

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

DECEMBER 5, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, December 5, 2016 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, Patricia Ingram, James Deerin, and Jennifer Stanley. Also in attendance was Administrator Cheryl Lewis.

The minutes of the meeting of November 7, 2016 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed:

1. Permit #16 -64, 228 South Street, Mr. and Mrs. John Yates, replacement of 3 non-functioning windows. Both Mr. and Mrs. Yates were present to discuss their application. Mr. Yates explained that the windows in their historic bedroom are non-functioning and that he and his wife want to replace them with new windows that are consistent with the rest of the windows in the house. The request came about as a result of the Yates looking into a fire escape plan should the need arise to escape their house from fire from the second floor bedroom. Mr. Costigan commented that he had read the Yates' explanation of their request, which was attached to their application, and that the part of the letter that surprised him was that they had paid someone to fix and restore the old windows in question. Mr. Yates stated that was correct but when those windows were put back in they still failed to work properly. The contractor has since gone out of business. The windows in question were two windows facing onto South Street directly over the front porch and one around the corner of the house, on the second floor, facing south. Mrs. Stanley spoke stating that there have been other homeowners in town that have restored their historic windows into working condition. She added that she too had the same problem with the windows in her historic home but in all fairness to the other members of the historic community, the Historic Commission has stood firm with regards to protecting historic windows, especially those on the front street which are highly visible, and the desire to keep the wavy glass that these windows are known for. Mr. Yates responded that not all the glass panes in the windows he was asking to replace were wavy. Mrs. Stanley responded that the group may need to come and take a look at them. Mr. Costigan added that the HDC is often faced with requests from homeowners in the historic district who want to replace their old windows in order to make their homes more energy efficient. However, this can still be accomplished by renovating and restoring the old windows, even if it means putting storm windows over them. Mr. Deerin also spoke stating that when reviewing the National Register of historic homes in Oxford the Yates' home is mentioned – specifically the 6 over 6 sash windows and the original siding, making it one of the best preserved of the small houses on South Street. Because the house has been recognized by the National Register, it is important that the Yates retain the original materials on their home when possible. Mr. Deerin also noted that there are some people in the area that are able to actually repair the old windows and make them operable. Mr. Costigan asked about the 3rd window that Mr. Yates wants to replace that is on

the side of his house, which, according to the Yates' letter of November 22, 2016 to the HDC, had been re-located from another location in the house in the past. Mr. Yates confirmed that that was correct and that that window is now located in one of the historic bedrooms that is in need of a fire exit. Mr. Costigan asked the group how they felt about the Yates replacing just that one window since it is not in its original position and taking into account the safety factor. Mrs. Stanley commented that Marvin Windows has created a window that looks like a double hung window but which actually is a casement window, with a side opening that works as an escape window and that this window was actually created to accommodate historic districts. She suggested that perhaps the Yates could investigate this type of window as a possible replacement. Ms. Litty agreed with Mrs. Stanley. Mrs. Stanley added that if the Yates would investigate the casement window she would be in favor of reviewing the application again for the replacement of the window on the side. The commission members also suggested the couple speak with Oxford resident Suzanne Beyda, who recently had her historic windows repaired and put back into working condition. The permit was tabled in order for the couple to rethink things through.

2. Permit #16-63, Carol Safir, 311-313 S. Morris Street, install 4' picket fence along property line to visually distinguish parcel 1 from parcel 2; circular drive eliminated and landscaping along fence to further delineate property line. Mrs. Safir was present to explain the application. Mrs. Safir explained to the commission that she owns two properties – one at 311 S. Morris Street and one at 313 S. Morris Street, both of which sit side by side. The property at 311 S. Morris Street is viewed as a marina having rentable boat slips. Her desire is to separate the house at 313 S. Morris Street from the marina parcel. Mrs. Safir explained that her solution is to do something about the driveway situation, which is currently shaped in a semi-circle that comes across both properties. In order to accomplish this Mrs. Safir was requesting a 4' fence, slightly inside the property line at 313 S. Morris Street, running from the edge of the front of the existing driveway down to the bulkhead at the end of the property. She added that her intention was also to landscape along the fence so that both properties would be clearly defined and that drivers could park on either one side or the other (not in-between). Mr. Costigan pointed out that the commission had reviewed this request in a past application and that they had been OK with the fence in the original location Mrs. Safir had been proposing but that they had had problems with the fence crossing the driveway. Mrs. Safir responded that she understood that and that was why she had changed her plan. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission approve the proposal of a 4' picket fence inside the property line at 313 S. Morris Street going back as far as the creek side of the property. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.
3. Permit #16-65, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Bell, 304 S. Morris Street, replace existing steps and railing and add portico. Mr. Bell was present to discuss the application. Mr. Costigan pointed out that the application had been submitted late and that the commission would be reviewing this application as a consultation only at this time. Mr. Bell explained that currently the steps going up to his front door are brick and primarily destroyed due to addition and renovation work currently taking place on his home. Mr. Bell noted that he and his wife are requesting to replace the brick steps with Azek or Epay premium decking, along with replacing the existing wrought iron handrails wooden handrails leading up to the steps, and a little portico going over the front door. Mr. Costigan asked Mr. Bell if they had considered installing a porch along the front of their house instead to which Mr. Bell replied that the cost for such an undertaking would be prohibitive. In general, everyone liked the concept presented though Mrs. Stanley did comment that the Bells need to be careful in not making the portico too small.

This concluded the review of building permits.

Prior to adjourning, the HDC discussed with Administrator Cheryl Lewis the RFP bids for The Mews that had recently been received and opened at the past Commissioners meeting. Mr. Costigan asked for an update on the Fowler building located at 113 S. Morris Street. Administrator Lewis responded that she had let the contractor and property owner several times that any changes they make to the outward appearance of the building would have to come back before the HDC for review. When questioned about the property at 102 S. Morris Street, directly next to Town Park, Administrator Lewis responded that no building permit has yet to be submitted to the office for review.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk