



OAK RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 21, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Chair
Debbie Shoenfeld, Vice Chair
Mac McAtee
Michelle Ungurait, Alternate (Sitting)

Staff Present

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk/HPC Staff
Bruce Oakley, Town Manager

Members Absent

Ron Simpson
Jim Kinneman, Alternate

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Schneider recognized Ann Pitz, who had recently moved and resigned from the Commission, for her service and contributions.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Mac McAtee made a **motion** to approve the meeting agenda after substituting discussion of purchasing a display case for community outreach. **Debbie Shoenfeld** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2013, MEETING

Michelle Ungurait made a **motion** to approve the June 12, 2013, meeting minutes. **Mac McAtee** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. NEW BUSINESS

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- **Request for COA:** Oak Ridge Foundation, 2317 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC, requests a COA for an addition to Holt Hall on the campus of Oak Ridge Military Academy. Guilford County tax parcel 0162858. Zoning classification PI.

Schneider read a statement regarding the duties and responsibilities of the HPC, which include approving or disapproving applications from property owners who wish to make changes to locally designated historic landmarks or properties within a locally designated historic district to ensure that changes are appropriate. HPC's role is to be impartial and not to take opinions of others into consideration, but to take the evidence presented and apply it to standards in the Design Guidelines, make findings of fact, and render a decision accordingly. Schneider said HPC can approve or disapprove a COA or continue it, but a decision must be made within 180 days. She said it was important to ascertain whether any HPC members have a conflict of interest regarding the COA about

to be heard. She asked HPC members to disclose if they have a fixed opinion; if they have had communication with the applicant or discussions regarding the COA; if they have a close family, business or other relationship with the applicant; or if they have a financial interest in the outcome of the COA application.

A short recess was called at 7:09 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 7:13 p.m.

Schneider continued that disclosure of any of these matters does not necessarily mean a Board member would be recused, but disclosure is required in North Carolina, and the other Board members would decide if that compromised the ability to participate. McAtee said he had no conflicts. Schneider said she had received a phone call from Mark Overby of Oak Ridge Military Academy, who asked about the meeting, but they did not discuss the case. Other HPC members said they had no conflicts of interest.

Testimony:

Mark Overby and Irvin Angel were sworn in.

Mark Overby, speaking on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Oak Ridge Foundation, said the Board wanted approval for an addition at Oak Ridge Military Academy to Holt Hall, which would allow the creation of new bathroom facilities. The existing bathrooms are dated and functionally obsolete. The addition of the new restrooms would match the existing building and would likely not be noticed from the road, Overby said.

Overby introduced Irvin Angel, an active alumnus and member of the Oak Ridge Society Foundation, which provides scholarship money to the Academy for students in need. Angel hired the architect who did the drawing, and he raised the funds for the Holt Hall addition, Overby said.

Debbie Shoenfeld said she did not see a utilities plan, landscaping plan or lighting plan in the packet of information provided to HPC. She said she had spoken to Town Manager Bruce Oakley about the utilities, and asked Overby if the academy's septic system would accommodate the additional showers or if an addition to the system would be required. Overby said the septic system that supplies the entire campus has additional capacity so no addition would be needed. He added that there would be no real change in the number of showers because the current ones would just be replaced with new ones.

Shoenfeld said she had noticed some landscaping around the foundation of the building and the steps that were going to be demolished, as well as a huge oak tree located near the building. Overby said the oak tree would be saved. He said he did not believe a landscaping plan had been done, but thought that the existing landscaping around the foundation would be matched. Shoenfeld said that a landscaping plan was still needed. Regarding lighting, Shoenfeld asked if there would be more outdoor lighting fixtures added; Overby said he thought there was a light fixture under the porch roof now, and that nothing new would be added to illuminate the outside of the building.

Mac McAtee said the elevation submitted with the application indicates there would be two porch lights, with one of either side of the porch.

Regarding the Commission members' questions, Angel responded that ORMA has a state-approved waste treatment plant which has surplus capacity. He said the shower rooms (one on each floor) and toilet rooms (one on each floor) in Holt Hall would simply be replaced with ones that were new and state of the art. He added that less wastewater would be produced because of water-saving devices available now.

Angel said there were no plans to add any additional lighting. The plans are to duplicate the west end of the building exactly as it is now. Plans call for reusing the porch rails, although some new vertical rails would likely be required in order to meet current building code, he said. Angel said anything that is reusable would be saved and reinstalled, and that the intent is to make the west end of the building look very near what can be seen now. He said the building, which was constructed in 1925, has walls about 14 inches thick walls and was built like the Titanic. Angel said the new walls would be made of 8-inch block, foam insulation, an air cavity and brick veneer, which would be manufactured to look as close as possible to the existing brick on the building. The brick would also be painted, as the existing brick is, to match the exterior of the building. Oakley presented a sample of the existing painted brick as well as a sample of the metal standing seam roofing that would be used, which Angel said should closely match the existing roofing.

Angel also said the construction engineer from King Guinn came up with the innovative idea to make the foundation completely supportive of the addition, so no load from the addition will be put on the old construction.

Schneider asked about landscaping, and Angel said the only thing that would be affected would be the holly bushes located on either side of the porch. Because they cannot be saved, the bushes will be replaced with a similar species to replicate the existing bushes. Angel said a large pin oak tree between Holt Hall and the chapel will be able to be saved; although it will have to be trimmed, it will be done under the watchful eye of someone who is an expert in the field, Angel said.

Shoenfeld said the Historic Guidelines say new foundations should have complementary shrubbery and plantings, and that a landscaping plan was not submitted. Shoenfeld said she thought the package was incomplete, and asked if HPC wanted to move forward or wait for the landscaping plan to be submitted. Oakley said his opinion was that a landscaping plan would just be a complementary plan to the original structure, so it would be considered the same as routine maintenance and not even a minor work.

McAtee asked if the same spacing and same plants would be planted as are there now, and Angel said yes, and that it only applied to the bushes on each side of the porch.

McAtee asked about the air conditioning units and said the application received by HPC did not include any detail about what the units would look like. Angel said there was detail in the engineered drawings which had been submitted to the Town. He added that the window sills were made of precast stone so the air conditioning units would be mounted on them and would be flush with the exterior wall. In response to questions from McAtee, Angel said the units would be made by Carrier and about 30 of them had been installed on campus.

Shoenfeld asked if the units would be installed flush with the wall, and Angel said yes and that they would be covered with a louver, the same as on Armfield Hall (the dorm beside King Gymnasium).

Shoenfeld asked about the detail for the lighting on the porch, and Angel said electrical drawings had been prepared and that they hoped to reuse the existing fixtures. If they cannot be used, Angel said a cut sheet could be submitted.

Ungurait asked Angel again if the lighting would be kept the same as is currently used if that is possible, and Angel said yes. He then told the Commission about some of the interior changes which would make the addition state of the art and energy efficient. Ungurait asked Angel to reiterate that there would be minimal changes to the landscaping, and Angel said yes and that because the existing bushes could not be saved, they would be replaced with similar ones. In response to Ungurait, Angel said no change to the Academy's utility plan would be required. Ungurait then asked for more detail on the porch railing; Angel said the existing railing is made of 2-inch steel pipe. While that is planned to be reused, it will require some ¾-inch vertical railings to be installed in order to pass code.

Schneider asked if the Commission felt the application was complete after hearing from Angel. She said it appeared the missing element was specifically what the air conditioning unit would look like, and Angel said he could provide that. Shoenfeld said she felt comfortable moving forward with a decision; McAtee agreed, providing the applicant supply a photo or visual depiction of the air conditioning units and landscape plan. Oakley said he would be glad to circulate that to HPC members once it has been submitted.

Schneider said one concern she had initially dealt with the consistency of the architectural elements and details, but she said she was heartened to learn that the plan is to replicate the existing porch at the end of an 18-foot addition. Schneider said typically the Historic Guidelines deal with an addition to a historic building by saying the work should be differentiated; she said she felt in this case it was different from adding on to an existing house and because the Academy is simply extending the existing structure, she didn't see the need to differentiate. She added that the porch was lovely and she was concerned when she thought it was simply going to be removed.

McAtee said the expansion joint between the old and new portions of the structure would show some.

Schneider said although demolition was going to occur in an area that is in the heart of the historic district, the fact that ORMA planned to replace features and extend the use of the existing building seemed to be important factors to consider.

Shoenfeld asked if it might be possible to remove the existing windows at the end of the building, have them remulled as double windows and then reused in the new portion of the building. Angel said he hadn't considered that, but thought it was an excellent idea and he thought there was a good possibility that could be done. He then talked about the fact that J. Hyatt Hammond, the same firm that built town hall, had worked on this project. He also said his father had also attended school at Oak Ridge and had boarded at the Benbow House, a photo of which is in town hall.

McAtee asked Angel what would be a reasonable time for to provide staff with a depiction of the landscaping and the air conditioning units, and Angel said by Tuesday of the following week (August 27, 2013).

Schneider said based on the fact that the addition is short, an addition of 18 feet doesn't change the proportion of the building dramatically, and with the replication of the porch, she felt the design concepts of scale, balance, rhythm, proportion and order were being fulfilled.

Shoenfeld said it appeared the addition had been designed to match the rest of the building and its architectural features, including the facia, soffits, doors and windows. She said she understood attempts to repair and restore existing lighting and possibly windows would be made. She added that the Academy planned to use materials that had the same design, texture and colors as samples that had been submitted.

Regarding shape, height and materials, Schneider said the plan was to introduce wall openings for mechanicals on the side of the building, and since they were flush with the building, that was even better. She added that the pitch of the roof would remain the same.

Shoenfeld pointed out that the elevation for the porch did not show gutters or downspouts, and she asked if they would be used. Schneider said the plan did say that guttering would be used as required. Angel said the plan at this point was to restore the gutters on the existing building and porch and reuse them.

Shoenfeld said the HPC had talked about windows and the fact that they would either be built onsite or existing windows reused/recycled. She asked if the columns were going to match those on the front of the building. Angel said he was not sure, but that they were designed to match what was on the porch now. He said the porch columns were 16 inches by 16 inches and contained structural steel columns within the brick.

Shoenfeld said mechanical elements had been discussed, but that she wanted to confirm that Angel understood that items such as roof ventilators, antennas and exhaust vents were to be located on the rear of the building. Angel said they were very sensitive to that fact, and that exhaust would be piped up through the building and vented out the back of cupolas on top of the building. Shoenfeld asked if the cupolas currently existed on the building, and Angel said yes.

Schneider said findings of fact had been reviewed for different aspects of the building, and everything had been documented in the drawings/plans submitted and documented for the record. The only things missing were the air conditioning specs and a landscaping plan; since existing landscaping was being replicated, it could be stipulated in the record that the HPC has accepted that.

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to approve the COA request from the Oak Ridge Foundation as requested with the stipulation that specs of the air conditioning units be provided by August 30, 2013, that HPC understands that there will be guttering on the porch, and that the applicant will replicate the existing landscaping. **Mac McAtee** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

- **Request for COA:** Oak Ridge Foundation, 2317 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC, requests a COA to construct a brick seating wall on the campus of Oak Ridge Military Academy. Guilford County tax parcel 0162858. Zoning classification PI.

Mark Overby stated that a 16-inch brick wall would be built on the existing cement patio outside of Cone Hall, which is used as a student activity center.

Schneider asked if the wall would go along the outside of the existing patio, and Overby said yes and that it would be 50 feet long.

McAtee asked if the wall would be visible to drivers along N.C. 150, and Overby said yes. He said the brick will match the building, which was constructed around 1992. Oakley said although the COA request could almost be considered routine maintenance, staff felt it should be brought before the Commission since it could be seen from the road. McAtee asked if the wall would trap water, and Overby said accommodations would be made so that water would flow underneath. McAtee asked if there would be any lighting, and Overby said no, it would simply be a landscaping feature.

Schneider said she assumed there were no conflicts of interest since this was the same applicant as was heard in the previous case. No conflicts were stated.

Schneider said the Historic Guidelines talk about fencing and walls on page 41. She stated that this was not a privacy fence, but was a landscaping feature for an area with picnic tables. She said it sounded like the wall would help better define the area and expand its usefulness. She said it would be visible from the street, and that HPC needed to look at the appropriateness of design, materials, dimensions, architectural details, finish and location.

Shoenfeld said she felt the plan was pretty straightforward. Matching brick would be used, and the detail provided with the application was pretty explicit. She said there was not a lot to ask about, since the request was simply for a brick bench. Schneider said she thought it would be a nice addition and appropriate for the area.

Mac McAtee made a **motion** that the COA request be approved. **Debbie Shoenfeld** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Oakley commended the HPC for its attempts to only move forward with complete applications, but said staff is limited in what it can turn down. When staff sees that obvious things are missing from an application, it can communicate with the applicant and get what it can. However, Oakley said some applications may come in that staff knows will likely be continued because they are incomplete. Schneider said it would be helpful for HPC to know everything that had been submitted, citing the full set of drawings and samples submitted regarding the Holt Hall addition. She said she wanted HPC to be strict and thoughtful and not waste people's time. If staff feels an application is incomplete, Schneider said she would be glad come down and take a look at it and then contact the applicant to tell them the case cannot move forward without additional information. Oakley said only the full Commission can deny a COA, and that sometimes there have been disagreements with applicants over whether their application is

complete. Shoenfeld said the Commission is trying to make sure all the lines are defined and that they are not making mistakes. Oakley said staff was working on a new application that included a checklist; that will make it easier to tell an applicant that their case will likely be continued because their application is not complete.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Town Council report.** Schneider thanked Shoenfeld for the report last month that was given to Town Council. Shoenfeld said she wrote the report, and that it was given by Jim Kinneman.
- B. **COAs approved/reviewed at staff level.** Sandra Smith reported that there had been one application in the previous month. Steven Lantz had requested permission to construct a fire pit, and had provided a complete application with samples. Because the fire pit would be more of a landscaping feature, it would be 250 feet behind the house, and it would not be visible from the road, staff felt it was appropriate to approve.
- C. **COAs approved but not completed.** Smith said Carolyn Brown had planted trees in connection with her approved COA, making it now complete.

Schneider asked if any progress had been made on the sign at the Fire Department, and Smith said staff was not aware of any.

6. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Mike Stone, a member of the Planning & Zoning Board, commended HPC, saying it was "spot on" from a technical standpoint, that it was doing a good job taking care of the town, and that it was amazing some of the things the Board picked up on.

7. UPDATES

- A. **Discussion of purchase of artifact display case.** Schneider said she thought this project was OK to move forward since the item had been approved in the budget. McAtee said he and Smith had briefly discussed the matter. While he has found several display cases online, they would require paying freight charges; he and Smith are trying to see if any local furniture companies make secure display cases to avoid paying that additional cost. He suggested he and Smith continue to work on the project and bring information back to the Commission in the future.

Ideas for different displays were discussed; McAtee said he had one on Carolina Lake, which used to be at near Oak Ridge Military Academy, "in the wings." Smith said she had several ideas and was thinking it would be a rotating display that changes every 4 to 6 months. Smith said she hoped residents would be willing to donate or loan items for display once they heard about it.

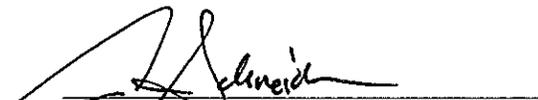
- B. **Budget update.** Schneider referred to the budget report for 2012-13, saying she thought the Commission would have been closer to spending the \$6,000 budgeted. Some of that related to the fact that each of the three historic markers ordered cost about \$370 less than projected.
- C. **Historic inventory/Markers.** Schneider said the three markers ordered have been delivered. The Commission is waiting for the Town Attorney to complete an agreement to be signed by the property owners. Until that has been done, it is hard to schedule unveiling dates. Schneider said she would like to do a series of two ads in the Northwest Observer to tell about the markers and invite the public to their unveilings. Publicity in the way of possible articles and calendar events in the Northwest Observer and a series of blast emails was also discussed.
- D. **Communications outreach.** Future outreach will be planned after the dates for the historic marker unveilings have been determined.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Debbie Shoenfeld made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. **Mac McAtee** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:


Sandra B. Smith, Town Clerk


Ann Schneider, Chair