



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Chair David Schwartz
Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles
Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy
Christine Berndt
Brian Daniels

Josh Gurlitz
Nancy McCormick
Anne Perl De Pal
Polly Van de Velde

Thursday, May 13, 2021

6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Virtual Meeting Notification

Board members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. The Town will not provide a physical location for viewing the meeting.

The public is invited to attend the Zoom webinar directly online or by phone. Register for this webinar: [URL](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 819 6841 1599

Opening

Roll Call

Staff present: Anya Grahn, Staff Liaison to Commission.

Present 7 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles, Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Josh Gurlitz, Nancy McCormick, Anne Perl De Pal , and Polly Van de Velde

Excused 2 - Christine Berndt, and Brian Daniels

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by McCormick, seconded by Gurlitz, that the agenda be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Announcements

Grahn announced that the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) text amendments for removal of A-J criteria passed. She also clarified the recent appointments Council made to the Commission.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. April 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

[\[21-0371\]](#)

A motion was made by McCormick, seconded by Deputy Vice-Chair Murphy, to approve the April 13, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Old Business

2. 201 E. Rosemary Street

[\[21-0269\]](#)

Grahn explained that this item was heard by the Commission at their April 13, 2021 meeting. The applicant had worked with staff to revise the application based on the feedback received from the Commission.

Ryan Spurrier, applicant, explained scope of the project and presented historic photos of the United Methodist Church. Spurrier pointed out changes that had occurred in the building's history, and he presented photos from 1973 depicting the building's use as an architect's office. He stated that the building and site had undergone many changes from early the 20th century to the 2000s.

Spurrier presented an updated design for the proposed ADA ramp and discussed the challenges of the existing ramp due to the interior programming. He provided photos of the southeast corner of the building showing the front steps and access to alleyway. Spurrier explained that he met with Inspections staff to discuss ADA requirements for the ramp and he described building code requirements for ADA ramp construction. He clarified that architectural drawings would not be required for a Town building permit as Inspections would accept sketches and drawings. He provided photos of the building and described the challenges of building the ADA ramp due to the elevation of the first floor of the building, slope of the front yard, and the building code requirements. He described his efforts to design an ADA ramp that would not require handrails; however, this was not achievable due to the site constraints and he instead proposed to paint the ADA ramp's railing a dark color to minimize its visibility. He showed how the existing landscaping would shield the visibility of the ADA ramp, and he discussed the ramp's compliance with the Design Standards.

Spurrier presented plans and photos of the building's front entrance. He explained that the existing double doors need to be replaced with a single

40-inch door in order to install an ADA opener. The new wood-paneled door would be similar in design to those found in the historic districts, and Spurrier provided examples of the Church's sister building, the historic Playmaker's Theatre, with a similar single-paneled wood door to meet ADA access. The applicant expressed a willingness to store the existing 30 year-old double doors on-site for future use. The applicant explained that there is no change in the proposed designs of the identification sign on the door or mail slot and he presented a picture from c.2006 showing a similar identification sign.

The applicant presented photos showing how the proposed cantilevered sign mimics similar signs that existed on site in 1973 and 2006. He explained his proposal to reintroduce a similar cantilevered wood sign and discussed its compliance with the Design Standards.

The Commission complimented the applicant on the improved cantilevered sign and ADA ramp designs. They supported the steps the applicant took to minimize the visibility of the ADA ramp and improve the building's accessibility. They discussed the temporary nature of the ramp to meet the needs of the current building tenant.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Gurlitz, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the applicant paint the ADA ramp's handrails a dark color, so it blends in with the landscaping. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 7 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles, Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Josh Gurlitz, Nancy McCormick, Anne Perl De Pal , and Polly Van de Velde

New Business

3. 510 Hooper Lane

[\[21-0372\]](#)

Staff Liaison Grahn explained this item was an After-the-Fact Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). She explained that the applicant is working on addressing some drainage issues on the site. Grahn summarized that the applicant proposed to construct Chapel Hill grit and permeable paver pathways, a retaining wall, and some updates to the house.

Kim Levell, owner and applicant, summarized water damage to the house, including a collapsed foundation wall and mold growth, due to the amount of water the house absorbs. She described that neighboring properties sloped

downhill to this site and her intent to mitigate water infiltration. She presented photos and explained how the foundation of the house was supported by a rock on the northwest corner of the building and clay soils. She discussed the challenges of clay when it remains wet. Levell also described water damage to the house due to poor drainage.

The applicant provided photos and surveys to show the relationship of the site to its neighbors and the site's existing conditions prior to the start of construction. Levell explained her plans to install hardscaping and a retaining wall that would help with drainage. She presented renderings and proposed landscaping to make the yard feel more natural. She also provided photos of neighboring buildings and described how these influenced her material choices for her brick stairs and driveway. She explained how her material choices were consistent with those found in the Historic District.

Levell explained the damage to the historic building materials due to the water infiltration. She proposed coating the soft brick with a limestone wash to protect the house from water infiltration. She described the topography of the lot and nearby lots and explained how regrading the site would improve drainage on the property. She provided photos of the basement to demonstrate water damage, and she explained steps past property owners had taken to mitigate the water such as stacked stone and concrete walls used to stabilize the foundation, sump pumps, and mortar repairs. She stated that UNC had used stucco and limestone coatings on their brick buildings to seal the bricks and prevent water damage.

Levell presented dimensioned drawings of the proposed landscape plan. She described how walkways would serve as open drains to move water away from the house. She presented elevations drawings of the retaining wall and described the construction of the wall. She described the use of stucco to coat the retaining wall so that it can be accessed for maintenance and the stucco would indicate when the wall was failing. Levell also indicated her plans to replace the roofing material, gutters, and lighting fixtures on the house.

The Commission expressed concern that some of the work had already been completed on the project prior to the applicant receiving a COA. The applicant clarified the work that already had been completed and the work that was proposed but not yet completed. The Commission clarified with the applicant the details of regrading of the site, the brick border along the

driveway, and the retaining wall. Levell discussed the need to paint the house to seal the brick and her intent to remove the storm windows to restore the wood windows. The Commission reiterated the need for applicants to comply with the Design Principles & Standards and follow the COA process.

Levell reiterated her need to make repairs to the house due to the collapsed foundation wall, mold, and other water damage to the house. The Commission recognized the need to address drainage but reminded the applicant that the Commission could not approve improvements that were not consistent with the Design Principles & Standards. They discussed whether temporary remediation work could have been completed to address the collapsed wall while the applicant went through the COA process; the applicant said there was no time for the process due to the gravity of the situation once the wall collapsed. The Commission discussed the changes that were made and their consistency with the Design Principles and Standards.

Chair Schwartz disclosed that a member of the public had sent an email to him and Staff Liaison Grahn with questions about the item, but he did not respond to the email or read it with the intent to influence his decision. Ferrell discussed the importance of disclosing this information, and Commissioners McCormick, Perl de Pal, Van de Velde, Murphy, and Gurlitz stated they had passed by the site. Ferrell reiterated the responsibilities of the Commission.

Ferrell stated that the ultimate goal of the Commission is to review the COA application and make findings of fact as to whether the project is congruous with special character of the district. He explained that this is done by reviewing the project for compliance with Design Standards. Ferrell stated that it is important to consistently apply the Design Standards. Decisions not based on application of congruity standards and design standards, become arbitrary. The Commission deliberated on the challenges of reviewing after-the-fact COAs.

Susan Smith, community member, pointed out a discrepancy in the staff report and information about the house's construction date. She stated that water damage did not exempt the applicant from the COA process or HDC review. Levell and Smith argued over Levell's proposal to redirect drainage and address water damage. Smith advocated that material choices be consistent with the Historic District and she believed that there was a way to address both the drainage issues and comply with the Design Standards.

Chair Schwartz moved to deliberate on the application with the Commissioners. Ferrell reiterated the responsibilities of the Commission. Commissioners discussed the scope of work and its compliance with the Design Standards.

The Commission discussed the need for additional information from the applicant. They requested additional detail about the height and materials of the new retaining wall and the removal of a fieldstone wall along the front of the property. They asked for clarity regarding the restoration of the wood windows. They also requested the applicant provide a rendering for the front stoop's railing and a photo of the existing railing. The Commission had an interest in seeing more photos of the property prior to the start of construction.

The applicant explained the urgency of addressing water damage. The Commission found agreement on the roof and gutter replacement.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Van de Velde, to approve the replacement of the asphalt shingles in-kind and install new gutters around the perimeter of the house. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

The Commission continued the discussion to the June 10, 2021 meeting.

Aye: 7 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles, Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Josh Gurlitz, Nancy McCormick, Anne Perl De Pal , and Polly Van de Velde

4. Revisions to Historic District Commission Rules of Procedure [\[21-0373\]](#)

The Commission continued the item to the June 10, 2021 meeting.

Historic District Design Principles & Standards

5. Historic District Design Principles & Standards [\[21-0271\]](#)

The Commission continued the item to the June 10, 2021 meeting and requested that it be placed first on the agenda.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - June 8, 2021

Order of Consideration of Agenda Items:

- 1. Staff Presentation*
- 2. Applicant's Presentation*
- 3. Public Comment*
- 4. Board Discussion*
- 5. Motion*
- 6. Restatement of Motion by Chair*
- 7. Vote*
- 8. Announcement of Vote by Chair*

Public Charge: The Advisory Body pledges its respect to the public. The Body asks the public to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous manner, both with the Body and with fellow members of the public. Should any member of the Body or any member of the public fail to observe this charge at any time, the Chair will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the Chair will recess the meeting until a genuine commitment to this public charge is observed.

Unless otherwise noted, please contact the Planning Department at 919-968-2728; planning@townofchapelhill.org for more information on the above referenced applications.

See the Advisory Boards page <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/boards> for background information on this Board.