

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, October 5, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., via "Zoom" due to the on-going pandemic of a virus known as Covid-19.

Other members participating in the virtual meeting included James Deerin, Suzanne Litty, Jennifer Stanley, Patricia Ingram, and Julie Wells. Also in attendance was Town Manager Cheryl Lewis.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #20-58, David Blanton, 218 S. Morris Street, installation of new window on north side of residence. Mr. Blanton was virtually represented by his contractor, Bruce Harrington. Mr. Harrington explained to the members that Mr. Blanton wanted to install a new window on the rear portion of his house at 218 S. Morris Street. The new window would be placed in a section of the home that is not part of the original structure, along the south wall, in order to let light into a stairwell area. The window would be a modern style, Marvin integrity window with a fiberglass exterior to simulate wood. Mrs. Wells asked if the new window would match any other windows on the house. Mr. Harrington responded that it would be different from those in the front of the house and not 1 over 1s as the owner wanted to inject more light in the back of the house. Mrs. Wells pointed out that the new window was big, at 73" across, with Chairman Costigan adding that it would be 70 ¾" tall. Mrs. Stanley stated she would have appreciated it if the proposed window had been drawn in on the elevation drawings so that the commission could see how it would fit in with the dimensions of the existing windows on the extreme rear of the house. Mr. Harrington responded that it was his understanding that Mr. Blanton had submitted this window in a consultation meeting but that he himself was not sure what happened at that meeting as he was not there. Mrs. Stanley explained that all the commission members expressed concern at that meeting about the style of the proposed window. Mrs. Wells added that all the members agreed the proposed large window didn't match the other windows in the house and that the new one should have some resemblance to the windows on the side of the house and, additionally, the proposed window is very, very large. Mrs. Stanley asked if the new window would be in line with the other window on the upper floor. Mr. Harrington responded the head height would match the same. Mr. Deerin commented that what struck him was that this was an extraordinarily large window that the owner wanted and that the fact that it was being placed in an addition, that was not part of the original structure, didn't mean that it didn't become a piece of the original house as the commission encouraged people to make things fit. He added that the window would be pretty glaring and an obvious deviation from the other windows in the house. He suggested that the owner consider looking into three (3) 3 over 3 windows or two (2) 2 over 2 windows instead. Chairman Costigan also pointed out that the Blanton house and the one next to it are fairly close in their proximity to one another and with this big picture window one would end up with a large window staring out into the house next door at about 1 foot away from it. Again Mrs. Wells stated that the style of new window would not match anything at all on that side of the house. Chairman Costigan

asked Mr. Harrington that because he was not hearing anything positive about the window if he wanted the group to vote on the application or would Mr. Harrington rather go back and talk to his client and ask him to consider scaling down the requested window. Mr. Harrington responded that it sounded like the vote would be negative but he would tell Mr. Blanton what had had been discussed. Chairman Costigan made a motion to approve the installation of a window as shown in the application on the north side of the residence at 218 S. Morris Street. Ms. Litty recused herself from the vote. There was no second made to the motion though a vote was received as follows: James Deerin – nay, Patricia Ingram – nay, Jennifer Stanley – nay, Julie Wells – nay. Chairman Costigan suggested that Mr. Harrington go back and speak to Mr. Blanton and explain to him that the commission was concerned about the size and suggest that he give the commission members an elevation of that entire side of the building so they could see how the window would fit. The application was therefore not approved.

2. Permit #20-59, Bernhard Witter, 213 South St., add two double hung windows to north wall. Mr. Witter was virtually Michael Lynch. Mr. Lynch explained that the front porch of the Witter home was built in the 1800s and had had 3 additions added to it over time. Mr. Witter's plan was to add two (2) windows to flank his fireplace in a living room which has no windows and thus is quite dark. The window would not be as tall as the ones in the front of the house. Chairman Costigan asked if it would just be those 2 windows on almost the rear of the house which Mr. Witter would be adding. Mr. Lynch responded that was correct and that they would be Anderson windows to match the rest of the house with operable shutters, greenish black in color, with no storm windows. Mrs. Wells asked if the new windows would line up with others on the house. Mr. Lynch responded that they would line up with the ones in the river room of the house but not the kitchen and that they would be close to lining up with the ones in the front. Mrs. Litty made a motion to approve the two windows, as presented, to be located in the back of the house. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.
3. Permit #19-61 supplement, Janice Gruber, 200 South St., shutters and shutter color for new home. Mrs. Gruber was virtually represented by Dawn Lednum of Safe Harbor Construction. Ms. Lednum addressed the members offering her apologies for not discussing the color of the shutters with the HDC and explained that custom made shutters had been purchased for this home. Chairman Costigan spoke stating that there were concerns voiced to the town office regarding the size of the shutters as they were being installed. He added that the HDC guidelines were specific as to what size shutters should be and that the ones placed on Mrs. Gruber's new home were too small in his opinion. Ms. Lednum asked if it was just one set of shutters that were a problem or all of them. Chairman Costigan responded that all the shutters were too small. He explained that one needs to measure the window openings, divide that in two, and that would give you the size of shutter needed. Ms. Lednum again stated that the shutters were custom made and could not be sent back. She asked if she could correct them or take them off altogether. Chairman Costigan admitted he did not know what could be done to make them appear visually larger. Mrs. Stanley commented that she did not think there was enough space for larger shutters in some areas. Ms. Lednum asked what others have done in situations such as these. Chairman Costigan stated that if one has a situation whereby a proper size shutter wouldn't fit, one should not put a shutter there and that having a skinny shutter that doesn't look right is worse than not having shutters at all. He added that the façade of the house that faces around the corner was in need of shutters. Ms. Lednum noted that there were several double windows upstairs. Real estate agent Henry Hale, also virtually present and representing Mrs. Gruber, stated that he thought it would be weird having different shaped shutters on the same side of the house. Chairman Costigan agreed adding that he had asked

Ms. Lednum to draw some existing elevations to see where the proper sized shutters could go as the skinny shutters were not working. It was agreed to table the application until the applicant could gather the additional information requested and meet with the commission again.

4. Permit #20-60, David Poe and Constance Vaught, 301 N. Morris St., fill in driveway median with brick, replace grass and dirt where grass does not grow; repair depression in brick patio behind house. Mr. Poe, who was virtually present, explained that his driveway was about 30' long, currently having two brick strips for the tires and what should be a grassy median strip in-between. His request was to fill in the middle section with brick using a different pattern, like that of a herringbone pattern. The other piece of his project was to fill in a sink hole in his existing patio, which would look the same once fixed. Mr. Deerin commented that the patio project sounded like a maintenance repair to him. Mr. Poe agreed as did Chairman Costigan. Chairman Costigan spoke stating that the real issue was the driveway which he himself had struggled with a little bit in that the HDC had encouraged others, in the past, not to do a whole brick driveway. However, this situation was different in that this driveway was leading to a parking location. The other issue was that there were large trees on this property making it difficult to grow grass in the center of the brick strips. Mr. Deerin stated that he thought it was great that Mr. Poe was going to use a different brick design in the middle of the brick driveway and thought it would look better and be more useable for the homeowner. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the application for 301 N. Morris Street to fill-in the driveway median with brick where the grass does not grow, in a pattern different than that of the tire strips. The motion was carried by all in favor.
5. Permit #20-62, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beyer, 105 N. Morris St., demolition of existing garage to be replaced with new garage, same size and location. Residential designer Timothy Kearns was virtually present to discuss the application. Chairman Costigan reminded the members that at their last meeting they had approved the rehab of the existing accessory building. Mr. Kearns spoke stating that after that meeting the contractor had looked at the project and thought it easier and more economical to take the accessory building down and rebuild it as it is with some modifications such as putting 2 x 8's above the existing slab and then replicating the building thus making it about one foot taller from what it had been. Modern windows would be placed where the existing windows had been, which would be 2 over 2's, and then the 3 new windows, which the commission had approved at their last meeting, to be placed on the west elevation, would receive another vertical mullion so they would become 2' wide by 3' high and would be similar in proportion to the double hung windows on the house. Other than that, everything would stay the same. Chairman Costigan asked about the roofing material. Mr. Kearns responded it would be a standing seam metal roof. Mrs. Wells asked if the accessory structure was historic. Mr. Kearns responded he believed it had been built in the 1970's. He also pointed out that the existing garage door would be replicated even though the building was going to be used as a guesthouse and not a garage. Mr. Deerin pointed out that in looking at the proposed east elevation plans it shows the existing garage door to remain, fixed in place, painted white and that for the purposes of having a clear record, it should be revised to reflect the change that it will not be the exact same door. He added that he thought the commission should request that Mr. Kearns update his submission to show what is going to be approved. Mr. Kearns responded he had those sets of corrected drawings. Mr. Deerin responded if the commission could replace what they received with the correct ones Mr. Kearns has, he would be comfortable approving the application at this point. Chairman Costigan stated the commission could approve the demolition of the existing structure and then at the next meeting approve what Mr. Kearns submits. Mr. Kearns responded that the demolition would take place right

away and that he could drop off the revised plans immediately. It was his hope the commission could approve, with the stipulation, that the drawings they have will be updated with what was being discussed at this evening's meeting. Mrs. Wells noted that she thought Mr. Kearns was good for his drawings and that if Mr. Kearns does have the updated plans in his possession, she didn't understand why the commission should stall in approving the application. Mr. Deerin stating he was comfortable in getting an updated set of plans with specifications that the commission talked about this evening and going with that. Mrs. Ingram agreed. Mr. Deerin made a motion regarding 105 N. Morris Street, that the commission approve the demolition of the existing garage and replacement of the existing garage with a new construction building that will be used as a guesthouse that will vary from the drawings that were received by the members of the commission, and, referring to sheet A-2, re. a garage door that will remain in place, will actually be a new garage door. With respect to the south elevation there will be a new window which will be 4 over 4, and there will be a new wooden door as shown on the drawing and then proposed Marvin windows on the west elevation, and finally, on the north elevation, there will be new willows as opposed to maintaining the existing windows, although those windows will be vertically identical to those being replaced and the building itself will be about 1' higher due to the use of modern studs and accommodation of the existing slab. Chairman Costigan stated his only comment was that the new double hung window would be 2 over 2, not 4 over 4 and added to Mr. Deerin's motion that it is all subject to Mr. Kearns furnishing the correct drawings that reflect the changes that Mr. Deerin enumerated. Mr. Deerin accepted the amendment. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor. Chairman Costigan reiterated to Mr. Kearns that the permit was approved but that Mr. Kearns need to get the commission members something on paper that reflected the changes discussed.

6. Permit #20-61, Freiderikos Franke, 104 Factory Street, request for solar shingles on house and 3 solar power wells on accessory structure. Mr. Franke was virtually present to discuss the application. In talking about the roof, Mr. Franke reminded the members that he had previously discussed with them using solar tiles on his roof and was told by the Tesla manufacturer that the shingles would not be reflective. His plan also includes storing his battery station in his garage. Mrs. Wells asked where the power walls were going to be mounted. Mr. Franke responded they would be inside the garage but if they needed to be placed outside, they would be behind the garage where no one could see them. Mr. Deerin noted that that if they ended up being outside, the commission would need to see something showing what it would look like as it would become part of the structure. Mr. Franke agreed he would do that, if the need were to arise. Chairman Costigan stated that if the commission were to approve this request, the town ordinance stated the owner has 6 months to begin the project and asked if Mr. Franke if he saw that as happening. Mr. Franke responded that the Tesla Company would still have to take out their own permit through the town and that installation would start 7 to 90 days from the approval of their application. Town Manager Cheryl Lewis confirmed this was correct and that the application needed to be approved by the town office as well. Chairman Costigan expressed his concerns in approving something he had never seen nor having access to any examples. He added that he did not have any real negative reaction to the application since Mr. Franke stated that he was told the shingles were to be non-reflective. Chairman Costigan made a motion to approve the installation of a solar roof at 208 Factory Street replacing the existing roof and added that if any accompanying mechanical gear that comes with that installation needs to be installed outdoors, the applicant would need to come before the commission again to show where that will be and how it would be screened. Mr. Deerin asked if the color of the shingles would be black. Mr. Franke responded they would more like black with gray, much like asphalt.

Mrs. Wells asked if they came in different colors. Mr. Franke responded “no.” Mr. Deerin suggested that part of the motion should be that should the HDC approve the installation of this roofing material, that it will be black or blackish gray, not some lighter color. Chairman Costigan accepted the addendum to his motion the color be black or black like with a gray tone. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley. Ms. Litty recused herself from voting. The motion was carried in favor by all remaining commission members.

