

## OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, September 14, 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 members James Deerin, Suzanne Litty, Jennifer Stanley, Patricia Ingram, and Julie Wells. Also in attendance was Town Administrator Cheryl Lewis.

The minutes of the meeting of August 3, 2020 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #20-51, David Blanton, 218 S. Morris St., install tank-less, Novien boiler and 100 gallon, above ground gas tank; add fencing around gas tank. Commission member Suzanne Litty recused herself from the discussion noting that she is working with Mr. Blanton. Alternate member Julie Wells was brought in to fill-in for Ms. Litty. Mr. Blanton and his wife were both virtually present at the meeting. Mr. Blanton explained that he was looking to update his house. In presenting his application, Mr. Blanton stated that the gas tank was to supply fuel to his boiler and that it would be hidden in his yard by an acceptable fence and plantings. The boiler would be inside the house, located within a utility room. It would be vented with a white plastic PVC intake which would be very small and not visible from the street. It too would be hidden behind the proposed fencing. The gas tank itself would be located within a notch behind the front of the house and would not be visible from the street. Mr. Deerin asked about what kind of fencing would be used to hide the tank. Mr. Blanton responded that that it would be similar to Oxford picket fencing, painted white and with or without the Oxford style hole in the top center of it. Mr. Deerin responded that either was fine and that the commission did not mandate the particular type and that he just wanted to make sure that the application was approved with what was submitted. Chairman Costigan noted that he was fine with what was submitted and that if the homeowner decides he wants to go with the Oxford picket style, that would be fine as the main objective was to hide the gas tank. Mrs. Stanley questioned the height of the fencing. Administrator Cheryl Lewis spoke stating that in cases such as this, whereby the fencing is only being used to camouflage a specific utility element, the fencing could exceed 4' in height. Mr. Deerin made a motion that the HDC approve the installation of a 100 gallon above ground gas tank at 218 S. Morris Street to be shielded by appropriate Oxford style fencing or white picket fencing as shown in the application. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and carried with all in favor. The commission moved ahead with Mr. Blanton's desire for a consultation to go over a number of changes he would like to see done to his house, starting first with a front portico. Mr. Blanton presented a neo-classical portico that he had drawn up for the commission's review noting that there would be no change in the color scheme and that it would be constructed of wood. Mr. Deerin asked if the trim color was going to be the same as the window trim on the side of the house. Mr. Blanton responded that it would be the same and that the side lights would remain the same. The only change would possibly be some new hardware on the front door. No objections were made by the members regarding the proposal

of the front portico. Discussion continued with Mr. Blanton's desire to install a new window on the south side of his house along the front of his stairwell. He explained that he was looking to install a large 6 x 6 Anderson window with wood interior as he was looking for the window to give a substantial amount of light upstairs in the stair hall and stairwell. Chairman Costigan pointed out that in a photo included in Mr. Blanton's packet it showed a small window that appeared to have the stringers for a stairwell passing in front of it. He asked if the new window would be going above that or if that old window would just go away. Mr. Blanton responded that the old window would go away because it was mostly obscured by the stairwell and that the new window would appear above it. Mr. Deerin pointed out that Mr. Blanton's house was a contributing structure and asked if most of the windows in the house were 2 over 2. Mr. Blanton responded that they were. Mr. Deerin then asked if the small window Mr. Blanton wanted to remove was a new window. Mr. Blanton responded that that it was and that there was no architectural distinction in that part of the house where he wanted to remove that small window and install the larger window. Mr. Deerin stated that the window Mr. Blanton wanted to install would not be in keeping with any other windows in the house. Mr. Blanton retorted that that was correct but that the rear addition in his house was not in keeping with the rest of house. Mr. Deerin expressed his opinion that the new 6 by 6 window should be more consistent with the windows that are in the old section of the house adding that the new window was more like a picture window on the second story. He then offered a possibility of installing two new 2 over 2 windows, side by side, to maintain some consistency when one looks at both the old and new sections of the house along the entire south wall to compensate for a big picture window popping out on that side. Mr. Blanton responded that he would be open to that idea adding that he wanted as much light as possible and suggested maybe he could even have three, 2 over 2 windows whereby he could match the windows that are in the front façade. Chairman Costigan spoke stating that Mr. Blanton had been given some doable options and since this was just a consultation they should all move along to the next idea for the north façade. Mr. Blanton explained that on this façade he would like to build a portico with a simple roof over an existing landing at the top of steps and include a railing. An existing down spout would need to be reconfigured and moved. With the portico, Mr. Blanton stated he would like just a simple glass door there with no sidelights. This would not be visible from the street and the roof of the portico would tie in with the roof above. No negative comments were received from the commission members regarding the portico discussion. The final piece of the consultation regarded the rear façade of the house. Mr. Blanton explained that there was a deck coming off of the master bedroom which he wanted to incorporate into a two-story portico with a roof above to keep out the rain and a floor above grade on the first story. Presently the bottom of this porch is at grade with brick and sand. Mr. Blanton stated that his desire is to have a genuine porch there. He added that this area could not be seen from the street. Mr. Deerin stated that this request was not one involving any real changes and that basically the owner just wanted to leave what was there and, as such, he noted that he did not have a problem with the request. Chairman Costigan added that it sounded like a nice change. Mr. Blanton expressed his concern of having approval for these items delayed. Chairman Costigan explained to Mr. Blanton that they were meeting with him in consultation only as a building permit(s) had not been submitted for any of the changes Mr. Blanton was seeking. He explained to Mr. Blanton that he would need to submit a building permit application and that the commission would be meeting again the first Monday in October. This concluded the consultation with Mr. Blanton.

2. Permit #20-52, Analipsi, LLC, 200 West St., proposed revisions to overall roof design and dormers of the accessory structure as was previously submitted to the HDC and approved. Architect Christine Dayton was virtually present to discuss the application. She stated that the owner is proposing to revise the roofline of his new accessory structure to accommodate some

of his equipment and to provide more fenestration to the structure. Chairman Costigan stated that the biggest change he noticed was the enlargement of the dormers on the West Street façade. Ms. Dayton responded that the plans do call for the elimination of a hip type structure so that there would now be two (2) gable ends vs. the roof being the same on all four sides. Changes involved having a gable end to the south of the neighboring property and a gable end towards the owner's main house along with changes to the dormers towards the street. Chairman Costigan asked about an added door as well on the north façade. Ms. Dayton responded the new door would be used to get to the equipment that would be housed within the accessory building. Ms. Dayton added that she and the owner felt that the changes being presented were in keeping with other structures in Oxford and complimentary. Mr. Deerin asked if any kind of sample of the Tesla roofing shingles had been made available. Ms. Dayton responded that she had submitted documentation from the manufacturer but had not been able to obtain from Tesla an actual physical sample. She could only note that they would be black glass, 30" long, and be staggered like a shaped shingle when installed. Mr. Deerin expressed his concern that he was worried the installation of the solar shingles may not look aesthetically pleasing once installed. Ms. Dayton reminded the commission members that the material for the roofing had already been approved. Mr. Deerin pointed out that the original roof shape was going to be that of a mansard roof so that it would be flat on the top with the sides going down. Ms. Dayton noted that none of pitches would change, adding that Tesla shingles would be on the dormers instead of standing seam roofing but that the roofing on the portico would remain with having a standing seam metal roof. Discussion went around again about the use of the Tesla shingles. Chairman Costigan reminded the members that they had already approved the use of those shingles and therefore there was no need to continue with any discussion revolving around the use of solar shingles. Chairman Costigan put forth a motion to the commission to approve the alterations to the existing application which had already been approved for 200 West Street including the change in the shape of the dormers facing West Street, the change to the removal of the metal roof on the dormers, and the addition of a door on the south side. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.

3. Permit #20-54, Cameron Mactavish, 102 Caroline Street, construct 8' x 10' deck with ¼" gaps between boards on P.T. sleepers and porous gravel; construct Eco-paver driveway tracks and apron in front of garage. Mr. Mactavish was virtually present to discuss his application. Mr. Mactavish addressed the members stating that the proposed decking would consist of spaced board made of a manmade material that would look like hardwood, built on sleepers, and not easily visible from the street. In addition to that a porous driveway has been proposed to be built with tow (2) tire strips made by Ecopaver, a product which is 10 % porous. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission accept the presentation for 102 Caroline Street to construct an 8' x 20' deck with gaps in between built on sleeps and porous gravel and Ecopaver driveway. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.
4. Permit #20-55, Donald and Megan Beyer, 105 N. Morris Street, transfer existing garage to gueshouse. Timothy Kearns was virtually present to discuss the application. Mr. Kearns explained that the owners own a garage that they would like to convert into a guesthouse. The garage is located behind the owner's home, on the water side. The change would involve creating a single room with a bathroom with the biggest change involving the addition of three (3) picture windows on the west elevation and a new entrance door on the south side. The materials would remain as existing except for the new windows and door. The garage barn door will stay the same and remain in place. The façade of the west side of the house has single windows with true divided light and the guesthouse will have single pan slides. Chairman Costigan noticed that in looking at the drawings it looked as though the roof of the guesthouse would have a metal standing seam roof that is not on the roof now and asked if that was

correct. Mr. Kearns responded that it may or may not go there and that it might just remain with the shingles. It was agreed to leave it with the building just having the shingles for now but that it could be amended later if the owner's decide to make that change. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the application to 105 N. Morris Street to basically convert the existing garage to a guesthouse involving placing picture windows on the west side of the existing garage and adding a door. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously approved with all in favor.

5. Permit #20-56, Freiderikos Franke, 208 Factory St., window awnings and pergola. Both Mr. Franke and his residential designer Timothy Kearns were virtually present to explain the application. Mr. Kearns explained that the application calls for five (5) pergola shapes along a walkway and the placement of awnings on the west and south facing windows. Mr. Franke spoke stating that the pergola shapes were more like trellises as he wanted roses to grow over them. In discussing the awnings, Mr. Franke offered a visual of what he was looking to create. He explained that the awnings would be a special order created with thin metal which would curve around. He adding that they were needed for protection from the strong light and sun coming in through the windows as well as to break up the house and give it color. The awnings would be placed just on the main house and not the garage. Mr. Deerin expressed his concern with the color red that Mr. Franke had chosen for the awnings as he found it to be too jarring. Mrs. Wells asked if Mr. Franke had a sample of the red to which Mr. Franke responded that he did not. Both Mrs. Wells and Mr. Deerin made a point about the color red chosen for the awning color. Chairman Costigan spoke stating that beside the color issue, he and the owner had talked about Mr. Franke's house as being designed by the architect Hugh Jacobson and Mr. Jacobson's style of creating stark looking houses. As such, he felt the architect wouldn't be crazy about the awnings being placed on the house. Mr. Franke reminded the commission Mr. Jacobson didn't own the house. Mr. Kearns added that the house wasn't actually designed by Mr. Jacobson himself. Mr. Deerin explained that he liked the awnings and that it was just the color he had issues with. He added that he would just like to see a sample of the color. Mrs. Stanley agreed that a color sample would be good but that she wouldn't disapprove it over a color. The commission suggested that Mr. Franke send a color sample over to Assistant Clerk Lisa Willoughby for her to get to the members for approval. Mr. Franke agreed to the request. Chairman Costigan made a motion to approve the pergola like structures that would line the front walkways as well as the awnings, subject to the homeowner providing the commission with a color sample. Mr. Deerin asked for the specifics on which windows would receive the awnings. Mr. Franke responded that there would be three (3) on the first floor, four (4) on the second floor, and over the 3 windows on the side of the house where the kitchen is located as shown on attached plan SP2. Chairman Costigan amended the motion to stipulate that there would be 10 awnings in total. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley by a vote of 5, with Ms. Litty refraining from the vote as she was working with Mr. Franke.
6. Permit #20-69, Thomas and Anne Demarco, 404 S. Morris St., rear two story addition and two story front porch. Virtually present to discuss the application were Mr. and Mrs. Demarco along with their architect, Christian Shute. Mr. Shute explained that the project would be broken down into two phases. Phase 1 consisted of a request to add on to the back of the west elevation a 15' x 15' addition with a first floor sunroom and bedroom above. Phase 2 would consist of a first floor front porch with a second story porch above it. Ms. Litty questioned if there was any room to add a porch onto the front of the house. Mr. Shute responded that the porch would be 6' deep and that the owners would be getting rid of their driveway. Chairman Costigan voiced his concern over the removal of the off-street parking in order to create the porch to which Mr. Shute responded that he had already discussed this with Town Administrator Cheryl Lewis. Ms. Litty pointed out that there weren't any double porches in the front of any houses in the historic district. Mr. Shute, in turn, pointed out that 106 E. Strand had

double front porches while Mrs. Demarco stated that her house want not an historic house. Ms. Litty agreed that the first floor porch would look better but added only without the balcony on top of it. Mrs. Demarco stated she liked the symmetry of the design, that she did not like a roof coming down as a shed roof, and that this design would create a more elegant appearance. Mrs. Stanley went back to the comments made on the Phase 1 portion of the project stating that there was not enough of a stepdown with the proposed addition to the back of the house and that it made the house look like one big wall of a building. She firmly stated that the tradition in Oxford has been that there is a stepdown when one does an addition. Mr. Shute responded with saying that the Demarcos were concerned with keeping within the historic district guidelines of showing the definite transition of existing and new which was why they made sure to step down a foot from the existing roof. He added that if they were to come down any further, the bearing height would come down a little thus affecting the addition's proposed cathedral ceiling. Dr. Demarco spoke stating that his home was a ¾ home and that the upper floor was a finished loft. He added that the addition that he and his wife were proposing would be lower than the house as it would step down. Though the house did look flat in the back, Dr. Demarco pointed out that it was no fault of his because he didn't build it. He stressed that the addition would be in the back and from the front it would not be seen. Mr. Shute added that the house was only 16' wide and the addition would be pulled in a little bit. Mr. Deerin asked about the windows on the addition and if they would be 4 small panes over 1 big pane. Mr. Shute responded that was correct --- on both the back and sides. Mr. Deerin pointed out that the drawing showed that on the side of the house it showed just 1 pane. Mr. Shute responded that the copy may not have printed out correctly and confirmed that it would be 4 small panes over 1. He added that on the plan page labeled as hdc203, the owners were hoping that the HDC would be amendable to an alternate version of the gable in which they would use board and batten. Chairman Costigan responded that would be the homeowner's call and that it was really not visible from the street. Mr. Shute asked if they would have to come back before the group for any ruling over what color they chose to paint the addition. Chairman Costigan responded that the commission would work with them so that they would not have to come back. Mr. Deerin brought up the lowering of the rear addition as well. Dr. Demarco again explained that the addition as shown had already been lowered as much as it could be. Mrs. Stanley felt that a foot was not much of a change. Dr. Demarco again explained that the house was very narrow and that they didn't have that much to work with nor did he feel it could be lowered it any further. He added that his home wasn't an older home and that because of the narrowness of the home making it step down any further made the whole project not worth doing and that with a narrow home, having additional ceiling height made a big difference. Mr. Shute also added that the proposed windows would have to be changed if they needed to bring the addition down as the windows would need to be made smaller. In an effort to move things along, Chairman Costigan made a motion to approve the rear two story addition at 404S. Morris Street as shown on the documents submitted with the application. An approving vote was made of 4 to 1 with one negative vote received by Mrs. Stanley. Moving back to the discussion of the proposed work in the front of the house, Mr. Shute explained the owner's desire to create a porch on the front of the house with a second floor porch above it. A brick veneer would be used on the bottom with Azek wrapped polyurethane 6" columns. Ms. Litty stated she was agreeable with the lower porch but not the second floor porch as she found it to be too much for that part of the neighborhood. Mr. Deerin agreed stating that a single porch would be find and keeping with the block but that the ascension did not fit the streetscape and would not be in keeping with the area in which the Demarcos lived nor Oxford in general. Mr. Shute asked if the commission would consider two story front porch addition without a third railing on top. Chairman Costigan replied that he doubted it but that the commission was favorable of a single story front porch. He further added that when one adds a

second story porch and railing on top, it makes it all too busy. In closing the discussion, Chairman Costigan stated that if they were to come back with a single story porch addition, the thought is that the commission would look favorable on that. However, he did add that he could put the second story porch to a vote, if that was what they wanted. Chairman Costigan's own view was that he was having trouble with the Charleston style porches that one doesn't have in Oxford, especially on a front façade. The owners decided to go back to the drawing board on his feature and bring it up at a later time. Chairman Costigan reiterated that the owners were approved for the rear and addition and that discussion of the plans for the front of the house would be revisited at a later date.

This concluded the review of the building permits.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Residential designers Timothy Kearns, as well as potential purchasers, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mueller, were virtually present to discuss with the commission their plans to build on the vacant lot at 210 Tilghman Street. Mr. Kearns explained that the lot very narrow and that the prospective purchasers were looking at building a house with an accessory structure, swimming pool, and dock. Mr. Kearns referred the members to an aerial photo and site plan as created by Lane Engineering. The desire is to pull the house towards the street thus creating a little more protection within the critical area buffer. Also provided was a sketched out plan showing a typical Oxford style gable home with eaves facing Tilghman Street and having a one story front porch telescoping to the back with a bay window facing the east and a two story porch facing the water. Materials would consist of Hardi-plank shingles, 2 over 2 windows, standing seam roofing, and functional shutters. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that the contract purchasers were headed in the right direction with regards to their plans. Mr. Deerin commented that he found the proposed plan to be a good one for the size of the lot. The other members agreed and encouraged Mr. Kearns to continue along with the route in which he was going.

Residential designer Timothy Kearns along with HDC member Julie Wells and her husband, Brian Wells, also virtually present, presented plans to make changes to the Wells' home at 205A N. Morris Street. Mr. Wells spoke stating that their house, known as The Academy House, had certain appendages that weren't so beautiful, namely a sunroom (possibly built in the 1980's) and garage. He explained that he and his wife would like to remove the existing sunroom structure, which has a series of structural problems, and replace it with something in order to create a sunroom/orangery that they could use all year round. Mr. Kearns spoke stating that the roof of the existing sunroom impeded the clearance from one of the windows on the existing house and that the new design would solve that issue. He added that in order to replicate the architecture as it exists on the house, the new addition would do just that in the shape of a solarium. The south façade would describe the height of the house itself as viewed from the rear with plasters that would be 2 stories high. The first floor roof would still be evident. Mrs. Wells spoke stating that it was important to both she and her husband to keep the integrity of the house and expose the beautiful lines that were there once before. Ms. Litty commented that she liked the plan. Mr. Deerin asked about the entry to the garage. Mr. and Mrs. Wells stated that it was not their intention to change the garage at this time other than maybe removing the siding on it and replacing it with Hardie plank. Chairman Costigan also stated that he too liked the design but had a question concerning color. He noted that this was a lovely, "A" list, historic home, with a garage built in the 1940's having a structure connected to it. He asked if any thought had been given to the painting of that connecting structure with a dark color, possibly with a color that would match the shutters, so that the connecting structure would almost visibly disappear. He also wondered aloud that if the orangery/solarium was built and completed, would overshadow the main house. Mrs. Wells stated she was concerned with painting any part of it building a dark shade and would be more in favor of white as

opposed to black. As a whole, the committee members looked favorably on what the Wells were planning on creating. Discussion ended with the couple stating they would think about the colors.

A third consultation was held with virtually present property owners of 102 E. Strand, Bartley Eckhardt and Bonnie Johnson. The couple spoke stating that the house they had purchased was a cute Cape Cod cottage, built in the 1930's, and that their desire was to fix it up in order to make it more authentic to the era. Their plans included adding two (2) partial shed dormers, much like those found on the Barnaby House at 212 N. Morris St., and to ask for a cottage type, 3 over 1, window, like one they had seen on a similar house, also built in the 1930's, in Cambridge. Chairman Costigan pointed out that the commission only had a north side elevation for reference so that they would just be focusing on that. Mr. Deerin stated that in terms of the proposal for the north elevation, he liked the design and look. Mrs. Stanley expressed some dismay over the choice of the use of a 3 over 1 window. Overall, the commission looked favorably at what the couple was proposing and the front façade plan they had seen.

The last consultation was with Administrator Cheryl Lewis who was representing the Town to give an update on The Mews. She explained that the Commissioners were going in a new direction after having someone bid on the building but failing to negotiate in a way that was agreeable to what the Town wanted to see take place with the building. Currently the Commissioners are working to figure out what the cost of bringing the building into a rentable condition would be and specifically looking at the two wings on the first floor only that were covered in the original design. Her purpose in the meeting with the HDC was to show them what the Town was looking at as far as construction drawings and costs and to get some input from them on the design. The second floor of the building would just be 2 apartments. New Commissioner, Jimmy Jaramillo, also virtually present at the meeting, asked about the apartments and whether they would just be for young professionals or anyone in general. Administrator Lewis responded they were just apartments at this point with the desire to just create a building that is rentable. Mrs. Stanley asked if there would be an elevator. Administrator Lewis responded that was something that still needed to be figured out.

Prior to the close of the meeting, Chairman Costigan addressed the members and informed them it was time to choose a new Chairman. Without much ado, Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission keep their current Chairman, Mr. Thomas Costigan. Mr. Deerin seconded the motion which was unanimously carried with no further discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby  
Assistant Clerk