



Historic District Commission

Regular Agenda – Certificate of Appropriateness 150 E. Rosemary Street (Project #21-047)

Summary Report

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Anya Grahn, Senior Planner
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Applicant	Filing Date	Meeting Date(s)	Historic District
Michael Stevenson, Architect	6/23/2021	7/20/2021, 9/14/2021	Franklin-Rosemary
Project Description The applicant proposes to construct a public park behind the historic U.S. Post Office Building.			
Proposed Findings of Fact <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The applicant proposes to construct a new landscaped public space on the southwest corner of Henderson Street and E. Rosemary Street, behind the historic U.S. Post Office building.2. The existing parking lot and service area behind the U.S. Post Office will be replaced with vehicular access to the NCNC Alley.3. Service elements will be located behind a screen wall with a fieldstone veneer along Henderson Street. These walls will be further shielded with climbing plants.4. The site will be regraded. Existing concrete walls will be removed and replaced by new precast concrete seat walls with a limestone finish similar in color to the limestone used on the Post Office.5. An ornamental gate will shield the service area along Henderson Street.6. Brick paver, concrete, and Chapel Hill grit walkways will extend throughout the site.7. While the U.S. Post Office at 179 E. Franklin Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the area behind the building is not. It is, however, located in the local Franklin-Rosemary Historic District.			
Applicable Design Standards <p><i>1.1 Site Features (page 42):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.1.2. Retain and preserve historic relationships between district buildings, structures, or streetscapes and their site features, including site structures, retaining walls, fences, foundations, driveways, and walkways.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. <p><i>1.2 Public Rights-of-way (page 45):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.1. Retain and preserve the topography, materials, site features, and street patterns of the rights-of-way and the dimensions of the streets, alleys, sidewalks, and planting strips, that are important in defining the overall historic character of the districts.1.2.2. Protect and maintain the details, features, and material surfaces of the historic streetscape—including, but not limited to, red brick and Chapel Hill grit walkways, fieldstone walls, and brick gutters—through a program of regular maintenance and repair using accepted preservation methods.1.2.7. Locate necessary street furniture, trash receptacles, mailboxes, newspaper racks, and similar elements in locations that do not compromise, but instead complement the historic			

character of the streetscape. Select benches and other street furniture that are compatible with the historic district in design, scale, and materials.

1.3 Walls & Fences (pages 48-49)

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.

1.3.8. Construct new front- and side-yard fences 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. Front- and side-yard fences, in front of the rear corner of the main block of the building, should generally not exceed 30" in height, should be constructed of wood or metal with structural members facing inward to the property, and must be painted or sealed.
- b. Temporary, light-gauge wire fencing may be constructed as necessary to keep animals out of gardens, side, and rear yards.
- c. Chain link, vinyl, or split rail fences are not appropriate.

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.

- a. Wood, composite, or chain link fences exceeding 30" in height should be relegated to rear yards, beginning beyond the rear corner of the main block of the building and should be screened with landscaping materials as much as possible.
- 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 (pages 52-53)

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 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.

1.4.9. 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.

1.4.11. 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.

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.

Exhibits

1. [July 20, 2021 Meeting Materials](#)¹

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5037465&GUID=2A7D4F4F-AAE9-4AE7-9C16-680C86AC1B21>