

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

OCTOBER 3, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, James Deerin, on Monday, October 3, 2022, in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Julie Wells, Suzanne Litty, Patricia Ingram, Jennifer Stanley, and new alternate member, Terry Sullivan. Also in attendance was Town Planner, Maria Brophy.

The minutes of the meeting of September 1, 2022 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #22-80, Richard Schramm, 208 S. Morris Street, remove unsafe brick porch floor and replace with A-Tech synthetic wood grained gray flooring. Mr. Schramm explained that his existing brick front porch, which was a later addition to his home, was experiencing serious cracking and that the foundation had gone bad. His plan was to remove it and replace it with gray A-Tech, a synthetic wood grained material, which would create the look of traditional flooring. The brick steps leading up to the porch and would be replaced to match the flooring material. The existing columns would remain the same. Mrs. Wells made a motion that the commission grant Richard Schramm at 208 S. Morris Street approval for a replacement porch made with A-Tech wood grain, in the color gray. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.
2. Permit #22-79, Susan Haggerty, 206 South Street, extension of fence; 4' high wood picket painted white. Mrs. Haggerty explained to the members that she currently has fencing in the back of her property and was looking to extend it further on the north side, ending with a section that would go in, towards her house, but not all the way to the end, so as to allow people to move in and out of the yard freely. The new fencing would match the existing fencing, which is white, picket fencing. She explained that the reason for the additional fencing was because her neighbors were complaining that her bushes were interfering with their driveway. The new fencing would not contain a gate and would be 6" off the property line. Chairman Deerin made a motion to approve the application for Susan Haggerty at 206 South Street for the extension of a white picket fence, 4' in height, along the northside of her home as shown on the application. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram. Mrs. Stanley suggested that the motion add that the fencing will be 6" from the lot line. Chairman Deerin amended the motion to include that the fencing will be 6" off the north property line. The motion was then unanimously carried with all in favor.
3. Permit #22-81, 202 Bank, LLC, 202 Banks Street, installation of free standing monument 20; installation of building sign. Pete Dierks, Marina Manager and Jessica Hickey, Office Manager, were both present to discuss the application. Mr. Dierks explained that the free standing sign dimensions would be 40" x 72" and would be visible at an angle from Banks and Wilson Street

and that it would be similar in appearance to the Vanguard Bank sign at the corner of Wilson and Factory Street. Chairman Deerin asked if there would be a frame around the sign. Ms. Hickey responded that there would not with Mr. Dierks adding that it would not be set on the ground. Chairman Deerin noted that the Historic District Commission did not have much say over maritime commercial property and the discussion was more advisory in nature. Town Planner Maria Brophy spoke stating that the application would need to go through zoning review for approval. Chairman Deerin noted that he had looked at other commercial signage of all kinds around town and thought the boatyard needed to have a sign to advertise their business and that the historic commission should encourage that. Mrs. Stanley stated that she thought there was a lot of blue at the base of the sign to which Chairman Deerin pointed out that this was (after all) a sign for a boat business. Mrs. Stanley replied that she just did not like all the "dead blue space". Planner Brophy noted that there were height requirements that the office will need to look at along with square footage requirements so that the size of the sign may have to change in order meet the zoning code. Chairman Deerin noted that if the size had to change, maybe the owners could take into consideration Mrs. Stanley's comments. Chairman Deerin made a motion that with respect to the 202 Bank Street, LLC application to install a free standing sign in front of the building at 202 Banks Street, as shown on the plan attached to the application as well as the graphic design of the sign itself, with the understanding that the commission is only dealing with the standing sign, that the commission approve that application subject to the agreement that if the zoning requires the applicant to reduce the square footage of the sign in order to meet those requirements, that the applicant would consider taking it off the bottom of the sign and put it up on white stanchions. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.

4. Permit #22-78, Ellie Kelepouris, 207 Tred Avon Avenue, demolish existing deck and install new 10' x 16' impervious deck with 5' trellis to screen HVAC units. Ms. Kelepouris was represented by her landscape architect, Jennifer Connoley. Ms. Connoley explained that the plans call for the removal of an existing deck to be replaced with a pervious deck made from composite material that would be porch gray in color, as well as replacing a dilapidated Halo gate with a similar gate made of white composite material. Pictures were included with the application to show what the finished plan would look like. Ms. Connoley added that the applicant has an existing fencing that wraps around her existing HVAC units which she would like to remove and replaces with a low trellis that would screen the HVAC from the deck along with including little gate in order to get in and out of the fenced-in area. The new deck would be almost twice the size of the existing deck, but it would be pervious. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to approve the plan for the pervious deck and trellis at 207 Tred Avon Avenue along with the screening of the HVAC units. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.
5. Permit #22-83, Christopher Rissmiller, 214 N. Morris Street, replace 3 windows in rear; construct new back porch. Mr. Rissmiller, along with his contractor Victor MacSorely, were present to discuss the application. Mr. Rissmiller explained that he was the new owner of the property which was previously owned by his mother. A permit had been issued to him some time back for work to be done on the back porch but that only resulted in the porch being ripped out and not replaced. The plans call for a new back porch area along with one replacement window in the dormer with a 2 over 2 window to match the other dormer window in the rear of the building. Two (2) rotten windows in the rear of the building to the right of the proposed back

porch also need to be removed and replaced. Chairman Deerin noted that it looked like the new porch in the back, off the kitchen, would be 8' x 10'. Mr. MacSorely noted that that was correct and that it would serve as a transition from the house into the yard, with 2 steps coming off of it. Mr. MacSorely added that the rear wing had been added to the house at some point and was not part of the original brick portion of the building. The back porch would have a shed roof with asphalt shingles matching the overall building. When asked about what kind of columns would be used on the porch, Mr. Rissmiller responded that he thought they would be camper 5x5 wooden posts. The material on the side of the porch would have vertical siding. Chairman Deerin summed up what the applicant was presenting for approval which included replacing the window of the left dormer with a 2 over 2 window, replacing the 2 windows on the first floor, on the right side facing the rear of the house, and the construction of a deck with a roof and a set of steps. Mrs. Wells made a motion that the commission approve the items as listed by Chairman Deerin. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.

6. Permit #22-61, Suzanne Beyda, 223 S. Morris Street, continuation of permit to complete the installation of hair pin fencing along the back of the property; total height 3'. Chairman Deerin noted that this was the 3rd time Ms. Beyda was coming before the commission and that the commission members were hopeful for a resolution. He recapped that the neighbors behind Ms. Beyda's property were concerned about having this type of fencing in the back and were not able to come to an agreement. He added that the commission needed to consider the application itself and get it off the agenda. Mrs. Wells spoke stating that she stood behind her objection that Ms. Beyda should replace the wire fencing she installed with wood and that a metal fence is not within the guidelines. Mrs. Ingram voiced her agreement with Mrs. Wells statement. Chairman Deerin spoke stating that the guidelines should have more information about fences and currently only lists 3 kinds of fences that are prohibitive. These includes post and rail/split rail, chain link, and stockade fencing. Those are specifically not permitted. The guidelines also mention typical Oxford wood fences, picket fencing, and other fencing of that nature. It was Chairman Deerin's thought that there was room for other types of fences that the commission has approved in the past such as different kinds of wire fencing found on different properties in town. Mrs. Stanley noted there were other places in town where wire fencing was evident in side yards. She added that she did not think it was fair to read into the guidelines that wire fencing of this type was not permitted as it did not fall into the prohibitive category and that though there may be preferences, in her opinion, preferences deal with front yard fences. In this case, she pointed out that the commission was dealing with a backyard where the existing side fences in Ms. Beyda's yard already had the wire double loop hair pin fencing. She went on to add that many years ago there had been a discussion about fencing, particularly side yard fencing as compared to front yard fencing and having to do with what people were permitted to do along their side yards. She remembered this as being an open town meeting with the lawyer and that it was generally concluded that fencing, along with the maximum height for fencing, was for the front yard so that the town had a consistent streetscape but what people did with their side yard didn't have much jurisdiction. Mrs. Stanley added that she agreed with what Chairman Deerin had concluded and how he read the direction in the guidelines. Mrs. Wells responded that in Ms. Beyda's case, she had already had a picket fence in the back of her yard and felt that needed to come into consideration as that was what

was more appealing to her neighbor. Chairman Deerin pointed out that if the neighbors behind Ms. Beyda's house were plant bushes to block the wire fencing, it wouldn't be an issue and that only about 20' of the wire fencing was visible from the neighboring property. He reminded the members that they had discussed letting the neighbors construct a piece of fencing to block the wire fencing but that resulted in an issue as to whose property would house the wooden fencing. Ms. Beyda spoke stating that the picket fencing that had been in her backyard was unpainted and "wonky". John Yates, the neighbor behind Ms. Beyda's property and who was present at the meeting, asked if there were any other considerations the commission might have other than a distinction between a front facing fences and a side facing fences. Chairman Deerin responded that the fence height is ruled by the Oxford Zoning Ordinance and only fencing 4' or below is legal under the zoning but that he did not remember the commission ever being concerned about the height. Mr. Yates responded that when he and his wife built their home, there were many considerations about items that were street facing and side facing and wondered if the same thought process was given to fences that can be seen from the street. Chairman Deerin responded that in this case, the 20' section of Ms. Beyda's wire fencing was visible from the Yates' patio and could be seen from South Street and that was a consideration. However, the rest of her fencing consists of double loop galvanized hair pin fencing, except for the fencing she has in her front yard, facing onto Morris Street. Mrs. Wells asked if the double loop galvanized hair pin fencing would ever be allowed in the front of a property. Chairman Deerin responded that the commission could approve that, if they wanted to, but the intent/philosophy of the guidelines addressed in more detail the street front facing fencing as opposed to the back yards and that the fencing should have balance. Mrs. Stanley noted that she liked the double loop as it had always there between her church property and Ms. Beyda's property and that she liked the see through quality about it. Audience member Susan Haggerty spoke stating that she wished she could have put a chain link fence in her backyard as it was so small and thought the commission should be careful about changing the look of the town. She added that she had spent a lot of money keeping all her fencing wood. In looking over the plat of the Yates' property, Mrs. Stanley pointed out that the Yates' propane tanks were located off their property and into the neighbor's property. Chairman Deerin explained that Ms. Beyda's fence is about 1 to 2 ft. inside of her property line and runs at an angle. In order for a 20' picket fence to be put in, it would have to be placed on Ms. Beyda's property and that she had already discussed in a past meeting that she is not willing to have that. The alternative would be for the Yates to install 20' of fencing facing outwards towards them that would shield the wire fencing from their patio but in doing so there would be a gap between the 2 fences and that that discussion proposal in the past was found not be an agreeable option. Mrs. Stanley responded that there may be other ways around this if the Yates were wanting some privacy. Mr. Yates responded to Mrs. Stanley's comment by stating that it had more to do with appearance than privacy. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission give Suzanne Beyda permission to build her wire fence to connect the north and south sides of her fencing with double loop hairpin wire fencing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty. The motion was carried by a vote of 3 to 2 with the following vote: Jennifer Stanley – aye; Suzanne Litty – aye; Julie Wells – nay; Patricia Ingram – nay; James Deerin – aye.

7. Permit #22-84, Ingrid Matuszewski, 216 South Street, add new doors and windows to existing she and transform into art studio; renovate exterior finishes; install HVAC unit. Residential

designer Timothy Kearns was present to go over the application. Mr. Kearns reminded the members that he had presented his drawings pertaining to this proposal in a previous meeting as a consultation. The accessory building would remain with its existing configuration. Three doors will be added to the east elevation with barn doors, hung on a hanging rolling system, that can be opened and closed to cover the glass doors to give the look of an accessory building with barn doors. On the north side, there will be a full pane window unit. The building itself will be used as an art studio. The windows to be added on the south side will not be visible from the public way and they will be single, double hung with 2 fixed panels up high so as to allow for space under them. All exteriors will remain as existing. Potentially, there may be an a/c unit added to the west side which would be a split system mounted on the interior wall. Chairman Deerin asked if the opening front sliding door would be the same size as the existing door. Mr. Kearns responded that it was intended to be but when ordered, the owner could only get one that was 10" wider but that the height would remain the same. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission approve the application for the new doors and windows to the existing shed at 216 South Street in accordance with the plans submitted with the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

CONSULTATION

A consultation was held with residential designer Timothy Kearns, who was representing the new property owner at 103 Tred Avon Avenue, Denise Bloomfield. Mr. Kearns explained that Ms. Bloomfield was looking to install a swimming pool with a pool house in the rear of the property and to change the design of the existing house from what Mr. Kearns had originally shown the members in a consultation format when the previous owner, Thomas Skowron, still owned the property. Chairman Deerin stated that his reaction to what was being shown was that the combination of the new pool and pool house looked to be almost the same size as the house and too big for the backyard. Mrs. Stanley noted that the house was totally vernacular as opposed to the pool house, which was elaborate and together with the house created a "country house meets a city pool" overall appearance. Mrs. Wells agreed adding that the pool house was much too modern looking. Overall, the commission verbalized their concerns over the modern look of the pool house along with their desire to see something less massive.

Prior to adjourning, a question was raised about the number of applications appearing before the board at this evening's meeting. Planner Brophy reminded the members that their limit was 7 building permit applications and that was what they had.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk