



## Historic District Commission

### Regular Agenda – Certificate of Appropriateness 201 E. Rosemary Street (Project #21-026)

#### Summary Report

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Anya Grahn, Senior Planner  
Jake Lowman, Senior Planner  
Judy Johnson, Operations Manager

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Filing Date</b>	<b>Meeting Date(s)</b>	<b>Historic District</b>
Ryan G. Spurrier, on behalf of Unity Properties LLC	3/23/2021	4/13/2021, 5/13/2021	Franklin-Rosemary

#### Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct a new ADA ramp on the front of the building, install a new automatic door opener on the Rosemary Street entrance, as well as add a sign on the wood front door and a new cantilevered sign at the front of the property.

#### Proposed Findings of Fact

1. The building served as the first Methodist Church in Chapel Hill and was constructed in 1853. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the Franklin-Rosemary National Register Historic District. Per the NRHP nomination, the building has been used as office space since 1963.
2. The applicant proposes to install a new handicap accessible ramp to the Rosemary Street façade that will include a push-plate door opener. The ramp will consist of a small landing adjacent to the front doors with ramps extending to the east and west of the landing. New wood stairs will face E. Rosemary Street. A push plate will be installed on the landing to allow for ADA access.
3. The painted wood ramp is designed to be reversible without damaging the historic building. Some bricks will be removed in order to pour the footings for the ramp's posts; however, it will be self-supporting and not attached to the historic building.
4. The ramp will be shielded from Rosemary Street by the existing brick wall and landscaping. No changes to the landscape in the front yard is proposed.
5. The applicant intends to install a removeable vinyl sign on the front door and a mail slot to the front doors along Rosemary Street.
6. The applicant also proposes to construct a wood cantilevered ground sign along E. Rosemary Street. The sign will consist of wood posts supporting a signboard. The sign will be installed in the landscape beds to help soften its appearance.

#### Applicable Design Standards<sup>1</sup>

##### *3.8 Accessibility & Life Safety Considerations: Standards (page 104):*

- 3.8.1. In reviewing proposed changes to a historic property, carefully consider related accessibility and life safety code implications to determine if the proposed change is compatible with the historic district, building, and site.
- 3.8.2. Meet accessibility and life safety code requirements in ways that do not compromise the historic character or significant features of the historic district or building site.
- 3.8.3. Meet accessibility and life safety code requirements in ways that do not compromise the historic character or significant architectural features of the building.
- 3.8.4. Introduce new or alternate means of access and new life safety features, as needed, in ways that are reversible and do not compromise the historic materials, features, or character of the building.
- 3.8.5. Locate new or alternative means of access-such as ramps, handrails, and mechanical lifts-on side or rear elevations where they are minimally visible from the street. Design accessibility

<sup>1</sup> Application was deemed complete after March 18, 2021 adoption of the updated [Design Principles & Standards](#).

features so they are compatible with the historic building in design, scale, materials, and finish. Consider using vegetation to screen the features and minimize their visual impact.

3.8.6. Locate life safety features—including but not limited to fire doors, elevator additions, and fire stairs—on side or rear elevations where they are minimally visible from the street. Design life safety features to be compatible with the historic building in scale, proportion, materials, and finish. Consider using vegetation to screen the features and minimize their visual impact.

#### 1.7 Signage: Standards (page 60-61):

1.7.5. Introduce new signage with care so that the overall historic character of the building, site, and district is not compromised or diminished. Select and site new signs so their location, orientation, height, scale, design, and finish are compatible with the historic district and its human scale.

1.7.7. In the residential areas of the districts:

- a. Install freestanding signs on low posts or bases that are compatible with the pedestrian scale of the historic districts and in locations that do not obscure architectural features or significant landscape elements.
- b. Mount small identification signs and plaques on building facades in locations that do not damage or conceal significant architectural features or details.

1.7.8. Construct new signage out of traditional sign materials, such as wood, stone, or metal. Do not introduce new signage in contemporary materials, such as plastic.

#### Congruity Findings

Based on the Findings of Facts and the relevant Design Guidelines referenced above, the HDC proposes congruity findings for the following Criteria as specified per LUMO Section 3.6.2(e):

Criterion C: The exterior construction materials, including texture and pattern, are ***congruous/ incongruous*** with those found on the existing building as well as historic buildings within the historic district.

Criterion D: The architectural detailing, such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials are ***congruous/incongruous*** with those found on the existing building as well as historic buildings within the historic district.

Criterion G: The general form and proportions of buildings and structures are ***congruous/ incongruous*** with those found on the existing house as well as existing building as well as historic buildings within the historic district.

Criterion J: The architectural scale of the ramp and sign are ***congruous/ incongruous*** with those found on the existing building as well as historic buildings within the historic district.

#### Condition of Approval

1. The certificate of appropriateness shall be valid for three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from date of issuance. If the authorized work has not commenced within that period, has not been extended by the commission, or has been discontinued for more than three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from the date of issuance, such certificate of appropriateness shall expire and the applicant shall be required to reapply and obtain a new certificate of appropriateness before commencing further work.

#### Decision

Based on the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions of law, the Historic District Commission ***approves/denies*** the Certificate of Appropriateness as referenced above on the basis that it ***would/ would not be incongruous*** with the special character of the district.