

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTEES

MARCH 7, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, William Dial, on Monday, March 7, 2011, at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Dorothy Fenwick, Jennifer Stanley, and Thomas Costigan.

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

The following permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #10-82, Kent and Elisabeth Habecker, 503 E. Strand, revision to previously approved permit to remove existing screen door and replace with existing sliding glass door and to remove a screen window and replace it with existing siding. Mr. and Mrs. Habecker were represented by their builder, Pete Hanlon. Mr. Hanlon explained to the commission that they had previously approved the Habecker's permit for closing off their existing porch. Originally, the Habeckers had requested removing a screened window and covering it over with siding. Mr. Hanlon noted that the owners would now like to put a new window where the lattice window that they had wanted to remove is located. The new window would fit through the exact opening of the old window and would match the style of the windows in the rest of the house. A motion was made by Mrs. Stanley to accept the revision as presented which was seconded by Mr. Costigan. The motion was carried without further discussion.

2. Permit #11-07, Kerm Henriksen, 207 S. Morris St., repair and replace Oxford fencing in front of house including pickets, slats, and posts that are rotten; rotten base board is to be removed but not replaced; all new wood to be painted white. Mr. Henriksen explained to the commission that the fence in front of house is in a state of decay. His request was to repair and replace all the rotten pieces of the fence, including both the vertical slats and posts. The only change Mr. Henriksen anticipated would be the elimination of the base board of the fence where the slats rest. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to approve the application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Costigan and unanimously carried with all in favor. A comment was made as to why this application came before the commission and that it was only necessary if the applicant were replacing an existing fence with a different fence.

3. Permit #11-08, Jennifer Stanley, 221 South St., replace existing cedar shake shingles with EcoStar Seneca shake, smoke gray shingles. Mrs. Stanley recused herself from the commission in order to present her application along with her contractor, Ned Crabb. Mr. Crabb explained to the commission that the shakes Mrs. Stanley had chosen to place on her house were composite shingles made of recycled plastics and that they last longer than wood shingles. Mr. Dial made a motion to accept the application as presented. The motion was seconded and carried.

4. Permit #11-09, Peter Rouse, 208 South St., construction of front deck on small cottage. Mr. Rouse was represented by Mr. Milligan, employee with Mazzatenta Construction. Mr. Milligan explained that the deck would be located on the front of Mr. Rouse's existing cottage and would replace an existing patio that is there now. The current deck has two steps leading up to it. The new deck would have only one step and the deck and step would be made of natural cedar. Mrs. Fenwick asked if there would be any railing around the deck. Mr. Milligan replied that since it would be so low to the ground it would not be necessary. A motion was made by Mrs. Fenwick to accept the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Costigan and unanimously carried without further discussion.

This concluded the review of building permit applications.

A consultation was held with Philip Logan, architect for Mr. Simon Arnstein and Ms. Joan Levy, property owners of 218 South Street, to discuss their plans for proposed alterations and additions to their home. Prior to the start of Mr. Logan's presentation, Mr. Dial addressed Mr. Logan with the following statement:

"Mr. Logan, before we speak with you regarding the consultation before us today, I would like to express our appreciation for the work you have done on your home on West Strand (Lover's Lane). The article in *Preservation Magazine* was delightful and exactly what we on the Historic District Commission enjoy seeing and hearing. We on the HDC often find ourselves in the role of critic when concepts and ideas are before us. It is nice, on this occasion, to be in the position of complimenting citizens for their efforts in maintaining the historic charm of Oxford. You have certainly done that with your home and you have our compliments and appreciation."

Mr. Logan thanked Mr. Dial for his comments and stated that his clients also want to maintain the historic character of their home by committing to their property. He then began to present the commission with his drawings – the first of which showed the existing house and the peculiar arrangement of the lot which sets at an angle. Mr. Logan explained that the house was once a small waterman's house made up of two parts. The first section of the house is parallel to the street and is the oldest part of the house. The second portion of the house is an addition that is fairly new but has a strange construction. Mr. Logan stated that the front part of the home is charming but the back is in sore shape with a concrete mechanical room added on the side. The owners would like to save the front half of the house that faces on South Street by preserving what is there and lifting it up, if it will hold up in one lifting, and putting a solid foundation under it. To do that, Mr. Logan explained they would probably take down the front porch and rebuild it back in kind to match what is there. A new foundation would take the front half of the house up by six or eight inches higher. Mr. Logan noted that the back half of the house was not worth keeping so that everything behind the existing front half of the house, that the owners are proposing to lift up, would be all new construction. The first portion of the rebuilt section would be in the same shape as what exists there now. The next new portion would be pulled in from the corners so that the front block would remain identifiable as a separate block. This portion would twist and go back into the garden. Mr. Logan noted that instead of making the roof one large roof, he had broken it up so that there is a roofline that

goes along the north side with a lower pitch roof on the south that would be a standing seam metal roof which would help to break down the mass and soften the edge on that side. From the street, one would see the portion on the back angling off to the left. There would also be a secondary entrance one would see from the street off to the side along with a screen porch on the second level in the back. The house currently has an existing chimney which is cider block. The owners are proposing to either surface it with thin brick or cladding the chimney with shingles. When asked about the north elevation, Mr. Logan stated he did not include a copy of that elevation as it was rather boring and would feature only one or two windows. He added that the back part of the house would not be easily seen. Mr. Dial stated that he noticed on the drawings that Mr. Logan provided the inclusion of solar panels and asked Mr. Logan for an explanation of those. Mr. Logan responded the solar panels were up for discussion and that people are always looking for ways to make their buildings more "green." Mr. Logan added that he did not want the solar panels to look like they had been thrown up on the roof and that his clients did not even know that he was looking into this for them. Mr. Logan stated that he was trying to come up with integrated solar panels so that one would not actually see them. Mr. Costigan asked if there was such a thing. Mr. Logan responded that he had been looking into it and other sustainable green technology that would keep the aesthetic and historic look to the home. Mrs. Stanley asked how much taller the new addition roofline would be. Mr. Logan responded he did not have the exact measurements but thought it would be about 2 ½' taller. Mrs. Stanley thought the new addition was making a larger statement with the roofline the way it was being proposed and that it would be more noticeable. Mrs. Fenwick asked what percentage the addition was to the house as it currently exists. Mr. Logan replied that it was about 1/3 more and that he would be below the allowable impervious area coverage for the lot. The consultation ended with Mr. Logan stating that he just wanted to get some sense from the commission on how they felt about the plans and that he would look into the roof line more.

A consultation was next held with Timothy Kearns, residential designer for Mr. and Mrs. Simon Cooper, property owners of 319 N. Morris Street, who, at last month's meeting, met with the commission to again discuss the building of an accessory building on the Cooper's property. Mr. Kearns presented the commission with a 3-D computer model of the proposed building which he was able to visually present on his laptop computer. Mr. Kearns also displayed photos of the existing neighborhood in relation to the proposed accessory structure and how it would relate to the buildings surrounding it. Also presented were photos and different details which were found on the Coopers house that would be repeated in the new proposed accessory building. The shape of the new building would be relative to the others surrounding it, the gable shed dormers would be similar to portions of the main house, all of the detailing would be similar to the main house, the larger volume of the building would be located in the rear, the structure itself would not go over 18', and the building would incorporate in part a larger space to make a transition from the agricultural buildings surrounding it to a more residential carriage type of structure. Mr. Dial commented that it appeared to look larger than it actually would be and Mrs. Stanley commented that the building appeared to look more like a house and that she did not see the agricultural side to it. Mr. Kearns retorted that it had the contrasting appearance of being both agricultural and residential. Mr. Dial questioned the doors on the building and asked if they would ever be closed. Mr. Kearns replied that they were being used purely as an

architectural effect but they could be functional. He noted that the side door would be primarily used as the front door. Mr. Kearns asked if the commission saw anything that would keep his clients from getting approval on this proposed plan. Mr. Dial responded that the commission was not in the position to say that until an application has been submitted but he found the preliminary plans to be interesting. Mrs. Stanley stated that Mr. Kearns was introducing a very different architectural roof style from the main house itself. Mr. Kearns noted that in a previous meeting the commission had asked him to break up the two roofs. Mrs. Stanley stated that the symmetry seemed jogged to her and that the asymmetry was not as pleasing to the eye as it could be. There were no other comments from the committee members.

This concluded the consultation portion of the meeting.

Mrs. Fenwick asked about the proposed accessory building that the Porters of 219 S. Morris Street had submitted to the HDC. Mr. Dial stated that he had spoke with the Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator, Lillian Lord, the next day following the HDC's last meeting, and asked if the commission had the authority to say where one could place an accessory structure. Mrs. Lord responded that she felt strongly the commission did not have that authority – only what it is supposed to look like, but not where it should be placed. However, Mr. Dial thought that since Mr. Porter demanded at that meeting that the commission members make a yes or no vote, he was left with only the choice of going before the Board of Appeals. Mr. Costigan asked if Mr. Dial posed the question as to whether the commission had the authority to say where one could not place an accessory building. Mr. Dial responded he thought that was a legitimate question. He added that he wished he had gone with tabling the application so that the commission could have dealt with the accessory building in relation to the mass of the main structure itself. This was the original issue the commission had been able to persuade Mr. Porter about in the beginning – that the mass of his addition was excessive and needed to be moved. Now he has turned around and put his accessory structure in the same place thus essentially completing that same mass that the commission had asked him to consider before. Mr. Dial stated that if Mr. Porter decides to go before the Board of Appeals, the commission will appear before the appeals board and explain the basis of what they were thinking.

Mrs. Fenwick reiterated the question that if an accessory building was to be placed in a relationship with the main house, and continued the issue of mass, was that in the purview of the HDC? Both Mr. Dial and Mrs. Stanley replied they did not know the answer to that question though Mr. Dial noted that mass was something the commission dealt with. He again stated that his question to Mrs. Lord was whether the commission could comment on the location of an accessory structure. He thought the Historic Commission would probably take some guidance by the Board of Appeals on that issue from what the board decides – if they support the HDC's position, than the answer is yes. Mr. Dial also noted that the accessory building Mr. Porter proposed wasn't much different than the mass of the original addition to the house that

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Mr. Porter had proposed. He also noted that the Porters have ample room in their yard to place their proposed attractive accessory structure.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk

Desperate