

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

AUGUST 3, 2009

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, George Gaffney, on Monday, August 3, 2009 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

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

The minutes of the meeting of July 6, 2009 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #09-47, Mr. and Mrs. George Passano, 201 Tred Avon Avenue, to make all roofs the same "Weathered Wood" Elk 30 yr. fiberglass material. Mr. Passano explained to the commission that some of the roofs on his house, which went back 30 years or so were failing. In 2000, an addition was built on to the Passano home and the roofing material used for the new addition was 30 year architectural grade. Currently two-thirds of the roof are covered in this material and Mr. Passano stated he wanted the entire roof area covered in this material. Mr. Baker made a motion to accept the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Fenwick and unanimously carried. Mrs. Fenwick added as a side note that Mr. Passano had presented a complete file to the commission which was very helpful and that other applications before the commission at this evening's meeting were not as complete.
2. Permit #09-48, Eric Mentzer, 102 Norton Street, take down a two story shed; foundation rotten from high tides; second story falling in. Mr. Mentzer, along with his father, Donald Mentzer, were present to discuss the application. Both father and son admitted they had made a mistake in taking down the shed in the back of the property prior to receiving permission to do so. Eric Mentzer explained that the foundation of the shed was rotten, that the top of the building was half way down, and because children were playing in the area, it had been seen as a safety hazard. Mr. Gaffney explained that the reason why he had insisted on Mr. Mentzer's attendance was because the shed was considered a piece of history and he wanted Mr. Mentzer to understand that a property owner in the historic district could not just destroy something without consulting the historic commission first. Mr. Baker made a motion to accept the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.
3. Permit #09-51, Paula Bell, 304 S. Morris Street, repaint shutters from black to dark green and front door from white to yellow. Mrs. Bell was represented by her contractor, Robert Andrew. When questioned about the front door and its surrounding trim and storm door, Mr. Andrew noted that only the front door would be painted yellow and the remainder would stay white. Ms. Litty stated she liked the shutters but asked if the

yellow color picked for the front door could be toned down a bit. Mr. Baker stated that the storm door would cover most of it and his thought was that it would not be that highly visible. Mr. Schmitz made a motion to accept the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baker and unanimously carried without further discussion.

4. Permit #09-52, Pamela Hamilton, 100 Sullivan's Alley, remove two bay carport. Ms. Hamilton explained to the commission that she just wanted to remove the two bay carport from her garage. She explained that the carport was built around 1976 and that it had become an eyesore and not at all historic. There is a pad in front of it that Ms. Hamilton made reference to taking out as well and replacing it with a garden area. Mr. Schmitz noted that if the carport were to be removed it would leave one side of the existing garage exposed. He questioned how that new exposed side would be treated, as well as the interior door leading out to the carport from the garage, and a questionable window. Mrs. Fenwick pointed out that the commission was given an application that really had nothing with it and nothing to go by other than two pictures provided by the applicant. She reprimanded the applicant for not providing the commission with any details and suggested that Ms. Hamilton bring in a drawing which will show what the garage will look like after the carport is removed, along with how the area will look after the concrete pad is removed. Mr. Schmitz added that Ms. Hamilton may want to reconsider the door and window as well. Mrs. Stanley reminded the applicant that her drawings need to be to scale and show exactly what she wants. Mr. Gaffney told Ms. Hamilton she would have to come back with a complete file. Mr. Baker made a motion to table the application, done so with the applicant's permission. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Fenwick with all in favor. It was also mentioned that no one in the commission had a problem with the garage coming down as well.

This concluded the review of building permit applications.

A consultation was held with Giovanni Salvo, and his architect, Timothy Kearns. Mr. Kearns came before the commission to ask what their impressions were of the existing plan that Mr. Salvo had previously submitted as well as to gather some hints for redesigning and adding a second floor to Mr. Salvo's home at 512 E. Strand. Mr. Kearns explained to the commission that they would need a variance for just about anything that the owners want to do on this property. The setbacks are a problem on this lot. Currently the existing stoop is about 1/3 over the property line. Mr. Kearns asked if he could change the front door and a window, noting that the front porch would not work where it is and that functionally, in his plan, the front door was facing the wrong way from where the parking area is to be located. Mrs. Fenwick stated that "one of the characteristics of the historic (district) is that the front door is on the street, not on the side." Mr. Kearns also noted that the house would need a new foundation. Mr. Schmitz pointed out that if the house is raised up it would need more steps. Mr. Kearns again stated that no matter what the owners planned on doing they would need a variance. Mr. Baker pointed out that the guidelines do say something about the front door facing the street, but that in this case the owners have a front door which is essentially almost on the street. Mr. Kearns responded that there were ways around that and asked if he could move a window in order to

move the front door so that it would be someplace other than in the middle as he would like to eliminate as many non-conformities as possible. Mrs. Fenwick stated she was not going to vote on a side entrance because she might not like the plan. Mr. Kearns then asked if the commission would be willing to allow him to move whatever he needed to move if he could make a successful design that meets with the commission's approval. Mr. Schmitz asked what options the commission had particularly if the house was raised, would the house have to be suspended? Mr. Kearns replied that the existing piers could be maintained and new piers built in between those piers. Upon completion of the new piers, the old piers could be removed. Mr. Schmitz noted this was an impossible situation with setbacks where some relief needed to be found somewhere. This leads to question of what possibilities are there for this property. If the owners were to move the house a little bit away from the street and a little over, Mr. Schmitz thought that would not hurt the situation. Mr. Kearns responded that they could not move it enough to change it from being a non-conformity. Mr. Baker reminded the commission that they should only be looking at the exterior design of the house, nothing else. Ms. Litty asked if Mr. Kearns could present to the commission a sketch of what he would like to do. Mrs. Fenwick stated that if one buys a house and it violates everything, the reality is that if one leaves it alone no one can come after you. She reminded the owner that he has a little house on a little lot and that when you buy a little house, you get a little house and that she would vote against moving it. Mr. Schmitz thought the house should be moved enough to provide for a stoop and that the front door should be in the front. Mr. Baker stated that he too would prefer the front door on the street; however, the commission had approved a house two doors down from Mr. Salvo's house that had a front door on the side of the house. Mr. Gaffney closed the discussion stating that Mr. Kearns and Mr. Salvo now know what they have to work with and that they should go discuss their concerns with the Planning Commission.

New Business

Mr. Gaffney reported that he has seen an increase in the addition of satellite dishes on roofs around town. Because there are currently no guidelines on this, Mr. Gaffney thought the commission should develop something. Though the federal government allows satellite dishes, Mr. Gaffney thought the commission could help in making sure they are put in proper locations. Mr. Baker reminded Mr. Gaffney that the dishes have to be installed in the direction of satellites. Mrs. Fenwick suggested sending something to the Commissioners to write up and that they send it back to the Historic Commission for comment. Mr. Gaffney agreed.

Mr. Gaffney also mentioned the fact the commission is beginning to hear more about "going green" as it applies to solar panels and roofing materials, and possibly siding. Mr. Gaffney thought the commission should at least be an advisory on what applicants can do and begin to be proactive with regards to this matter. Mr. Gaffney asked Mrs. Stanley if she could find out if the historic towns of Annapolis and Alexandria have anything in their guidelines with regards to this, as well as asking Mr. Schmitz if he could look through some of his architectural magazines and assemble whatever information he could find on this topic. Information could then be

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gathered together and sent on to the Commissioners to let them know what is going on and how the commission should be advised to handle this.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk