

IN THE DISTRICTS

A newsletter published by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission

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■ WITHIN THE COMMISSION

Surveys May Lead to New Historic District Designations

Studies are now underway to determine whether two areas of the city are eligible for future historic district designation. The RHDC awarded contracts in May for historic resource surveys of the warehouse section of downtown and the Mordecai neighborhood. The studies will assess the historical and architectural significance of properties in the two areas on a building-by-building basis.

The city's comprehensive plan specifically recommends surveying the warehouse section. The area, located immediately west and south of Nash Square, once served as Raleigh's industrial center. Today it consists primarily of warehouse and storefront properties, some dating from the 19th century.

The survey will determine whether the area qualifies for designation as a local historic district. Such status would encourage development that enhances the character of the area, using the same design review standards in effect in the city's five existing local districts.

The consultant for the survey is Ruth Little, of Longleaf Historic Resources.

The Mordecai study comes as an outgrowth

of the recent Mordecai Neighborhood Plan, which specifically calls for inventorying the neighborhood's historic properties. The survey area extends from Courtland Drive south toward the Oakwood Historic District, and from Wake Forest Road west to N. Blount Street. Chronologically, it encompasses a broad span of the city's architectural history, from plantation beginnings through Depression-era housing.

Should findings warrant it, a portion of the neighborhood may be nominated to become a National Register Historic District. While such status is largely honorary, the area could subsequently be studied for designation as a local historic district,

should residents wish to pursue it.

The survey is being conducted by architectural historian Pat Dickinson, with partial funding from the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

Both area surveys are expected to be completed by early 1997. ■

The surveys have been suggested by citizens during recent planning efforts



Pat Dickinson (top) is researching the Mordecai area, while Ruth Little (bottom) documents the downtown warehouse area.

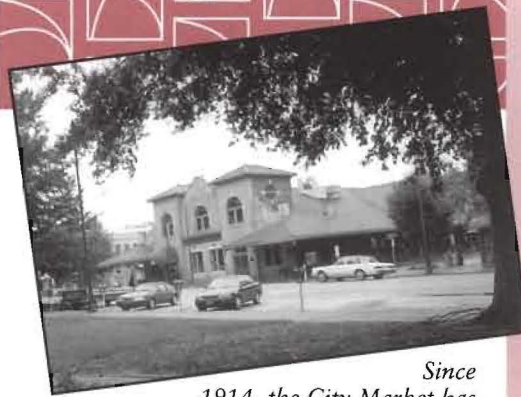
■ PROFILE

Continuing Transformation: Moore Square Historic District

The Moore Square area exemplifies Raleigh's urban evolution. Centered on one of the city's five original public parks, the area originally was residential in character. Yet by the early 20th century, the square fronted a bustling commercial district. City Market anchored the area's southern side, while to the west, E. Hargett Street was the African American community's "main street."

In the post-World War II era, however, commercial activity shifted elsewhere. Businesses moved out; buildings fell into decline.

Concern for the area led to a series of city-initiated measures to encourage redevelopment: street-scapes improvements, a



Since 1914, the City Market has been a focal point of Moore Square.

facade improvement program, and, in 1983, the area's listing as a National Register Historic District. In 1992, a multi-block section was designated the city's fifth local historic district.

Today, evolution continues to be the watchword in Moore Square. The rebirth of City Market and an influx of art galleries are re-establishing the square as a focal point of the community. At the same time,

its rows of historic storefronts serve as a graphic reminder that this new activity is founded on a vibrant past.

The Moore Square area exemplifies Raleigh's urban evolution.

■ UPDATE

House Moving Times Three

Three Dorothea Drive houses now boast new addresses—and prospects for the future. This past spring, the trio of one-and-a-half story bungalows were moved from the 1000 block of Dorothea Drive to the three vacant lots at 705, 707 and 709 Dorothea. The house movings, which were carried out by a private developer, were necessitated by the construction of Western Boulevard Extension. Plans call for the houses to be ready for new residents later this fall.

In the Wake of Fran

As the clean-up from Hurricane Fran continues, many historic property owners face unforeseen dilemmas: how to deal with persistent moisture problems, whether to remove damaged plantings, working with contractors, etc. To help out, the commission has compiled a set of recovery tips and techniques. The information includes dry-in processes (including mold control), obtaining SBA loans for historical repairs, landscape restoration, and saving water-damaged textiles and furniture. Contact the commission office for additional details.

■ TECH

CORNER

Q.

Leaks, leaks, leaks – I've had it with my slate roof! What can I do?

A.

Your best bet is keeping the slate. Slate roofs are an integral component of historic architecture. And, unless the slates are of an unusually poor grade, they have a lifetime of wear left. Better varieties of slate can last 150-175 years; given the age of most slate-roofed houses, the remaining useful life equals 4 to 6 re-roofings with fiberglass shingles.

It's usually not the slates that are causing the problems.

Metal ridge caps, valleys, and the liners of box gutters are all subject to corrosion (especially if they're not kept painted); when in doubt, inspect thoroughly.

While slates can chip and break, slipping or falling slate usually means rusting nails. Those repairs should be left to an expert.

The most economical option is to hire



a professional slater on an annual retainer, to secure and replace slates on an "as-you-go" basis. This not only helps keep little problems small; it also institutes a program of prevention. And the annual cost is far less than tackling repair jobs after they've reached critical mass, or the cost of total removal and replacement.

Whatever you do, **don't slop on the glop!** Asphalt patching will crack loose, and can destroy a fine slate roof's appeal. It also can trap moisture, just making matters worse.

Only if the slate is in poor condition does replacement make sense. Again, before you act, get a slate professional's opinion. The RHDC staff also can provide advice and guidance. ■

■ AT YOUR

SERVICE

RHDC: 35 Years of Service

On December 18, the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission marks 35 years of guiding historic preservation in Raleigh. The first such commission in the state, the body was created by resolution of the City Council in 1961.

Early milestones were publication of *North Carolina's Capital: Raleigh*, by Elizabeth Waugh, creation of Mordecai Historic Park, and initial designations of city historic sites. The 1970s brought the designation of the Oakwood, Blount Street, and Capitol Square Historic Districts, adoption of design guidelines, and initiation of the design review process. During the 1980s, the Boylan Heights Historic District was estab-

lished, and a formal place for preservation secured in the city's *Comprehensive Plan*.

The designation of the Moore Square Historic



St. Augustine's Chapel was designated a Raleigh landmark in 1969.

District and publication of the award-winning book *Culture Town* are among the commission's recent accomplishments.

Plans for the RHDC's anniversary observance are now taking shape; check with the commission office for details. ■

■ GUIDE LINES

On Deck(s)

Decks pose a pivotal question to the process of design review: how to integrate a basically modern feature into a historic building. As always, the RHDC *Guidelines* aim for balance, seeking to accommodate the new while maintaining district character. In assessing decks, the RHDC weighs three major aspects of design: placement, form, and detailing.

The *Guidelines* call for decks to be placed at the rear of the building, recognizing both their contemporary form and pattern of use.

Structurally, the rule is the simpler the better. Massing should be proportional to the house; multi-level decks have sometimes been approved, but most often to reduce their mass on sloping sites.

Detailing is a key to successful design. Decks should relate to the existing horizontal lines of the house. Railings best echo those of historic front porches: simple, evenly-spaced balusters set between top and bottom rails, with a substantial top rail.

Under-deck screenings are crucial to joining the deck with its surroundings. Screening can consist of evergreen plantings, or framed wooden lattice positioned between the supporting posts. (Note that diagonal lattice is best suited to late 19th-century homes, while vertical/horizontal lattice better complements bungalow and Colonial Revival houses.)

Deck construction can significantly impact the appearance of a house. To allow greater citizen input in the review process, this year the commission provided that deck platforms more than 42" above grade are to be reviewed by the Certificate of Appropriateness Committee. Lower decks can be reviewed and approved by the commission staff.

If you're considering adding a deck to your historic house, remember that design advice is as close as the commission phone number; give us a call!

The Raleigh commission was the first created in the state.

■ CITY GOVERNMENT

Preservation & Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan

Raleigh's blueprint for the future is *The Raleigh Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted by City Council in 1989, the plan guides the city's physical development. Its central goal is "to provide for a high quality of life," in part through the preservation of "important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of Raleigh's heritage."

The plan is divided into two sections: an area-by-area set of District Plans and a series of general Systems Plans. Among the latter, the



"Historic Preservation Element" outlines preservation goals and objectives, and targets future strategic action. Appendices identify preservation organizations and information.

Copies of the complete *Raleigh Comprehensive Plan*, or just the "Historic Preservation Element" are available from the Raleigh Planning Department, at 890-3125. ■

■ AROUND THE RHDC

RHDC Meetings

RHDC Business meetings:

10/15; 11/19; 12/17; 1/21; 2/18; 7:30 AM, Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.:

Application deadline & meeting date: 10/21 for 11/4; 11/14 for 12/2; 12/18 for 1/6/97; 1/17 for 2/3; 2/17 for 3/3; 4:00 PM, Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Public Relations/Education Comm.:

10/17; 11/21; 12/19; 1/16; 2/20; time & location TBA, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Research Committee:

10/3; 11/7; 12/5; 1/2; 2/6; 12:00 Noon, Rm. 317, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Contacts

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Downtown Economic Development & Planning: Ken Maness	890-3655

■ CASE IN POINT

City Survey Highlights Preservation

A recent survey of Raleigh citizens found widespread support for the preservation of the city's historic resources. Respondents to the Community Appearance Survey, which was conducted by the Raleigh Appearance Commission (RAC), ranked preservation fifth among the city's top twenty programs for improving community attractiveness. Other programs cited included protecting local natural resources, requiring landscape buffers, and planting street trees.

The survey's findings underscore the ties between historic preservation and appearance issues, as well as the role preservation plays in helping to define a local sense of place. They

also represent a vote of confidence for the efforts of the RHDC and other local preservation bodies toward maintaining the character of the city's historic properties and neighborhoods.

The survey results will be used by the RAC in developing its upcoming work program.

To obtain a copy of the survey results, contact the Raleigh Planning Department, located in Rm. 307 of the Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex. ■



■ A B R O A D E R

V I E W

Much of what guides historic preservation in the United States originates with the National Park Service (NPS).

Established in 1916, the NPS administers all federal park lands and historic sites under the protection of

the Department of the Interior. The agency has developed methods for documentation, restoration, and maintenance of historic resources that have become standards for the field.

In recent decades, federal legislation has expanded the agency's role and responsibilities. Since the 1960s, it has maintained the National Register of Historic Places, and since the mid 1970s, has administered the federal

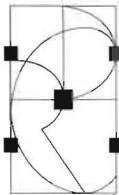
preservation tax credit program.

The NPS also serves as the chief funding and technical link between the federal government and individual state historic preservation offices.

Technical publications are another important aspect of the agency's preservation efforts. Many are available in the RHDC library.

COA Tally

	May 96	June 96	July 96	August 96
Major work (comm. review):				
Approved as submitted	1	1		
Approved w/conditions	2	4	8	3
Deferred		1	1	1
Denied			1	
Withdrawn	1	1	1	
Minor work (staff apprvd.):	13	9	16	16



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Staff support for the RHDC is provided by the City of Raleigh Planning Department.

The mission of the RHDC is to serve as City Council's official historic preservation advisory body to identify, preserve, protect and educate the public about Raleigh's historic resources.