

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

**2017 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 March 2016 through April 2017, and to share with you the goals for the coming year.

The Commission presently has two (2) vacancies and consists of the following five (5) members:

Anthony F. (Tony) Armento, Chairman  
Kelly Collins-Schram, Secretary  
Marc Brooks, Treasurer

Richard (Rick) Thomas, member  
Gary Weaver, member

Treasury report = \$843.76

The purpose of the Oxford Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is:

- 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.

These core purposes were served over the last year through the following activities of the HPC:

Activities from March 2016 – April 2017:

- The HPC received 41 Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications (28 in prior year; an increase of 46.4%) affecting 32 properties and consisting of 96 separate projects (48 in prior year; an increase of 100%). 3 applications (13 projects) were withdrawn by the property owner before hearing by the HPC. Of these, 1 application (7 projects) was re-submitted at a later date. Of the 83 project applications reviewed:
  - 14 were approved administratively as Minor Works;
  - 69 were formally reviewed; of these, 68 were approved and 1 denied.

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT of the OXFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (Continued)

- The 5th Annual HPC Stewardship Award and the HPC Photo Contest were conducted, with award winners announced in May 2016.
- The HPC engaged with other committees working to enhance the community by designating liaisons to participate in the Downtown Master Plan and the Bicentennial Committees.
- The HPC's partnered with the City Parks and Recreation Department by developing the informational content of the Historic District Walking Tours, as the HPC's contribution to the 2016 Bicentennial events. 12 tours were conducted over 3 days, with participants commenting that the tours were very thorough and informative.
- Members attended three separate training sessions, totaling approximately 7 hours. Participation in these training sessions enables the HPC to maintain its designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG), a designation awarded by the North Carolina State Preservation Office (SPO) in September 2014 based on standards of performance achieved by the HPC. Topics covered in the training sessions included review of state enabling legislation, Oxford's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the HPC Charter, Rules of Procedure, and Code of Ethics, and how to effectively apply the *Design Guidelines* in review of a COA application.
- The HPC completed the revision of the *Design Guidelines*, which became effective on December 9, 2016. The revision was funded in part by a \$12,000 grant from the federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), following a successful application to the SPO, which administers the grants, and was made possible by the City of Oxford having achieved CLG status. *The Design Guidelines* is the document used by the HPC to assist in the evaluation of applications for a COA. The revision has made the *Design Guidelines* more accessible, informative, and helpful to historic district property owners and others. To complete the revision project, the HPC:
  - conducted two community meetings, in March and October, to engage the public in the revision process and to receive their suggestions and comments concerning specific guidelines. These meetings were very useful to the project, and substantially all of the concerns and requests received were incorporated into the Guidelines revision.
  - held 6 separate work sessions of approximately 2½ hours each, to review draft sections of the Guidelines and the final document in a group setting. The resulting document is a real collaboration among the members of the HPC, taking into consideration the input of the community and historic preservation professionals.
- The HPC continued to monitor the Brown-Watkins property on College Street, that had been the subject of a Demolition by Neglect action, until it was transferred to Preservation North Carolina (PNC) in April last year, bringing to an end the process that had begun in 2013. The HPC remained in touch with PNC staff regarding its effort to identify a buyer of the Brown-Watkins property on College Street. A qualified buyer was identified last summer, and the property has been successfully saved from demolition.
- The HPC conducted research concerning two properties in the College Street Historic District and prepared an appropriate response based on the principles of historic preservation, in response to a request by the Planning Director for recommendations concerning two real estate matters.

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT of the OXFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (Continued)

- In July, an exploratory meeting was held with SPO staff to determine the feasibility, benefits, and requirements of updating Oxford's National Register of Historic Places inventory. The HPC was advised by the SPO that there is a strong need for Oxford to undertake such a project, as it has been 30 years since the Register nomination was originally approved and because it is a responsibility of a CLG to keep its Register inventory current. Based on an initial assessment by the SPO, as many as 33 of the 205 buildings (16%) currently listed in the Registry as non-contributing structures could potentially be reclassified as contributing structures, causing future qualified rehabilitation expenses of these buildings to become eligible for tax credits. Also, additional buildings on the perimeter of the current boundaries of the federal district potentially could be included in the revised Registry and likewise become eligible for tax credits. Based on feedback from the Commissioners, an application for funding the project through the HPF was submitted to the SPO in February. If funded, the project is expected to take two years to complete.
- HPC officers were elected, and goals for the coming year were set, in January 2017. All members formally recommitted themselves to the HPC Code of Ethics, sections of which are read aloud at each regular meeting.

### Goals for the coming year at this time include:

- Conducting the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual HPC Photo Contest, and issuing the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual HPC Stewardship Award, in May 2017;
- Revision of the Stewardship Award eligibility criteria, so that additional projects may become eligible;
- Creation of an online inventory of historic district properties, including photos and descriptions;
- Creation of an informational brochure for potential historic district homebuyers;
- Development of a welcoming committee for new historic district homeowners;
- Enhanced communications with historic district property owners
- Hosting an educational session on the topic of preservation techniques and products, for property owners and contractors;
- Creation of a "property of the month" and other recurring features for the Public Ledger;
- Participation in community events;
- Beginning the project to update to the National Register of Historic Places inventory.

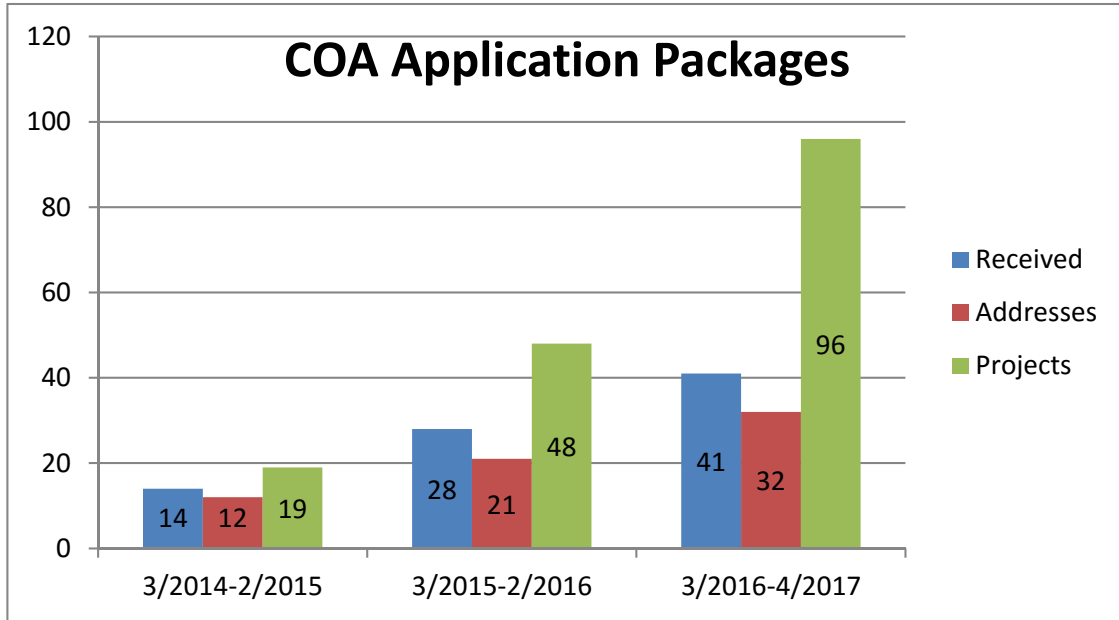
In closing, on behalf of the members of the HPC, I extend our gratitude to the Mayor and to the Commissioners, and to Planning Director Cheryl Hart, for your support in the preservation of the City's historic structures.

This the 9<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

Anthony F. Armento, Chairman  
Oxford Historic Preservation Commission

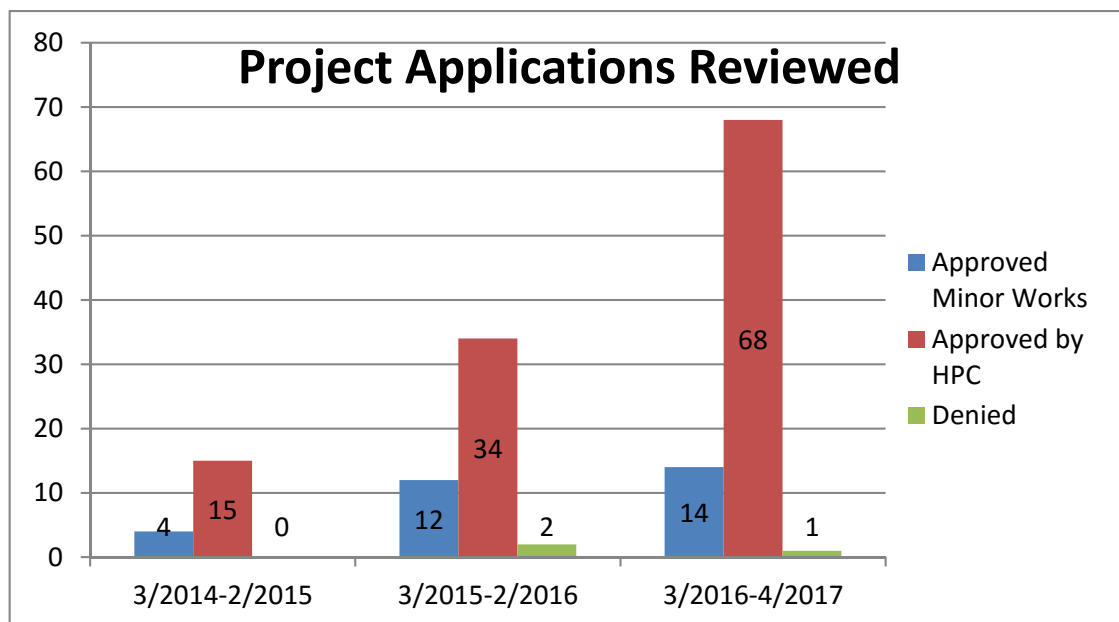


Attachment to the  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT of the  
OXFORD  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION



Increase from prior year:

Received	100.0%	46.4%
Addresses	75.0%	52.4%
Projects	152.6%	100.0%



Approval

<u>Rate</u>	100.0%	95.8%	98.8%
-------------	--------	-------	-------



**Attachment to the  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT of the  
OXFORD  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION**

### Project Applications

