Historic District Commission

Regular Agenda – Certificate of Appropriateness
609 North Street (Project #21-035)

Summary Report

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
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Applicant	**Filing Date**	**Meeting Date(s)**	**Historic District**
Susan and Ritch Allison	5/21/2021	6/10/2021, 7/13/2021	Franklin-Rosemary

Project Description

The applicant proposes to renovate the historic Dr. W.C. Coker House, including adding an addition to the northeast corner of the house, reconstructing an existing carriage house, and making site improvements.

Proposed Findings of Fact

1. Dr. William C. Coker built "The Rocks" house in c.1908 and included a private garden. The front-gabled stucco garage was constructed c.1920. The site, including the house, garage, and landscape, were listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the Chapel Hill Historic District Boundary Increase in 2015.
2. The applicant proposes to repair and stabilize the exterior building envelope on an as-needed basis, including repairing and replacing in-kind wooden trim, replacing in-kind concealed gutters and damaged roof slates, repairing the stucco finish, restoring the wood windows and doors.
3. On the north elevation, the applicant proposes to replace two picture windows of an enclosed porch with new divided light windows matching the diamond-pattern design of existing windows.
4. The applicant proposes to replace existing door with transom and sidelights on the façade (west) with French doors matching the diamond-pattern divided light windows.
5. The proposal includes removing an existing door and screen door and replacing it with a new window on the south elevation.
6. The applicant proposes to rebuild the kitchen addition on the southeast corner of the house by extending the addition to the southeast and introducing new windows and doors matching those found on the house.
7. The applicant also proposes to construct a one-story addition on the northeast corner of the building with a basement-level garage. The new foundation will be constructed of reinforced concrete block and faced with stacked stone to match the original foundation. The walls will be finished with cementitious stucco to match the existing house. Custom wood windows and doors matching the originals will be installed as well as a skylight. The applicant proposes using a glass "hyphen" to connect this new addition to the original house.
8. There is an existing carriage house to the north of the house. The carriage house was listed as 'contributing' on the NRHP district nomination; however, it is not original to the site. The carriage house has been altered in the past, including rebuilding the roof. The applicant proposes to salvage the roof slates, wood siding, gable vent, and light fixture to reinstall on a reconstructed carriage house similar in dimension to the existing carriage house, but expanded to accommodate contemporary vehicle sizes.
9. The applicant proposes to remove a portion of the existing loop driveway to the north of the house. The existing gravel parking pad will be expanded. Fieldstone edging along the driveway will be expanded to address ongoing erosion. Existing asphalt surfaces will be re-surfaced or replaced with Chapel Hill grit or gravel.
10. The applicant proposes to restore the driveway connection to the carriage house that was converted to landscaping in the 1990s. Paving materials will include pea gravel and concrete pavers. The driveway to the west of the house will be Chapel Hill gravel. New fieldstone walls will be introduced on the west and south sides of the driveways.

11. A timber arbor will be reconstructed to the north of the front terrace matching the original Coker-era arbor and based on historic photos.

Applicable Design Standards[1]

*1.1 Site Features: Standards (*page 42):

1.1.7. Introduce new site features to be compatible in scale, design, and materials with the overall historic character of the site and district. Utilize traditional materials in the construction of benches, terraces, gazebos, trellises, fences, and walls.

1.1.8. Introduce contemporary site features—including playground equipment and swimming pools—in locations that do not diminish or compromise the overall character of the site and district, typically in rear yards or other locations not visible from the street.

*1.3 Walls & Fences: Standards (*page 48-49):

1.3.1. Retain and preserve the materials and decorative and functional features of walls and fences that contribute to the overall historic character of sites within the historic districts. These include, but are not limited to the overall form, materials, patterns, dimensions, textures, configurations, and details.

1.3.6. Site new walls and fences in configurations and locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district and consistent with the location and height of other walls and fences in the district.

1.3.7. Construct new walls using traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, height, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district.

a. Walls in front and side yards should generally not exceed 30” and should be constructed of red brick or fieldstone.
b. Walls constructed of cut stone, bare concrete block, or with thin stone veneers applied to concrete or other structural block are not appropriate in locations visible from the street.

1.3.9. Introduce contemporary utilitarian walls and fences in rear yards only where they do not compromise the historic character of the building, site, or district.

b. Sites with significant variations in topography should consider segmented walls and fences that step up and down to follow the topography.

*1.4 Walkways, Driveways, & Off-Street Parking (*page 52-53):

1.4.1. Retain and preserve the features, materials, patterns, dimensions, details, and configurations of walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas that are important in defining the overall historic character of sites within the historic districts.

1.4.2. Protect and maintain the details, features, materials, and surfaces of character-defining walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods.

1.4.3. Repair deteriorated or damaged historic walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through recognized preservation methods. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated portions of a feature, matching the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern.

1.4.4. If a historic walkway, driveway, or off-street parking area is completely missing, or if deterioration necessitates its replacement, replace it to match the original in material, design, dimension, configuration, detail, texture, and pattern, based upon physical and documentary evidence. Otherwise, replace it with a new feature that is compatible in material, design, scale, and detail with the overall historic character of the site and district.

1.4.5. Design new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking to conform with the spacing, width, configuration, and materials of character-defining walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas in the district.

1.4.6. Site new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas in locations that are compatible with the character of the building, site, and district—typically to the side and rear of existing

[1] *Application was deemed complete after March 18, 2021 adoption of the updated Design Principles & Standards.*

buildings—and locate them so the topography of the site and mature trees and other significant site features are not significantly altered, damaged, or lost.

a. In residential areas, do not locate off-street parking areas in front yards. Whenever possible, driveways should lead to parking areas to the side or rear of the primary building on the site.
b. In commercial and institutional areas, parking should be located at the side or rear of the property whenever possible.

1.4.7. Do not locate driveways or parking areas in locations where the paving will abut the principal building. A planting strip should be retained between historic residential structures and any new paving in order to minimize damage to the foundation.

1.4.8. Do not locate new off-street parking on a site where the paved area will substantially alter the proportion of the site that is paved versus landscaped.

1.4.9. Construct new walkways in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district.

a. These include red brick, flagstone, concrete, and Chapel Hill grit.

b. Do not use asphalt or contemporary materials that mimic other materials for sidewalks within the historic districts.

1.4.10. Construct new driveways and off-street parking areas in traditional materials and designs that are compatible in configuration, material, scale, and detail with the character of the building, site, and district.

a. These include red brick, concrete, asphalt, and Chapel Hill grit. Consider permeable materials—including brick—or install paving strips or concrete runners, to minimize the impervious surface area and thus, reduce runoff from the site.

b. Do not use gravel in sizes larger than one-half inch.

1.4.11. Utilize perimeter plantings, trees, shrubbery, hedges, and other landscape features—including low stone walls—to screen new driveways and off-street parking areas visually from the street, to buffer adjacent residential properties from their visual impact, and to reduce the solar heat gain of paved surfaces. Further reduce the visual impact of large parking areas by subdividing them with interior planting medians.

*1.6 Exterior Lighting (*page 58):

1.6.5. Introduce new exterior lighting fixtures with care so that the overall historic character of the building, site, and district is not compromised or diminished. Select and site new lighting fixtures so their location, orientation, height, brightness, scale, and design are compatible with the historic district and its human scale. Fixtures should emit a white or warm spectrum light; fluorescent, neon, blinking, or colored lighting is not appropriate in the historic districts.

1.6.6. Introduce low-level lighting in residential areas as needed to ensure safety and security. Minimize their impact on the overall historic character of the site by selecting discreet fixtures—such as footlights, recessed lights, directional lights, and lights on pedestrian-scaled posts—and installing them in unobtrusive locations.

*2.1 Wood (*page 66):

2.1.5. Repair deteriorated or damaged wood features and surfaces through accepted preservation methods, such as patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the wood. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated portions of a historic wood feature or surface.

2.1.6. Replace in kind wood features and surfaces that are too deteriorated to repair, taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature or surface. Replacement features and surfaces should match the original in material, design, dimension, detail, and finish. Consider a compatible substitute material for wood features (including fiber cement board, cellular PVC, or plastic composite) only if replacement in kind is not technically feasible or there is an ongoing water infiltration problem; the material matches the existing in design, dimension, and detail; and the wood to be replaced is a painted wood to which the finish of the substitute material can be matched.

*2.2 Masonry (*page 70):

2.2.6. Repair deteriorated stucco by removing loose material and patching with new stucco that matches the strength, color, texture, and composition of the original. Do not use commercial caulks or compounds to repair stucco.

2.2.7. Repair deteriorated or damaged masonry features and surfaces through accepted preservation methods for patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the masonry. Repairs may include selective, in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated masonry units.

2.2.8. Replace masonry features and surfaces that are too deteriorated to repair, taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature or surface. Replacement features and surfaces should match the original in material, design, bond pattern, dimension, detail, texture, color, and finish. Consider a compatible substitute material only if replacement in kind is not technically or economically feasible.

*3.1 Roof, Gutters, & Chimneys (*page 81-82):

3.1.1. Retain and preserve roof shapes, materials, and decorative and functional features that are important in defining the overall historic character of buildings within the historic districts. These include, but are not limited to, roof height, form, shape, pitch, and overhang; roof materials and functional features including shingles, flashing, vents, and gutters; and decorative features including dormers, chimneys, turrets, spires, cupolas, and balustrades.

3.1.3. Repair deteriorated or damaged roof features and surfaces through accepted preservation methods for the specific feature or material. Repairs may include selective in-kind replacement of missing or deteriorated portions of historic roof features or materials. Do not patch slate or metal roofs or flashing with tar or asphalt products.

3.1.4. Replace in kind roof features and surfaces that are too deteriorated to repair, taking care to replace only the deteriorated portion rather than the entire feature or surface. Replacement features and surfaces should match the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color.

3.1.5. If deterioration necessitates the replacement of an entire roof surface, replacement surfaces should match the original in material, design, dimension, pattern, detail, texture, and color. Consider a compatible substitute material (including composite shingle, synthetic slate, and wide-pan matte-finish metal roofing) only if the replacement material is compatible with the design, size, and scale of the building.

3.1.8. Introduce new gutters and downspouts, as needed, with care so that no architectural features are damaged or lost. Select gutters and downspouts that are painted or coated with a factory finish (unless they are copper) to match the building's trim. Replace half-round gutters and cylindrical downspouts in kind.

*3.3 Exterior Walls, Trim, & Ornamentation (*page 81-82):

3.3.7. Locate new exterior wall features, such as windows, doors, chimneys, bays, and communication or mechanical equipment, on exterior walls that are not visible from the street or in locations that do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

3.3.10. Do not introduce exterior wall features, details, or surfaces to a building or site that would create a false historical appearance

*3.4 Windows & Shutters (*page 90):

3.4.6. If new window openings are necessary, when possible, locate them on a side or rear elevation where they are minimally visible from the street, ensuring that they do not damage character-defining features or materials, or otherwise compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

3.4.15. Do not introduce window features or details, including shutters, to a building that would create a false historical appearance.

*3.4 Doors (*page 94-95):

3.5.7. If new doors are necessary, locate them on a side or rear elevation where they are minimally visible from the street, ensuring that they do not damage character-defining features or materials, or otherwise compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

3.5.13. Do not introduce exterior doors or entrance features to a building that would create a false historical appearance.

*4.7 Garages, Carports, & Accessory Structures (*page 130-131):

4.7.1. Introduce compatible new garages, carports, and accessory buildings, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.

4.7.2. Site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings in traditional locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site, typically beyond the rear wall of the primary building on the site.

4.7.3. Site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings to be consistent with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings, both in orientation to and setback from the street as well as in spacing between and distance from other buildings, especially when the siting is important in defining the overall historic character of the district. Whenever possible, locate garages, carports, or accessory structures behind the primary structure, in a rear yard. Structures may be placed in side yards only when rear setbacks do not allow for enough space. New garages, carports, and accessory structures are not appropriate in front yards.

4.7.4. Design and site new garages, carports, and accessory buildings so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, and significant site features.

4.7.5. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings so that their size, scale, and form do not visually overpower the primary building on this or adjacent sites. Design garages, carports, and accessory buildings to be compatible with, but secondary to, the primary building in size, scale, and building and roof form.

4.7.6. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings to be compatible in height, form, and proportion with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings when the height, form, and proportion are important in defining the overall historic character of the district.

4.7.7. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings that are compatible with, but discernible from, historic garages and accessory buildings in the district.

4.7.8. Design new garages, carports, and accessory buildings and their features to be compatible in scale, materials, proportions, and details with the overall historic character of the site and district and with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings when the scale, materials, proportions, and details are important in defining the overall historic character of the district.

a. Select exterior materials and finishes that are compatible with the primary building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color. Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for new accessory buildings.
b. For larger buildings, it is appropriate to echo the form and detailing of the primary structure. However, elements should be reduced in scale to complement the smaller building form and should have less ornate detailing than that on the primary structure.

4.7.9. Design new garages, carports, or accessory building so that the placement, shape, scale, size, materials, pattern, and proportion of windows and doors are compatible with the windows and doors of the primary building on the site and with garages and accessory buildings in the immediate surroundings when those elements of doors and windows are important in defining the overall historic character of the district.

a. Windows should follow the standards for New Construction: Doors & Windows.
b. Garage doors on street-facing elevations should be single-bay (single car wide) doors with multiple doors, rather than a single, wider door, installed to access two-car garages.
c. Do not install vinyl overhead garage doors.

4.7.11. Maintain and protect significant site features—including stone walls—from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

4.7.12. Do not construct a new garage, carport, or accessory building if doing so will detract from the overall character of the site or district or if the construction will require the removal of a significant building element or site feature.

*4.8 Additions (*page 134-135):

4.8.1. Introduce compatible new additions, as needed, in ways that do not compromise the historic character of the site or district.

4.8.2. Site additions in locations that are compatible with the character of the building and site and are minimally visible from the street, typically on rear elevations. Additions may be located on side elevations only when rear setbacks do not allow for enough space and if additions have been carefully designed to retain the spacing of buildings in the district and to minimize their impact on the rhythm of the streetscape or characterdefining open spaces. Additions are never permitted on front facades.

4.8.3. Site additions to be consistent with additions in the immediate surroundings and to retain the orientation of the existing building as well as the spacing between and distance from other buildings in the immediate surroundings when the siting and spacing are important in defining the overall historic character of the district. Maintain the original orientation of the structure with primary entrances on the front façade of the building.

4.8.4. Design and site additions so they do not compromise the overall historic character of the site, including its topography, significant site features, and distinctive views. Do not introduce an addition if it requires the loss of a character-defining building or site feature, such as a porch, or if it necessitates the relocation or demolition of historic garages or accessory buildings.

4.8.5. Design and locate additions so that, as much as possible, historic features and details—including windows, doors, chimneys, bays, corner boards, wood shingles, brackets and decorative trim—are not removed or concealed.

4.8.6. Design additions so that their size, scale, and form are compatible with the existing building and do not visually overpower the building on this or adjacent sites.

4.8.7. Design additions to be compatible with, but discernible from and secondary to, the existing building in their location, size, scale, and building and roof form.

a. Limit the size and scale of additions to minimize their visual impact and maintain private open spaces on the site.

b. Match the foundation height, style, and materials of an addition to the existing building.

c. Differentiate the addition from the wall plane of the existing building and preserve existing cornerboards and trim by stepping back the wall plane of the addition and/or utilizing a hyphen or other small-scale transitional element to connect the addition to the existing building.

d. Where additions compete in size with the original building, include a hyphen or small-scale connecting wing or to separate the historic building from its new addition.

e. Utilize similar roof forms and pitches for building additions and, when possible, align the height of the eave line of a new addition with the eave line of the existing building.

f. Maintain the roof pitch and ridgeline of the existing building. Do not alter or raise the roof ridge of existing buildings in order to accommodate additions. Roof ridges for additions should be secondary to (lower than) those of the main structure.

4.8.8. Design additions using contemporary architecture provided they adhere to the characteristics of the historic district including: materials, siting and setbacks, scale, height, form, proportion, and details.

4.8.9. Minimize damage to the historic building by constructing additions to be structurally self-supporting, where feasible, and attach them to the original building carefully to minimize the loss of historic fabric. Attach additions in such a manner that, if additions were removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.

4.8.10. Design additions and their features with materials that are compatible with, but discernible from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings when the features and materials are important in defining the overall historic character of the district.

a. Select exterior materials and finishes that are compatible with the original building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color.

b. Use traditional materials in conventional ways so that additions are in harmony with the buildings in the historic district (i.e. wood siding applied horizontally).

c. Smooth-faced cementitious or composite siding that matches the traditional dimension of wood siding is permitted for additions.

d. Do not use synthetic (vinyl, aluminum, PVC, plastic, resin) siding and details on additions within the historic districts unless it can be demonstrated that the material and finishes are compatible with the original building in terms of scale, dimension, pattern, detail, finish, texture, and color.

4.8.11. Design additions and their features with architectural details that are compatible with, but discernible from and secondary to, the existing building and historic buildings within the immediate surroundings when the features and materials are important in defining the overall historic character of the district .

a. Incorporate materials and details derived from the primary structure.

b. Extend the hierarchy of architectural details to the addition with embellishments and detailing simplified on less visible side and rear elevations.

4.8.12. Design additions so that the location, shape, scale, size, materials, pattern, and proportion of windows and doors are compatible with the windows and doors of the existing building and with historic buildings in the immediate surroundings when these elements of doors and windows are important in defining the overall historic character of the district. Doors and windows should follow the standards for New Construction: Doors and Windows.

4.8.13. Design porches so that the location, shape, scale, size, materials, and details are compatible with, but discernible from and secondary to, porches on the existing building. Porches should follow the standards for New Construction: Porches.

4.8.14. Maintain and protect significant site features from damage during or as a consequence of related site work or construction.

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.