

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HAPC)

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The July 8, 2020 meeting of the Oxford Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Chris Skoglund

Members present: Chris Skoglund, Edna Southard, Corey Watt, Dana Miller, Hueston Kyger, Sean Wagner. Chad Smith was excused. Staff present was Sam Perry, Director.

Mr. Skoglund explained this was a virtual meeting and discussed the meeting procedure. This meeting was being conducted virtually using Zoom and Youtube in accordance with House Bill 197.

Ms. Southard made motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Watt seconded the motion. All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

HAPC-2020-06

Mr. Sam Perry provided a review of a request to add six windows to an existing building and façade color change. Mr. Perry shared a photograph of Mr. Webb's request. Mr. Perry referred to Mr. Webb's proposal to add only windows with no changes to any other parts of the building. Mr. Perry discussed the design guidelines which state that windows should be proportionally vertical; however, there isn't much discussed regarding new window openings. Mr. Perry reported that Mr. Skoglund asked that it be on the agenda because of the size and color standpoint. Mr. Webb discussed the current color of the façade noting that it was time for a change. The plan is to simply take the façade color around the building. Regarding the windows they would align them with the existing windows. Window heads and sills are colorful and ornate on the façade and would not take that around the building, thus avoiding excessive ornamentation. Mr. Perry referred to the existing cast stone masonry and inquired if that could be highlighted to add a 3-dimensional interest. Mr. Webb explained that the front windows were relatively new and the new windows would match them. Mr. Kyger and Mr. Wagner agreed with the choice.

Mr. Wagner made motion to approve the request as presented. Ms. Southard seconded the motion.

AYE: Mr. Skoglund, Ms. Southard, Mr. Kyger, Mr. Watt, Mr. Miller, Mr. Wagner

NAY: None

ABS: None

HAPC-2020-08, 101 W Church, Pre-Application

Mr. Perry announced that Mr. Norman Butt, The Architectural Group, was present for this meeting, and representing the owner to share a pre-application for a substantial project, located at 101 W. Church Street. Mr. Perry reported that this was a demolition requiring a reuse based upon the zoning code for fire damage. Mr. Perry noted that an analysis was required by the code. Mr. Perry explained the purposeful use determined to justify demolition. Because of the fire damage, City officials observed conditions of the buildings and expressed their concern. Mr. Perry noted that the cause of the fire was old wiring, and not something the owner or tenants had caused.

Mr. Butt spoke about his specialization in historical preservation and restoration. Mr. Butt noted this is was a sensitive building and that he took preservation very seriously. Mr. Butt explained what had occurred, and how the owner brought him on. Mr. Butt stated that based upon requirements, options were discussed with the owner, and that they took into consideration the Fire Chief and Building Official input. Mr. Butt stated that the fire started on the second floor affecting the historical part of the building related to the electrical wiring. This area was mainly living space. Mr. Butt discussed the cost factors of repair.

Mr. Skoglund referred to the \$218,000 cost estimate being just for the historic part of the structure, and inquired about the other areas of the building. Mr. Watt inquired what damage occurred in the non-historical part. Mr. Butt responded smoke damage. Mr. Butt also referred to the many additions having taken place over the years to the original structure and the requirement of bringing it all up to code. Mr. Butt reported it would still end up with multiple breaker boxes in the structure. Discussion took place regarding the impact of restoring the entire building, Mr. Butt discussed all of the structural changes that have taken place during the additions.

Mr. Watt: inquired about taxable value versus fair market value and how it was determined. Mr. Watt inquired about insurance value versus auditor value. Mr. Skoglund inquired that prior to the loss of this building it had a value, and wouldn't that be the basis versus value of the building in its distressed state if left as is. Discussion followed regarding fair market value. Discussed demolition criteria. Mr. Kyger inquired about rents received for this property. Mr. Perry reported the structure was permitted for 12. Mr. Butt talked about what criteria's would have to be met when rebuilt. Discussed existing characteristics and their importance and characteristics of surrounding properties. Discussed design elements. Mr. Butt also reviewed scale proportions and how they fall within a four story development. Wants the HAPC to understand the size noting that the structure was located in an intermediate area and a fourth floor fitting into this area. Understand its relationship to surrounding properties. Mr. Butt stated the plan was for the fourth floor to be built into the trusses. Mr. Butt shared plans, in regards to setbacks, and onsite parking underneath the building coming off Church Street. Mr. Butt discussed the footprint existing structure versus the new, looking at 4,000 square feet versus new 19,000 square feet, so about four times larger. The plan is to develop it so it has components of space. The 19,000 square feet represents one level not all four. Discussed benefit/contribution to the community for professionals, faculty, etc. Mr. Skoglund inquired and it was shared the existing occupancy versus potentially 100 occupants. HAPC is just looking at the replacement building after a fire. Discussed zoning code requirements. Mr. Perry noted that it would be looked at as one entire quarter block lot. Mr. Watt noted that the HAPC has to consider how it is zoned right now. Mr. Perry stated this is one lot. Mr. Butt stated the lot measures 27,500 square feet, but with setbacks, measures 22,115 square feet; this development is 19,000 square feet, so we are below the allowable amount. Mr. Butt reviewed how they have designed the building by breaking it up to give it the component of spacious balance, along with reflecting the character and shape of the current building. Mr. Skoglund inquired about the maximum height. Mr. Perry responded 48 feet; however, the peak can go above that maximum height. Mr. Miller stated that he saw some of the current structure in the new design but only when you point it out specifically. Discussion followed regarding elements Mr. Butt had pulled from the existing structure. Mr. Skoglund stated he was just trying to grasp the size of the replacement structure as it so substantially larger. Mr. Kyger inquired what feedback Mr. Perry and Mr. Butt wanted. Mr. Perry stated that the code didn't require feedback on pre-application and suggested doing a round robin.

