

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

DECEMBER 7, 2015

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, December 7, 2015 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, James Deerin, Jennifer Stanley, and Patricia Ingram.

The minutes of the meeting of November 2, 2015 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #15-57, Timothy Wilson, 214 South Street, install two heat pumps on side of house. No one was present to discuss the application. Because the members had some questions concerning the location of the units, it was agreed by all to table the application.
2. Permit #15-65, Mr. and Mrs. John Yates, 228 South St., install storm door. Mr. Yates explained that he had found similar storm doors around town that compared to the one he and his wife were wishing to install. When questioned about the door, Mr. Yates responded that it would be white and produced a picture of what it would look like. A motion was made by Ms. Litty to accept the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.
3. Permit #15-60, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Lee, 100 Tred Avon Avenue, fencing to screen a propane tank and replacement of existing fence to screen a/c unit and trash area. Mr. and Mrs. Lee's permit was presented by Ms. Litty. In reviewing the application the commission concurred that it was difficult to tell what the end result of the proposed project would look like. Questions were also raised as to where the proposed new fencing was going to go. Mr. Costigan stated that a site plan would be helpful along with some clear, large representational drawings. It was unanimously agreed to table the application until more details had been received.
4. Permit #15-54, Mr. James Dewar, 106 N. Morris Street, replacement of 15 double hung windows with new efficiency double hung windows. Mr. Dewar explained to the members that he had been replacing his existing windows since 2010 with energy efficient ones. He added that he has already replaced half of them and is now looking to replace the second half. The new replacement windows would match the existing replacement windows. All will be double hung, having the exact same size as those existing, with a slight greenish tint to them. Mr. Dewar noted that the existing windows left in the house were not old, wavy glass windows, and that these new replacement windows would be located on the back and sides of the house. No alternations would be made to the exterior trim. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the placement of the replacement windows as described in the Windows World specification sheet. The motion was second by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried.
5. Permit #15-61, Thomas Ray, 402 S. Morris Street, new 3 ½' white Oxford style picket fencing and new carriage style garage door. Mr. Ray explained that the new proposed fence would match that of his neighbors at 400 S. Morris Street. The Oxford style fence would be stained white, 3

½' in height, and enclose the property in order to keep Mr. Ray's dogs within his yard. A separate, small section of Oxford style fencing would be placed on the property in order to screen a propane tank. Mr. Costigan noted that the fencing used for screening purposes would not be visible from the street but suggested that Mr. Ray work up some kind of drawing showing the screening to give it to the town office just so that something would be on file. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to approve the fence as drawn on the plans. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor. The commission briefly discussed Mr. Ray's plan for a new carriage style white garage door to replace the one existing on his garage. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the new garage door as described. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried with all in favor.

6. Permit #15-62, Thomas Ray, 402 S. Morris Street, new storage shed and revised driveway. Mr. Ray explained that he would like to replace the existing shed on his property with a larger shed to be 14' x 10' and 12' high. It would be stick built with the same color treatment as the house with appropriate doors and windows to also be consistent with the house. The windows would be 4 pane double hung, with a door on the side and no windows on the back side of the building. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to accept the shed as designed by the owner. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor. Mr. Ray next presented his plans to revise his existing driveway. Currently the driveway has gravel but has been found to be messy. Mr. Ray stated he was looking to remove the gravel and replace it with 4 bricks strips which would come up to the concrete pad in front of his garage. He added that he was also looking to install a slate patio to come off from his back porch. Mr. Costigan stated that nothing could really be seen of Mr. Ray's backyard from the street so the commission would be happy with anything Mr. Ray wanted to do in the back of his property. However, Mr. Costigan did comment that Mr. Ray may have some problems when it came to impervious surface coverage. The discussion ended with Mr. Costigan stating that the commission had no objections to the plan that Mr. Ray was suggesting. However, he may need to do more investigative work on what product he planned on using for the driveway and/or patio as coverage may be a factor.
7. Permit #12-49, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Wright, 101 Norton Street, revisions to previously approved building permit. Mr. Costigan prefaced the discussion with the Wrights by stating that the commission had asked them to tonight's meeting because of some concerns the commission had about their project and the work that was being done there. In 2013 the commission approved the restoration and addition to the Wright home. The concern with the commission was that the restoration project had turned into a new construction project. Also in question was the location of the windows in the house that now varied from what the commission had previously approved. Mr. Costigan added that the commission would like to work with the Wrights and do not want to see the project shut down but they need to know what is being done and why changes had been made unbeknownst to them. Mr. Wright responded that he had taken pictures of the construction process that would help to explain what problems had been found along the way. Photos were presented of the deplorable condition of the existing wood and structure of the existing house. Photos were also presented indicating that the foundation was found to be cracked and busted and that most of the house had rotted away. Mr. Wright noted that they had tried to save as much of the original house that they could but there was not a lot that could be saved. When the house was lifted in order to have a new foundation built under it, the house had become bowed in the middle. Mr. Wright stated that he and his wife were under the assumption that the Town of Oxford knew the condition of this house because originally the town had it on its list of houses scheduled for demolition. He added that many people had told him the house was in bad shape but no one ever said not to

lift it. It was also found that the roof was rotted which spurred having a new roof placed on the house. Mr. Wright also stated that when a copy of his approved plans were returned to him, he found that the building inspector had written a note on them stating that the windows did not meet egress which spurred him on to order bigger windows. Mr. Wright pointed out that because the house is small, by adding an additional 3' onto the windows did change the look. He added that the builder had put in extra headers so that in case the windows had to be moved or changed they could be. He also noted that the plans specifically stated that all the bedroom windows did not meet egress and that he wanted all the windows big enough for anyone to be able to get out of any room should the house catch on fire. Mr. Deerin noted that by changing the windows the house now look completely different from what had been approved. Mrs. Stanley stated that if the owners planned on making any changes from what had been approved, they had to let the Historic District Commission know in advance. Mr. Costigan added that the plans need to match what is being built. He continued by stating that he did not think the commission was faced with an insurmountable problem and that they were happy there were some existing pieces still in the house, but the commission needed to have plans of what was being built as close to the plans that had previously been approved. Mr. Wright responded that the finished project would be built according to the plans and that he could do the original configuration of the windows. However, he felt it was a lot of windows, especially for a house that was only 15' wide. Mr. Deerin asked about the two windows put in over by the porch side of the house and how they differed from what had been approved. Mr. Wright responded that because the bigger windows were placed on the house on that side he thought they would dominate the look and opted not to put in the additional windows as previously shown on the plans. He added that safety took precedence over everything. Mrs. Stanley stated she was worried about the window proportions and wanted to see a new drawing showing the new window sizes so that the commission could see that they would all be proportionate. Mr. Costigan asked that Mr. Wright either consult with his architect or contractor to draw up a plan of exactly what they were planning on building and present it back to the commission for approval so that the project could move ahead. He added that the commission could respond back to the owners in a fairly expeditious manner. Mrs. Wright asked if they could still put up their siding and glass door in the back of the house. Mr. Costigan suggested she contact the town office and ask the Administrator that question. He added that the commission would not have any objections to that request.

This concluded the review of building permits.

In a brief discussion following the review of the permits, Mrs. Stanley stressed the need for applicants to understand that any changes they want to make to their previously approved plans could not be done without letting the commission know in advance. Mr. Deerin added that the building inspector should not be able to write on the approved set of plans that are given back to the applicant because it changes the approval. He also suggested that maybe a note or stamp be placed on the approved plans stating that any changes to the plans would need to come back before the HDC. The members also discussed a possible upcoming workshop between the HDC and the building inspector.

Dale Benson, a member in the audience, asked the commission what they were going to do with Tim Wilson's permit that had been scheduled for permit review. He was particularly concerned because the permit was scheduled to go before the Board of Appeals in the upcoming week. The commission members talked about it amongst themselves but no formal decision was made because Mr. Wilson wasn't there to answer any of the questions the HDC had concerning the location of the unit.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk