

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

August 28, 2009

Be it remembered that the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission did meet in regular session on Tuesday, August 11, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall courtroom with the following members present:

Jeff Asti
Camp Best
Kevin Frye
Harry Owens
Jack McKenzie
Molissia Swaney
Shawn Telford
Sonia Weinburg Thompson

Tim Akers, City Planner
Katrina Hourin, Assistant City Planner
Tiffany Smith, Historic Preservation Consultant
Alicia Thompson

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Asti.

After the meeting was called to order, the following business was transacted:

The following change was made to the agenda: removal of item # 8 from the agenda.

The following correction was made to the minutes from the June 9, 2009 meeting: reflect the absence of Commissioner Cody Giles from the meeting. There being no further changes, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Owens to accept the minutes from the July 14, 2009 meeting.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

Election of Officers

HPC Consultant Tiffany Smith informed the Commission that Commissioner Cody Giles had recently expressed his intent to resign from the Commission effective immediately. She also informed the Commission that it needed to elect new officers for the upcoming term. After discussion, Commissioner Asti asked for a motion to nominate the commission's chairman. Motion was made by Commissioner Owens and seconded by Commissioner Best to nominate Commissioner Asti as Chairman of the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission by acclamation. Motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Owens to nominate Commissioner McKenzie as Vice Chairman of the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission by acclamation.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

Public Hearing for Case 075 – 1701 Jackson Avenue. Katrina Hourin informed the commission that she had spoken with the applicant, John Shaw, and he stated that he could not make the meeting. Mrs. Hourin stated that Mr. Shaw informed her that he would be represented by his contractor, Ken Ash. Commissioner Asti asked for Mr. Ash to come forward and there was no response.

There being no response from the applicant, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner McKenzie to postpone the hearing indefinitely until a report could be made by the applicant.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

Discussion was made between Commissioner Asti and the commission on initiating the process of demolition by neglect for 1701 Jackson Avenue. Historic Preservation Consultant Tiffany Smith indicated that nothing prohibited a commission member from initiating the process of demo by neglect. City Planner Tim Akers expressed concern and stated that the commission should specify whether the demo by neglect would apply the entire structure or just the balcony. Commissioner McKenzie asked Randy Barber, the city building inspector, if he would be reinspecting the property. Mr. Barber replied that he would not be reinspecting the property until a further report is made by the applicant. Commissioner Asti again informed the commission of his intent to initiate the procedure for demolition by neglect for 1701 Jackson Avenue. Further discussion was made between the commissioners on taking the affirmative step to initiate the procedure for demolition by neglect. Mr. Akers again reiterated that the commission make it understood that the procedure for demolition by neglect would only apply to the balcony on the existing structure.

Motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Thompson to advance item #7 of the agenda forward.

Public Hearing for Case 080 – 1415 Jefferson Avenue. Babs Ton came before the Commission seeking a certificate of appropriateness to add two new posts and new railings to the front stoop of property located at 1415 Jefferson Avenue. Mrs. Ton presented a drawing of the proposed project and a photo of the existing structure. She also presented a materials list and explained her request. Discussion was made between the commissioners regarding the applicant's request.

There being no questions or comments from the public or the commission, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Best to approve the request for a certificate of appropriateness to add two new posts and new railings to the front stoop of property located at 1415 Jefferson Avenue.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

Public Hearing for Case 078 – 505 North 14th Street. Corey Alger, Architect, came before the commission representing Jay Hughes seeking a certificate of appropriateness to demolish an existing single family residence so that a new single family residence could be constructed. Mr. Alger presented a site plan, a historic resources inventory from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and photos of the existing structure. Mr. Alger informed the commission that the existing house is like a “Trojan Horse” with foundation failures and toxic levels of mold. Mr. Alger also stated that the existing structure had been neglected for years. Commissioner McKenzie asked Mr. Alger how long the structure had been empty. The applicant, Jay Hughes, came before the commission and informed Commissioner McKenzie that the structure had been empty for two years prior to him purchasing the property. Mr. Hughes explained to the commission that he and his wife had always loved the property and decided to put in an offer on the home during the Double Decker Festival. Mr. Hughes also explained that his original plan was purchase the home and make some renovations to it. Mr. Hughes further explained that once he made an offer to purchase the home, the original owners make a counter offer with the contingency that no inspections would be required. Mr. Hughes further stated that he accepted the “as is” offer because he had no idea of the problems within the home. Mr. Hughes also stated that he hired Stan McCay to do an inspection of the home after he purchased it and that is when he learned of the toxic levels of mold. Mr. Hughes explained that the inspection report stated that mold was present in the timbers and down to the foundation of the home. He also informed the commission of his intent to rebuild a new residential structure of the same footprint that would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Asti expressed his concern that the applicants request did not address any of the criteria for demolition. Mr. Hughes informed Commissioner Asti that the residential contamination had been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control. Commissioner Asti again argued that no information had been presented to justify the demolition. Mr. Hughes stated that he had an engineering report that stated that the structure too unsafe to be inhabited. Mr. Alger read aloud the criteria for demolition and lengthy debate was made between Mr. Alger and Commissioner Asti. Mr. Hughes stated that the totality of the structure’s problems meets the criteria for demolition. He also stated that he was not trying to circumvent the commission’s authority with his request. He reiterated that he had sought input from Katrina Hourin, the assistant city planner. Lengthy debate was made between Mr. Alger, Mr. Hughes, and Commissioner Asti regarding the criteria for demolition and the individual significance of the existing structure.

After lengthy debate, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Swaney to approve the request for demolition pursuant to 54-26 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance submitted by the applicant.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

Public Hearing for Case 078 – 505 North 14th Street. Architect, Corey Alger came before the commission representing Jay Hughes seeking a certificate of appropriateness to construct a single family residence on property located 505 North 14th Street. Mr. Alger presented digital renderings of the proposed project and explained the applicant’s request. Commissioner Asti

asked Mr. Alger about the height differential. Mr. Alger explained and discussed the roof height. Commissioner Owens stated that he was concern with the height of the proposed structure. Commissioner Owens asked Mr. Alger if the proposed structure would be a 1 ½ story. Mr. Alger replied that it would be a 1 ½ story. Discussion was also made regarding the dimension and ceiling height of the proposed structure. Further discussion was made regarding the height of the surrounding structures in the neighborhood. Commissioner Swaney expressed concern that the proposed structure would have the appearance of a “new” house instead of having a historic feel. Commissioner Alger replied and discussed the details that would be added to the structure giving it a historic feel. Jay Hughes also replied that the goal is to make the proposed structure look like a home from 1932 “with makeup on”. Commissioner Asti expressed concern with the proposed new structure and read the criteria used for approving a new construction. Commissioner Owens stated that he would like more time to review the application and asked if the proposal included a garage. Corey Alger presented photos of the existing garage and carport and discussed a proposed garage. Commissioner Asti asked what type of materials would be used in construction. Mr. Hughes replied that materials would included cement board siding, painted brick, composite asphalt on the roof. Commissioner Owens asked if copper would be installed above the bay window. Mr. Hughes replied that copper would be installed above the bay window. Mr. Alger informed the commission that the front yard would be preserved as much as possible and that protective fencing would be installed around the front yard during construction.

Motion was made by Commissioner Frye to approve the certificate of appropriateness for new construction based upon documents provided. Commissioner Owens stated that he was uncomfortable voting on the project without considering the drawings within the neighborhood. Commissioner McKenzie asked the applicant what was the time frame for demolition. Mr. Hughes replied that it would be as soon as possible. City Planner Tim Akers reminded the Commission that there still were procedural issues and that those applications for demolitions and new construction must be approved simultaneously. Commissioner Swaney seconded the motion to approve the request made by Commissioner Frye. The applicants stated that they would be requesting a variance from the setback from the Oxford Planning Commission. Discussion was made regarding the process for a variance through the Oxford Planning Commission

The vote was as follows:

Asti	Aye
Frye	Aye
Thompson	Aye
McKenzie	Aye
Telford	Aye
Best	Aye
Swaney	Aye
Owens	Abstained

The motion was approved with the following condition:

1. That no building permits shall be issued until a vote is made by the Oxford Planning Commission.

Discussion on Solar Panels. Will Higman came before the Commission with a presentation on the use of solar panels within a historic district. Historic Preservation Consultant, Tiffany Smith also presented the commission with a report on solar panels from the Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Higman stated that he has a client that would like to install solar panels on a residence located in the Oxford Historic District. He stated that solar panels are a new issue for Mississippi and explained his client's interest in using solar panels. Commissioner McKenzie asked Mr. Higman if the solar panels would be visible from the street. Mr. Akers replied that the panels could possibly be visible from the rear of the property. Commissioner Frye expressed concern that solar panels are not historic. Mr. Higman explained the requirements for solar panels and stated that he had gotten input from the Oxford Electric Department. Commissioner Asti informed Mr. Hughes that he would review the information on solar panels on his company's website. Mr. Higman replied that he has provided the planning department with his credentials.

There was no action taken.

Public Hearing for Case 075 – 1701 Jackson Avenue. Contractor, Ken Ash, came before the commission representing John Shaw seeking a certificate of appropriateness to demolish an existing front porch and balcony on property located at 1701 Jackson Avenue. Mr. Ash informed the commission that Mr. Shaw has tried to repair the porch and balcony for five years. He stated that the porch could potentially fall. Commissioner Asti asked Mr. Ash about the costs to repair the porch versus replacement of the porch. Mr. Ash replied that the cost to support and brace the porch would be approximately \$7,000 and the cost to replace the porch would be approximately \$42,000. Commissioner Asti also asked why the applicant hadn't taken precautions to support the structure. Commissioner Frye asked Mr. Ash what else had been done by the applicant to repair structure versus demolition of structure. Discussion was made regarding the applicants request. Commissioner Asti informed the Mr. Ash that a decision on the request had been tabled until next month. Commissioner Asti also informed Mr. Ash that the applicant, John Shaw needs to present at the next before a vote could be made. Further discussion was made between Mr. Ash and the commission regarding supporting the existing porch. The commission also informed Mr. Ash that the only thing before them was a demolition of the porch. The commission requested that the applicant also include a proposal that includes an estimate to repair the structure.

There being no further business to come before the commission, motion was made by Commissioner McKenzie and seconded by Commissioner Frye to adjourn the meeting.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned.