



MEETING MINUTES

PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

5:30 P.M. Room 2404

Members Present: Carl Klein, Sarah Dreller, Thomas Ahleman, Stuart Cohen, Lesa Rizzolo
Charles Smith, Amanda Ziehm

Members Absent: Joshua Bowes-Carlson, Matthew Johnson, Beth Bodan

Staff Present: Cade W. Sterling

Presiding Member: Sarah Dreller, Chair

Minutes Taken by: Cade W. Sterling

DISCUSSION 5:30 PM START

Envision Evanston 2045 Discussion

Representatives from HDR Inc. & McAdams will facilitate a discussion regarding Envision Evanston 2045.

- A representative and project manager from HDR Inc. provided an overview of planning activities to date which included finalizing phase 1 engagement discovery of major themes and concerns, and creation of a vision statement and preliminary goal statements.
- Significant themes related to historic preservation included:
 - Preservation of Community Character, and
 - Arts, Culture, and Vibrant Public Spaces
- Significant concerns that the community identified related to historic preservation include:
 - Developments that clash with Evanstons historic and cultural character, and
 - The decline of downtown
- Desires for the future that the community identified related to historic preservation include:
 - Integration of arts and culture

- Affordable housing
- A diversity of housing
- Prioritizing historic preservation
- The proposed vision statement was shared and Commissioners offered the following comments
 - The language related to arts and culture is too passive, specifically the word “celebrate”, which assumes a kind of stasis to arts and culture. Arts and culture should be not only celebrated but actively integrated into a variety of land use and policy decisions. Embracing, advancing, prioritizing, and integrating arts and culture into decision making is ongoing and important work. In order to realistically and adequately advance that work, Arts and Culture needs to be meaningfully invested in, prioritized, and elevated and requires concrete strategies for advancement.
 - The word, “we” should be further defined. Who is we? Who is advancing this work and who is this plan and vision for? Instead of just we, this could include residents young and old, city government, local school districts, northwestern university and other institutional and partner organizations, those who live in or work in Evanston, those with past connections to Evanston, etc.
 - It was suggested that as a principal policy document for City decision making and policy, there should be additional reference within the vision statement to creating an institutional framework within local government but also across other partners that is capable of realistically advancing this vision and being held accountable to it.
- Proposed goal statements were reviewed, initially the flow chart identifying how the public engagement themes. These were informed by the public's primary concerns and desires which informed the vision statement and corresponding goal statements.
 - Commissioners were concerned that the predominant engagement themes, desires, and concerns related to historic preservation that were reviewed earlier were not elevated similarly to the others. Primarily the theme, “preservation of community character”, a desire to “prioritize historic preservation” as well as a concern that, “new developments clash with Evanston's historic and cultural character” were the only items that didn't directly translate into a goal. This might be resolved by rewording the goal for arts and culture, which should be more active than, “celebrate” and should directly reference and include historic preservation. An example provided was to prioritize, or strengthen arts, culture, and historic preservation.
- Specific goal statements were reviewed one at a time with associated comments by the Commission.
- **Foster a healthy community**
 - The word, “strive” is too passive for a goal or value statement. Instead, try, “we are a vibrant, inclusive community...”

- The bullet related to, “enhancing the aesthetics of the built environment through...” was discussed. Specifically, the consultant was encouraged to modify this goal to expand beyond the aesthetic considerations of the built environment. The aesthetic contributions and beauty of the built environment is an important consideration, but if the goal is to create a built environment that is vibrant, inclusive, and inspiring, it should include additional complexity.
- Generally, the Commissioners felt the goals and the language associated with them was shallower than expected, with the concern being that if the language and terminology within the goals are shallow or static, that they will inform policy and initiatives that are similarly flawed.
- People are attached to built environments that have rich complexity in character, design, visual interest and aesthetic intrigue, human scaled volumes and human scaled sense of enclosure, psychological attachment to place through its continued evolution and stewardship, small and long-standing businesses, a richness in sensory experience, landscaping, shade and street trees, lighting, gathering spaces, public art.
- Vibrant and inspiring places are often those that aren’t new. A study by the National Trust was suggested as reference, “older, smaller, better”. Part of fostering a healthy community and creating vibrant and inspiring places is identifying, protecting, adapting, and actively managing the places that already exist that meet those goals.
- **Establish a Strong Local Economy**
 - The City’s smaller neighborhood and human-scaled business districts were provided as examples of existing human-scaled and vibrant places including Church and Dodge, Greenwood, the Main Dempster Mile, Noyes Street, Foster Street, and Central Street which the community seems more attached to, which have lower rent structures and many long-standing and legacy businesses, and which are well suited for more preservation-based economic development strategies.
 - The main-street model through the National Trust was provided as a good reference point.
 - Commissioners noted that in conversations they’ve had, many in the community have a preference for these neighborhood and human-scaled environments vs the downtown and the decline of the downtown is multi-symptomed but intimately connected to a decline in its human-scaled, traditional, and unique built fabric. If the downtown is prioritized for revitalization, it should start by identifying the remaining environments within it that are not expendable and should be retained and preserved as a starting place for a more vibrant future.
 - It is critically important through this process to identify locations where growth should and can occur and where it should not. Development and re-development occurs in places that are seen as expendable or which are seen as incapable or underutilized in meeting our goals as a

community, but there are many places that are not expendable and are largely irreplaceable and deeply connected to our collective memory of Evanston and its identity.

- The downtown has remade itself many times over in efforts to compete with various market demands and trends. It was a significant regional shopping destination, then it was headquarters city, then it was the research park theory, etc. In the newest remaking, it should look to its past for a more inspiring future.
- **Protect natural resources**
 - Commissioners expressed that the goals listed were noble but pushed for increased action oriented language, specifically that existing natural areas and open spaces should be proactively identified and meaningfully protected and that this identification and protection needs to happen in the near term in order for these spaces to not only remain, but be ecologically rich in 2045.
 - Additional existing city-owned and non-city owned natural areas and open spaces, including parks should be considered for landmark designation.
- **Celebrate arts and culture**
 - The language is too soft within the goal statement. We shouldn't aim to honor our history, we will honor our history.
 - The specific language within the second bullet point regarding preserving and restoring historic buildings should be modified. These are technical terms that have significant meaning, and the language use doesn't reflect the desire of the Commission to allow for our built heritage to evolve in a compatible way, for it to be used and continually adapted. These are spaces for people to occupy and live in, to evolve and include our present day history so it can be represented and remembered in the future.
 - It is recommended that the language be changed to, "protecting, adapting, and rehabilitating historic buildings..."
 - Include a broader definition of historic preservation that goes beyond built heritage.
 - Public art does not need to be limited to traditionally defined public spaces such as parks and civic buildings. Public art and culturally expressions should be integrated into and be a part of the broader built and natural environments to be shared, explored, and experienced in a variety of ways including during routine activities and within unexpected locations which often have the highest impact.
 - Public art should also be purposeful in its placement and consider its context and contextual design or natural vocabularies in that decision making.
- **Increasing Housing Diversity**
 - Commissioners expressed a desire for more integration between historic preservation and its role in advancing affordability, specifically

preservation or more vernacular housing typologies which may exist as naturally occurring affordable housing.

- Commissioners suggested that the consultant review initiatives within the Preserve 2040 Plan related to this integration as well as preservations role in advancing climate resiliency.
- Commissioners noted that this section makes heavy reference to development, and understandably so. However, it is important to understand that within a built out community such as Evanston, development comes at the expense of something. That something is lost in order to build something new. It is imperative then to understand which areas are not expendable, where new development is appropriate, and where it is not.
- Commissioners suggested that the diversity of housing typologies within the City's historic districts that pre-date zoning controls can serve as a template for future compatibility.
- Commissioners asked about the school system and noted it would be important to make an effort to integrate that into the planning process. The school system is often one of the first things a family looks at when choosing to live in a community and they are important neighborhood and community institutions that have a direct effect on quality of life.
- Commissioners further noted that the quality of school architecture in Evanston is significant and with the potential for future school closures, adapting those structures and preserving their artistic value and ability to communicate their past will be critical and can help build additional residential density in neighborhoods through their adaptive use.

OLD BUSINESS 7:00 PM START

24PRES-0068 - 724 Colfax Street - Northeast Historic District

Todd Israel, architect and applicant on behalf of the homeowner, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a wood deck and stair and construct a single-story addition and new deck at the homes rear volume.

Case withdrawn at the applicants request. Pending re-application for the September 10 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

24PRES-0085 - 1036 Forest Avenue - Lakeshore Historic District

Omar Gutierrez, architect and applicant on behalf of the property owner, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new two-and-one-half story single-family home and detached alley-accessible garage on a vacant lot.

Applicable Standards: Construction [1-16]

- Omar Gutierrez, provided a detailed overview of the proposal and a summary of the applicable standards and how the new construction is visually compatible with the surrounding block, which contains a great variety in form, materiality, and other design details and styles. The intention is to provide new construction that is sympathetic to its historic contexts, but also reads as an authentic architectural expression that embraces the technologies, materials, and design influences of today.
- Commissioners asked about the placement of the home on the lot, and whether it would be possible to move the home further west and north so that it has a larger front-yard setback and south interior side-yard setback.
- The applicant explained that they had considered this, and had already moved the entrance door to the north to provide additional privacy to the home to the south. Bringing the home further forward on the lot was done intentionally to create an illusion of increased height in order to find more compatibility with the mass and scale of the home to the south.
- The Commission discussed the unique opportunity to move the home as far north as possible to create a more compatible relationship between the structure to the south and the proposed home. This is only possible since the home to the north is setback so far from its southern lot line.
- Commissioners discussed the importance of moving the home to the west to align the front porch setback of the proposed home and the home to the south. It was acknowledged that there was already an effort to align details of the proposed porch to the one to the south including its eave line, but the setback should also align.
- Commissioners discussed the importance of archaeological resources, and a higher degree for inadvertent discovery since the majority of the lot has not been built on previously. The applicant agreed and acknowledged the need to sensitivity in approach during excavation.
- Commissioners discussed the proposed solar array, noting that it aligned with the Commissions solar guidelines and seemed compatible considering the home is new construction.
- The applicant noted that the solar array was positioned in order to eliminate glare into the adjoining structure to the south.
- Commissioners discussed the proposed roofing material, noting there is some precedent within the district for a standing seam metal roof, and that given the home is new construction, the material seemed appropriate.
- Commissioners noted the lack of visual relief on the side elevations of the home, and that given the large side setbacks that would occur, this would be even more apparent and asked if the applicant would consider some additional features to provide more articulation both at the south and north wall and roof planes in order to further break down the scale of the home and create more compatible relationships of solids to voids.
- **Public Comment**
 - Members of the public provided testimony regarding the proposal, with the majority of those commenting having concern with the lack of articulation and relief on the side wall and roof planes, the positioning

of the home on the lot relative to adjoining lots, particularly the south and east setbacks, the material choice for the roof, and the solar installation.

- **Deliberation**

- Commissioners discussed the materiality of the home, finding that the use of materials was appropriate for new construction, including the standing seam metal roof.
- Commissioners discussed the positioning of the home on the lot, noting a need to move the home as far north as possible, and at a minimum further west so that the front porch would align with the home to the south.
- Commissioners discussed the lack of visual relief and articulation at the homes side wall and roof planes. With the new positioning of the home, relief at the north elevation would be difficult as it would trigger zoning variations. However, there would now be more room to propose a bay or similar feature at the homes south elevation which is also more closely visually related with a landmark home. Additional visual relief should be explored for the roof lines, such as dormers, or other projecting features that break up the single plane of metal roofing.
- Commissioners discussed the proposed windows, their proportions, and more historically accurate moulding profiles. Specifically, whether the double windows ganged closely together was appropriate, was left undecided, with some seeing a need for more accurate window proportions with mouldings between windows, while others noted that was just a reflection of window technology at the time, requiring weight pockets that made it impossible to abut two windows. Since that's no longer needed now, and since this is a new home, its windows should appear authentic and utilize the technology we have today while remaining compatible in other visual aspects.
- Commissioners discussed the directional expression and overall proportions and massing of the home, noting that a more narrow and taller home may be more compatible with the homes to which is visually related, but the Commission also noted the difficulty of achieving this without triggering a variation for height, or drastically altering the interior layout and program.
- Commissioners discussed continuing the case to allow the applicant time to explore the suggested changes and come back in September, with the majority of Commissioners seeing the necessary changes being clearer than typical, and due to the August recess, seeing an approval with conditions as appropriate. Other Commissioner suggested it would be nice to see the changes before approving it, and suggested a compromise where an administrative review could take place.

- The Commission asked the applicant if they agreed with this approach and if they were willing to make the suggest changes in order to meet the standards identified.
- The applicant stated that they did, and would work with staff to come up with a revised submission for review by a subset of the Commission.
- Commissioners Rizzolo, Ahleman, and Cohen volunteered.
- A motion to approve with conditions carried on a vote of 7-0. Conditions include:
 - The applicant shall revise the proposal to be compatible with Standards for Construction 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8. The applicant shall consider the following and resubmit drawings for administrative review in consultation with a subset of the Commission (Ahleman, Cohen, and Rizzolo). The following shall be considered:
 - Positioning the home further west so that the front-porch aligns with the front porch of the home immediately south to which it is visually related.
 - Positioning the home further north to create a compatible relationship of spacing of structures on the street.
 - Alter the proportion of width to height of the homes volume to be compatible with the proportions of similarly styled homes to which the project is visually related.
 - Study the proportion of openings and associated trim and moulding profiles to be compatible with similarly styled homes to which the project is visually related.
 - Study ways to provide additional visual relief and articulation at the homes north and south roof planes, and north and south facades in order to be compatible with directional expression of facades, roof shapes, rhythm of projections on structures to which the home is visually related.

24PRES-0086 - 711 Michigan Avenue - Lakeshore Historic District

DeBaker Design Group, architect and applicant on behalf of the homeowner, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an attached deck at the homes rear elevation, and alter the homes rear volume by constructing a single-story addition within the existing rear-yard.

Applicable Standards: Alteration [1-10]; and Construction [1-15].

- Beth DeBaker, provided a detailed overview of the proposal including the interior modifications which were driving the project, as well as an approach which was meant to be more sensitive to the existing rear volume of the home and the second-story sunroom windows.

- Commissioners asked about the proposed roof form and why it was selected versus a more traditional addition. What is proposed has the appearance of a semi-attached cottage that reads independently from the main house.
- The applicant noted the significant challenge of trying to retain the majority of the rear elevations character defining features including the second-story sunroom windows atop the proposed addition. Exploration of a hipped roof or cross gable that connected more directly with the homes rear elevation, would have required additional alterations to the homes pattern of fenestration.
- Commissioners applauded the proposed interior layout and understood the need for the addition. They also applauded the design of the addition if it were independent, including the pattern of fenestration, and treatment at the east elevation. However, as an addition to the home, the roof form is problematic in that it slopes back toward the home and creates a non-compatible relationship between the two structures – an appearance of the two masses colliding into one another. If the addition were setback further from the home, and had a small breezeway or other means of connection, it may be more effective, but as proposed it creates a very uncomfortable relationship.
- Commissioners asked about the use of materials and material transition at the point where the addition connects to the home.
- The applicant stated there were two separate materials, brick and wood, all in the same plane. The thought was to create some transition to brick where the addition contacts the brick of the original home, but read independently elsewhere.
- The Commission noted that material changes in the same plane is problematic in terms of a compatible relationship of materials and textures, and it isn't clear how the transition actually occurs. The Commission suggested maintaining the same material across the wall plane, or creating differentiation between the two volumes, pushing the brick mass inward or outward ~1' to create a more natural transition.
- The Commission also noted the large wall planes in the gable ends with the same material and asked that the applicant explore changing the material in the gable end to create additional visual relief and articulation and break down the scale of those surfaces.
- The Commission debated continuing the case to allow the architect to study the feedback and present a more sympathetic and compatible solution vs approving with conditions.
- The majority of Commissioners agreed that unlike the previous case, the direction to find compatibility is not as clear, and leaves a lot of room for variation in approach. As such, the case should come back to the Commission for review at a later date.
- Commissioners noted that the addition is to the rear of the home, with the majority of it only visible from the alley, while the previous proposal was for new construction that was very visible from the street.

