MEETING MINUTES
EVANSTON PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 17, 2017
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2404
7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Elliott Dudnik, Ken Itle, Julie Hacker Jamie Morris, Suzi Reinhold, Mark Simon, Karl Vogel, and Diane Williams

Members Absent: Robert Bady, Sally Riessen Hunt, and Tim Schmitt,

Staff Present: Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Division Manager; Carlos Ruiz, Senior Planner/Preservation Coordinator, and Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney II.

Presiding Member: Diane Williams, Chair

CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm with a quorum present.

OLD BUSINESS

A. 2014 Orrington Av. (NEHD) – Dov Hillel Klein, applicant. Exterior remodeling for ADA accessibility; partial 3rd floor/attic addition to accommodate needed spaces; updated front and rear facades; new elevator for ADA accessibility. Requires Zoning Variations: 6-8-2-4 special use permit for a religious institution required due to increase in building/impact. 6-8-2-9-A Maximum height permitted is 35’ to peak or 2.5 stories, whichever is less. Proposed height 35’ to peak of roof (excluding rear parapet and elevator overrun). However, knee-wall exceeds 3’ and therefore constitutes a full 3rd story. 6-18-3 Exterior knee-walls shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. 6-8-2-8-B-3 15’ interior side yard setbacks required for non-residential structure. Propose 5.4’ north interior side yard setback and 9.5’ south interior side yard setback for additions, front porch, rear balcony. 6-4-1-9-A-3 Block average's front yard setback (to house facades, not porches) is 34’ and existing setback is 27.3’. Proposed front yard setback 27.3’ (extending higher than existing). 6-4-1-9-B Eaves may extend 10% into a setback or a minimum of 6”. Front porch eave setback = 27.6’. Proposed front porch eave setback is 24.8’. Applicable standards: [Alteration] 1-10; [Construction] 1-16; [Demolition] 1-5; [Zoning Variation] A and C.

Rabbi Dov Hillel Klein and Kiril Mirintchev, architect, presented the application. Rabbi Klein said that 2014 Orrington is a building of wordship, and as such it can only be in a residential area. It operates under a zoning variance, with approval of City Council, and a Court order that was challenged, but it was upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1983. The synagogue is one of several non-conforming structures in one block radius. The goal is to upgrade the facility and how the building looks in order
to increase the value of the neighborhood, enhance to its life, and make the facility accessible and safe. Rabbi Klein said they want to be sensitive and extremely caring to their neighbors. They are willing to create a balance and made their facility look and appear more residential.

Rabbi Klein said the Lakeshore Historic District (2012 Survey) shows there is a distinction between residential, non-residential architecture, and religious facilities. There are seven religious facilities in the district, and five of them are historic. Clearly in 2012 there was an understanding that religious facilities should not be treated like residential facilities.

The proposed design takes elements from the neighborhood and fits right in. Jewish law requires a synagogue to have windows. Other religious centers including other synagogues in Evanston are filled with windows. Rabbi Klein showed examples of other religious and residential buildings in the Northeast Evanston Historic District with fairly amount of windows.

Rabbi Klein said based on the Commission’s and the neighbors’ comments the revised design is unique, it blends with the nature of the block and they will be changing the synagogue from one that does not conform into one that will live up to the Northeast Evanston Historic District.

Kiril Mirintchev listed the comments from the Commission as follows:
  • The bulkiness of the top floor as compared to the bottom floor.
  • The use of brick material on the sides of the dormer.
  • The large openings of the windows, not being proportionally scaled towards the rhythm of openings and solids parts of walls in the neighboring buildings.
  • The whole façade is too complicated.

Kiril Mirintchev described the revisions to the front facade as follows:
  • The roof is the same; the width of the dormer is reduced by a foot by removing the brick pilasters, and replacing them with simple framed walls with stucco finish.
  • The sloped roof behind the dormer has been removed, so now one can see a straight horizontal line, bringing more unity to the front elevation.
  • With a slimmer dormer, the roof is steeper. It looks more elegant rather than bulky.
  • More solid parts were added to the dormer windows with a different rhythm. Now it resembles the proportions of the windows on two houses on the block.
  • The revisions allow the front façade to merge or blend better with the residential environment around it.
  • The front façade represents the character of the building as a synagogue.
  • The ridge height of the building is lower than the adjacent buildings, and the gable roof on the dormer corresponds to the size of gables around it.
• The revisions bring the design closer to the adjacent buildings and the character of the neighborhood. Thus, presenting the building as a non-residential building which is its character.

