

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

APRIL 4, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, William Dial, on Monday, April 4, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, Jennifer Stanley, James Deerin, and Thomas Costigan.

The minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2011 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #11-16 - John Williams, 211 Tilghman Street, replace 5 windows on first floor and one door. Mr. Williams presented to the commission a description of the replacement indicating that the new windows would be the same size and style as the existing double hung windows. When asked about the door, Mr. Williams responded he had not picked one out yet. A motion was made by Ms. Litty to accept the proposal for the windows but to hold off on the door. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried without further discussion.

2. Permit #11-17 - Simon Arnstein and Joan Levy, 218 South St., alteration of existing house and addition of two story extension, basement, and larger accessory work studio at rear of yard. Mr. Arnstein and Ms. Levy were represented by their architect, Philip Logan. Mr. Logan stated that this was his official submission of the renovation and addition to 218 South Street that he had presented to the Historic Commission as a consultation at their last month's meeting. He noted that he had made some revisions since the consultation but that this was a hard line set of drawings. For the record, the chairman, Mr. Dial, recused himself since he is a neighbor of the applicants. In describing the application, several points were raised by Mr. Logan which included the following:

1. The front of the house would be preserved but raised in order to put under it a proper foundation and to create a crawl space. In the process of doing that, there is also a front porch which would be raised though it is possible it may fall off in the process of lifting. It may be preferable to take it off and reinstall it the way it is now. In any case, the whole front portion would remain as is and raised about 8 to 10 inches so the floor level would be 16" above grade.
2. A structural engineer was called in to look at the house and noticed that the rafters of the house are rough cut lumber and are spaced as such that they do not meet code. There were also issues concerning the roof line, which was brought up at last month's HDC meeting. As a solution, the owners would like to cut the roof off and add about 15 inches to the height of the building so that the proportions stay the same between the old and new portions of the house.

3. The windows would be raised slightly so that they also maintain the same relationship to the cornices.
4. There would be a 15" higher elevation to the building. The framing would work off the existing framing, the roof structure would be rebuilt entirely and a new roof would be put on top of the existing structure. The existing middle section would be removed and rebuilt over the existing footprint with some slight setbacks to define the front portion and a new rear section added on to that. The roofline in the new proposed section would be consistent from front to back with no increase in height and having an overall pitch of 9/12.
5. The front of the house has 6 over 6 windows which will remain in the front portion only. The rest of the windows will have 2 over 2 windows.
6. With regards to materials, the shingles on the existing house will be replaced so that the house and roof shingles will have a consistent color. The color scheme will be refined once that stage has been reached. Essentially the house would be done in a gray color. Real wood shingles would be used. The roof would have typical asphalt shingles which will be a gray color. The owners are also looking at the possibility of using synthetic wood shingles, depending on the cost. The front porch would have a standing seam metal roof. A screened porch would be on the second floor which would have a small portion of metal roof coming over that. The valley between these roofs would have a low pitch roof, also with metal, that would match the front porch.
7. Three new windows would be added along the south, lower elevation that will be noted on the final submission. All the windows are being replaced, hopefully with true divided light windows.
8. The screen on the front porch will be replaced and the concrete flooring removed. The plan is to do a wood deck with slight brick piers underneath the corners. There is a question as to whether the owners would show a brick reveal the whole length or just brick piers.
9. There will be two additional windows for the north elevation on either side of the chimney.
10. The existing cinder block building on the north side of the house would be removed.
11. The owners are proposing to clad the existing cinder block chimney with the same material that would be used to clad the house. A new chimney would be going in. The thought is the house could be lifted without damaging the existing chimney.
12. The picket fences on the property would be replaced and relocated.
13. An existing oil tank would be removed and a propane tank would be buried in the yard.
14. There is a proposal for replacing the current shed with a new voice over studio. This will not be seen from me the street. The owners would like it to have a second floor. More details will be brought in later.

Mr. Logan added that he was hoping to receive conditional approval of this application during this night's meeting.

Mr. Deerin mentioned that the existing extension to the house could be rebuilt. Mr. Logan responded that the plan was to remove it as it had no historic value and had been settling over the years. It would be rebuilt in the same location but not with the same floor plan. The owners are hoping to use the foundation as a grandfathered condition. Mrs. Litty asked if the owners were planning to install a basement. Mr. Logan responded that there would only be a mechanical crawl space located in the middle section of the house. There is also a proposal for an elevator which would need a decent slab under the foundation in order to carry it.

Mr. Deerin pointed out that there was a statement in the application whereby it said that every effort will be made to maintain the front porch of the existing house. He asked Mr. Logan if there was any question in his mind as to whether this could not be done. Mr. Logan responded that was why he had brought in a structural engineer as he was concerned about the chimney and whether the house could be lifted without it falling apart. Expert House Movers have said it would be easier if the contractor's got rid of the concrete slab of the porch because they have to slide beams underneath it. Mr. Logan thought it would be almost better to rebuild the front porch and that they were trying to decide how much historic value the porch had. He added that they could separate the porch before they take out the concrete slab or they could lift the porch with the house without the concrete slab. Mr. Logan noted that they would come to the committee with the design of the rebuilt porch.

Mr. Costigan asked about the cladding on the chimneys, particularly about putting shingles on the cinderblock. He asked if the new chimney would also be clad. Mr. Logan responded that both chimneys would be clad in order to be consistent. Mr. Costigan asked if there were any examples around town where this had been done. Mr. Logan responded that there were chimney enclosures made of wood siding. Mr. Dial spoke stating that they were not common around Oxford but in other places where he had seen them before. Mr. Logan stated that another option would be to leave the cinder block as is and that the new chimney would be brick. He also offered to use stucco as a more preferable means which would mean the second chimney would be stucco as well. Mr. Costigan stated that his only concern is that the HDC guidelines mention brick chimneys. Ms. Litty asked Mr. Logan if he could do a veneer on the cinder block chimney. Mr. Logan responded that they could do a brick with stucco on the front.

Mr. Dial suggested a vote be made giving conditional approval of the plans presented with the understanding as things are narrowed down, the applicants come back before the commission. Mr. Logan stated he understood and that he was looking for conditional approval so that he could go before the Planning Commission to deal with some of his zoning issues. He noted this was a design and development set, not a construction set, and that he would prepare a construction of drawings that would be the formal application for the permit. Mr. Dial asked if that meant Mr. Logan was looking for the approval of the footprint. Mr. Logan responded that was correct and that he would be coming back in a month. He added that he had not wanted to

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go any further with the plan until he had some sense from the commission as to whether they liked it.

Prior to the motion, Mr. Costigan asked about the overall finished height of the house whereby the plans showed the finished height of the addition and extension at the back at 32'9". Mr. Costigan noted that this would put the house at a height higher than what is allowed in the Oxford Zoning Ordinance, which is 30'. Mr. Logan noted that figure referred to the elevation, not the building height and that the building height was around 22'.

Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the footprint and presentation as it appears pending the materials and colors. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with the exception of Mr. Dial who had recused himself and abstained from voting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk