

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

MAY 2, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, William Dial, on Monday, May 2, 2011, in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

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

The minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2011 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permits #11-17 and 11-25, Simon Arnstein and Joan Levy, 218 South Street, details regarding materials of 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 announced that this was a follow-up from his meeting with the HDC in April. He presented the commission with a watercolor depiction of what the property would look like viewed from South Street. The proposed shingles would be more gray in color as opposed to a lighter beige color as shown in the rendered painting. Mr. Logan also presented a new set of revised drawings and mentioned that they were primarily for planning review and that he did not yet have the construction plans. Currently the house is about 8 to 10 inches over on town property. Mr. Logan noted that Mr. Arnstein is looking at keeping the building where it is right now and just repairing the sills, not raising or lifting it or anything that would not allow the owners to keep the building where it is. However, should the Board of Appeals allow the owners to move the house back to the front face of the property line and leave it there, Mr. Logan thought that would make for a better building. Mr. Logan then went over the following details with the commission:

1. The owners have decided to keep the existing windows and repair and restore them.
2. There are three options for the roof. The first option is a rubber roof like that which is being installed at 221 South Street. That may be cost prohibitive. Another option is asphalt shingles or wood shingles. The owners are requesting approval of the asphalt but would like the option of the wood shingles or rubber (Ecostar) shingles. Mr. Logan noted he would come before the HDC next month with definite answers.
3. The new portion of the house would have metal clad Anderson white windows.
4. The front door would be a light blue color.

Mr. Deerin stated that during last month's HDC meeting there was a discussion about the rear section of the Anstein/Levy house being demolished and rebuilt in the same location and that the owners were hoping to use the foundation as a grandfathered condition. However, Mr. Deerin pointed out that the plans do not show the house staying within that foundation and having a different setback from what was there. Mr. Logan responded that was correct. He

added that the existing condition was actually closer to the property line whereby the new plan is to pull it back from the property line a little further. Mr. Logan understood that from his meeting with the Planning Commission that the moment this section is torn down and a new foundation put in, the owners would lose their grandfathered setback and that this was why they were going before the Board of Appeals to seek a variance.

With regards to the new studio, it would be a simple 17' high structure setback 4' from the property line and would be covered in wood shingles. Though the drawing showed a metal roof, Mr. Logan stated that the building would have an asphalt roof with a pergola in front of it and corrected the plans to reflect that change. Mr. Logan did not think the building could be easily seen from the street. The old accessory building on the property is 8' x 12'. This new building would be 15' x 13' and would have two stories. Ms. Litty noted that all the elevations showing the accessory building were labeled as north elevations. Mr. Logan stated that was incorrect and that they were mislabeled. He manually corrected the copies of the elevation drawings at the meeting. Mr. Logan stated he was hoping that the commission would approve the accessory building at this meeting. Mr. Costigan made a motion to approve the accessory building with the written changes. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor. A member of the audience, Dale Benson, asked if one of the members was an alternate and if so, should the alternate be casting a vote. After a brief discussion, it was determined that Mr. Deerin was the alternate and should not be voting unless one of the full time members was absent, in which case he could vote.

2. Permits #11-20, Philip Logan, 101 West Strand, installation of wood deck with open ¼" wide gaps on drainage bed to allow access and use by wheelchair bound occupant. Mr. Dial asked Mr. Logan if gravel constituted a drainage bed. Mr. Logan responded that was correct and that the gravel allows water to flow into the ground but does not allow grass and weeds to grow. Ms. Litty asked if Mr. Logan had enough pervious surface left to build the wood decking. Mr. Logan responded that a wood deck does not fall under the impervious configurations and that wood decking is now considered pervious. He also noted he was taking this application before the Planning Commission because there may be a setback issue. Mr. Logan explained that he and his wife have a garden and guesthouse out in their backyard that their wheel chair bound son cannot come out to because of the soft ground and that he needed a solid surface for his wheelchair. Mr. Deerin asked if there was such a thing as temporary approval because the reason behind these walkways had to do with Mr. Logan's son being unable to navigate the grass. If the family were to move, these walkways may not be necessary for the next family. Mr. Dial responded that there was nothing in the zoning ordinance to allow the commission to do such thing. A motion was then made by Mrs. Stanley to approve the application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Costigan and unanimously approved without further discussion.