Public comments:
Gerry Melkov of 901 Colfax said what it should be preserved is the diversity of Evanston. The proposed partition of the window into three panels addresses his concern about the aesthetics of it.

Ellen Wodika of 1508 Oak, 2S said she was pleased with the proposed design and for the Chabad House being part of the community.

Bob Bisenback of 2011 Orrington said the windows and drawings continue to make progress. He wants the Chabad House continue to be a great neighbor and the building blend in as much as possible into the residential character.

Dave Mack of 2015 Orrington said he supports having the Chabad House in the neighborhood and will follow what the Commission wants to do.

Jesse Viner of 1130 Judson said the project meets long overdue needs of the Jewish community in Evanston. He believes the process underway represents the diversity and integration of the community.

Laura Viner of 1130 Judson said a very important aspect of her life is her strong affiliation with the Chabad House. The process reflects Rabbi Klein’s intention to be completely cooperative and transparent in the way he approached the process with the Commission and the neighborhood. She supports the project and believes the design meets the criteria to be both collaborative and blending with the community and the residential aspect.

Sholom Hecht of 1107 Garrett Pl. said that the proposed design meets the standards and goes above and beyond than others structures in the neighborhood and historic district.

Chair Williams said the Commission received a letter from Jack Weiss that says essentially the proposed changes fail to respond to the concerns of mass and scale of the neighborhood.

Commission’s questions and comments:
Elliott Dudnik:
• Religious buildings in most communities do not necessarily reflect the residential character of the rest of the block.
• Do our standards encompass the issue of a building of different type and use and so on, relative to the other buildings?
• The issue is not the scale of the windows, but the way they are imposed on the front elevation, given the scale of all other windows. The mullions or the divisions between the windows could be more broken down.

Commissioner Hacker:
• The dormer windows could be double hung and keeping with the scale of the existing windows. Also, the rear façade is within the purview of the Commission.

Chair Williams asked about the windows on the side of the dormer. K. Mirintchev the side windows are divided and with an arch. The addition on top is also stucco.

Chair Williams asked Mario Treto for direction to allow no more than two Commissioners provide feedback and guidance to the applicant to continue working on revisions to the design. M. Treto said it needs to be clear that it would be any indication as to approval by the whole Preservation Commission and just provide input as to the design.

Commissioner Itle:
• The conflict is what is happening in the first floor; its scale, material and character do not relate to the second floor. The windows on the first floor seemed too small and out of scale.

Chair Williams said that, based on the discussion, the applicant will lighten up the second floor windows and look at the first floor. The revised drawings would be circulated by City staff to no more than two (2) Commissioners.

Commissioner Itle made a motion to table the application at 2014 Orrington Av. until November 14, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Dudnik. The motion passed. Vote: 7 ayes, 0 nays.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 100 Greenwood St. (LSHD) - David & Susan Abraham, applicants. Construction of a single family home with attached garage. Approximately 6,000 SF, on a vacant lot, including a fence variance for: Replacement of a 5'-0" high existing metal picket fence along the east property line with a new custom metal picket-style fence and 36" high planters, which also serve as retaining walls. A 6'-6" high metal privacy fence parallel to the north property line within the front yard setback. Applicable standards: [Construction 1-13 and 16] and [Fence Variation] A and B.

David Abraham, owner, of 2334 Central Park, and Andy Tenucci, architect, presented the application. A. Tenucci gave a brief history of the property with some projects approved, but not materialized.

Andy Tenucci referred to the diverse collection of buildings in the vicinity; many of them have horizontal expression. The existing fence at 144 Greenwood, covered in vegetation will be removed. The proposed site plan shows the access from Greenwood,
Lake Michigan to the east, 114 Greenwood to the west, a vacant lot to the north fronting Greenwood St. and 115 Dempster to the south.

A. Tenucci described the three levels of the house from below grade to second floor, a total of 6,000 S.F. The front façade with a masonry base and main entry, glass openings for bedrooms. Second floor, primarily glass balanced with opaque cedar. The height of the structure is 25 feet, 10 feet below the height of neighbors. The proposed house lays low and horizontal, as many of the architectural styles of the district suggest.

The existing metal fence to the east will be taken down and replaced with planters and plantings. The north facade maintains the rhythm of the openings and horizontality, an opening for the garage, cedar panels next to glass on the second floor. The south, similarly, with transparent and opaque façade. The west is the rear yard, with an opening to the yard, with the same glass and opaque façade on the second floor.

The material palate is simple: light color masonry at the base, wood siding – natural color wood siding for the opaque panel. Aluminum window system with mullions. Paving on the ground and driveway.

Andy Tenucci showed images of the house from Greenwood St. showing a screen wall (metal blades at an angle). Also views from the north looking south; and from the east looking west.

Public Comments:
Paul Janicki of 1422 Judson said of the proposed house does not meet the following standards: the height as compared with the adjacent structures (standard 1); the proportion of the front façade (standard 2); proportion of openings (standards 3) – windows of adjacent structures are consistently vertical, the proposed windows are square; rhythm of solids and voids; there is more solid than void in the adjacent houses (standard 4); materials, there is not wood cladding in the district as on the proposed house (standard 7); roof shapes, every single house in the district, except for two, have a gable or hip roof (standard 8). P. Janicki said that there are contemporary houses in the district that fit into the neighborhood and meet all the standards. Contemporary design can be respectful of the context. A contemporary house or building can be built in a historic context and still have a personal vision.

Commission’s Comments:
Commissioner Vogel said there is precedent in the historic district such for the proposed house, such as 1014 Michigan and 1221 Michigan. Commissioner Itle wondered what is the actual visual context for the proposed house, it is an odd parcel, set way back from Greenwood St. it has a vacant lot on one side, and a retaining wall on the other, and a street with parked cars. Chair Williams said it has its own context for where is located, with Lake Michigan and Lakeshore Blvd.

Chair Williams referred to standards for construction 1-13 and 16. She asked about the proposed fence height at 6.5’ requiring a fence variance. A. Tenucci said it is to screen the concrete wall. Front yard fences are also not compliant.
Commissioner Dudnik thought context includes the neighborhood. Commissioner Hacker said it is a nice house, but at looking at the standards it would be hard to meet the standards. She wondered if an international style building in this particular area would meet the standards.

Chair Williams asked what standards would apply? Commissioner Reinhold said it clearly meets the height requirement (standard 1), it relates to the adjacent Dempster property (at its rear). Commissioners Dudnik and Hacker said standards 1-13 and 16 for construction apply.

Commissioner Itle made a motion to issue a COA for the proposed project, construction of a house at 100 Greenwood St., standards 1-13 and 16 of construction apply, seconded by Commissioner Vogel. The motion passed. Vote: 5 ayes, 2 nays (Commissioners Dudnik and Hacker).

Commissioner Itle made a motion to issue a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals for fence variation in that standards A and C apply, seconded by Commissioner Vogel. The motion passed. Vote: 5 ayes, 2 nays (Commissioners Dudnik and Hacker).

B. 911 Edgemere Ct. (L/LSHD) - Healy Rice, applicant. Construct ADA ramp along north side of house for access to elevated 1st floor. Install new access door. Applicable standards: [Construction] 1, 5, 7, 10, and 12-15. [Applicant has requested to continue the application to December 19, 2017]

Commissioner Dudnik made a motion to continue the application for 911 Edgemere Ct, until the December 19, 2017 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Itle. The motion passed. Vote: 7 ayes, 0 nays.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES of September 19, 2017.

Regarding 1310 Main, Commissioner Dudnik wanted to add in the minutes that the revised drawings should show the information about the repair of the windows on the front dormer.

Commissioner Itle made a motion to approve the September 19, 2017 meeting minutes as corrected, seconded by Commissioner Dudnik. The motion passed. Vote: 6 ayes, 1 abstention (Commissioner Hacker).

COMMITTEE REPORTS (Working Groups)

A. Preservation Ordinance Review / Rules and Procedures Subcommittee - Update. - Setting date and time for next meeting

The Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing the Rules and Procedures. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 8 am.
VOLUNTEER REPORTS

A. Design Guidelines Volunteers – Update

Carlos Ruiz informed the Commission that he had met with Hillary Beata, the City’s Digital Services Specialist, and received instructions how to post the PDF documents that the Design Guidelines volunteers provided to City staff.

STAFF REPORTS

Carlos Ruiz confirmed that the CAMP training for Preservation Commissioners will take place in Evanston on Saturday, November 18, 2017 from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

DISCUSSION (No vote will be taken)

No discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Itle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 pm on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Hacker. The motion passed. Vote: 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos D. Ruiz
Senior Planner/Preservation Coordinator

Next Meeting: TUESDAY, November 14, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. (Subject to change)