7. Permit #19-40 supplement, Freiderikos Franke, 104 Factory Street, request to paint front door. Mr. Franke stated that the color he chose for his door was a Benjamin Moore color that was the darkest red color he could find and that it was called “Dutch Tulip.” Chairman Costigan asked how that color compared to that of his awnings. Mr. Franke responded that it would be very similar. Mrs. Wells commented that when the commission had talked with Mr. Franke in the past, Mr. Franke had stated the awning color was more like a burgundy color and asked if his door paint would be more like that. Mr. Franke responded that was correct. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission approve the red color, Benjamin Moore, for 208 Factory Street. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried will all in favor.
8. Permit #20-63, Ray and Linda Sattler, 104 Benoni Street, enclose existing first floor back porch by replacing screens and plastic telescoping windows with glass casement windows; install a small wall unit HVAC pump for the room only. Both Mr. and Mrs. Sattler were virtually present to discuss their application. Mr. Sattler spoke stating that he and his wife have an older home with a porch room in the back that is cooler in the winter and hot in the summer. Their plan is to install insulated Anderson windows and an HVAC unit that will heat and cool the room so it can be used year round. The dimensions of the room would not change. Mr. Sattler added that they would also like to replace the color of the front door of the house from the bright orange color that it is now to a softer blue gray color. He also noted that commission member Mr. Deerin had come to the house to look at the area in which changes are to be made. Mr. Deerin stated that the proposed HVAC system would not come out very far from the house and that it would not be able to be seen from the street. Mr. Deerin asked the applicants if the existing door was going to remain in the porch area. Mrs. Sattler responded their plans all to replace it with a door that would look the same but would be insulated and having all glass and that the proposed windows would be casement windows. Mrs. Wells spoke stating that she thought it was a big improvement from what was there and would look great. Chairman Costigan made a motion to approve the application to enclose the back porch by replacing screens and plastic telescoping windows with glass casement windows and install a small wall unit HVAC pump on that room only that is not visible from the street. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor. With regards to the request to change the front door color, Chairman Costigan stated that he did not see a problem with the request but asked that the applicants furnish a paint sample to the town office. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the change of color of the front door to some color of gray with the applicants supplying same to the town office. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously approved with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

CONSULTATION

A virtual consultation was held with Chris Rissmiller with regards to 214 N. Morris Street. Mr. Rissmiller stated that his goal was to make repairs to the building on the property and to keep everything the same. He described some rotten wood issues on the exterior of the house that needed to be repaired along with some gutter repair work and window sills that needed to be replaced, adding that there was

no interest in changing the appearance of the building. Chairman Costigan responded that this sounded more like a maintenance and repair job and that unless visual changes were made, the work could be done without a permit. He added that Mr. Rissmiller should just continue to keep the town office alerted as to what he was doing so that there would be no questions along the way. Chairman Costigan also asked that Mr. Rissmiller consider getting rid of the ivy going up the building to which Mr. Rissmiller responded that he would.

Prior to adjourning, Mrs. Stanley spoke stating that on a recent trip to the town post office she noticed that at the corner Wilson Street and S. Morris Street, the hedge was about 10' high and that something needed to be done about it. Chairman Costigan responded that the HDC did not have jurisdiction there and that it sounded like a safety issue to him. Mrs. Stanley stated there was a town ordinance addressing this issue whereby one has to keep their plants at fence height. Manager Lewis questioned if that was in the current town code, to which Mrs. Stanley responded that this was something past Town Attorney David Thompson had written up and made into a town code. Manager Lewis explained that there was a difference between something in the town code and what the town can address and something may have taken place but that she would look into it.

Chairman Costigan asked about the counting house that seemed to have found its way to the end of Caroline and Morris Street. Manager Lewis stated that that was going to be its new home and that it was on town property, at the Causeway, where the watermen are located, and that they were accepting of it. She added that it would face the road and that the Oxford Museum will be coming up with signage to attach to it. The plan calls to have electricity run to it so that it could maybe be used for something and will have screening to hide the electric box when it is installed. The town also has the hoist part of the structure that they may be able to install to it. Mrs. Wells commented that there is a great amount of history attached to the building and she was glad that it had found its new home.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk