



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary D. Reid Wilson

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Darin J. Waters, Ph.D.

May 24, 2024

Anya Grahn-Federmack
Principal Planner
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Email: agrahn-federmack@townofchapelhill.org

Dear Mrs. Grahn-Federmack:

Thank you for your report regarding the Chapel Hill Historic District Commission's activities during FY 2022-23 as a Certified Local Government (CLG) in North Carolina's preservation program. As a CLG, Chapel Hill continues to play an important role in a national initiative to preserve the unique and valuable historic character of over 2,000 communities across the country. The CLG program provides for increasing local involvement in preservation and offers technical assistance and grants to participating local governments.

The following are minimum responsibilities, per the National Park Service, for continued participation in the CLG program:

1. Maintain a qualified historic preservation commission.
2. Enforce state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic resources.
3. Maintain a system for survey and inventory of historic properties.
4. Provide for adequate public participation in the historic preservation program.
5. Review National Register nominations through a qualified local historic preservation commission.

Based on the information contained in the report, we are pleased that Chapel Hill is meeting the responsibilities for continued participation in the CLG program.

Your report indicates commission and staff were actively engaged during FY2022-2023 in fulfilling duties outlined in NC GS §160D-942. Among other activities, you reviewed numerous Certificates of Appropriateness applications, formed a public outreach committee, and launched a fantastic educational video. We applaud you for your hard work and dedication to preservation.

In addition to the basic responsibilities noted above, CLGs must meet certain, more specific requirements set forth in the *Guidelines for North Carolina's Certified Local Government Program*. One of these requirements is to participate in annual training as the local community benefits from the commission's

increased knowledge and expertise. We commend Chapel Hill's staff and commission members' commitment to meet these training requirements this past year.

Please keep in mind that the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office is here to support you in your preservation efforts. We love to hear from you and encourage you to continue to call upon us for:

- Technical assistance – Mitch Wilds, Restoration Branch Supervisor, at mitch.wilds@dn-cr.nc.gov or 919-814-6588.
- National Register information – Sarah A. Woodard, Survey and National Register Branch Supervisor, at sarah.woodard@dn-cr.nc.gov or 919-814-6573.
- Any additional support or questions - Kristi Brantley, CLG Coordinator, at kristi.brantley@dn-cr.nc.gov or 919-814-6576.

Congratulations on the continued certification of Chapel Hill as an important local government partner in North Carolina's historic preservation program. We thank the town, the commission, and the citizens for all they do to preserve Chapel Hill's unique and irreplaceable historic resources and for the contribution their efforts make to its overall quality of life.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Brantley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Kristi Brantley
Preservation Commissions Coordinator

Cc: Ramona Bartos, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

#15

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
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Page 2: Commission Staff

Q1

Name of Preservation Commission

Chapel Hill Historic District Commission

Q2

Staff Contact (the city or county employee that provides staff services to the commission)

Name	Anya Grahn-Federmack
Title	Principal Planner
Name of Local Government	Town of Chapel Hill
Mailing Address	405 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
City	Chapel Hill
ZIP	27514
Telephone	919.968.2728
E-mail	agrahn-federmack@townofchapelhill.org

Q3**The local government**

The commission staff person is employed by:

Q4

In addition to the preservation planner how many local government staff are assigned to work on commission-related tasks?

The Principal Planner spends about 50 percent of her time and the Planner II spends about 25 percent of her time on HDC-related items.

Q5**No**

Has your community experienced staff turnover for the staff member(s) who work with the local preservation commission?

Page 3: Commission Members

Q6

If you had commission vacancies during this reporting period, please indicate the method(s) your local government used to seek professionals to serve on the commission.

Directly contacted professionals known to reside within the CLG's jurisdiction

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Contacted area educational institutions, professional organizations, and local historical societies or preservation associations for suggestions of potential members

,

Placed announcements in local media specifically recruiting professional members

,

Other (please specify):

We encourage Commissioners to also share news of the vacancies with their networks.

Q7**No**

Were all vacancies filled within 60 days?

Page 4: Commission Meetings & Procedures

Q8**Once a month**

How frequent is the preservation commission's regularly-scheduled meeting?

Q9

Does your commission have an active, maintained website?

Yes or Other (please specify and provide links if applicable):
<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/planning/overlay-districts>

Q10

Does your commission have an annual retreat or check-in?

Other (please specify):

The first retreat of the HDC took place in December 2021, and there is a desire to organize another retreat in early 2024. The Commission is considering the possibility of making this retreat an annual event.

Q11**No**

Was the local preservation ordinance updated or amended during the reporting period? If so, please send the HPO a copy of the updated ordinance or amendment by email.

Page 5: Commission Partnerships

Q12

Does your community have a preservation-oriented non-profit organization?

Yes or Other (please specify):

Preservation Chapel Hill:

<https://www.preservationchapelhill.org/>**Q13**

Does your commission have community partnerships? Examples would be a paint shop discount for local historic district residents or educational programs with the local school system.

Yes/Other (please specify):

Starting in May 2022, the HDC formed a public outreach subcommittee. The committee has been working with different local organizations, historical societies, and preservation groups to promote historic preservation and community history.

Q14

Does your commission work with local real estate agencies/agents and independent home sellers ("FSBO") to notify potential buyers of the local designation status of the properties in a local district or individual landmarks? This can be through the MLS listing or a brochure.

Yes (please explain how you work together) or Other (please specify):

In May 2022, the HDC launched the "Historic Districts in Chapel Hill" video that was shared with the local realtor association. The video highlights the importance of historic preservation in the community and works to promote the role of the HDC. <https://youtu.be/vPFHcZLKbPw>

Q15**Yes**

Is commission staff coordinating with the local fire department and property owners to ensure properties that are locally designated or eligible for local designation are not removed by the fire department by a controlled burn or for "practice"?

Page 6: Preservation Planning

Q16

How is your commission and/or local government working toward the goals of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Plan? Please see - https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/historic-preservation-office/NorthCarolina_2013-2022_HistoricPreservationPlan.pdf

The Chapel Hill Historic District Commission (HDC) is actively working towards the goals of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Plan. They have achieved this through various initiatives and collaborations:

The HDC and staff have participated in preservation trainings and educational seminars, fulfilling their Certified Local Government (CLG) training requirements.

Commissioners have consistently advocated for historic preservation, with the Council designating May as historic preservation month in Chapel Hill. A subcommittee of commissioners regularly meets to brainstorm ways to promote historic preservation in the community.

Efforts have been made to provide timely and expert assistance to improve the quality of projects in local historic districts. Staff has implemented officer training that includes meeting facilitation. We also hold regular check-ins with the HDC's attorney and officers to navigate contentious items. Staff has provided guidance to applicants on the Design Standards and the COA process, resulting in better quality applications and presentations to the HDC. As a testament to the success of these efforts, no HDC decisions have been appealed to the Board of Adjustment since 2020.

Strong relationships have been fostered with the state historic preservation office (HPO), Preservation North Carolina, and Preservation Chapel Hill. Last spring, staff met with these organizations regarding the impacts of the proposed Housing Choices text amendments on the historic districts.

The identification and designation of historic resources has been prioritized. National Register nominations and entries from Historic Chapel Hill are included in Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application materials. The HDC also reviewed the National Register nomination for the U.S. Armory on the UNC campus. Town staff successfully nominated the Hargraves Community Center to the NC Civil Rights Trail: <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/News/News/18697/4048>.

Over the summer, the Planning Department had a youth intern digitize our historic district files. This has improved documentation and aided staff in understanding changes within the local historic districts. Going forward, we'll also use these files to help us identify historically significant sites outside the local historic districts.

Through these ongoing efforts, the HDC and staff are actively working towards the preservation and promotion of Chapel Hill's historic heritage.

Page 7: Annual Reporting

Q17**Yes**

Does your commission compile an annual report for your governing board and/or the public? If so, please email a copy of this report to kristi.brantley@dncr.nc.gov.

Page 8: Historic Resources

Q18**None at the moment**

Please indicate the incentives your local government offers to historic property owners.

Q19**No**

Has your commission acquired or protected property through NC G.S. 160D-942(3) (former 160A-400.8(3)) in this reporting period? This can include the use of a revolving fund or house museum properties.

Page 9: Designation of Historic Properties

Q20

How many local designation reports did the commission process during this reporting period?

0

Q21

Yes (please provide amount) or other:

N/A

Does your commission charge a fee to submit a local landmark or historic district report?

Q22

Other sources (include grants or programs):

N/A

For local landmark or historic district reports, who is responsible for paying for the report preparation? This can include consultant fees.

Q23

How many of the following were designated by the historic preservation commission during the FY 2020 reporting period?

Local Landmarks	0
Local Residential Historic Districts	0
Local Commercial Historic Districts	0
Local Combination Residential/Commercial Historic Districts	0
Local Historic District Boundary Increases	0

Q24

Did your commission receive requests for any de-designations during this reporting year? (If yes, please elaborate)

No

Q25

Please provide additional information regarding any other designation activity in your community during the reporting period. This can include National Historic Landmarks and properties of Statewide Significance.

In June 2023, the Hargraves Community Center unveiled their NC Civil Rights Trail marker as part of their annual Juneteenth celebrations: <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/News/News/18697/4048>

In September 2023, the HDC forwarded a positive recommendation to SHPO for the inclusion of the U.S. Naval Armory on the National Register of Historic Places: <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6326544&GUID=644AF444-C6CE-4406-9E5E-0711CB5850AC&Options=&Search=>

Page 10: Commission Education & Outreach Programs

Q26

Please describe your education and outreach programs, especially ones that you are planning or those that have been successful in past. Website and program names would be nice to have. (Other commissions are especially eager to hear the great things their fellow commissions are doing! Your responses will be shared.)

The Historic District Commission's (HDC) Educational Outreach Committee has been actively working towards promoting historic preservation in the community. Throughout the year, the committee has met informally to brainstorm and explore various avenues for raising awareness and educating the public about the importance of preserving historic sites.

In collaboration with the Town Council, the committee successfully advocated for the designation of May as Historic Preservation Month in Chapel Hill. This designation serves as a platform to highlight the significance of historic preservation and engage the community in related activities and events.

The committee has also been proactive in connecting with different community groups. By forming alliances and partnerships, they aim to create opportunities for future public events and educational campaigns. These collaborations will help expand the reach of their message and foster a greater understanding and appreciation for historic preservation among a wider audience.

Through their ongoing efforts, the HDC's Educational Outreach Committee is actively working towards promoting the value of historic preservation and making sure that the community is actively involved in preserving Chapel Hill's rich heritage.

Page 11: COA Review and Regulation

Q27

Yes

Does your commission accept electronic COA applications or can a property owner submit a COA application online?

Q28

Yes, separate fees for minor and major work

Do you charge a fee for COA applications?

Q29

Please provide the number of COA application rulings during the reporting period.

Total	43
Approved	35
Approved with conditions	8
Denied	0
Withdrawn/Deferred/Resubmitted	1
Other	11

Q30

Please provide the type of COA applications received during the reporting period.

Total	43
Minor works	17
Major works (includes demolition and new construction)	24
After-the-fact COAs	2

Q31

How many COA applications did your commission receive during this reporting period for demolition or relocation?

0

Q32

Considering the number COA applications for demolition or relocation you noted in the previous question, please respond to the following questions:

How many were denied?	0
How many were approved?	0
How many were approved with conditions?	0
How many were withdrawn or deferred?	0
How many were acted upon? (This can also include approved COAs reported in a previous reporting period that were not acted on during that reporting period.)	0
Other.	0

Q33

No

Were any COA decisions appealed during the reporting period?

Q34

If your commission dealt with after-the-fact COAs during this reporting period, please indicate how many and other information on the circumstances.

The Historic District Commission (HDC) is disappointed with the frequency of After-the-Fact Certificate of Appropriateness (ATF COA) applications. Many long-time property owners are unaware of the COA requirement. Staff refrains from doubling the application fee for ATF COAs if property owners are actively cooperating. Staff and the outreach committee are working to improve awareness and understanding of the COA process among residents, property owners, contractors, and realtors in the historic district. The HDC has reviewed two ATF COAs this year, involving siding and roofing replacement on a non-historic fraternity house and the construction of an enclosure over exterior stairs on a non-historic ranch house. The HDC aims to preserve the historic integrity of the district by reducing the need for ATF COA applications and promoting understanding of the importance of preservation.

Page 12: Commission Training

Q35**Yes**

Did the commission staff person and at least two commissioners attend training between the period of October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, as required by the CLG program?

Q36

Please indicate which of the following training opportunities you and your commissioners attended/participated in during the period of October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

CLG/Commission Training in Raleigh, NC. (November 9, 2022)

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CLG/Commission Training in Southern Pines. (September 25, 2023)

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Other (please specify):

Staff regularly watches online trainings from the NC Shelter Series, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC), National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service (NPS), and others.

Q37

Please share training topics that would be most beneficial to your preservation commission.

The HDC and its staff would greatly benefit from additional training sessions that focus on achieving a balance between the congruity standard and the Historic District Design Standards, understanding sustainability in preservation, and gaining knowledge about the National Register of Historic Places.

The Town's Ombuds has been actively providing training to HDC officers with the aim of enhancing meeting efficiency, effectively handling difficult applicants, and fostering professionalism. It'd be helpful for us to learn from other commissions or seek guidance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on navigating challenging situations and implementing effective de-escalation strategies.

Page 13: Evaluation of HPO Services

Q38

Please rate the following resources offered by our office.

Website	5 - Extremely valuable
GIS maps	5 - Extremely valuable
NCPres Listserv	4 - Good to have
Staff consultations (including Restoration Branch, National Register and Survey Branch, and office branches)	5 - Extremely valuable
Training	4 - Good to have

Q39

Please suggest ways in which the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office can better serve your community.

We look forward to participating in additional CLG trainings in 2024 and exploring opportunities to collaborate with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in order to provide training opportunities for our Commissioners in Chapel Hill.

Page 14: Documentation request: New Commissioner Resumes

Q40

Emailed

Documentation of new commissioner(s) is:

Page 15: Documentation request: Resources lost or added to the survey

Q41

Not applicable to this commission at the time

Documentation of resources lost or added to the survey is:

Page 16: Documentation request: Optional

Q42

Emailed

Documentation of other commission/preservation activity is:

Q43

If possible, please provide a brief overview or link to any newspaper articles related to preservation in your community.

N/A

Page 17: Commission Activity Overview

Q44

Please describe any significant challenges or difficult issues faced by the commission during the reporting period.

The HDC has faced significant challenges in the past year. Concerns have arisen regarding the quality of materials submitted for some COA applications, as well as frustration with applicants submitting revised plans after agenda packets are published. Additionally, there are concerns about the frequency of compounding changes and COA amendments on larger rehabilitation projects.

To address these issues, staff implemented a \$150 fee for COA amendments as part of the Town's revised fee schedule, effective July 1, 2023. This fee aims to discourage frequent changes and amendments to COAs.

Q45

Please summarize the commission's accomplishments, successes, and MAJOR activities during the reporting period. Include grant projects, educational and public awareness efforts, and innovative collaborations.

The Commission is actively striving to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their meetings. To support this goal, the staff has provided meeting facilitation and legal trainings for new HDC officers. Additionally, the Commission's attorney has prepared draft motion scripts to support them in their decision-making process. These efforts aim to streamline meeting procedures and provide a smooth workflow.

Furthermore, the Commission is committed to fostering stronger relationships and familiarity among its members. By building these connections, they can enhance collaboration and communication within the Commission. As part of this initiative, the HDC plans to establish the 2021 HDC retreat as an annual event, starting in 2024. This retreat will provide an opportunity for members to come together, exchange ideas, and further strengthen their working relationships.

By continuously improving their meeting processes and fostering a sense of camaraderie among members, the HDC is dedicated to enhancing their overall effectiveness and achieving their preservation goals.

Page 18: Affirmations

Q46**We affirm.**

The designated CLG staff person, the preservation commission chair, and the chief elected local official(s) hereby affirm that the certified local government meets all standards for certification and continues to operate according to the guidelines for certification as set forth in 36 CFR Part 61 and in the "Guidelines for North Carolina's Certified Local Government Program." We affirm that, in accordance with N.C.G.S. 160D-303, all members of the historic preservation commission are qualified to serve, a majority having demonstrated their competence through either their educational or professional experience or through their special interest in, and knowledge of, historic preservation. We affirm that the certified local government has made a good faith effort to appoint to the commission professionals from the disciplines of architecture, history, architectural history, planning, archaeology, or a closely related discipline, and have attached written documentation of such effort. Finally, we affirm that all members meet the residency requirements of N.C.G.S. 160D-202 and 160D-303. (Affirmation below is considered by the HPO as an electronic signature.)