- The majority of Commissioners expressed that the addition is also very visible from the sides, and as an addition to an existing, contributing structure with excellent integrity, additional sensitivity in approach is warranted above and beyond new free standing construction which has more room for authentic expression.
- A motion to continue in order to further study a compatible solution that addresses Standard for Construction 8, Roof Shapes, as well as Standard for Construction 7, Relationship of Materials and Textures, carried on a vote of 7-0.

24PRES-0087 - 2115 Sherman Avenue - Northeast Historic District

Kiril Mirintchev, architect and applicant on behalf of the homeowner, submits for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the homes attached multi-level stair and deck at the side and rear elevations, construct a new single-level attached deck and swimming pool at the homes side and rear volumes, alter the homes rear elevation fenestration, and enclose an existing screen porch with rooftop deck and railing.

Applicable Standards: Demolition [1-5]; Alteration [1-10]; & Construction [1-15]

- Kiril Mirintchev, applicant, provided a detailed overview of the proposal, including the need for a pool to accommodate the needs of the homeowners child and that those needs require visibility from the home as well as ease of access rather than an in-ground pool in the rear-yard. The materials, detailing, and profiles will match those on the existing home.
- The sunroom is converted to a mudroom with storage, with a rooftop accessible from the second floor.
- Commissioners asked about the stair complex at the side elevation.
- The applicant said he wasn't sure when it was installed, but it is not operable currently and is not required by code for the full third story of the home. It would be removed and the south elevation would be repaired to match its original condition.
- Commissioners agreed that the proposal, with the stair complex removed, is a significant improvement to the homes architectural integrity.
- Commissioners asked about the windows on the new mudroom.
- The applicant noted that the windows act as clerestory windows allowing light into the space atop built-in cabinets.
- Commissioners identified some smaller fixed or casement windows on the existing home, and agreed the fenestration was compatible.
- **Public Comment:**
 - The neighbors in a townhome to the south spoke in opposition to the proposal, specifically to the request for minor variation to place the pool partially in the side-yard and resulting noise impacting their quality of life.
- The applicant noted that the location of the pool makes the most sense in terms of efficient use of the lot as well as providing the access and visibility needs for the homeowners child who has special needs. Moving the pool

in a compliant location, ~10' to the east, where it would be compliant would create significant logistical challenges and a design less compatible with the home. An in-ground pool in the rear-yard wouldn't meet the needs of the homeowner due to access limitations and it would take away a lot of useable green space.

- Commissioners asked about relocating the pool to the north side of the mudroom.
- The applicant noted there is a basement stair in that location which prevents that, as well as it not being ideal to have a north facing exposure for the pool, and that it would be much closer to the north lot line than currently proposed at the south elevation in a large side-yard that is used sparingly.
- Commissioners asked about the large deck in the side-yard and whether that new mass and volume being introduced was compatible. The majority of Commissioners agreed that due to the large side-yard, and the deck being pushed at the rear volume of the home, it would likely not be as visible as it reads in the elevation drawings, and is compatible in its design and use of materials.
- The applicant stated that the railing as well as the railing atop the mudroom would match the condition of the homes original front-porch railing system.
- Commissioners noted that the elevation drawings are a little misleading and due to the length of the railing segments and materials used, additional intermediate posts would be required to support itself.
- A motion to approve with conditions carried on a vote of 7-0. Conditions included:
 - The applicant shall provide detailed drawings and a section of the proposed railing system for review and administrative approval.
- The Commission deferred review of the proposed zoning variation to the Zoning Administrator without comment, seeing no material connection between the request and historic preservation.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of June 11, 2024

- Approved with an amendment by Commissioner Ziehm to include the standards found not to be compatible by the dissenting Commissioners in regards to Case 24PRES-0046

ADJOURNMENT

Order & Agenda Items are subject to change. Information about the Preservation Commission is available at www.cityofevanston.org/preservation: Preservation Commission Questions can be directed to Cade W. Sterling at 847-448-8231 or at csterling@cityofevanston.org The city is committed to ensuring accessibility for all citizens; if an accommodation is needed to participate in this meeting, please contact the Planning and Zoning Division at (847-448-8687) 48 hours in advance so that arrangements can be made for the accommodation if possible.

