

Dear City Council Neighborhoods Committee,

Thank you for your careful consideration of proposed changes to the Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts. Thank you especially for considering the opinions of the residents of the districts, who are the stewards of Raleigh's historic treasures.

Oakwood is the largest of the City of Raleigh historic districts, in terms of number of residents and number of properties. It generates the largest number of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. And it is among Raleigh's major tourist attractions. Every week we host tour groups as well as individual tourists. We host many road races throughout the year. Our annual Candlelight Tour brings several thousands to Oakwood. Our annual Garden Tea and Tour was recently written up in *Southern Living* magazine. And we welcome thousands of children every Halloween.

Oakwood's value to its residents, to the city, to tourists, and to posterity, depends on the preservation of its historic character. The Society for the Preservation of Historic Oakwood (SPHO) has worked to preserve this historic character since 1972, when it led the fight to stop the expressway that would have leveled Oakwood. The board of directors of the SPHO is elected each year by the residents of Oakwood.

The SPHO has several times submitted a letter to City Council requesting five changes to the Guidelines, to insure that Oakwood's historic character is not compromised by additions or new construction that are in extreme contrast to its historic architecture.

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission (RHDC) has recently submitted new language intended to address this issue. However, RHDC's new language would still allow additions or new construction that are "glaringly different" from historic buildings. It merely states that the Guidelines do not REQUIRE that additions or new construction be "glaringly different" from historic buildings.

We would like to submit new language that is an actual compromise between RHDC's proposed guidelines, and the SPHO's previous proposal. We request that these two sections be added to the Guidelines:

3.2.13 It is not appropriate to construct an addition that is starkly different from the original building in terms of architectural style.

3.3.13 It is not appropriate to construct a new building that is starkly different from nearby buildings that contribute to the special character of the historic district, in terms of architectural style, materials, form, size, massing, proportion, roof shape, or overall appearance.

These are two of the four sections the SPHO previously requested, but with the language "starkly different" taken from page 10 of the U.S. Park Service's *Preservation Brief 14*, describing an incompatible addition. The proposed 3.2.13 is also abridged to fend the criticism that additions often by their nature have different materials, form, proportion, and roof shape than the original building. This is a compromise from SPHO's previous request, since it includes only two of the four sections previously requested, and it drops the previous request that wherever the word "**compatible**" appears, it be replaced with "**compatible and consistent**."

Thank you for helping to preserve Oakwood's historic character.