

**OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2009**

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, George Gaffney, on Monday, December 7, 2009 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were David Baker, Heinrich Schmitz, Dorothy Fenwick, and Suzanne Litty.

The minutes of the meeting of November 2, 2009 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permit was reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #09-64, Mr. and Mrs. William Adkins, III, 208 Tred Avon Avenue, removal of exterior stairs leading up to second level deck; replacement of decking with IPE wood; replacement of existing white wood railings around deck; addition of new section of railing where stairs are removed; replacement of triple French door with same type; replacement of backyard fence with white pickets; repainting of house and shed; and repair and replacement of rotten wood of house and shed door. Both Mr. and Mrs. Adkins were present to speak with the commission. Mr. Adkins explained to the commission that his house needs to be painted but before doing so the deck, located in the back of the house and which is in bad condition, needs to be replaced and the exterior stairs removed and replaced with railing which would travel all the way across the back of the deck. A set of French doors, located upstairs and having a rotted sill, is in need of replacement which the owners would like to remove and replace with essentially the same things. Mr. Adkins further noted that repairs to the siding and trim need to be done before the painters come in and paint. The house would be painted with the same colors already existing on the exterior of the home. Another request is to replace an existing fence, that is supported by ivy and never intended to be permanent, with a typical picket fence to be painted white. The fence would be located in the back of the property, facing West Street, and would not take into its perimeters the existing driveway and shed. Mr. Gaffney applauded the couple on the fine job they did in putting their building permit application together. Mr. Baker made a motion to accept the application. Prior to approving the application Mr. Adkins pointed out to the commission that there would be two gates located within the fenced in area and that a photo of the proposed treatment of the fence hardware was included with the application. The motion was continued and seconded by Mrs. Fenwick and unanimously carried without further discussion.

This concluded the review of permit applications.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gaffney distributed copies of a letter that he was planning on sending to the Commissioners regarding the matter of people coming into the town office and saying that they have simple repairs to make in the historic district that will not require changing anything but resulting in changes occurring. The question for the Commissioners is what are they going to do about this

and what do they want the commission to do. The commission made references to a house on Tilghman Street in which the contractor had told the town office he needed to put a new roof on the house which would not involve any changes. However, the commission was of the opinion that something false was presented to the town. Mr. Gaffney elaborated that the contractor had put a membrane over the roof that was not there before, that it was tilted, and that he had put on an aluminum tie down. He added that the whole thing looked like it was put on the least expensive way that it could be done. Mr. Baker countered that whenever one repairs a roof some changes do occur, but that the degree of alteration is a very nebulous thing to judge. He added that the way in which the contractor had replaced the roof may have been the most effective way that it could have been done for a flat roof. Mrs. Fenwick added that the roof in question had had a membrane on it in the past. Mr. Schmitz thought that gutters should have been added all the way around the house that the overhangs should have been brought out. He added that when one drives down Tilghman Street one sees that the membrane has not been done properly and that it is easy to notice. Mrs. Fenwick questioned what could be done with people who come into the town office saying they need to make repairs and that the repairs will not reflect any change to what is already present. She could understand why the office would tell the individual that they would not have to go before the historic commission. She suggested that it might be a better matter of protocol to send everything before the commission. In cases such as repairs, perhaps a full written out statement of what the homeowner planned to do would suffice. In this way the commission would have something in writing to go by. Mr. Schmitz again expressed his concerns that any change that could be detected with one's eyes signified a change. In the case of the house on Tilghman Street, the principal of the whole roof was changed. Mr. Schmitz thought that had the homeowner come before the commission the discussion at that point could have been to change the roof into an "A" roof. He also added that flat roofs were not permissible. Mr. Baker argued that the flat roof was already there.

Mr. Gaffney requested that the town office submit to the Commissioners this discussion along with the letter that the commission will be submitted to the Commissioners so that they can read and see what the concerns are of the Historic District Commission and to give them time to contemplate how this matter should be handled and how the commission should be directed prior to their upcoming meeting with the Commissioners which will hopefully take place in January. He added that if the Town Administrator, Lillian Lord, had not yet sent a letter to the contractor with regards to the work he did on the roof on Tilghman Street, it should be done.

Mr. Baker brought up the discussion that was held in a past meeting regarding the removal of hardware after shutters are taken down and not replaced. He stated that if someone wanted to take off their shutter hardware he could not see where that would be a problem. He argued that having the hardware remain makes it look like something is missing from the house. Mr. Gaffney replied that this question will be posed to the Commissioners when they meet with them to see how they want the commission to deal with this matter. Mr. Schmitz stated that shutters are an architectural detail which is important. Mr. Baker questioned how the commission could make the determination as to whether or not a homeowner could afford to replace his or her shutters. He added that he believed that Scott Whipple from the Maryland

Historic Trust had addressed the commission informing them that it was more important to protect the entire building than a piece of façade which may be rotten or damaged and suggested that Mr. Schmitz look at Article 31. Mr. Schmitz countered that if one were to remove one's hinges it would be more expensive than leaving them in place. Dale Benson, a property owner in town, agreed with Mr. Schmitz adding that sometimes taking off hinges is not as simple as it appears as it leads to other things unforeseen.

Mr. Baker then announced that he had come to the end of his term and would be asking the Commissioners not to extend his time on this commission. He added that he would be applying to serve on the Planning Commission as he had always enjoyed the zoning aspects of the town. The commission members expressed their regrets in his leaving the group.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk

