure. (Going from stucco to fiber cement)
- Commissioners asked about the proposed dormers and expressed concern with their form and lack of relation to the principle structure. This was debated and ultimately determined that the ADU did not need to match the home exactly and was ok as presented
- Commissioners expressed some concern with the proposed balconies on either side of the ADU
 - The applicant addressed the reasoning for these features as related to the interior floor plan
 - After limited debate, it was agreed that the balconies were ok as presented.
- Commissioners addressed the letter of support from the neighboring property.

Action: A motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness as presented passed 7-0

E. 1027 Judson Avenue – Lakeshore Historic District – 21PRES-0055

Kevin Panek, architect, applies for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a rear addition and rear wood deck and pergola, construction of a two-and-one-half story addition at the east, alley-facing elevation, and alteration of the front porch roofing from asphalt shingles to standing seam-metal, and alteration of the front porch columns.

Applicable standards: Alteration [1-10]; and, Construction [1-15]

- The applicant presented the proposal and the need for updates and expansion of the existing home to fit the needs of the new owners and their family.
- Commissioners had concern with the material for the siding (vinyl)
- Commissioners expressed concern with the drawings, specifically the roof plan which was difficult to understand without accurate 3D renderings.
 - The applicant noted that the renderings were not updated after changes were made but the elevations had been changed and were accurate
 - The staff liaison stated that changed were required due to zoning issues and non-compliance with the definition of a third story
- Commissioners debated the roof form and associated drawings for some time. Concern was expressed with the roof form, raising of the roof to be higher than the principle structures peak, as well as varying roof forms with awkward transitions.
- Commissioners stated that the composition at the rear of the home was being directed not by the preservation standards, but by a desire to maximize space while maintaining zoning compliance. It looks like what it is.
- Commissioner stated concern with the unsympathetic mass of the rear addition, non-contextual fenestration, and additions insubordination to the principle structure.
- The applicant noted that the issues were related to the basement finished floor level and there were not many good alternatives. The applicant noted that what is proposed is not dissimilar to the existing rear-addition, although what is existing is not sympathetic in form or mass either.
- Commissioners agreed it was a difficult design challenge and the most likely solution may be complete removal of the rear addition as starting over instead of trying to modify something that already wasn't working well.
- The applicant asked for direct input on next steps
 - Commissioners gave specific feedback on standards of concern for new construction including standards 1-4; 7; 8; and, 10
 - The Commission stated it was difficult to give specific feedback and they are best suited to make comments on something once its proposed, not to design

the building for the applicant. The Commission offered to setup a subset of 2-3 Commissioners to review a revised plan and give more concrete feedback.

- This was agreed to by the applicant.

Action: A motion to continue the case to the subsequent meeting (June 8), passed 7-0

5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of April 13, 2021

Action: A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented passed 6-0 with 1 abstention.

6. DISCUSSION

Staff proposes to revise Commission Rules to implement a vote to conduct meeting business past 11:00 PM.

No action taken

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30pm