

## OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

JUNE 3, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairperson, Jennifer Stanley, on Monday, June 3, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, Margaret Morris, Justin Werner, Terry Sullivan and James Wilcox.

The minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2024, were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

- Permit #24-40, Richard Schramm, 208 S. Morris Street, replace 2 HVAC units and air handlers. Mr. Schramm explained that he wanted to replace his existing HVAC system and was originally planning on shielding the units from sight by using siding that would match the house. However, he informed the members that he has since decided not to use that but instead use picket fencing that would match the fencing between his house and the house at 208 S. Morris Street. The fencing will be slightly higher than the unit in order to hide it. The application was changed to reflect the proposed change in screening materials. Mr. Wilcox made a motion that the commission approve the application to replace the existing HVAC units and install screening at 208 S. Morris Street with the understanding the screening added will be white picket fencing, with the same dimensions, color, and configuration of the existing fencing on the side of the property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sullivan and unanimously approved with all in favor.
- Permit #24-34, Tim Boyle and Anne Ruecktenwald, 104 N. Morris Street, replacement of 2 hat pump systems and discussion of house colors. Tim Boyle, his wife Anne Ruecktenwald, and architect Philip Logan, along with the HVAC contractor, were all present to discuss the application. Mr. Logan explained the couple were going from 2 units to 3 units which would be set back 18" from the property line. Mr. Wilcox asked about the screening for the units. Mr. Logan responded that that units could not be seen and therefore there were no plans to screen them. Mr. Boyle elaborated further that his plan is to install a garage in the back and that they did not want to extend their existing fence any further into the back yard area. Mr. Werner made a motion to approve the placement of the HVAC units on the back of 104 N. Morris Street as submitted without any screening. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sullivan and unanimously carried with all in favor. The group then reviewed the property owners request for house colors. Samples were presented with the first being a yellow sample for the house referred to as "Lemon Souffle." Chairperson Stanley asked if any investigative work had been done to find out what the original color of the house was. Mr. Logan responded that the forensic work done on the house showed that the existing siding had been a dirty white or taupe color. The age of the house given was 1885. Other colors proposed were Hawaiian Prime Blue for the shutters on the front of the house and front door, along with the metal roofing. The color for the asphalt roof would be Nantucket Morning. All the trim will be white, and the rear deck will be a type of

brown color, but it would not be seen from Factory Street. Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve the colors as request for 104 N. Morris Stret and that the colors would be Lemon Souffle for the color of the house, Hawaiian Prime Blue for the shutters and door and metal roofing, and Nantucket Moring black for the roof. The motion was seconded by Mr. Werner and unanimously approved with all in favor.

- Stephen and Susan Anderson, 212 N. Morris Street, request to repaint exterior of house in gold (HC-8, Benjamin Moore paints) and front door in dark green (HC121). Both Mr. and Mrs. Anderson were present to discuss the application. Mr. Anderson explained that he and his wife were looking to paint their house a mustard color while keeping the shutters the dark green color that they already are, along with dark green doors and dark green window sashes. He added that the house was heavily renovated on the outside and showed early termite damage back in the 1980's. Mr. Anderson noted that that the original clapboards were 12" wide and made of yellow pine, but that only a few of those boards are left on the house and located on the main front part of the house. The house was built in 1770. Chairperson Stanley asked if Mr. Anderson if he could determine the color that was originally found on the house. Mr. Anderson responded there was a red wash on a board that he found but that he didn't know if it was a primer or not. Mr. Werner spoke stating, that from a forensic standpoint, his take on it was that this home was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the commission owed it to the house to figure out what the original color was because he thought that houses of this vintage needed to maintain some historical accuracy there and that the commission needed to do their due diligence. Mr. Wilcox agreed stating that for the commission, the color would need to be either red or white. Mr. Anderson asked how he and his wife could do their due diligence to find the original color when the entire house had been covered over with new siding. Mr. Wilcox responded that the only evidence that they have is the red or white. Chairperson Stanley pointed out that there had been other properties in the town that have had the MD Historic Trust come out and offer their assistance. Mrs. Anderson spoke stating that the problem they were facing was that they had a painter lined up to do the work and didn't want to lose him. Mr. Werner stated that he thought it was prudent to do the work to see what had been there and that he did not want to be hasty with his decisions. Mr. Anderson responded that he and his wife had put a lot of energy into finding the right painter who understood the work. Mr. Werner again pointed out that the color of the house had always been white as far back as the commission knew and would need some evidence to prove that it had been another color. Again, he stated that the commission has to say it's a white house until the applicants could provide the evidence that it had been another color, and because of historical accuracy, it would need to remain a white house. Chairperson Stanley agreed, again stressing that this was an important property and that the MD Historic Trust was available to help and give advice. Mr. Anderson asked about the possibility of doing preparatory work. Mr. Werner responded that there was nothing to stop him from doing preparatory work, especially in knowing they are going to have to paint it anyway. All agreed that the couple could move ahead with any prep work that needed to be done. When questioned by the Mr. Anderson about trim color and door color, Mr. Wilcox responded by stating he thought the HDC would want to hear back from the MD Historic Trust before reviewing different colors for the different parts of the building. The review ended with Chairperson Stanley clarifying the commission would meet with the couple as

soon as they gather information from the MD Historic Trust and could even hold an emergency meeting with the couple, if necessary.

- Revisit of Permit #24-33, William Salomon, 203 Tilghman Street, enclosure for previously approved installation of ductless HVAC system. Mr. Salomon returned to the commission to go over his plans to hide his previously approved permit to install a new HVAC system. The new unit would be installed approximately 29" above the ground to meet FEMA height requirements. Chairperson Stanley pointed out that the drawing provided by Mr. Solomon shows that pickets would cover the stand the unit will be placed on and would continue up in order to hide the unit. Mr. Solomon stated that the pickets could start at the top edge of the platform, if that would be preferable. Mr. Wilcox stated that he had a problem with maintaining the existing streetscape by having the applicant install his unit on the front of his house, facing the street, and that he did not like that as a precedence in general. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that this was the only suitable place on the house for Mr. Salomon to install it, to which Mr. Wilcox replied that maybe Mr. Solomon couldn't have it. Mrs. Morris noted that in this case, Mr. Solomon's front door was not on the street, but on the side, so it was not as though the unit would be installed at this front door. Chairperson Stanley was also quick to point out that she had previously asked the applicant if he could put the unit on the other side of his chimney and he gave a good reason as to why it could not. She reminded the members that Mr. Solomon's house was small and that his new unit would be small as well. She was of the opinion that it would be better to have the pickets come all the way down, close to the ground, and that it would be less noticeable. She added that the pickets did not have to be on all 3 sides, in order that he could get to his unit, if needed. The pickets will be painted brown to match the color of the house. Chairperson Stanley made a motion to approve the HVAC enclosure at 203 Tilghman Street, that will be built to surround the HVAC unit from the ground to a couple inches over the top of the unit and will be painted brown to match the house. The motion was seconded by Mr. Werner and carried by a vote of 4 to 1 with one nay vote from Mr. Wilcox.

This concluded the review of building permits.

### **Old and New Business**

Mr. Sullivan read aloud a portion of the Oxford Historic Guidelines, pointing out that the guidelines did not go into great detail with regards to paint color, nor did it mention the need to have paint scapings done. Mr. Werner stated that in the case of the Andersons, their house is an unusually historic one, as is the Robert Morris Inn. Mr. Wilcox agreed, pointing out that both are iconic properties and important in terms of the history of the town, along with adding his thoughts that it was reasonable to focus more on the historical quality of both. Mr. Werner also pointed out that the Anderson house was on the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Sullivan asked local residential designer and past member of the HDC, Timothy Kearns, for his thoughts on the matter. Mr. Kearns stated that he would say that the classification of the building is what establishes the level of prudence and that that is at the height of the historic nature. Chairperson Stanley agreed with Mr. Kearns' statement.

Mr. Werner reminded the commission that they were going to do a summary on fencing, put together some notes, and discuss it in another meeting. He also offered the idea that when applicants come before the commission with a project, that each member should get assigned to a project in order to follow up further on each permit and keep an eye on what they are doing. Mr. Sullivan stated he did not

feel qualified to do that nor did he feel the HDC members should be the police for that sort of thing. Mrs. Morris stated she had gone before the Commissioners with this in the past and was told that the town didn't have the manpower for enforcement and that it should be up to the office to handle complaints, not the HDC commission. Planner Williams reminded the group that anybody can go out and look at any job that is in progress but not to go onto the property unless they have permission from the owner(s). Mr. Werner asked again about the process of making sure permit holders are doing what they are required to do. Planner Williams explained that the town's inspector generally looks to make sure things are being built to code and that the members could call her and tell her about anything they think the inspector should double check.

Discussion turned to the possibly of changing the meeting time. Mr. Werner made a motion to revise the meeting time for the HDC to the first Monday of every month at 3:30 in the afternoon. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilcox and Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.

In closing, it was confirmed that the next meeting would be Monday, July 1, beginning at 3:30 p.m. and that Planner Williams would work to set a date set the review of fences.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk