

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

JANUARY 3, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, William Dial, on Monday, January 3, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

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

A motion was made to approve and accept the minutes of December 6, 2010. The motion was carried with one abstaining vote from Ms. Litty.

Mr. Dial announced that Historic Commission's thoughts were with member Tom Costigan who would not be attending this night's meeting as his mother had taken a fall and he and his family were with her.

The following building permit was reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #10-82, Mr. and Mrs. Kent Habecker, 503 E. Strand, remove existing screen door and replace with existing sliding glass door; remove screen window and replace with existing siding. Both Mr. and Mrs. Habecker were present to discuss their application. They explained that they currently have a porch on the back of their house with one wall only having screening. Inside the screened porch is an existing sliding glass door leading into the house that the Habeckers are requesting to have moved and placed in the area where a screen door is currently located. A window on the side of the porch will be taken out and covered in the same siding as is currently on the house. Ms. Litty made a motion to accept the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permit applications.

A consultation was held with Raymond "Trey" Porter, property owner of 219 S. Morris Street, to discuss four items that Mr. and Mrs. Porter are looking to do to their existing home. These include: 1) enclosing a side front corner porch into a screen porch, 2) adding a front porch addition, 3) adding a two story rear addition with a small portico over a door, and 4) demolishing an existing one story unfinished space that is currently a workroom in the house. Mr. Deerin asked if Mr. Porter was still planning on taking down an existing shed in the back of his property. Mr. Porter responded that he was but he would be proposing that at a later date. For now he was just looking to take off a shed room area that is attached to his home. He explained that the area in which he wanted to demolish consisted of a single story shed roof section which was uninsulated, unfinished, and currently being used as a workspace. Mr. Dial asked Mr. Porter if he had gone before the Planning Commission yet. Mr. Porter responded he had not and that his plan was to go before the Board of Appeals to get a variance to keep the current sideyard setback in order to build a 16' or 16 ½' addition. Ms. Litty asked if the

neighbors were opposed to that. Mr. Porter responded that they knew he was planning on doing an expansion in the back but that he hadn't had a chance to talk to them about it. Mr. Deerin noted that although the Porter's house fronts on S. Morris Street, the way the lot is situated all of it is visible from the street if you were to look at it at an angle. It appeared to Mr. Deerin that one was going to really notice the addition on the back. Mr. Porter responded that he had done some renderings to show the addition from some images of pictures that he had and that there was only one area where the addition would be seen. Ms. Litty stated that the proposed addition was so big that she thought it was going to impact the neighbors. Mrs. Stanley observed that traditionally houses were stepped down and that this addition would create a huge wall. Mr. Deerin asked what the reason was for the roof to be so high in the back. Mr. Porter explained that it involved the width of a certain area of the house and in trying to match the same roof pitch it ended up making the roof higher. Ms. Litty asked if there was any way the storage part of the addition could be lowered so that it would not stand out. Mr. Porter responded that it was so far back that if one was walking on the street one was not going to see something towering over because it was probably 40' back from the front gable. Ms. Litty countered that the neighbors would see it. Ms. Litty then asked if Mr. Porter would consider making the addition smaller. Mr. Porter responded that he would consider making the roof line match the other roofline in height. Mr. Deerin stated he could not think of any house in town that steps down then steps back up as well as having a piece that comes out vertically. Mr. Porter responded that there were other houses in town where they go larger, smaller, and larger, but not telescoping in the way the commission was thinking. Ms. Litty noted that she didn't mind the addition going back but that she was worried about the roofline sticking up the way it showed and the neighbors having to look at it. Mr. Deerin pointed out that Oxford has lots of long houses but it bothered him that what Mr. Porter was presenting looked broken. Mr. Porter responded that he just wanted to keep as much of the original house as possible and that was why he had the "bookend" look. Mr. Deerin countered that the proposed addition looked like a big trailer at the end of the house. Mr. Dial asked if the roofline could be dropped down to approximately match the other roof line. Mr. Porter responded that he could bring the roofline down but that he wanted to keep the footprint. Mr. Dial then asked if Mr. Porter could do a model of his home with the proposed addition. Mr. Porter responded that he thought he could get his point across better with a model because he did not think one was going to see from the street the perspective of a big roof next to a lower roof. Mrs. Stanley noted that in the past there were additions put on in areas of Oxford and some things were not taken into consideration at that time. Some of these additions took away from the architectural character of the house and additions were put on in big blocks which she felt definitely took away from the aesthetic of the traditional step down approach. Mr. Porter countered that the end of his house would not project any further than the neighbors next door to him and that their house went back as far as what Mr. Porter was proposing. Mr. Deerin again asked if there was some architectural detail way to disguise the fact that Mr. Porter would have one big addition tagged on to the end of his house so that it would not look like such a big caboose on the end.

The commission members all agreed that the proposed footprint was OK and that their issue was the roofline. Mr. Porter proposed taking the edge of the eave and dropping it down in order to create a height difference. Mr. Deerin responded that he was not sure dropping the roof

down a couple of inches was going to solve the problem. He noted that ideally, the typical Oxford house kind of steps down on the back. Mr. Dial asked Mr. Porter if he would consider building an "L" addition as it would better resolve the issue at hand. Mrs. Stanley also encouraged Mr. Porter to put on an "L" addition as it would give him more back yard. She added that he did not need to preserve some of his hollies and magnolias as they are not very yard friendly trees. She also noted that though the addition would be seen it would be more aesthetically pleasing and that she would encourage him to think about it. Mr. Porter asked if the commission was comfortable with dormer windows. Mrs. Stanley replied that there are dormer windows in town. Mr. Porter noted that he could keep the roof lower if he were to have dormers.

The commission members then addressed the proposed open front porch addition and covering the enclosed side porch with a screened porch. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve of the open front porch addition where Mr. Porter enclosed the side porch to a screened porch. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley with all in favor.

Mr. Porter then asked about his proposed demolition of the shed roof. Ms. Litty noted that the commission does not approve a demolition if something else is going in its place until they see a plan and suggested that it should all be approved at the same time when the commission knows what is going in its place. Mr. Dial asked that if it did not have to be done in the interim, the commission would prefer to wait on this particular item and asked Mr. Porter if he could abide by that. Mr. Porter replied that he could.

This concluded the consultation with Mr. Porter.

Prior to adjourning the meeting, the commission briefly discussed an e-mail that the members received from Planning Commission member David Baker explaining some of the ordinances with regards to what is a blighted house and what the restrictions are pursuant to destroying a house that is blighted or not. Mrs. Stanley questioned the reason behind the e-mail wondering if Mr. Baker had worried about the commission doing something or granting a demolition or if someone had asked him something about it. Mr. Dial responded that he thought commission member Dorothy Fenwick had asked Mr. Baker for some clarification of the ordinance itself particularly with regards to the Salvo property. Mr. Deerin noted that he was not sure what Mr. Baker was saying but appreciated the fact that he had obviously looked into it. Mr. Dial ended the discussion by stating that the committee members should read over it and the commission could then discuss it again, if they would like.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk