

Public input from neighborhood meetings and community listening sessions found some consensus in a call for greater *clarity, predictability and consistency of outcomes* in the update of the RHDC's guidelines for development in historic districts. Reaction to the draft presented on October 20 varied, but in general, reflected some disappointment that a major theme calling for provision of a clear working definition of the concept of "compatibility" for use by both petitioners and commissioners was not provided. The word compatible or compatibility appears 20 times in the non-commercial parts of Section 4—Additions and New Construction. 9 times the word is used in the introduction to Part 4.3 NEW CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY BUILDINGS and 6 times in the eleven points of guidance for new construction. While this section does provide some examples of what constitutes compatibility (the best examples being found in the fourth paragraph of the section, to wit: "*In considering the overall compatibility of a proposed structure, its height, form, massing, proportion, size, scale and roof shape should first be reviewed.*" And "*For example, if the street facades of most nearby buildings are vertical in proportion, taller than they are wide, then maintaining the vertical orientation of the building façade will result in a more compatible design.*") A clear definition for or instruction to reviewers and applicants in how to interpret "compatibility" is not provided. Absent a good working definition, it may be difficult for stakeholders to clearly articulate why a particular design is or isn't compatible with the character of the surrounding structures in a specific historic district.

Section 4.2.8 Guidelines for Additions to Historic Buildings similarly call for an addition to be compatible ". . . in mass, *architectural style*, materials . . ." without describing how *compatibility* will or should be expressed. While observation of mass, shape, material, etc. may be used to identify a particular architectural style, we are again left bereft of guidance as to *which* style would be found by the commissioners to be most compatible, and this is, in fact, a value judgment based at least in part on personal taste. If architectural style is to become a point of measurement in a public approval process, the stakeholders will require instruction as to which style(s) is/are appropriate, and will also need a lexicon of design features that describe particular styles based on salient features so that they can select appropriately.

Many seemingly disparate pairings have been made to illustrate the concept of compatibility and differentiate it from the concept of sameness. Gin and olives, wine and cheese, chocolate and garlic are notable examples. Through skillful combination of these six elements, we have a wonderful menu including a famous cocktail, a good queso, and the king of all sauces, mole. The *Guidelines* are still lacking an appropriately detailed recipe that may be followed to a predictable outcome.

Chris Crew

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Lauer, Martha

From: Marsha Gordon <marshagordon99@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 26, 2014 8:48 AM
To: Lauer, Martha
Subject: comments on proposed guidelines

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
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Hi Martha,

I just wanted to share a few thoughts with y'all about the newly proposed guidelines revisions.

1. Although I have concerns about style creeping into the guidelines (since it seems to me that making a case for the compatibility of style is potentially problematic and confusing, and it is really reliant on things such as massing, scale, and proportion, which are already there), if it is going to be there then:

under new construction, I think a more explicit statement that echoes the sentiments of the 4.2 description for Additions to Historic Buildings on p. 58 would be appropriate, something like:

"New construction may be traditional or contemporary, as long as it is compatible with and differentiated from the historic character of the other homes in the district."

I would want to see this in 4.3 on p. 60 in the opening paragraph.

2. 4.3 .7, p. 61: I would also like to see that language from 4.2 echoed here: "Design new buildings to be compatible with BUT DIFFERENTIATED FROM surrounding buildings..." I think this is very important to be clear about.

3. I also wonder if it is worth adding a kind of footnote exception about building siting that has to do with lot shape. The illustrations on 4.3 are useful, but if a lot is not shaped in the usual fashion (as was the case for us on Euclid St.) then the building cannot be oriented in the same way. So although there are not many lots that would be subject to this, it would be nice for the commission and for applicants not to have to fight a standard that is not applicable, perhaps with a note that states: "In the case of unusual lot geometries, exceptions to setback, orientation, and spacing may be made." I know that this is implicit, but I'm thinking about ways to save potential headaches for RHDC & applicants down the line.

Can you please confirm receipt?

Thanks for your consideration,
Marsha

November 17, 2014

To: Raleigh Historic Development Commission

Re: Guidelines Revisions

I am a former chair of the commission and I spent 6 years on the COA committee reviewing hundreds of cases. I started these notes back then and have been refining them ever since. The current debate prompted me to compare the existing guidelines with the existing proposed revisions. The following comments are with regard to the proposed revised guidelines and Jo's proposed revisions.

I find the current guidelines to be quite good and both sets of revisions make them stronger. The following notes suggest further refinements.

General

- Historic Development Commission
- Change "Adjacent" (structures and/or buildings) to "well-related nearby"

Section 1

- For transparency and educational purposes COA section needs to talk about how the process works. Suggest that the section include information such as:
 - Preservation philosophy: 1st preserve fabric, 2nd repair fabric...
 - standards for review differ for
 - Individual Landmarks
 - Contributing Structures
 - Non-contributing structures
 - State owned Contributing structures
 - How the special character essay relates to the text of the main body of the guidelines
 - How to review proposed work:
 - Do the specifics appear not incongruous?
 - Does the whole appear not incongruous?
 - Does the proposed work appear not incongruous in context?
- COA analysis methodology: Perhaps craft a score card for approval similar to New Bern's demolition denial scorecard in that congruity is quantified and the net score determines the outcome. The LEED scorecard may be a better model as it allows requisites, and then a combination of other factors. This might help demystify.
Alternately describe the philosophy.

Section 2

- Suggest **adding a section on subdividing/combining lots** requiring that the resulting lots reflect the historic built pattern of the subdivision. Perhaps: When subdividing lots the resulting lots must reflect the typical proportion of the well related historic lots in the district being mindful of the street width to lot depth ratio.
- 2.7 - Current lamp of choice is a harsh orange color sodium vapor. Metal halide is quite distorted color. LEDs are available with low color temperature (2,700-3,200 degrees kelvin) and CRI in excess of 80.

Section 3

- Everything should be relative to well-related buildings as defined in the draft revision.
- I suggest **adding a section** speaking to **restoration** that expressly allows the restoration of an asset to a documentable point in time in the period of significance that is evidenced by the majority of the existing historic elements. It should direct the applicant to select materials and elements consistent with the style of the asset at the selected date of restoration. It should also expressly forbid changing the building to a style that is not part of its own history.

Section 4 (Revised per Jo Edit)

- Everything should be relative to well-related buildings
- 4.2 - Very concerned about the wording "New additions are appropriate as long as they do not destroy historic features, materials, and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site and they remain deferential and subordinate to the original building." This still reads as very permissive, which I know isn't the intent. My concern is that on appeal an aggressive lawyer could argue that this is the criteria and something that does not meet the rest of the guidelines would have to be approved. Perhaps something like "New additions are ~~appropriate~~ **not inappropriate if** as ~~long as~~ they do not destroy historic features, materials, and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site, they remain deferential and subordinate to the original building, **and providing they meet the rest of the criteria in these guidelines.**"
- 4.2.8 Concern
I am concerned about the addition of "style" without an accompanying definition of "Compatible." Suggestions:
Define Compatible in terms of "style"
- 4.2.11 - Clarify - "It is not appropriate to construct an addition that significantly changes the proportion of original built mass to open space on the individual site." What tips the scale? Would an 1800sf addition to a 1200sf building do it? The

phrase "individual site" would suggest this is not in relation to the overall development pattern, but to the existing historic structure. It seems several approved additions ignore this guideline.

The underlying assumption appears to be that the aggregate impact of significant additions would adversely impact the character of the structure or district.

If this is what we want it seems to hinge on the question of what is a "significant" change and what is the basis of judging the change?

Dictionary def: Significant: "of a noticeably or measurably large amount"

Zoning seems to define a significant increase to be 150% or more.

Also we are talking about built mass and comparing it to open space: Mass is a 3 dimensional construct and open space is in this application a 2 dimensional construct.

Suggestion: Either define in the guidelines "significantly" as percentage of lot coverage greater than 150% of the historic fabric of the lot in question or the average historic portions of the well related nearby lots, whichever is larger or adopt this definition as policy. I understand that there is concern that 150% will become the automatic go to point, however there is so much in the guidelines that will tend to limit this and many applications have tended to greatly exceed 150%, which leads me to believe that designing to 150% will be a symptom of control, not a self fulfilling prophecy.

Define what goes into lot coverage. Suggest that primary structures, accessory buildings, and impervious surface extant at the time the structure was originally designated be the base point.

Suggested edit:

It is not appropriate to construct an addition or **a collection of additions** that significantly changes the proportion of ~~original built mass~~ **area in existence at the date of original designation** to open space on the individual site.

- 4.2.12 Suffers from the same problems as 4.2.11.

The use of Surrounding Buildings seems inappropriate where we have a definition of "well related nearby structures".

It appears that this is meant to be an additional limitation that would keep an originally large structure (relative the surrounding buildings) from overpowering them with an otherwise allowable addition.

Suggested edit:

It is not appropriate to construct an addition if the overall proportion of built ~~mass~~ **area** to open space on its site will significantly vary from the **average of the surrounding well related nearby buildings on the date of their designation** and sites that contribute to the special character of the historic district.

- 4.3.7 Concerns

1) I am concerned about the addition of "style" without an accompanying definition of "Compatible."

2) "height within 10% of well related"... Consider 500 block of Polk street. North street wall alternates 2 story /1 story/2/1/2/1/2. Does this mean within 90% of the smallest and 110% of the largest??

Measured to where?

Suggestions:

Define Compatible in terms of “style”

Define “building height”.

- 4.3.12: See 4.2.12
- Add **4.3.13 Where an infill is a replication of a historic style provide a permanent bronze plaque at the house side of the sidewalk facing the street noting the building is a replication. (Have height, finish, material, font size, language, and plaque size requirements.)**

Section 5

- (nothing)

Section 6

- Definitions
 - Add **BUILDING HEIGHT:**
See UDO for definition.
 - Add: **COMPATIBLE:**
Define relative to the topic retaining the same underlying philosophy on each. Suggestion:
COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT
Follows the street grid, building setback, building orientation, street wall alignment, hardscape, building massing, and street accessories found in the historic development and mimics the established variation of these attributes within the historic district. Contains compatible buildings.

COMPATIBLE BUILDING
Has similar orientation, street wall alignment, hardscape, massing, and street accessories found in the historic development and mimics the established variation of these attributes within the historic district. Contains compatible fenestration and building elements and is designed in a compatible style.

COMPATIBLE STYLE

 - 1) In the case of repairs or restoration: Matching the existing.
 - 2) In the case of additions: Matching the existing on elevations with significant adjacent historic fabric. Similar to the existing on elevations with a roughly even mix of historic and new fabric to the existing, Referential to the existing on elevations with minimal historic elements visible.
 - 3) In the case of infill:
Referential to well-related nearby structures, allowing significant variation

from historic fabric.

COMPATIBLE FENESTRATION

Refer to the placement of Windows and Doors on a structure and is evaluated by looking at rhythm, texture, spacing, etc. Employs compatible materials and components.

1) In the case of repairs or restoration: Matching the existing rhythm, texture, spacing, and proportion.

2) In the case of additions: Matching the existing on elevations with significant adjacent historic fabric. Similar to the existing on elevations with a roughly even mix of historic and new fabric. Visually similar to the existing, with the greatest variation allowed on elevations with minimal historic elements visible.

3) In the Case of infill:

Visually similar to well-related nearby structures, allowing significant variation from historic fabric.

COMPATIBLE BUILDING ELEMENT:

Refers to major elements such as roof, walls, porches, accessory buildings, driveways, etc. Employs compatible materials and components.

1) In the case of restoration, repairs and changes to historic fabric, “Compatible” element is defined as being of the same style, proportion, color, visual texture, and finish as the historic element with which it is being integrated.

2) In the case of additions, “Compatible” element is defined as being of the same proportion, shape, visual texture, and finish as is in the historic structure.

3) For new construction, “Compatible” element is defined as being of the similar proportion and shape as found in well related nearby buildings.

COMPATIBLE MATERIAL or PRE-MANUFACTURED COMPONENT:

Refers to materials or manufactured components, such as windows, columns, etc.

1) In the case of restoration, repairs and changes to historic fabric, “Compatible” material is defined as being of the same style, color, proportion, shape, edge definition, surface texture, finish and having similar coefficients of expansion as the historic material with which it is being integrated.

2) In the case of additions, “Compatible” material is defined as being of the same proportion, shape, edge definition, surface texture, and finish as is in the historic structure.

3) For new construction, “Compatible” material is defined as being of the similar proportion and shape as found in well related nearby buildings.

- **ADD: CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE**
A structure noted in the listing inventory as contributing to the character of the historic district. Where a listing lacks this inventory or the inventory is incomplete this would be defined as a structure in existence during the period of significance of the historic district that was not altered to the point of losing the character it had at the end of the period of significance.
- LIFE-CYCLE — The lifespan of a material, feature, or system **starting with manufacture and ending with disposal/recycling.**
- NOMINAL SIGHTLINE—“An imaginary line extending from a hypothetical six foot tall pedestrian **at the street wall** on the **opposite side of the** street to the top of a building and beyond.”
- TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE—Possible to accomplish ~~using reasonable skill~~ with available materials, labor, and technology.

Oakwood Special Character - Add:

- Break the districts into zones and discuss the qualities of that zone in terms of the criteria in the guidelines including, but not limited to,:
 - porches (are they appended or inset),
 - lot shape
 - sidewalk
 - setbacks
 - Alignment of house bodies.
- Homes on corner lots being larger structures on smaller lots, with the exception of Elm street, Euclid st, Pell street, ...

Sincerely,
Curtis Kasefang

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Date: November 12, 2014

To: Martha Lauer
Jo Leimenstoll

From: Oak City Preservation Alliance

Subject: Response to October 20, 2014 Presentation

The mission of the RHDC is to identify, preserve, protect and promote Raleigh's historic resources. How best to accomplish this mission is a key question. We applaud RHDC in sponsoring two community sessions to gain input on the current Guidelines. Gaining community input is critical but equally important is the analysis of that input to ensure that the recommendations and outcomes reflect the majority view.

We appreciate the time and effort expended by Ms. Leimenstoll in developing her presentation. Nonetheless, on a few points we don't believe the recommendations reflect the majority view of participants at the September meeting nor the majority of the formal comments submitted to the RHDC following this session. In our view, it is critically important to quantify the input and allow the majority view to prevail. There is no indication that a quantitative analysis was done but rather a compromise or middle of the ground position was sought. The role of RHDC is to preserve historic districts and buildings; not to seek compromise or assume a middle of the road position. Harmony is nurtured through the neighborhood and its residents. With all due respect, it is not created by the RHDC nor should it be.

First issue: only a few individuals who sat at two different tables mentioned expanding the **period of significance**. Formal submissions opposed an expansion yet this recommendation is made. It appears that RHDC had a preconceived outcome in mind and then cited the few comments to support its position. Input gained at the October 20 session, also indicates that only a few individuals felt this is a good idea. We respectfully request that this recommendation be eliminated from consideration. There is no benefit in expanding the period of significance while there can certainly be unanticipated consequences. A rolling period of significance waters down and dilutes the original historic period.

Second issue: architectural style. The presentation regarding style is a bit ambiguous. While there was a range of views expressed, the dominant or majority view was that architectural style must be considered consistent with enabling legislation. We appreciate that the RHDC Guidelines now reflect the enabling legislation but believe its impact is watered down by suggesting a “both/and approach as well as including “contemporary” in the additions and commercial section. We object to the statement, “clarify that the style of new construction and additions can range from traditional to **contemporary** and, whatever the architectural style, differentiation and compatibility of new construction are key.” This statement provides far too much leeway to architects seeking design guidance in historic districts as well as deliberation by the COA Committee which invariably will lead to even broader interpretation than we have experienced in the past few years.

We have concerns about referring to contemporary style when addressing both additions and new construction. Contemporary style simply means a style in the current time period and can be whatever the architect deems to be contemporary. We do not understand why some members of PNC and RHDC are advocating modern and contemporary architecture within historic districts. Surely, there are development opportunities outside of historic districts where modern and contemporary designs are welcome.

We fail to see the value of this language. We hope that PNC and the RHDC continue to fulfill its primary mission which is to protect historic districts and buildings. These organizations are critical to the preservation of historic districts and buildings. Advocacy of the infusion of contemporary in-fill or contemporary additions to historic buildings is counterintuitive to this mission. It troubles us that this advocacy is still evident despite the majority of public input opposing this view. We don't believe that contemporary new construction adds depth to a historic district; it serves only as a distraction to the period of significance.

OCPA enjoys all types of architecture and its mission seeks to protect both historic and modern structures. For example, we are opposed to the de-designation of the Weber House, and have objected to this proposed action under separate cover.

Third issue: compatible. It is not clear why there is objection to adding specific language to accompany the word compatible. This term in and of itself does not serve the historic districts. The majority of residents of historic districts do not want modern or contemporary styled homes or significantly differentiated additions. The words complimentary, harmonious or congruous are stronger indicators of what is appropriate in an historic district. We appreciate that a definition of this word will be included in the glossary but also recommend that stronger language is included in the body text.

Specific standards are required; too much leeway is afforded the COA Committee and loose interpretation is clearly evident during the past several years. Cherry picking and Mr. Potato Head refer to the Euclid house since Mr. Cherry used examples from many houses to justify his design to the COA Committee. This is an example of meeting specific elements of the guidelines but not considering how the overall design fit within the historic district. Unfortunately, it suggests that those who approved the design did so lacking understanding and appreciation for the value of intact historic districts.

On this point, neighborhood input at the Euclid COA process was ignored. The majority of those present at the hearing objected to the design and construction of this house. Why was this input ignored? We were told that the COA Committee justified its approval in part since the Euclid design was compared to the 2008 house across the street. However, this house has steep roof lines and a full front porch. The relevance is not apparent. Further, the Euclid design should have been viewed in context of the entire district not just this street. This also was the rationale for approving the modern addition to a historic home on Linden. Now it appears that the RHDC is broadening or softening the Guidelines perhaps to protect against the ensuing or future litigation. Had the Guidelines been strictly interpreted and the community input given its due at the Euclid COA Committee meeting, perhaps this would have been avoided. It seems that we may be repeating our mistakes rather than learning from them.

We urge RHDC to review and quantify the responses on these three key issues; architectural style, specifically the word contemporary; compatibility; and, period of significance. We believe it is imperative that recommendations be based on a quantitative analysis and reflect the majority of community input. In our review of the individual, table and formal comments, it is clear that a majority view on key issues was not presented on October 20. It is noteworthy that this same majority view has been expressed by the residents of Historic Oakwood. The result of multiple forums on different occasions indicate that 75% to 85% do not want contemporary styled homes built in its historic district nor do they want modern and extreme differentiation when building additions to historic properties. It is not surprising to OCPA that these percentages are basically the same as the input received at the September and October sessions along with formal submissions as it is what the residents of historic districts expect.

The RHDC process is suspect if community input is minimized. It appears comments submitted as a result of September 22 meeting were not given sufficient weight or given too much weight depending on who submitted opinions. Respectfully, we believe that a process which puts forth recommendations not held by a majority of respondents, both formal submissions and table discussions, infers a lack of genuine respect for the residents of the historic districts who spent their time providing such input.

This is not an "insignificant conflict of a thing" as characterized in the cartoon used by Ms. Leimenstoll. The very culture and character of historic districts are being threatened.

Sincerely,

Oak City Preservation Alliance
Officers and Steering Committee

Don Becom
Paula S. Huot
Bruce Miller

Terri Becom
Mary Iverson
Suzy Newsom

Darcia Black
Manish Lamba
Heather Scott

Susan Bray
Rex Michaels
Ray Stephens



Martha Lauer <mlauer@rhdc.org>

RHDC Guideline Revisions

Peter Rumsey <peter@peterrumsey.com>

Mon, Nov 17, 2014 at 8:55 AM

To: "rhdc@rhdc.org" <rhdc@rhdc.org>

I support adoption, with some modification, of the revised Raleigh Historic Development Commission (RHDC) guidelines as presented at the October 20 public meeting. I also support modifications suggested by Curtis Kasefang, in his November 4, 2014, letter to the Commission, which included defining "compatible" for each of its many applications in the guidelines.

My support is informed by my experience as a longtime resident of Historic Oakwood and, since 1980, as a Realtor and private developer moving, renovating, listing and selling homes (and vacant lots) in Raleigh local historic districts. The underlying basis for my support is stated in section 4.3, "New Construction of Primary Buildings", "Things to Consider As You Plan":

The success of new construction within a historic district does not depend on direct duplication of building forms, features, materials, and stylistic details. Rather it relies on understanding what the distinctive architectural character of the district is. Infill buildings must be compatible with that character. The special character essays for each historic district are excellent references for understanding the relevant character and context. Contemporary design generated from such understanding can enrich the architectural continuity of a historic district.

A special character, a defining characteristic, of Historic Oakwood is the diversity of its lots and buildings both during and after its originally defined period of significance. This diversity is Historic Oakwood's DNA. It expresses itself in the diverse cross section of people who have lived here, and now, in growing numbers, want to live here. The diversity of Oakwood residents and their diverse contributions to our City is a significant part of Raleigh's history that should be preserved by preserving the diversity of the built environment.

I encourage the RHDC to recognize and honor this diversity when considering changes to its guidelines and organization, and when applying the guidelines in the COA process in Oakwood and the other local historic districts. I also believe it is an argument for expanding the period of significance in Oakwood and possibly other districts as well. Such expansion may help mitigate the threat of tear downs in local districts.

Finally, I applaud the RHDC initiatives to educate the public about the requirements and responsibilities of owning property in a local historic district. At each opportunity, I suggest the RHDC explain the difference between local and national register districts, as well as neighborhood conservation districts. Specifically, Realtors should include these as separate choices in the multiple listing sheet. I also support RHDC efforts to help create continuing education course for Realtors that would address these areas. Similar courses should be explored for architects and builders.

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Martha Lauer <mlauer@rhdc.org>

Hugh Stohler's comments on changes to RHDC guideline

1 message

Hugh and Sara Stohler <stohler1@bellsouth.net>
To: rhdc@rhdc.org

Sun, Nov 16, 2014 at 11:00 PM

To the Raleigh Historic Development Commission:

30 years ago, even before it was certain my family would move to Raleigh for employment reasons, I knew that I wanted to live in the Oakwood neighborhood. It was downtown and within walking distance of many things I valued, including schools and work, though my hope for downtown revival was almost 20 years early. A still dicey "downtown" reputation did not deter my family from choosing a real neighborhood, in which diversity of homes shaped a vibrant community of people. My first work in Raleigh was to restore my house to the 1920's single-family dwelling it had originally been. My family came to love the rooted diversity of the shapes, sizes and styles of homes, and we delighted that neighbors continued to renovate and restore houses to their more authentic forms. When serving on the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission I became aware of issues of introducing contemporary styles into the historic neighborhood when the Greenhouse property came up for development. I was somewhat disappointed in the results of that development, as I had hoped for more examples of good contemporary forms and fewer derivative ones. I firmly believe that good contemporary designs can and will live comfortably with authentic designs of past periods.

Other issues I believe still need more attention in proposed revision of the guidelines include the following:

1. The much-used term "compatibility" needs to be defined in a more discriminating way, particularly as relates to repairs and restorations vs. new construction.
2. "Period of significance" should be expanded to give greater protection to worthy mid-Twentieth Century homes now over 50 years old (some mid-century homes were simply uninteresting post-war infill with little of particularly redeeming architectural value). To encourage stability, we need to discourage tear-downs and applications to do so need to meet clear criteria.
3. The proposed revisions haven't yet found a "sweet spot" of describing lot coverage and baselines for measuring change, as well as variance between mass-to-open space of new buildings vs. surrounding buildings.

I hope the RHDC will continue to work on these issues before they are submitted to Council.

Yours,

Hugh Stohler

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Raleigh, NC 27604

919-821-4338

The time, effort and expense in opening the topics regarding the Raleigh Historic Development Commission and the Guidelines are greatly appreciated.

Although initially optimistic about the public forums, it is a great disappointment that the process did not result in a process and outcome that showed openness to other options/opinions. It is clear that the RHDC and its staff hold the opinion that additions and new construction in an historic district should not consider compatibility of architectural style, but the Raleigh City Council wanted to explore/discover the community values to be used in these contextual guidelines. Often it is difficult to be open to other views and not get stuck on one's own views/biases. It appears that the RHDC failed in this regard.

Regarding process disappointments:

1) At the 9/22 meeting, speaker, Pratt Cassity, in expounding on his view that the architectural style of new construction could be anything one wanted and not respecting that there is another opinion.

2) The round table format, with comment briefly and sometimes confusedly written up by city employees, made it difficult to figure out what all the opinions were, but there was a decided majority in favor of limiting architectural styles.

3) There was no notification that the 10/20 public meeting would again open all three questions to public comments. We were told that we would only be allowed to comment on Ms. Leimenstoll's proposed changes.

4) Public comment concerning the 10/20 meeting was not posted on the website (assuming that there were comments in addition to the comments from the meeting itself)

5) Ms. Leimenstoll's strategy to compromise is in no way a compromise.

Regarding the recommended substantial changes:

1) Public sentiment clearly asked for predictability and clarity of terms. The only term defined in the changes is architectural style – and that definition is not specific and does not clarify the issue in any way.

2) The City Council wanted to find out the public's values, and to have the proposed guidelines utilize those values in context. Ms. Leimenstoll concluded that there was not one public value concerning adding modern architecture styles to historic districts and proposed a "compromise." This compromise, although mentioning the words "architectural style" allows any and all architectural styles and is therefore not a compromise. Historic Oakwood has had several endeavors attempting to capture public sentiment on this issue – ALL have shown a majority view opposed to allowing modern architectural styles in an historic district (Oakwood) which does not have that architectural style currently existing there.

3) On the critical subject raised for the need to limit the size of additions, Ms. Leimenstoll stated that she would not put a limit on size, as then applicants would all go to the top of the limit. While that statement defines logic and has no basis in fact, it is one of the most significant problems in our districts as important contributing structures are suffering severe and inappropriate additions which alter their historic appearance.

The guidelines changes as written by Ms. Leimenstoll are not acceptable.

Actions the RHDC can take to demonstrate that public values are being considered:

1. Publicly acknowledge that there are two views concerning adding modern architectural styles to historic districts.
2. Self-examine your openness to another view (the community's view, even if it is different from your view)
3. Reject Ms. Liemontoll's solution of "compromise" because this is not a compromise – it adds the words "architectural style" but defines it as anything – and thus does not have the outcome as a compromise.
4. If the Commission does not get a sense of the community's values on this issue from these public forums, to possibly consider a scientific survey of residents; or consider a compromise as each district to determine for themselves this question. Oakwood has had several means to get public sentiment – and ALL show the majority view of considering architectural style and that additions and new construction should be in the architectural style of the existing styles in the district.
5. From the review of public comment, it appears that the public either do not understand the features of different architectural styles, or feel it is an "emotional" term. Possibly the RHDC should educate the public regarding different architectural styles – as is being done in the SPHO newsletter.

Sincerely,

David C. Wiesner 515 Euclid Street



Martha Lauer <mlauer@rhdc.org>

Comments to submit on RHDC on guidelines discussion

1 message

Gail <gwiesner@nc.rr.com>

Sun, Nov 16, 2014 at 10:16 PM

Reply-To: Gail <gwiesner@nc.rr.com>

To: Martha Lauer <mlauer@rhdc.org>

The time, effort and expense in opening the topics regarding the Raleigh Historic Development Commission and the guidelines are greatly appreciated. However, it is a great disappointment that the process became a means to further push a particular point of view on the subject of architectural style of additions and new construction.

At the 9/22 meeting, a good bit of time was spent by the speaker, Pratt Cassity, in expounding on HIS view that the style of new construction could be anything one wanted. This was to be a community conversation. It was completely inappropriate for the speaker to express his prejudice for one side of this pivotal issue, particularly since there was no opportunity for another view. This is particularly distressing since the staff was asked about this a few weeks before at a neighborhood meeting in Oakwood. One of the residents expressed concern since the bias of Mr. Cassity appeared on his website postings.

The round table format, with comments briefly and sometimes confusingly written up by city employees, made it difficult to figure out what all the opinions were, but there was a decided majority in favor of limiting architectural styles. In spite of this, Ms. Leimenstoll wrote guidelines which state:

For additions:

"In terms of architectural style, a new addition may be traditional, contemporary or a simplified version of the original building so long as it strikes a balance in terms of compatibility with and differentiation from the historic character and identity of the original building"

This wording allows any style.

The change to Section 4.3 for new construction does not even mention style, thus completely opening up to ANYTHING, once again ignoring the state law stating that architectural style be compatible with the district.

When asked by a participant if she had considered the numbers expressing an opinion, she said she had not and that this was a way to reach a "consensus". She ignored the majority opinion and most certainly did not express a consensus. There can be no consensus on whether it is acceptable to allow outlier styles. You do or you do not. She simply used wording that allows any style and protects the Committee on Appropriateness. On the critical subject raised for the need to limit the size of additions, Ms. Leimenstoll stated that she would not put a limit on size as that would induce applicants to build to the maximum. This statement has no basis in fact or logic. This one of the most significant issues as contributing structures are suffering inappropriate additions which severely alter their historic character and appearance.

Last, it was not made known that there would be a round table format once again at the 10/20 meeting. Many who attended the 9/22 meeting did not return and new attendees did not go because they did not know that there would be a second garnering of opinions on the three topics. Also, unlike that for the 9/22 meeting, the additional comments sent in by the public from the 10/20 meeting have not been published on the RHDC website, preventing transparency.

While each district may vary, Oakwood is the largest district and the greatest as a tourist attraction and place that others in Raleigh visit and enjoy. On three occasions polls have been taken amongst our residents. All three expressed a strong majority in favor of limiting architectural styles for new construction to those of our contributing structures and not allowing outlier styles.

The guidelines changes as written by Ms. Leimenstoll do not reflect the majority opinion and are not acceptable.

Gail Wiesner

515 Euclid Street

Lauer, Martha

From: Barbara Wishy <bwishy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2014 9:06 AM
To: rhdc@rhdc.org; Lauer, Martha
Subject: Guideline Comments

I am a former chair of the commission and have recently served another term on the Commission as Chairman of the Research Committee. I have admired the guidelines for their flexibility but at this time I do see the need for the proposed changes.

The Oakwood Historic District consists of houses of many styles and sizes, and I firmly believe that new construction in the neighborhood should be permitted to include contemporary buildings that are compatible with the character of the neighborhood. Since 'style' will now be incorporated into the criteria for consideration, it is important that 'compatible' becomes further defined. I have read Curtis Kasefang's suggestions to the Commission and hope that his detailed thoughts will be given serious consideration. The lack of detailed explanations of that word has caused considerable confusion in the neighborhood.

I am aware that the Oakwood neighborhood anticipates serious development pressure in the near future. To discourage demolition I hope that the period of significance in the district will be expanded. I welcome the addition of Paragraph 12 of New Construction of Primary Buildings-4.3. The language may need some refining as suggested by Curtis Kasefang, but it will certainly help discourage demolition.

Most of the members of the RHDC by the City Council have so far been well versed in architecture and design or brought some other important expertise to the Commission. I hope that the City Council will continue that practice.

I think that the round table discussions and Joe Leimenstall's explanations and her guideline revisions have been very beneficial to all participants. I anticipate that the final guidelines will make the COA process easier to understand for all the residents of our historic district and make them more 'predictable'.

Barbara Wishy
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