3. Permit #11-22, John Kendall, 307 S. Morris Street, demolition of an existing shed. Mr. Kendall was represented by Mary Crabb of the contracting firm Crabb and Associates. Mrs. Crabb explained that Mr. Kendall also owns the property at 305 S. Morris Street and that he just recently purchased this property which is next to his other property. There exists on this

property at 307 S. Morris Street an old shed which is sinking into the ground. Mrs. Crabb stated that Mr. Kendall wanted to tear it down because of it being a hazard and dangerous. He is also looking into putting in a new culvert in order to get a parking area. Mr. Deerin asked if the shed had any historic significance. Mrs. Crabb responded she did not think so, that it had no foundation, and looked to her like an old chicken coop. She also noted that the property is in a floodzone and that everything on the property flooded during Hurricane Isabelle. Ms. Litty made a motion to have the shed destroyed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.

4. Permit #11-21, John Kendall, 307 S. Morris St., raise home as required for flood zone regulation and construction of new foundation. Mr. Kendall was again represented by Mary Crabb of the contracting firm Crabb and Associates. Mrs. Crabb explained to the commission that by raising this house it would match the elevation of Mr. Kendall's other house next door. Mrs. Fenwick asked how many steps would be leading up to the house. Mrs. Crabb thought it would only be about two or three steps. She added that from 305 to 307 S. Morris Street the grade drops down from about 1 to 2 feet. The grade would be brought up so that the number of steps at 307 would be like that at 305. The steps would be brick. The foundation would have landscaping around it. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor. Before leaving, Mrs. Crabb asked if requests for brick sidewalks needed to come before the historic commission. Mr. Dial responded that the HDC had never reviewed them in past and that that was a town issue. Mrs. Crabb then asked if she needed to come back before the HDC if the owner wanted to fix his existing windows with new sash kits or installing operable shutters. Mr. Dial responded that a building permit was not needed for those items.

This concluded the review of building permits.

A consultation was held with Timothy Kearns, residential designer for Mr. and Mrs. Simon Cooper, property owners of 319 N. Morris Street, who presented the commission with some new concept drawings for a carriage house (a.k.a. accessory building) that the Coopers wish to build. A general discussion took place, in which the design of the structure was discussed, the intended use of the building, and about the use of "prairie" windows.

The commission had a brief discussion concerning the house at 512 E. Strand in which the owner has placed raw boards screwed across the front windows and door. Mr. Dial asked Administrator Lillian Lord if the HDC had any say when someone chooses to board up their house. Mrs. Lord thought the commission did not and that it was the owner's prerogative to secure his or her home. Mrs. Stanley asked what the purpose was that the owner at 512 E. Strand was trying to achieve. Mr. Dial responded that if the owner was concerned with someone breaking and entering into his home there were other ways to accomplish securing his home that would be within the guidelines such as placing bars inside his windows or padlocking his door from the inside as opposed to the use of rough boards. Mr. Deerin asked if it was possible to get the town council to give the commission guidance on this issue. It was agreed by

all that the matter should be taken before the Commissioners and that Mr. Dial would follow up with it.

Ms. Litty stated that she had received some complaints regarding the front siding that has been ripped off the house at 219 S. Morris Street. The commission members reminded Ms. Litty that the homeowners have a year from the date in which their project has been approved to complete their work. Mrs. Stanley suggested that Ms. Litty tell those who are complaining to her to be patient.

Ms. Litty then asked if the HDC should be consulted with regards to any plans involving any structures or memorials being placed on town property. This led to a discussion of other issues that the HDC should look into such as accessory buildings and derelict buildings. It was agreed by the members present that a workshop should be held soon in which these matters can all be addressed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk