

## OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

APRIL 4, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, April 4, 2022, in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building, at 5:00 p.m.

Other commission members in attendance were Jennifer Stanley, James Deerin, Suzanne Litty, Patricia Ingram, and Julie Wells. Also in attendance were Town Manager Cheryl Lewis and Town Planner Maria Brophy.

The minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2022 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following the building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #22-21, Town Creek, LLC, 314 Tilghman St., replace rotting siding and trim on building; project will be in stages as to not interrupt restaurant business. Manager member of the LLC, Katie Schroeder, was present to discuss the application. She explained that work had been done on the outside of the building for the past several years involving the replacement of the old T-111 siding with a composite product which looks the same as the T-111 but holds up better. Work will be done in sections as to not interrupt the opening of the restaurant business on April 21<sup>st</sup>, with the worse spots to be done first. Everything will remain the same color. Chairman Costigan pointed out that work had already been completed on the top side of the building. Ms. Schroeder noted that was correct and that work also included the installation of new windows. A motion was made by Ms. Litty to approve the application as presented and seconded by Mrs. Stanley. The motion was unanimously approved. Chairman Costigan noted that Ms. Schroeder had brought up the problem of material procurement and agreed that is a problem right now that may need to be addressed later. Ms. Schroeder responded that they have the material they need right now for the section of the building they are planning on starting, adding that they would not let the building end up looking like a checkerboard and would repair whole sections of the building at a time.
2. Permit #22-12, Thomas Caravythà, 200 West Street, install solar tiles on roof of existing SGD and 2 energy storage systems. At the request of the HDC, Mr. Caravythà, who was present to discuss his application, had put together a full packet explaining the tiles which included some photos to help the commission members understand the look of the solar shingles. He presented a photo showing a view of his house now with the metal roofing and another of what it would look like with the solar shingles, pointing out how much reflection the metal roof produced in comparison with the much less reflection of what the solar shingles would produce. He also presented documentation of how Washington, D.C. is in favor of solar roofing and how other historic districts have this under discussion, some with positive results. Ms. Litty asked how long it would take to get the shingles, if approved. Mr. Caravythà responded that he did not know because of the supply problem but it should be 4 to 6 weeks. Chairman Costigan noted that the application mentioned the installation of 2 energy system and asked where they would be placed. Mr.

Caravythà responded they would be placed within his garage and would not be visible. Mr. Deerin expressed his concern over the reflective glow of the solar tiles and that one of the photos provided by the applicant would lead one to believe they are shiny. Mr. Caravythà responded that may be the case but compared to the metal roofing it would be much less reflective. Mr. Deerin reiterated what he had already stated in the last HDC meeting with Mr. Caravythà over this request, in that the HDC guidelines state, in part, that traditional building materials should be used. He added that his other concern was that with other modern equipment the commission has approved, such as solar panels, it was done so only if the panels were out of sight. In this case, Mr. Deerin felt that this request would result in a lot of shingles on a very visible roof, unlike Mr. Caravythà's guesthouse which isn't as highly visible from the street and that it would stick out like a sore thumb. Chairman Costigan pointed out that currently there is a lead coated copper roof on Mr. Caravythà's house that cannot be painted so maintenance of that roof would be impossible. Mr. Deerin asked if there was a problem with the roof today. The owner responded that there was not. Chairman Costigan questioned that if it was, would the owner have to have another metal roof. Mr. Deerin responded that unless the commission says solar shingles are acceptable in the entire historic district, he would think the owner's roof would still have to be metal. Chairman Costigan retorted that each application had to be looked at separately, case by case, and that if the commission were to approve this, Oxford would be one of the first historic districts doing this kind of thing. Mr. Deerin asked if the commission had sufficient background information and alternative sources of other historic districts having done this. Chairman Costigan stated he had look on the Internet for answers, having found only one other similar home in Washington state, which, like Mr. Caravythà's home, was not an historical home. Mr. Caravythà reminded the commission members that back in 2018 the HDC was not against his desire to have a Tesla solar shingled house. He also pointed out that in May of 2019, in a consultation involving the roof, the members all looked favorably upon the request for solar shingles. Mr. Deerin stated that he just wanted to make sure that when the commission makes their decision, that they take into account that it will impact their ongoing decisions on solar shingles. Mrs. Stanley commented that the commission needed to look forward with solar use and accept the fact that though it may be difficult, they will probably see more of it in the future and the town could be a pacesetter for this type of work. Mrs. Wells expressed her views that she knows the commission looks at applications on a case by case basis, but that they still have the overriding historic district and love for how the town looks because of it. She added that though Mr. Caravythà's presentation was impressive, her main concern was over the integrity of the historic district. A lengthy discussion followed with Chairman Costigan wrapping it up by reminding the members that when the initial presentation was made by real estate agent Chuck Mangold, on behalf of Mr. Caravythà, there were 4 different versions of these shingles, and the members were receptive to the idea. He also gave a brief synopsis of a letter that was received addressed to the HDC from neighboring property owner and town resident, Cameron Mactavish, who was opposed to the idea of having solar shingles placed on the house at 200 West Street. Chairman Costigan stated that the letter would become part of the application. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the solar shingles at 200 West Street which was unanimously approved with all in favor. Chairman Costigan added that it was likely the project would not be started within 6 months of the approval of the permit, given the current state of the supply and demand of materials, and asked Mr. Caravythà to keep in touch with the office to let them know of his progress on this project.

3. Permit #22-25, William Britton, 206 Tred Avon Avenue, shutters, and front door color change. Though Mr. Britton was not available to present his application, it was found to be a straightforward request. Currently the house is beige with white shutters. The request is to change the front door and shutters to a deep blue color, identified as "Washington Blue" on the sample provided. A motion was made by Mrs. Wells to accept the application as submitted and seconded by Mrs. Ingram. The motion was unanimously approved by all with no further discussion.
4. Permit #22-28, Elspeth Ritchie, 226 S. Morris Street, white, Oxford style picket fence at front of property along S. Morris Street. Neither the applicant nor a representative was present to discuss the application. Chairman Costigan admitted that this was the first time he had seen the application but that it was not a complicated request or fence that the applicant was asking for. The only real question that was raised concerned exactly where the proposed fencing would be placed on the property. After studying more closely the drawing provided with the application, the members were able to decipher the location. A motion was made by Mr. Deerin, with respect to 220 S. Morris Street, for the commission to approve the application to install a new fence as shown on the fence description sheet, to be 45 ½" feet long, with a gate at the walkway, in front of the property, turning on the north end of the property to a 2'8" return. The motion was seconded by Chairman Costigan and unanimously carried with all in favor.
5. Permit #22-29, JBC Partners, 104 Strand, replace existing front door, no change in existing transom or sidelights. No one was present to discuss or explain the application. A question was raised about the old, existing door and if it was the original door to the house. Chairman Costigan was of the opinion that the new door did not look like it should go there as it was not a style of a door one would put on an historic house. He felt a wooden six panel or tombstone door would be a better option and that either of those doors could have a glass storm door over it. His suggestion was to deny the application and let the applicant do more research or talk to the commission members to find out what the HDC would like to see. Chairman Costigan added that he had walked down along the Strand and did not see any other single glass doors like the one presented with this application. A motion was then made by Chairman Costigan to deny the application and suggest that the applicant seek out a more appropriate and historically correct front door that suits and fits the house and the Strand. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried by all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

A discussion was held with residential designer Timothy Kearns concerning a continuation of the house at 203 N. Morris Street, owned by David and Rose Donovan. Prior to beginning his discussion, Mr. Kearns warned the commission members that procurement of windows is difficult at this time due to the problem of aluminum availability. As a result, he was steering his clients towards the use of fiberglass windows made by Marvin that simulate a traditional shape but with the use of fiberglass instead of aluminum. He added that the appearance of the fiberglass windows is a bit more modern, but only slightly. Mr. Deerin noted that the Donovan house was more modern anyway with Mr. Kearns adding that it sat further back from the street making it less visible. The only changes made on the house from the last time Mr. Kearns met with the members was the addition of some paneling below the 2 bay windows in the front of the of the house with the copper roof over the windows remaining the same. A dormer over the front door was

made a little wider from what was shown at the last meeting. The second story addition windows would be relatively similar with the upper right side north elevation matching the existing windows. The lower south elevation shows awning windows that would face the accessory structure, which is visible from the public way. The water side elevation showed casement windows with awning windows above with transoms. As for the new addition, the only change would be slight changes in the windows along with a dormer over the front door that has grown a little larger from that which was originally presented. Everything else would remain the same as what was shown last time to the commission. Chairman Costigan stated that he thought the house looked better with the new changes. Overall, the members were agreeable to the new changes as shown.

A second consultation was held with Mr. Kearns to go over an existing garage at 216 South Street that the owner, Ingrid Matuszewski, would like to turn into an art studio. The structure as it exists will remain in the same shape though eventually the owner would like to add something to the back of it. Currently she just asking for some new windows and doors. There would be a 3 panel slider on the side of the garage and a 4 panel slider on the front with a barn door on a real barn door track over top of the front panel slider that faces the street. The idea is that the barn door would close off the studio visually from the street when not in use. Chairman Costigan asked if the façade that faces the street, that would have the barn door, would be used to cover all proposed glass sections of the slider. Mr. Kearns responded that it would only cover 2 of the glass sections. Mrs. Stanley pointed out that the building isn't an historic structure, and that the sliding door was a good alternative when the owner was not working on her art projects. Mr. Deerin stated that he didn't see any problem with the door and the remaining members didn't see any problem with what the owners were looking to do.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Costigan pointed out that he, along with Town Manager, Cheryl Lewis, had been working in the "pincushion area", along the Causeway, in moving the historic district sign to face the road. Along with that, Public Works employee, Michael Carroll, had developed and worked to put in a flower bed around the marker and flagpole thus making the area much more appealing.

With regards to the problem of getting materials in time to finish approved projects, Chairman Costigan felt that people will need to be reminded to keep in touch with the town office to let them know what is going on with their building projects. Manager Lewis stated she would mention this at the next Commissioner's meeting. She felt that a 6 month extension could be given but that the permit applicants would need to ask the office for the extension.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk