

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapel Hill Historic District Commission

FROM: Britany Waddell, Planning Director
Charnika Harrell, Senior Planner
Anna Scott Myers, Planner II

SUBJECT: Gimghoul Castle at 742 Gimghoul Road: Renewal of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
(PIN 9788-96-2765, HDC-23-31, HDC-23-33, HDC-24-40, HDC-25-6)

AMENDMENT FILING DATE: June 18, 2026 (HDC-25-6)

DATE: August 11, 2026

COA SUMMARY

The applicant, Craig Ward, on behalf of Gimghoul Corporation, asks to modify existing field stone walls and install an irrigation water well.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed location is zoned Office/Institutional-1-Conditional Zoning District (OI-1-CZD) and is in the Gimghoul Historic District.

BACKGROUND

April 13, 2021	The Historic District Commission (HDC) reviewed and approved a COA request for the construction of an addition to the c.1926 castle. Meeting Materials ¹ .
October 12, 2021	The HDC reviewed and commented on a concept plan for the Gimghoul Castle. Meeting Materials ² .
April 12, 2022	The HDC reviewed and provided comments on a conditional zoning district (CZD) application for Gimghoul Castle. Meeting Materials ³ .
January 6, 2023	Staff administratively approved a 365-day extension request for the COA. (COA to expire on January 12, 2024.)
November 15, 2023	Staff administratively approved the construction of stone bollards along the west side of the new sidewalk and a backflow preventer at the driveway entrance.

¹<https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4891310&GUID=53CB93F5-61CD-4FBF-90C3-2C12B6F596E9&Options=&Search=>

²<https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5150315&GUID=7EC266F3-EE66-499C-8F3D-1D60ECBECB35&Options=&Search=>

³<https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5537892&GUID=63CE3F91-31F2-4C93-A5B8-B20A386B0CD1&Options=&Search=>

February 13, 2024	The HDC reviewed and approved a 365-day extension request for the COA. Meeting Materials ⁴ . (COA to expire on February 13, 2025.)
December 10, 2024	The HDC reviewed and approved a 365-day extension for the COA. Meeting materials ⁵ . (COA will expire on December 10, 2025.)
March 4, 2025	The applicant asks to amend the previously approved plan. (The COA will expire March 4, 2026.)
May 13, 2025	The commission approved the amendment to remove a tower and terrace lookout with outer walkway.
May 29, 2026	Staff approved a 12-month extension to the previously approved COA amendment. Staff also approved a minor change to include the construction of two stone columns along the gravel entrance drive.
June 18, 2026	The applicant applied to modify the COA to include changes to existing stone walls and the installation of an irrigation water well.

DISCUSSION

The Commission should discuss whether the work proposed by the Applicant is or is not incongruous with the special character of the Gimghoul Historic District. The Applicant has provided materials, which the Applicant asserts shows that the proposed project is not incongruous with the character of the Gimghoul Historic District.

If the COA is granted for the exterior change, the applicant would then be required to obtain any necessary zoning compliance and building permits from the Town.

NOTE

The [Chapel Hill Historic Districts Design Principles and Standards](#)⁶ are incorporated into the record by reference.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [Special Character Essay – Gimghoul Historic District \(pages 36-38\)](#)⁷
2. Application Materials

⁴ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6498507&GUID=57B10E28-5552-4633-BEE6-9218CB340573&Options=&Search=>

⁵ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7028898&GUID=E65851EA-DFF5-4977-AD60-7A80B36B025D&Options=&Search=>

⁶ <https://www.chapelhillnc.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/planning/documents/plans-and-ordinances/overlay-district/ch-hd-design-principles-and-standards.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.chapelhillnc.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/planning/documents/plans-and-ordinances/overlay-district/ch-hd-design-principles-and-standards.pdf>