



Darryl Welch | The Covington News

Oxford breaks ground on Yarbrough House renovations

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The City of Oxford officially broke ground for renovations on the historic Yarbrough House before Monday's city council meeting.

The house at 107 West Clark St. sits directly across from Oxford's city hall. It is believed to have been built sometime between 1842 and 1854 by Rev. John Yarbrough, a well-known at the time Methodist preacher.

According to a Newton County Registry of Deeds record provided by city council member Jeff Wearing of the city's Historic Preservation Committee, prior to Oxford's purchase of the property in 2017, the house had changed hands only eight times in the 176 years or so since it was built.

In July 2017, Oxford's mayor Jerry Roseberry tasked the preservation committee with determining the historical significance of two city owned properties. The committee looked at the two properties and determined that the house on West Clark Street had histor-

ical significance.

"We examined the property at 107 West Clark Street and determined that it did have historical significance due to its association with the Yarbrough Oak and it being a former residence of Atticus Haygood, former Emory College president and Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop," the committee wrote in its report.

The committee recommended that the house be used by the city as a multipurpose community venue that could include a welcome center and a coffee shop or restaurant.

The committee said the space could also include meeting rooms, historical displays or other activities that could bring people together in the city.

JACO Contracting was chosen for the project. Equipment for the renovation is being donated by Ready-Rent-All of Covington.

Work already completed includes shoring up the front porch. Future work will include installing a new roof on the house along with other infrastructure improvements including new siding and electrical work.

At the Sept. 10 city council meeting city council meeting, committee chairman and council member David Eady said that a final determination about future use of the house has not been made.

"We have not made a determination as to the final use of the property but we know that there are certain elements that just need to be fixed on the house to provide a nice, solid foundation for whatever future use is there," he said.

Eady said the city is interested in hearing from the public with ideas for the future use of the house. He also said Oxford wants to hear from businesses that might have an interest.

"We welcome any ideas and proposals from the community on the use of that, particularly if there is a commercial enterprise that would be interested in exploring further work with us on the property," he said.

Anyone with ideas or an interest in the project can contact Oxford's city manager, Matt Pepper.