

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Be it remembered that the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission did meet in regular session on Monday, February 8, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall courtroom with the following members present:

Jeff Asti, Chairman
Jack McKenzie, Vice Chairman
Campbell Best
Harry Owens
Julie Spears
Molissia Swaney
Shawn Telford
Sonia Weinburg Thompson
Babs Ton

Katrina Hourin, Assistant City Planner
Alicia Thompson, Secretary

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Asti.

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

2. **Approval of the Agenda.** Chairman Asti asked if there were any changes to the agenda. The following correction was made to the agenda: that Item # 3 reflect approval of January 13, 2011 minutes. There being no further changes to the agenda, motion was made by Commissioner McKenzie and seconded by Commissioner Swaney to approve the amended agenda.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved and the agenda was accepted.

3. **Approval of the Minutes from the January 13, 2011 Meeting.** Chairman Asti asked if there were any modifications to the minutes from the January 13, 2011 meeting. There being no changes, motion was made by Commissioner Ton and seconded by Commissioner Swaney to approve the minutes from the January 13, 2011 meeting.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. **Public Hearing for Case #130 – 1209 South 16th Street.** Edey Conkerton of ECO Architects, LLC came before the Commission representing Agrivest, LLC seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new residential building presented as Residence #C on property located at 1209 South 16th Street, Oxford, Mississippi. Ms.

Conkerton presented the Commission with schematics of the elevations for Building #C and explained the applicant's request. Discussion was made regarding the presented elevations and Commissioner Spears asked if there was a site plan. Assistant City Planner Katrina Hourin presented the Commission with the site plan for the project. Discussion was made regarding the presented site plan. Commissioner Swaney questioned Ms. Conkerton about the color scheme for Building C. Ms. Conkerton replied that the color scheme would probably be green with a brown roof. Discussion was made regarding the color scheme.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Swaney and seconded by Commissioner McKenzie to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1209 South 16th Street, Oxford, Mississippi.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

5. **Public Hearing for Case #131 – 1000 University Avenue - #5.** Andy Fornea of A.S. Fornea Construction came before the Commission representing Brett Parsons seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to make exterior renovations to property located at 1000 University Avenue - #5, Oxford, Mississippi. Mr. Fornea presented the Commission with a site plan and photos of the existing unit. Mr. Fornea informed the Commission that the renovation would include the removal of an existing garage door, framing and bricking the wall where the garage door was previously installed and installing two four foot by five foot (4' x 5') windows. Discussion was made regarding the applicant's request and Commissioner Spears asked Mr. Fornea what types of windows would be used in the project. Mr. Fornea replied that the windows would be two four foot by five foot (4' x 5') clad Anderson windows mulled together. Further discussion was made regarding the location of the proposed window.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Owens and seconded by Commissioner McKenzie to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for property located at 1000 University Avenue - #5, Oxford, Mississippi.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

6. **Public Hearing for Case #132 – 613 South 11th Street.** Lendy Alderson came before the Commission seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a wrought iron fence at the rear of property located at 613 South 11th Street, Oxford, Mississippi. Ms. Alderson presented the Commission with photos of the home and proposed fence and stated that it would be connected to the existing iron fence located on her property. Ms. Alderson further stated that the proposed fence would enhance both her property and the

neighborhood. Ms. Alderson also stated that the proposed fence would be forty eight inches in height (48"). Discussion was made regarding the applicant's request.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner Owens and seconded by Commissioner McKenzie to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 613 South 11th Street, Oxford, Mississippi.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

7. **Public Hearing for Case #133 – 1445 South Lamar Boulevard.** Mike Bridge came before the Commission seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a residential structure located at 1445 South Lamar Boulevard, Oxford, Mississippi. Mr. Bridge presented the Commission with photographs detailing the appearance of the resource, engineer's report detailing the condition of the resource, a report from the Mississippi Department of Archives & History, lot size, topography, building layout, and a petition from adjacent property owners in favor of the demolition. Mr. Bridge explained to the Commission that he was desirous of demolishing the structure due to the fact that it was in poor condition and that the floors were like a "trampoline". Mr. Bridge further explained that if the demolition were approved, he was not proposing to construct anything new on the site, but added that he would like to landscape the site. Mr. Bridge then presented a landscaping plan for the site and explained his request.

John Lewis of Hill Lewis, LLC Surveying and Engineering came before the Commission representing Mike Bridge and informed them that an inspection was made on the property to determine the amount of repairs needed to make the residence safe for occupancy. Mr. Lewis stated that the following major items were found:

1. The outside foundation walls on the South and East side have major cracks indicating the house has shifted in those directions. (Depicted on photos 1, 2, and 3.)
2. There is water going under the foundation on the West or front of the residence. The water movement is undermining the brick foundation wall that is sitting directly on the soil with no foundation. (Depicted on photos 4, 5, and 6.)
3. There are cracked floor joists, very unstable splices of the floor joist and main wood beams and deteriorated wood bands around the exterior perimeter. Some of the floor joists do not attach directly to the main wood beams. (Depicted on photos 7, 8, and 9.)
4. The interior pier supports are very unstable. Soil has eroded away from these pier bases making the entire house very unstable. (Depicted on photos 10 and 11.)
5. The masonry supports and the interior wood supports for the rear of the house are very unstable. There are cracks in the masonry columns and some of the interior supports have fallen down. (Depicted on photos 12, 13, and 14.)

Mr. Lewis also stated that the house is located on a very small lot with a very steep grade from front to rear. Mr. Lewis further stated that there is very little room on the exterior of the house to work. He stated that in order for the residence to be repaired, the entire foundation would need to be replaced. He also informed the Commission that in order to replace the entire foundation, the house would have to be jacked up or removed from the site and returned to the new foundation. Mr. Lewis further stated that if the house is jacked up and the foundation repair is attempted, this would create a very unstable work environment. Additionally, Mr. Lewis stated that if there was an attempt made to move the house, the deteriorated wood band would not support a move. Therefore, Mr. Lewis recommended that the structure be demolished and removed from the lot.

Questions came from Chairman Asti asking Mr. Bridge when he acquired the property. Mr. Bridge replied that he acquired the property approximately 17 years ago. Questions came from Chairman Asti asking Mr. Bridge how the property came to be in such a state of disrepair. Mr. Bridge replied that he first noticed a shifting of the home in the basement. Chairman Asti then asked Mr. Bridge if the property was currently rented. Mr. Bridge replied that the home was not currently rented. Chairman Asti asked Mr. Bridge how long the property had been in that condition. Mr. Bridge replied that the deterioration appeared to have happened over a period of time due to previous renovations that were poorly done. Chairman Asti then asked Mr. Bridge if the previous renovations were done under his direction. Mr. Bridge replied that the previous renovations were done under his direction. Chairman Asti asked Mr. Bridge when the previous renovations were done. Mr. Bridge replied that the previous renovations were done approximately four to five years ago. Further questions came from Chairman Asti to Mr. Bridge regarding the cost to repair the structure. Mr. Bridge replied that the cost to repair the structure exceeded the current value of the home. Chairman Asti then asked Mr. Bridge about the home's current value. Mr. Bridge replied that if the home were structurally sound it would be worth approximately \$40,000 - \$45,000. Chairman Asti then asked Mr. Lewis if he was an engineer. Mr. Lewis replied that he was a professional engineer who has done work in Oxford since 1996.

Mr. Lewis explained to the Commission that the main issue is movement of the structure from the south and east. He also stated that there are erosion issues and the home's structural supports have deteriorated. He presented photos that depicted the issues and stated that the foundation was resting directly on dirt. Mr. Lewis reiterated that in order for the home to be repaired it would need to be moved off its foundation. Mr. Lewis added that if the home were moved off its foundation it could not be placed on the lot due to the sloping lot. He stated that the structure was too unstable to jack it up to repair it. Mr. Lewis informed the Commission that a rough estimate to repair the foundation only was about \$125,000 - \$150,000.

Discussion was made between Chairman Asti, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Bridge about the length of time the home's foundation has been in disrepair. Mr. Lewis presented photos #1 and #2 which depicted the cracks in the foundation and stated the foundation could have been in disrepair as far back as 10 years ago.

Discussion was made between the Commission, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Bridge about the erosion problems and water coming into the home. Chairman Asti asked Mr. Bridge when the structure was last occupied. Mr. Bridge replied that the last time the structure was occupied was approximately one year or more ago. Discussion was also made regarding the wooden piers on the rear portion of the structure. Mr. Lewis stated that the structure was in such poor condition that it could collapse if anything were to be removed. Mr. Lewis reiterated that the structure was unsafe to repair.

Questions came from Commissioner Ton to Mr. Bridge asking him if owned any other rental properties in the district. Mr. Bridge replied that he did own other properties in the district. Commissioner Ton advised Mr. Bridge to inspect his other properties to prevent the same types of issues from occurring in the future. Mr. Bridge rebutted by saying that none of his other properties were in that condition.

Chairman Asti cited Section 54-26(4) of the Oxford Historic Preservation Ordinance regarding demolitions. The ordinance states:

In considering any application for the demolition of a landmark or a resource within a preservation district, the following shall be considered:

- a. The commission shall consider the individual architectural, cultural, and/or historical significance of the resource.
- b. The commission shall consider the importance or contribution of the resource to the architectural character of the district.
- c. The commission shall consider the importance or contribution of the resource to neighboring property values.
- d. The commission shall consider the difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a resource because of its texture, design, material, or detail.

Discussion was made regarding subsection (a) and Mr. Bridge rebutted stating that the even though structure is classified as contributing it does not architecturally match the other structures in the neighborhood. Mr. Bridge stated that the structure had been added on to at least twice since the original construction and contains asbestos siding. Mr. Bridge further stated that he has contacted each of the adjacent property owners regarding the demolition and each of them is in support of removing the structure.

Chairman Asti rebutted and stated the wishes of the adjoining neighbors was not before the Commission and read aloud the survey regarding the home from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Chairman Asti stated that page 2 of the MDAH survey lists the home as contributing, therefore according to Section 54-26(4)(a) of the Oxford Historic Preservation Ordinance the home is a contributing structure.

Commissioner Spears agreed that the structure is contributing because of the items indicated in the MDAH inventory survey. Commissioner Spears stated that the shape, proportion, bricks, balusters, and windows are all characteristics of a craftsman style home.

Mr. Bridge rebutted and stated that it was appropriate to demolish the structure since it was dangerous to renovate it.

Discussion was made regarding subsection (b) and Chairman Asti stated that according to the survey conducted by MDAH in 2000, the structure contributes to the character of the district. Mr. Bridge rebutted and stated that he owns other properties in the South Lamar District and that he was not familiar with any other structure that resembled the property. He also stated that the structure does not relate character wise to any of the other structures in the neighborhood.

Discussion was made regarding subsection (c) and Mr. Bridge stated that the structure detracts from property values of other houses in the district. He cited the lack of available parking and the fact that the adjoining neighbors feel the structure has a detrimental impact on the neighborhood.

Discussion was made regarding subsection (d) and Mr. Bridge stated that the potential exists for the structure to implode or fall apart if repairs are attempted. Mr. Lewis stated that in his professional opinion it would be a major undertaking just to repair the foundation. Mr. Lewis also stated that a swag exists in the roof ridge of the structure.

After further discussion, Commissioner McKenzie stated that the Commission should vote on the request. There being no questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was made by Commissioner McKenzie to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish an existing structure on property located 1445 South Lamar Boulevard. The motion died for lack of a second.

Chairman Asti then asked Assistant City Planner Katrina Hourin if the City of Oxford's Planning Department was required to approve the landscaping plan for the site. Mrs. Hourin stated that a landscaping plan was not required if the property is not zoned commercial. Mr. Bridge stated that he planned to install a mesh covering at the site and put in other landscaping if the request for demolition was granted. Mrs. Hourin stated in order for the demolition to be granted, a building permit would have to be issued simultaneously with the Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Bridge rebutted and stated that he had no plans to rebuild on the site.

Commissioner McKenzie questioned why the request was before the Commission if it could not vote on approving the request. City Planner Tim Akers informed the Commission that the property was not zoned commercial, and stated that the ordinance only allows for the demolition of commercial property with a landscaping plan. Mr. Akers added that there is currently no mechanism in the ordinance to allow the demolition of a residence without a replacement plan.

Mr. Akers then suggested that the Commission make a motion regarding possible amendment of the ordinance allowing demolition of a residential structure without a replacement plan and stated that the amended ordinance would have to go be approved by both Preservation Commission and the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for approval.

There being no further questions or comments from the public or the Commission, motion was by Commissioner McKenzie and seconded by Commissioner Swaney giving City Planner Tim Akers permission to draft new language in the Oxford Historic Preservation Ordinance regarding residential demolitions.

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved.

8. **Preservation Awards and Other Outreach Programs.** Assistant City Planner Katrina informed the Commission that she had spoken with the Courthouse Square Preservation Commission regarding preservation awards and outreach programs for both the Courthouse Square and Oxford Historic Preservation Districts. Mrs. Hourin stated that she will continue to work on ideas for the awards and will report back to the Commission. Discussion was made regarding the awards and outreach programs.
9. **Resolution to Amend Fees for Certificates of Appropriateness.** Assistant City Planner Katrina Hourin informed the Commission that she had received feedback from applicants regarding the inconsistency associated with fees for Certificates of Appropriateness. Mrs. Hourin provided data and stated that she had researched the fees and guidelines of other historic preservation commissions around the country. Mrs. Hourin further stated that she will draft a suggested fee schedule and report back to the Commission. She stated that a resolution amending the fee schedule would then have to be forwarded to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for approval. Discussion was made regarding the fees and resolution.
10. **Historic Preservation Commission Training.** Assistant City Planner Katrina Hourin informed the Commission that she had distributed an email regarding training for technical preservation to be held in Tupelo, MS on February 17, 2011. Mrs. Hourin informed the Commission that members were not required to attend the training but it was encouraged. Commissioner Ton replied that she would attend and represent the Commission. Discussion was made regarding the training.

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

All present voting aye.

The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned.