

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HAPC)
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, March 12, 2025
6:00 P.M.

I. Call to Order

The March 12, 2025 meeting of the Oxford Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dana Miller.

Those members present: Dana Miller, Corey Watt, Alex French, Rémah Dinç, Alia Levar Wegner, Sean Wagner, and Brad Spurlock

Those members excused: None

Staff members present: Sam Perry, Community Development Director

Staff members excused: None

II. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Miller asked if there were any updates to the agenda. Ms. Dinç requested to include a discussion on the preservation series planned during the previous meeting. Ms. French made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Watt seconded the motion. All were in favor.

III. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public. Mr. Miller welcomed students from Miami University in the audience.

IV. Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2025

Ms. French made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Spurlock seconded the motion. All were in favor.

V. New Business

HAPC-2025-01, 131 E Spring Street, CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, porch replacement, Elizabeth Baer-Broestl, Applicant, Scott Webb, Architect

Mr. Perry provided a summary on this case, noting that this originated from an enforcement action due to the work being performed without a permit. Mr. Perry explained that reviewing a case when the project is minor there is no need for a review by the Commission. Upon review, further explained Mr. Perry, it was determined that the project involved significant changes requiring approval from the Commission.

Mr. Watt inquired about the intent of the owners and whether they were aware of constructing a project in the historic district. Mr. Perry clarified that the owners had started work without initial approval but later sought guidance to ensure compliance.

Mr. Scott Webb, Architect for the project, spoke on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Webb shared information about the history of the building, explaining that the current owners had been working on preserving and improving the structure. Mr. Webb also explained that the rear porch replacement was necessary due to extensive damage from various weather elements and structural instability. The initial repairs revealed further damage, making a full reconstruction necessary, added Mr. Webb.

Mr. Webb next explained in detail the changes, emphasizing the intent to maintain compatibility with the historic character of the building.

Next, the Commission members engaged in a lively discussion about some key elements such as (1) removal of non-original decorative elements – “gingerbread” framework, (2) the use of square columns instead of round ones, (3) composite material for the porch ceiling.

Ms. French and Mr. Spurlock agreed on the removal of the fretwork stating that it was not an appropriate addition to an older house. Ms. Dinç agreed with Ms. French and Mr. Spurlock and also wanted to see that the ceiling material and style should match the front porch.

Ms. French made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the ceiling of the rear porch should be consistent with the existing ceiling of the front porch. Mr. Spurlock seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-1 with a dissenting vote from Mr. Watt.

VI. Discussion Items

McKenna Update Open House Report Out / HAPC and the Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Perry provided a detailed update on the McKenna open house event that was held on February 26th. The meeting focused on three major areas: (1) zoning code revisions, (2) historic preservation plan, (3) design guidelines update. Mr. Perry emphasized that the project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act and the targeted completion date is August 2025.

Mr. Perry showed the Oxford Today project website, explaining that the website compiles inventory data from past surveys and allows public input. Mr. Perry then highlighted the importance of integrating preservation efforts with economic development strategies. Mr. Perry also highlighted adjustments to zoning, including the creation of an Uptown Transition district to better link the Locust Street corridor with the Historic Urban Core.

Mr. Perry next shared a slide showing various building types. This was used at the workshop to help people think on where these types of buildings should be in the community, explained Mr. Perry.

Mr. Perry informed the Commission that the next open house is planned for May 29, where community members will have another opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions about the progress.

Mr. Watt proposed a joint work session between HAPC and Planning Commission to align historic preservation goals with broader zoning policies. A tentative day in April was proposed.

Preservation Advocacy Series

Ms. Dinç talked about the preservation series initiative, inspired by concerns about Miami University's building projects. Ms. Dinç explained that the series would include:

- An event on April 28 with DAR focusing on preservation efforts
- Another event with CHAPS on one of the weekends in April
- DAR attending the next HAPC meeting pending case volume

Mr. Watt suggested broadening the outreach to Miami students beyond architecture and history majors to include anthropology, psychology, education and social work students.

Mr. Miller wanted clarification on HAPC's role in this event. Ms. Dinç responded that the April meeting would serve as an informational session about the Commission's work. Mr. Perry supported the initiative, noting that a structured series could enhance public engagement.

Historic Preservation Myth Busters

Mr. Miller shared highlights from the McKenna open house Myth Busters station, which tested knowledge on historic preservation. The Commission members also tested their knowledge as a group and Mr. Miller shared the answers to the questions.

Mr. Perry offered to share the full list of questions and answers with the Commission members.

Omission of Oxford in the Civil Rights Trail

Mr. Miller raised the possibility of getting Oxford recognized on the National Civil Rights Trail, given the city's historical significance, particularly Freedom Summer. Mr. Miller noted that Ohio is currently absent from the Trail map.

The Commission discussed possible next steps:

- Reaching out to Ann Elizabeth Armstrong and Bob Wicks
- Investigate previous efforts to achieve the recognition
- Identify key historic sites that meet the trail's criteria

Ms. French stated that she is unable to attend the Talawanda Board of Education meeting where the proposal for a historic marker at the current Board of Education building (Harry Thobe's House) was to be presented. Ms. French noted that Kim Daggy was seeking someone to be present with her. The Commission discussed potential attendees and agreed that a letter of support could serve as an alternative if nobody is able to attend.

Mr. Watt proposed creating a priority list of sites for future historic markers. The Commission welcomed Mr. Watt's proposal.

VII. Administrative Decisions (Previously Decided)

HAPC-2024-18, 45 E High Street, CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, screening for rooftop unit AC, Robert Humphrey, Applicant/Agent

HAPC-2024-19, 35 W High Street, CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, replacing wall sign, Jonah Prost, Applicant/Agent

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Watt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. French seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.ⁱ

ⁱ This meeting summary was generated with the assistance of AI technology to enhance accuracy and efficiency. While AI was used to capture key points and structure the summary, it has been reviewed for accuracy and completeness by a staff member.