



# VILLAGE OF ORLAND PARK

14700 Ravinia Avenue  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
www.orland-park.il.us

## Department Requested Action

File Number: 2013-0489

**Agenda Date:** 10/7/2013

**Version:** 0

**Status:** IN BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

**In Control:** Board of Trustees

**File Type:** MOTION

### **Title/Name/Summary**

9855 W. 144th Street - Certificate of Appropriateness

### **History**

#### **QUICKFACTS**

#### **Project**

9855 W. 144th Street - 2013-0489

#### **Petitioner**

Kurt Ringhofer

#### **Purpose**

The petitioner is requesting a new Certificate of Appropriateness for 9855 W. 144th Street to approve metal railings on the front porch of the house. The new COA seeks to amend the existing COA approved under case number 2012-0690.

*Requested Actions:* Certificate of Appropriateness

#### **Project Attributes**

*Address:* 9855 W. 144th Street

*P.I.N.(s):* 27-09-211-017

*Size:* 7,375 square foot lot

*Comprehensive Plan Planning District:* Downtown Planning District

*Comprehensive Land Designation:* Single Family Residential

*Existing Zoning:* OOH Old Orland Historic District

*Existing Land Use:* Single Family Residential

#### *Surrounding Land Use:*

North: OOH Old Orland Historic District - (across 144th Street) Single Family Residential

South: OOH Old Orland Historic District - vacant Lot 3 Kelly Grove Subdivision

East: OOH Old Orland Historic District - (across Third Avenue) Multi-Family

Residential

West: OOH Old Orland Historic District - vacant Lot 1 Kelly Grove Subdivision

*Preliminary Engineering: N/A*

### **OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

On January 15, 2013, the Historic Preservation Review Commission recommended the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (case number 2012-0690) for a new single family home on Lot 2 of the Kelly Grove Subdivision. The subdivision was approved by the Plan Commission on January 8, 2013. The Village Board ultimately approved both the subdivision and the COA on February 4, 2013.

The Certificate of Appropriateness for the single family home on Lot 2 of Kelly Grove included a set of elevation drawings that depicted the railings on the front porch of the proposed home to appear as wooden with a design similar to many other new Old Orland homes. The same depiction was made regarding the railings at the rear deck of the house. The elevation drawings, however, do not call out the material of the railings to be wooden despite the graphical depiction. They also do not call out the material of the railings to be metal.

At the time of the COA review, the HPRC presumed that the house for Lot 2 of Kelly Grove would have the same or similar building appurtenances as the homes that were recently approved along 144th Place. The reason for this was because the new home was considered part of the same early 21st Century housing set built by Ulverton and designed by IJM Group, Inc. Like all the new homes on 144th Place, it had the same or similar architectural style and characteristics-all of which had the same graphical depiction on their COA drawings for wood porch railings and, indeed, now have wood porch railings. The HPRC has consistently recommended approval of porches made of wood components and this has been a long standing policy for the area.

During construction, a field change was made without Village approval and metal railings were installed around the front porch and wood railings were installed at the rear porch. (See attached exhibit). The installation of the metal railing is contrary to the expectations of the Board Approved elevation drawings approved via the COA. The installed metal railings, as designed, do not fit the architectural design of the home and would not have been approved if included on the COA elevations. Staff has recommended a compromise to keep the railing material as metal but use a design more appropriate to the area. The petitioner has declined the compromise and instead wishes to pursue a new COA for the railings as installed.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION & CONTEXT**

The petitioner proposes to rectify a field contradiction to the Board Approved elevation drawings to permit metal railings. The metal railings in question are located at the front of the porch. They are cast in a wrought iron/ aluminum metal with a swirl on the rod and diamond shaped medallions alternating at the center and edges of every other rod. The hand rail of the railing is cast ogee edge style. The foot rail at the bottom is

a standard metal bar. The metal railing system is along the entire front porch, which wraps the front of the house on both Third Avenue and 144th Street.

The petitioner is not requesting any variances or modifications to the Land Development Code for the proposed improvements.

The recommendation motion for this project is to deny/approve the request to amend the existing COA. This report outlines the following points:

- 1) The proposed metal railing is not appropriate to the style and character of the Historic District.
- 2) The proposed material is incompatible with the design of the house.
- 3) Approving a new COA establishes a precedent that weakens the credibility of Board Approved elevations.

It is important to note that an existing Certificate of Appropriateness (2012-0690) that meets the Land Development Code's intent and regulations is already approved for this project. It is also important to note that while elevations drawings are amended regularly, they must still be amended appropriately, with consideration to the design and character of the surrounding area (in this case the Historic District) and within Code.

The metal railing on the porch of the house at 9855 W. 144th Street was installed without review and does not conform to the Board Approved elevation drawings in case number 2012-0690 and to the policies for this area.

#### **APPROPRIATENESS OF STYLE AND CHARACTER**

Section 6-209.F.3.c.2 of the Land Development Code notes the following for porches in the Old Orland Historic District:

"New porches and over hangs are encouraged for all additions and new buildings. Wood components and wood siding are appropriate and should be painted. Porches on additions or new construction are encouraged to be open and of a compatible scale and material..."

Section 6-209.F.3.c.3 includes a list of specific improvements that are prohibited or not permitted in the Historic District for porches and door overhangs. This list does not include metal railings.

Currently, Section 6-209 of the Land Development Code (Old Orland Historic District) does not expressly require wooden railings or expressly prohibit metal railings on porches. The intent of the Code, however, is clear. It notes the *appropriateness* of "wood components" while encouraging compatible scale and material. Therefore, the Code's intent is to have "wood components" on residential structures (e.g. porches) that are of "compatible scale and material" to the structure and the surrounding neighborhood. The original COA petition was recommended for approval by the HPRC with this intent and expectation.

While encouragement is not a requirement, the Code's intent is to reach compatibility with that which is appropriate. The COA process provides for review of elements like porches to ensure that if a non-wood material is proposed, it is still complimentary and appropriate to the building design and the Historic District. Therefore, the encouragement clause of this section is associated to the context of appropriateness and the Land Development Code does not state that metal components are appropriate for porches.

### **INCOMPATIBILITY WITH DESIGN**

The introduction of the metal railings on the structure is contrary to the appropriateness of wooden materials and the Code's intent for compatible scale and material. The metal railings are not compatible to the architecture of the Ringhofer House, which in the original COA was described as a National style building (although it also has some other minor stylistic influences). The Ringhofer House replaced an 1885 non-contributing National style residential house. Continuing the National style on the property was an important consideration in the approval of the original COA to maintain the Historic District's distribution of style and character. The scale and material of the house proper is consistent with National style construction, in that wood-in the framing, siding, posts, overhangs, gables, decks, baseboards etc.-- is the overwhelming identifying building material for the structure.

The metal railings, however, are a solitary component at the front of the house, out of scale with the bulk and mass of the structure. The 'fine' nature of the railing material, color and design is lost in the mass of the home's architecture. The appearance of the railing fades into the façade and almost makes the porch look incomplete. This calls into question its compatibility with the rest of the building's architecture. National style porches tend to be well-defined integrated edges along the exterior appearance of the house and made of wood. The metal railing is atypical of this style. It produces a transparent edge around the front of the building with little relationship to the rest of the house's architecture. (See attached exhibit).

The incompatibility of the metal railing reaches beyond the house to the surrounding historic district as well, where metal railings have never been approved by the Village for residential properties based on historic precedents. Wood is the prevailing historical architectural building material in Old Orland and the National style is the predominant architectural style in the District. Had the metal railings been included in the original elevation drawings in case number 2012-0690, the review would have likely removed the metal in favor of wood.

That said, a metal railing designed to integrate and enhance the architectural style may have been considered to be within the context of Code requirements. For further discussion see the "Alternative Solutions" section of this report.

### **PRECEDENT AND CREDIBILITY**

An amendment to the existing COA means setting a precedent for the Historic District that impacts the type of materials permitted and the strength of the Code and Board Approval. The proposed petition to amend the existing COA will establish the

precedent of using materials that have consistently been interpreted by the HPRC as non-conforming and ahistorical to the Old Orland Historic District. It will also set a precedent that Board approved elevations are flexible in nature (e.g. can be changed in the field without prior notice or review).

Such a new precedent will have the effect of eroding the vision for the district, its character and the preservation ordinance that supports these. The precedent will mean that non-wooden materials not expressly prohibited by Code can be considered appropriate alternative options to wood construction on residential structures in all of the Code's architectural design categories (not just porches). This means that where the Code does not offer alternative solutions for building materials or prescribes solutions based on "should" or "encouragement/ discouragement" clauses, the precedent to select unmentioned materials may be set for windows and doors (including frames, sashes, storm doors etc.), cladding (i.e. siding, fish-scales), roofs, chimneys and other building components.

To close the gap that may be created by any precedent, the Land Development Code may be amended and Section 6-209 updated to tighten up the regulations and make any precedents legal non-conforming/ illegal.

The recent redevelopment successes of the Old Orland Historic District, particularly related to the removal of non-contributing structures and edifices built during the 1960s and 1970s and replaced with Code conforming new homes and/or restored edifices in traditional styles and the rise in the District's popularity are a direct result of the consistent Code interpretation by the Village and the HPRC for the appropriateness of design (i.e. wood components) on residential structures in the Historic District. (See attached exhibit).

Finally, amending a Certificate of Appropriateness, or issuing a COA to reverse previously approved designs that unequivocally meet Land Development Code requirements per consensus and interpretation of the HPRC, to accommodate materials not originally approved and installed without HPRC/ Village Board review sets a poor precedent for the practice of historic preservation planning.

#### **ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION**

An alternative solution was proposed by the Village to meet half-way regarding the inclusion of metal railings on the porch for the Ringhofer House. The solution was proposed to bring the porch closer to conformity with the Code's intent for appropriateness, reduce the incompatibility with the structure and surrounding neighborhood, and to reduce any precedent set by the choice in material and its potential approval.

The alternative solution that was suggested included capping or cladding the hand and foot rails of the porch railings with wood so as to relate the railing back to the house and define the edge of the National style building. Doing this would also bring the house closer in compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Many of the neighboring properties were required to install and maintain wood railings.

The alternative solution was proposed in fairness to the homeowner, in recognition of his investment, and to previous projects and other homeowners that were required to remove or alter architectural components that were incompatible with Section 6-209 regulations.

The petitioner rejected the alternative solution and selected to petition for a new Certificate of Appropriateness to reverse the original.

This is now before Historic Preservation Review Commission for consideration.

**Recommended Action/Motion**

I move to accept as findings of fact of this Historic Preservation Review Commission the findings of fact set forth in this staff report, dated September 17, 2013

And

I move to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees to deny/approve the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness to 9855 W. 144th Street for metal railing on the front porch per the elevation drawings titled "Two Story Residence for 9855 W. 144th Street Orland Park IL. 60462," prepared by IJM Group Inc., dated Dec. 11, 2012, received on Aug. 9, 2013.