Mr. Wagner left at 7:15 p.m. Mr. Perry stated that if the consensus is that a bulk change is concerning, they could ask the applicant to re-evaluate, possibly consider dividing up the land into individual lots and could report at the next meeting, which would require a completely different design. Mr. Perry asked that during HAPC round robin if the HAPC would provide feedback on demolition and loss of building and the appropriateness of the design.

Mr. Kyger commented that it was boiled down to the status of the current building. Mr. Kyger referred to Chief Detherage comments in the past regarding the fire, and the Ferguson renovation estimate, as it seemed sad to say the building was damaged in a way to cost a substantial amount of money to get it back to the way it was. The redevelopment presented is what he expected. Redeveloping at one time seems better versus dividing into individual lots. Mr. Kyger stated he expected what was presented.

Mr. Watt reviewed the age of the existing structure, and noted its location was in one of the transitional areas, and that this was probably one of HAPC's first review of such an old structure. Mr. Watt suggested if we could incorporate parts of the existing structure; thus saving it if we could? Ms. Southard stated she was concerned about the impact of loss. Ms. Southard continued that we were fortunate no one was killed; however, to expect public pushback if choosing to demolish the structure. Ms. Southard inquired if we could find a way to incorporate the existing structure, and take another look at it? Somehow preserving it?

Mr. Miller inquired about there once being a structure in existence between this structure and the alley area? Mr. Miller inquired about what was the real historical value in saving that style of structure. Mr. Miller stated he was still on the fence. Mr. Perry stated that he had a photo of an old building that once existed, similar to the house located to the west. Mr. Perry displayed a photo of the Sanborn Map from 1911.

Mr. Skoglund stated he understood that this was one of the largest lots; however replacing the structure with four times the size of the existing structure and two more stories was a lot. Public perception is concerning. Mr. Skoglund inquired was the cost of demolition versus cost of repair in HAPC's purview. There was nothing structurally wrong with the other parts of the structure besides smoke damage, wiring wasn't an issue, so consider keeping, or build something on a smaller scale?

Mr. Perry inquired, but noted they would need to have a majority vote, to retain a third party entity to conduct a financial analysis fair market value/construction estimation.

Mr. Watt made motion to retain a third party. Mr. Kyger seconded the motion.

AYE: Ms. Southard, Mr. Miller, Mr. Kyger, Mr. Watt, Mr. Skoglund (5)

NAY: None (0)

ABS: None (0)

Ms. Southard inquired about a timeframe. Mr. Perry responded that he planned to have completed prior to the next meeting.

HAPC-2020-09, Pre Application, 36 E. High Street, Brick Street, addition of a second floor patio

Mr. Perry provided a staff report. Mr. Perry described the request to extend an existing outdoor patio by adding a second floor and extending the patio closer to High Street by adding one additional pier “bay”. Mr. Perry displayed the design. Mr. Perry announced this would also be reviewed by the BZA because of the patio being within the front yard setback.

Mr. Mark Weisman, Applicant, spoke. Mr. Weisman described the plan to remove the existing patio roof covering, add a second floor patio, and expand one additional pier “bay” toward High Street. Mr. Weisman stated they would not be increasing the footprint of the patio. Two stairwells up to the second deck would be built as well. Mr. Weisman noted that they were not asking for an additional occupancy load as the plan was to space people out due to Covid-19 regulations. Mr. Weisman stated they would also be removing the existing brick/glass block on the first floor patio to match the railing of the second floor. Mr. Skoglund inquired about the railing height plan. Mr. Weisman responded 42” on the upper level was required. Ms. Southard understood safety was not under the HAPC purview, but asked at what point was that considered and reviewed. Mr. Perry stated that the Zoning and Building Departments would review the application. Ms. Southard felt the design looked good. Mr. Watt disagreed as he felt there to be no complimentary architecture in the design. Mr. Watt also suggested the two exterior staircases be located inside the existing building. Discussion followed.

Mr. Skoglund, in referencing to Brick Street’s unique structure design, complimented on how the applicant handled the look of the exterior design and that he felt the side of the building lined up pretty well with the front of the building and that the newer design was more complimentary to what currently existed with the sloped roofline. Discussion followed.

Discussion took place regarding the two stairwells be located inside of the structure.

Mr. Kyger stated he didn’t have a major problem with the request; however, he was concerned about the upper deck rail height. Mr. Kyger noted that he didn’t believe Mr. Weisman was adding an additional patio for Covid-19 reasons. Mr. Weisman referred to having seen this kind of patio design in other parts of the country and noted that if you can spread people out that there was much less risk for infection. Mr. Weisman noted that businesses in Oxford are trying to figure out how to survive.

Mr. Watt expressed concern regarding the continual additions on some structures in the Uptown and the importance for the HAPC to be involved in those decisions. Mr. Watt inquired about the occupancy. Mr. Perry reported that it was up to the Building Official as part of the permitting process. Mr. Perry stated they could submit with the application that they were not increasing the occupancy. Ms. Southard referred to the art deco style of the building and appreciated them keeping it.

Ms. Southard made motion to approve HAPC-2020-09 pending that the railing height be high enough to meet zoning code. Mr. Watt amended the motion to add that the staircases be moved to a non-visible area preferably the interior. Discussion followed regarding stairs. Mr. Weisman stated that he was not sure they had the ability to place stairs inside. Mr. Watt withdrew his motion. All were in favor of Ms. Southard’s motion to approve HAPC-2020-09.

Mr. Perry announced that there were no public input received during discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Skoglund thanked Ms. Southard for her comments regarding the expansion of the historic district at a recent City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Watt made motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Skoglund seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.