

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GRANVILLE
CITY OF OXFORD**

**2019 ANNUAL REPORT of the
OXFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION**

TO: Mayor Jackie Sergeant and the Oxford Board of Commissioners

On behalf of the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), I present this Annual Report to update you on the activities of the HPC from May 2018 through April 2019, and to share the goals of the coming year.

The Commission presently has no vacancies and consists of the following six (7) members:

Anthony F. (Tony) Armento, Chairman	Derreck Brown, Vice-Chairman
Gary Weaver, Treasurer	Lisa Schons, Secretary
Kelly Collins-Schram, member	Jacalyn Thomas, member
Mark Pace, member	

Treasury report: \$1,145.00 operating funds; \$8,209.00 special-purpose project funds

N.C.G.S. § 160A-400.1. Legislative findings.

The historical heritage of our State is one of our most valued and important assets. The conservation and preservation of historic districts and landmarks stabilize and increase property values in their areas and strengthen the overall economy of the State. This Part authorizes cities and counties of the State within their respective zoning jurisdictions and by means of listing, regulation, and acquisition: (1) To safeguard the heritage of the city or county by preserving any district or landmark therein that embodies important elements of its culture, history, architectural history, or prehistory; and (2) To promote the use and conservation of such district or landmark for the education, pleasure and enrichment of the residents of the city or county and the State as a whole. (1989, c. 706, s. 2.)

In accordance with the legislation enabling the creation of historic preservation commissions by municipal governments, the purposes of the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) are:

- To safeguard the heritage of the City of Oxford by preserving districts and landmarks therein that embody important elements of its cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history and which possesses integrity of design, setting, materials, feelings and association;
- To promote the use and conservation of such districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and enrichment of the residents of Oxford and of the state as a whole.

In addition, preservation efforts should help:

- Foster civic beauty;
- Stabilize property values;
- Strengthen the local economy;
- Encourage the restoration, preservation, rehabilitation, and conservation of historically, architecturally, and archaeologically significant areas, structures, buildings, sites or objects and their surroundings; and
- Protect such buildings, sites, or objects and their surroundings from potentially adverse influences that may cause the decline, decay or destruction of important historical, architectural, and archaeological features that are a part of the local heritage.

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These core purposes were served through the following activities of the HPC during the period May 2018 – April 2019:

- The HPC received 16 Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications (29 in prior year; a decrease of 44.8%) affecting 12 properties and consisting of 29 separate projects (64 in prior year; a decrease of 54.7%). 1 application (1 project) was not reviewed because the property owner did not appear for the hearing by the HPC. Of the 28 project applications reviewed:
 - 1 was approved administratively as Minor Works (3.6%);
 - 27 were formally reviewed (96.4%); of these, 27 were approved (100%) and 0 denied.

- Two (2) HPC members attended 6-hour training sessions in May and August, sponsored by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and hosted by the Chapel Hill Historic District Commission and the City of Hendersonville Historic Preservation Commission, respectively. Participation in SHPO training is required for the HPC to maintain its Certified Local Government (CLG) designation, awarded to Oxford by the SHPO in September 2014 for standards of performance achieved by the HPC. Topics covered in the training sessions included legal basics for local government preservation programs, ethical standards for local preservation commission members, and review of North Carolina Historic Preservation Tax Credits and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

- The project to update the architectural survey of the Oxford Historic District (OHD) listing in the National Register of Historic Places was completed. The project was funded in part by the award in July 2017 of \$10,800 by the national Historic Preservation Fund. The HPC was previously advised by the SHPO of the importance of Oxford undertaking such a project, as 30 years had passed since the OHD Register nomination was originally approved, and because a CLG has the responsibility to keep its Register inventory current. The project was concluded by submission of the updated survey to the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee, which approved the HPC project consultant's recommendations of at its October meeting. Final survey results include:
 - 23 of the 33 buildings currently listed in the National Register as non-contributing structures were reclassified as contributing structures, making future qualified rehabilitation expenses of these buildings eligible for tax credit;
 - 246 additional contributing resources in 12 expansion areas on the perimeter of the original OHD have been added in the expanded OHD;
 - 6 additional districts and 5 individual buildings were approved for application to the National Park Service for National Register designation at any time in the future that the City of Oxford would like to do so.

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(Continued)**

- With the approval of the Board of Commissioners and the support of a private donor, the HPC engaged hmwPreservation to prepare the application to the National Park Service for the Oxford Historic District National Register Nomination Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase. This phase of the project was commenced in December and the application to the National Park Service was completed and presented to the SHPO for review and approval in March. Because the application has reached this status, owners of contributing structures within the expanded district may immediately apply for tax credit for eligible projects.
- The 7th Annual HPC Stewardship Award, for the preservation activities at 414 College Street, was presented at this meeting in May 2018.
- The 7th Annual HPC Photo Contest was conducted throughout the summer of 2018. Contest categories included: Nature/Wildlife, Porches, Nighttime, and Photographer's Choice. The awards were funded in part by contributions from Granville Health System, Highland Dentistry, Ortho NC, and the generous support of a private donor whose contribution also allowed the HPC to present the awards at a reception event held at The Hub on Main in October. Additionally, in partnership with the Downtown Oxford Economic Development Corporation, all winning photos were displayed in downtown storefronts throughout the recent winter months.
- On November 15th, the HPC hosted a Community Education Session at the Richard Thornton Library. Commission members and residents of neighboring areas were invited to attend, and several representatives from Warren County were in attendance. Amber Stimpson, the Certified Local Government Coordinator for the NC SHPO, and Heather Slane, principal of hmwPreservation were the presenters. Ms. Stimpson spoke on the value that historic structures bring to contemporary life, and Ms. Slane recapped her work on Oxford's National Register Expansion and the project status. Evaluation responses indicated high satisfaction, with each metric scoring at 4 or above on a scale of zero to five. Survey comments included "Excellent work!" "Well done!" "Thank you!" and "Awesome."
- Aware of the increasing popularity of historic tourism and its benefits to downtown merchants, the HPC has partnered with the Downtown Oxford Economic Development Corporation to reboot the Historic District Walking Tours. Originally created as a self-guided tour, guided/narrated tours were also developed in 2016 as part of the City's Bicentennial celebration events. Current planning is to re-introduce the self-guided tours, facilitated by a smartphone app, to conduct guided tours semi-annually, and develop holiday and garden tours in the future. A funding application to the Granville County Tourism Development Authority for foundational support of the programs was submitted in April.
- In furtherance of its objective to engage with other activities in the civic life of the City, the HPC again participated in the Lighting of the Green's event in December. HPC members and other volunteers prepared home-baked cookies to be handed out at the event and held a drawing for a red velvet holiday cake. Planning is underway for an expanded and heightened educational focus for the 2019 event.

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(Continued)**

- The HPC’s “This Old House...Oxford” column was continued, enhancing the community’s familiarity with the HPC and its activities. The column appears in the Oxford Public Ledger as a compliment to the HPC’s occasional press releases.
- The Oxford HPC Welcome Program was continued. HPC member Gary Weaver visited nearly all the new residents to the Oxford Historic Districts during the last year, to welcome them to Oxford and inform them of the resources that are available to answer questions they may have about changes or improvements to their property.
- An Historic District database is presently under development. The database is a contact list of Historic District residents that will allow the HPC to communicate electronically with property owners in order to share relevant information and to announce events of interest to them.
- HPC officers were elected, and goals for the coming year were set, in January 2019. All members formally recommitted themselves to the HPC Code of Ethics, sections of which are read aloud at each regular meeting.

HPC Goals for the coming year currently include:

- Conducting the 8th Annual HPC Photo Contest, with contest entries again to be accepted throughout the summer. The contest will conclude again with a reception event in October where the winners will be announced, and the winning photos displayed;
- Addition of an online inventory of historic district properties, including photos and descriptions, and a “property of the month” feature, on the HPC website
- Hosting a Community Education Session, open to also to residents of neighboring historic districts;
- Continuing:
 - Welcome Program introductions to new residents
 - Periodic “This Old House... Oxford” columns in the Oxford Public Ledger;
 - Participation in the Lighting of the Greens event;
- Implementing the self-guided and guided walking tour programs;
- Completing the National Register District expansion by acceptance of the boundary adjustments by the National Park Service in the Fall of 2019;
- Awarding the 8th Annual HPC Stewardship Award, in May 2019.

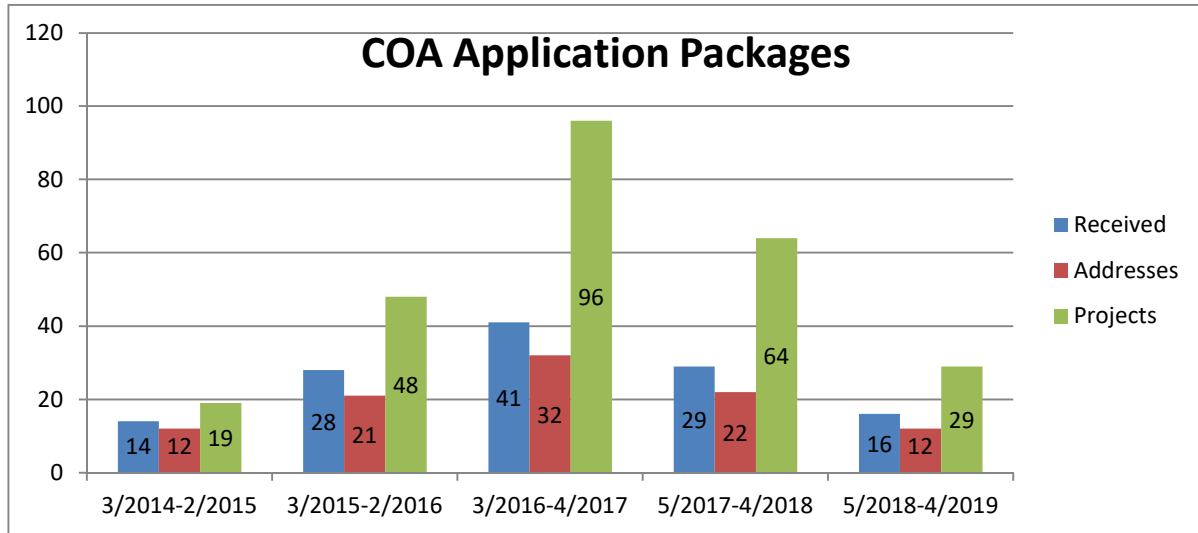
In closing, on behalf of the members of the HPC I extend our gratitude to the Mayor and to the Commissioners, and to City Manager Alan Thornton and Planning Director Cheryl Hart, for your ongoing support in the preservation of the City’s historic structures.

This the 14th day of May 2019.

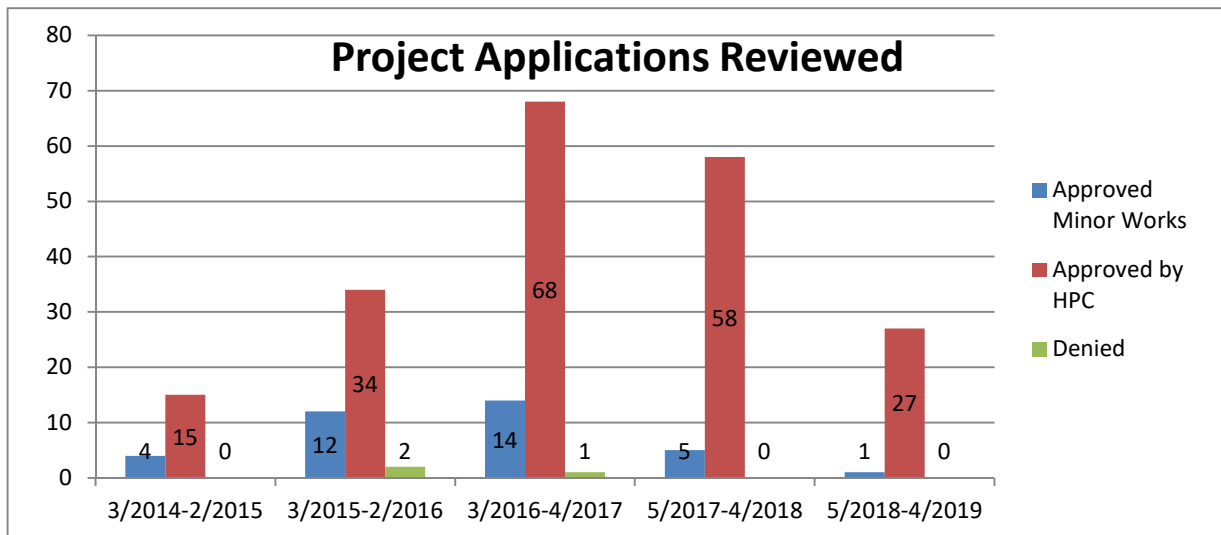
Anthony F. Armento, Chairman
Oxford Historic Preservation Commission



**Attachment to the
2019 ANNUAL REPORT
of the
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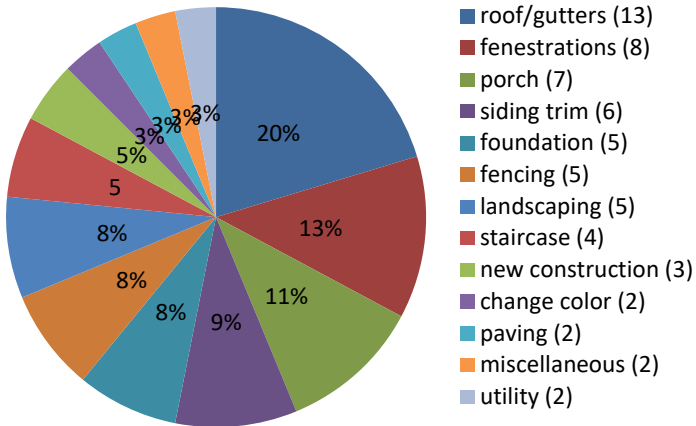


<u>Change from prior year:</u>	<u>14/15 - 15/16</u>	<u>15/16 - 16/17</u>	<u>16/17 - 17/18</u>	<u>17/18 - 18/19</u>
Received	100.0%	46.4%	-29.3%	-44.8%
Addresses	75.0%	52.4%	-31.3%	-45.5%
Projects	152.6%	100.0%	-33.3%	-54.7%

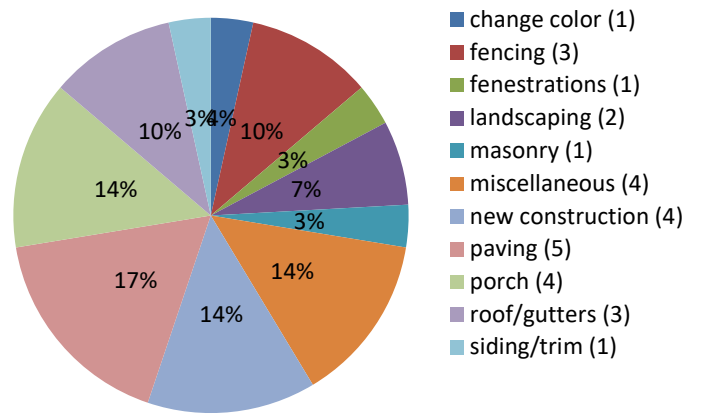


<u>Approval Rate</u>	<u>13/14 - 14/15</u>	<u>14/15 - 15/16</u>	<u>15/16 - 16/17</u>	<u>16/17 - 17/18</u>	<u>17/18 - 18/19</u>
	100.0%	95.8%	98.8%	100.0%	100.0%

2017-2018 Projects



2018-2019 Projects



Applications by Project Type

