

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

February 23, 2010

Be it remembered that the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission did meet in regular session on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall courtroom with the following members present:

Jeff Asti  
Campbell Best  
Kevin Frye  
Jack McKenzie  
Harry Owens  
Julie K. Spears  
Molissia Swaney  
Shawn Telford  
Sonia Weinburg Thompson

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

The following Commissioners were absent:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Asti.

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

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Chairman Asti asked if there were any changes to the agenda. The following changes were made to the agenda:

1. That item #8 (1701 Jackson Avenue) be heard first;
2. That Item #7 (Case 098) be heard second; and
3. That Item #9 (Complimentary Review) be heard third; and
4. That Items #4, #5, #6 (Cases 095, 096, & 097) be heard last.

After the modifications were made to the agenda, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Telford to approve the amended agenda.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved and the agenda was accepted.

### **Approval of the Minutes from the January 12, 2010 Meeting**

The following change was made to the minutes: that the record should reflect Commissioner Telford as present at the January 12, 2010 meeting.

After modifications were made to the minutes, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Best to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2010 meeting.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

**Public Hearing for Initial Review Section of the Demolition by Neglect procedure for property located at 1701 Jackson Avenue.** City of Oxford Building Official Randy Barber came before the Commission with a written report on the findings of the property located at 1701 Jackson Avenue. Chairman Asti asked Mr. Barber to explain his findings. Mr. Barber reported that he and City Building Inspector Chris Carter performed an inspection of the property with the permission of owner John Shaw. Mr. Barber stated that Ken Ash was also present during the inspection. Mr. Barber explained his findings and presented the Commission with a list and photos of the deterioration of the front porch and other areas of the residence. Mr. Barber made the following report of the condition of the property:

1. Beams - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor appeared to have been rotten due to water damage, deflection is noted between the spans, and the floor is breaking away from the house between the beams because of improper bracing to the structure.
2. Columns – 1<sup>st</sup> floor hollow made of 2x8 treated pine mounted on metal plates appeared to be in good condition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor solid timber could not be reported on due to the location.
3. Foundation Wall – the mortar in the brick has turned to sand and lacks strength. The wall is in need of stabilization due to buckling in the middle of both the east and west ends.
4. Floor Joists – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor joists are running parallel to the building which prevents proper lateral bracing. Both the ceiling and floor joists are covered so visual inspection cannot determine structural integrity.
5. Cornice – appears damaged from water intrusions and exposure.
6. Roof – hole on the west end and appears to have other leaks throughout.
7. Band – around the balcony is rotten and it was necessary to replace boards on the west side to install bracing. The remaining band also appears to be weathered and in need of replacement.

8. Further inspection of the house revealed a large hole on the exterior of the chimney. Water enters the house damaging the interior of the structure.

Lengthy discussion was made between the Commission and Mr. Barber regarding the deteriorating condition of the front porch of the property. Mr. Barber's January, 21, 2010 letter concluded with a finding of deterioration of the balcony and chimney of the structure. However, Mr. Barber's statements to the Commission indicated findings of deterioration in other areas of the structure. After lengthy discussion, Historic Preservation Consultant Tiffany Smith asked Mr. Barber to re-inspect the property and return with a letter documenting each finding of deterioration at the next meeting.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Owens and seconded by Commissioner Frye that City Building Official Randy Barber will re-inspect the property and return with a letter documenting each of the findings at next the meeting.

All present voted aye.

The motion was approved.

**Public Hearing for Case #098 – 611 North Lamar.** Joel Little and Hassell Wilkinson of Little & Wilkinson Construction representing Doty and Vontese Farmer came before the Commission seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to restore and renovate an existing residential structure located at 611 North Lamar Boulevard. Mr. Little presented the Commission with photos of the existing structure, elevations, a site plan, construction drawings, and an engineer's report on the condition of the home. Mr. Little informed the Commission that several problems existed in the home and that the applicants desired to correct those problems through renovation. Mr. Little informed the Commission that the proposed renovation would include removing portions of the existing dwelling and adding new additions. Mr. Little also stated that the façade and roofline would remain intact and that the applicants were proposing to remove and replace portions of the home due to structural deficiencies. Mr. Little informed the Commission that the home had foundation problems and deteriorating windows. Mr. Little also presented the Commission with a materials list and explained the deteriorating condition of the chimney. Discussion was made between Mr. Little and the Commission regarding the applicants' request. Commissioner Owens asked Mr. Little if the home's façade would remain the same. Mr. Little answered and replied that the façade would remain the same. Commissioner Owens also asked Mr. Little if the rear half of the home would be essentially new. Mr. Little answered and replied that the rear would be essentially new to replace layer upon layer of additions. Compliments came from Historic Preservation Consultant Tiffany Smith to the applicants on their presentation.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Best and seconded by Commissioner McKenzie to approve the request for Certificate of Appropriateness to restore and renovate an existing residential structure located at 611 North Lamar Boulevard.

All present voted aye.

The motion was approved.

**Complimentary Review for property located on the corner of S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Garfield Avenue.** Edye Conkerton of ECO Architecture, LLC came before the Commission representing Agrivest, LLC seeking complimentary review for a proposed demolition of an existing residential structure and the proposed construction of three new residential structures. Ms. Conkerton presented the Commission with photos and explained the proposal. Ms. Conkerton stated that the applicant wished to demolish the existing structure because it is in poor shape. She also stated that there is vinyl siding and asbestos siding on the exterior. She stated that vinyl siding had been put over wood that is rotting. Commissioner Asti asked Ms. Conkerton who owned the property. Ms. Conkerton answered and replied that Agrivest, LLC were the owners. Ms. Conkerton's further stated that the applicant's goal is to build three new residences with rear parking on the site. Ms. Conkerton also stated she is seeking feedback from the Commission about the proposal. Commissioner Asti asked Ms. Conkerton if the structure was contributing. Ms. Conkerton answered and replied that she doesn't think so. Commissioner Spears stated that the structure is contributing. Commissioner Asti asked Ms. Conkerton how long the property had been vacant. Ms. Conkerton answered and replied that the property is not vacant and that it currently houses students. Discussion was made between Ms. Conkerton and the Commission about the proposal. Ms. Conkerton also presented the Commission with elevations of the proposal and stated that the development would include significant landscaping so as to save as many existing trees as possible. Commissioner Thompson asked Ms. Conkerton if the proposed project would consist of all duplexes or consist of all rentals. Ms. Conkerton answered and replied that the applicant would like to turn the units into condominiums. Commissioner Best asked Ms. Conkerton if the applicant has considered renovating the structure. Ms. Conkerton stated that renovating the structure would be cost prohibitive and not economically feasible due to the number of add-ons that have been done on the structure. Further discussion was made between Ms. Conkerton and the Commission about the proposal. Asti read Section 54-30 of the Procedures for Demolition by Neglect. Commissioner Asti further advised the applicant to return to the Commission with significantly more information and observe the next case as an example for demolition. Tiffany Smith also informed the applicant that permits for the demolition and new construction would need to be issued simultaneously unless the property is commercially zoned. Further lengthy discussion was made regarding the applicant's proposal. The Commission advised Ms. Conkerton to consider returning with the developer of the project and provide additional information regarding the proposal.

**Public Hearing for Case 095 – 410 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street.** Ronald Garner, of Ronald Garner Architects came before the Commission representing St. Johns Catholic Church seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an existing single-story frame building located at 410 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Oxford, Mississippi. Mr. Garner presented the Commission with photos of the structure and a site layout of a proposed education building and possible new parking lot. Mr. Garner informed the Commission that Father Joe Tonas, Rick Addy, Paul Berhrndt, members of the church's building committee, as well as neighbors were present to support the project. Mr. Garner also

informed the Commission that the applicant was seeking demolition of the structure for the following reasons:

1. The structure has outlived its life as a classroom;
2. The structure is located in a remote part of the campus causing significant foot traffic; and
3. The space is needed to satisfy the City of Oxford's requirement of 48 parking spaces for the site.

Questions came from Commissioner Asti to Mr. Garner asking if the parking requirements were the basis for the proposed demolition. Mr. Garner replied and answered yes. Lengthy discussion was made between the Commission and Mr. Garner regarding the City's parking requirement.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Garner informed the Commission that the applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for two structures: 410 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 416 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Garner again stated that the request for the proposed demolitions was to create additional parking for the church and build a new education building. Mr. Garner also stated that he had been in contact with Bill Gaitlin from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History regarding the two structures. Mr. Garner stated that in conversation with Mr. Gaitlin he was informed that there was no information that the structures were local landmarks. Mr. Garner further informed the Commission of the condition of the structures. Mr. Garner stated that the structures call no attention to themselves; are an eyesore; and are haphazard. Mr. Garner further stated that the structures are exerting a negative on the property and it is the applicant's intention to use the land as a parking lot with landscaping and a park like feel. Mr. Garner also reiterated that the structures are built with common inexpensive materials. Questions came from Commissioner Asti to Mr. Garner asking what steps the applicant has taken to maintain the two structures. Church representative Paul Behrndt replied on behalf of the applicant and stated that the maintenance has been performed on the foundation, ceiling, roof and roof supports. Mr. Behrndt also noted that the structures are no longer useful and have many safety concerns. Mr. Behrndt added that space heaters are being used to for heat in the winter and window units are being used for air in the summer months. Further lengthy debate was made between Mr. Behrndt and the Commission regarding the request.

Commissioner Best commented that if the request for demolition is approved, it appears that only four parking spaces would be lost. Discussion was made regarding the number of parking spaces that would be available and Commissioner Asti asked the applicant what had been done about parking in the past. Church representative Rick Addy replied that the church has been allowed to park along University Avenue, the Mary Buie museum, and the Gertrude Ford Center. Mr. Addy also commented that there is a potential safety hazard for parents with small children when crossing University Avenue. Commissioner Asti asked the applicant if accommodations had been provided for elderly parishioners. Church representative Paul Behrndt replied that there are some handicapped parking spaces available on the site.

Lowry Lomax, a neighbor whose property backs up to the two lots, added that he supports demolishing the two structures to make room for additional parking. Mr. Lomax also reiterated that he is all for preserving the historic look of neighborhood. Mr. Lomax further noted that the

two structures are an eyesore that looks like the ghetto. Commissioner Frye added that just because a structure is an eyesore that doesn't warrant demolishing it. Further debate was made by Mr. Lomax and the Commission.

**Public Hearing for Case 097 - 403 University Avenue.** Ronald Garner of Ronald Garner Architects came before the Commission representing St. Johns Catholic Church seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new education building and church offices to the east of the existing church building on property located at 403 University Avenue. Mr. Garner presented the Commission with photos of the existing site, a site layout, and drawings of the proposed structures. Mr. Garner added that the proposed education building will house classrooms, offices, and multipurpose rooms. Mr. Garner informed the Commission that the structure will be noncompeting and stated that the materials, colors, and texture would match that of the existing church. Commissioner Owens commented that the proposed structure didn't appear to fit well within the neighborhood. Lengthy debate was made Commissioner Owens and the applicant regarding the proposed structure. Discussion was made between the Commission and the applicant regarding the structure's height and scale. Further discussion was made regarding the materials and landscaping for the proposed project.

Historic Preservation Consultant Tiffany Smith expressed concern to the Commission about voting on a new construction without approving the demolition. She informed the Commission that a building permit could not be issued without a demolition permit for this case. Mrs. Smith also stated that the applicant still had issues that needed to be addressed with the Planning Commission. Further discussion was made regarding the applicant's request. Commissioner Asti informed the applicant that the case could be treated as a preliminary review and the applicant agreed that the request be treated as a preliminary review. The Commission determined that the applicant needed to provide more information before a decision could be reached.

After further debate, motion was made by Commissioner Frye and seconded by Commissioner Owens to defer the request until the next meeting.

All present voted aye.

The motion was approved.

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

All present voted aye.

The meeting was adjourned.