

IN THE DISTRICTS

A newsletter published by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission

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■ IN THE WORKS

Brooklyn to Undergo Architectural Study

A small but distinctive part of downtown Raleigh is headed for the preservation limelight. With joint funding from the commission and the Historic Glenwood Residents' Association, an intensive architectural study is planned for the neighborhood known as Brooklyn. The goal is assessing whether the area qualifies for historic district designation.

Established in the 1880s, Brooklyn was originally a Raleigh suburb. By the early 1900s, however, with the development of the Glenwood neighborhood to the east and the campus of the Methodist Orphanage (now Fred Fletcher Park) on the north, the community became part of the growing city.

Evidence of Brooklyn's past is apparent. Street names honor local landowners from whose property lots were carved. Victorian cottages and two-story homes date from the area's initial settlement. Interspersed bungalows attest to later build-out, with neighborhood commercial and church structures underscoring a long-standing sense of community.

Changing times, however, have brought challenges to neighborhood cohesiveness. Modern commercial and office development along Peace and St. Mary's streets have encroached upon the neighborhood's borders. Alterations to other properties have compromised architectural integrity. A 1980 urban conservation study placed adjacent Glenwood on the National Register; older Brooklyn was left behind.

Today, the two areas consider themselves one neighborhood. Recent interest in preserving Brooklyn's character has raised the historic district issue anew. Last fall, at the request of the neighborhood association, RHDC representatives provided information on designation procedures. In response to community interest, the commission pledged a substantial portion of its research funds toward the project.

If the results of the study are positive, a National Register nomination will be forwarded for state and federal consideration.

National Register Historic District status

would make available tax credits for certified rehabilitation of neighborhood historic resources. ■



Top: The view down Devereux Street.

Bottom: Victorian cottage at 723 Gaston Street.

Cases of Neglect

City Code requires that all exterior changes to historic district properties be approved by the commission. By extension, when neglect (a "passive" change) threatens a property, the RHDC can seek remedial action.

Usually the neighborhood initiates activity through a written request that the commission investigate conditions. If the RHDC determines demolition by neglect is taking place, it files a petition listing specific defects with the city Inspections Department. Inspections, as the city's enforcement body in zoning matters, may then issue a written complaint to the property owner outlining the defects. The department also arranges a formal hearing on the case, to establish evidence regarding the charge, and ascertain whether the owner wishes to claim economic hardship (the latter requires submitting detailed financial information).

If Inspections rules demolition by neglect is underway, it can issue an order requiring the owner undertake repairs within a specified time, or else face mounting fines. As a last resort, the city may take legal action.

Copies of the code sections addressing demolition by neglect (Sections 10-6180 through 10-6186) can be obtained from the commission office.

portable to birds' feet. Liquid sprays provide the same protection for broad surfaces, trees, and shrubbery.

The most high-tech approach is sonic. Single or grouped devices issue variable ultrasonic waves that irritate pests, but are beyond the range of human hearing. Sonic devices imitate distress calls of problem birds, suggesting a hazardous environment. Built-in solar cells allow remote mounting, while motion detectors eliminate sounding unless a pest is near.

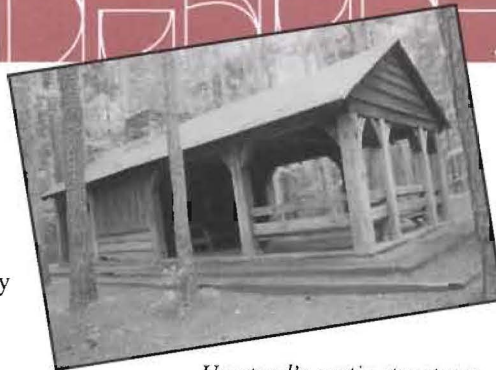
Several manufacturers of pest control measures maintain web sites. The commission staff can suggest specific web addresses. ■

■ PROFILE

District in the Woods

Each year, thousands of people enjoy hiking, picnicking, and camping in William B. Umstead State Park. Relatively few, however, are aware their visit takes them into a National Register Historic District.

Umstead's status as a historic site stems from its reclamation as a natural resource. In 1934, the federal government purchased 5,000 acres of depleted Wake County farmland, designating it the Crabtree Creek Recreational Demonstration Area. Most of the park's rustic buildings, site features, and landscaping were installed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1936 and 1941. In 1943, the state acquired the land. Twelve years later, the park was



Umstead's rustic structures exemplify park design of the 1930s.

renamed in honor of late Gov. William Umstead, a strong supporter of conservation.

The commission, in its role to identify and protect the city's historic resources, initiated a study of the site in the early 1990s. With funding from the federal Certified Local Government program, a comprehensive survey of park structures was completed. In recognition of

Umstead's historical significance, the park was listed in the National Register in 1995. ■

The park's historic status stems from reclamation of the land.

■ TECH

CORNER

Q. Birds, squirrels... my house is getting overrun! What to do?

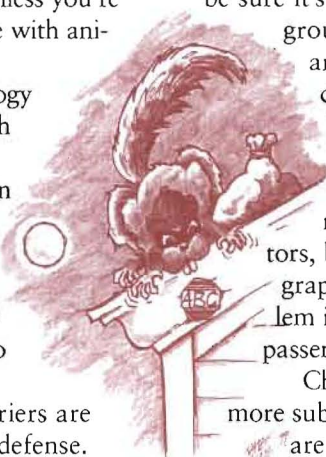
A. Historic houses are great places to live—unless you're sharing the space with animal interlopers. Modern technology has come up with several strategies for deterrence. In a historic district, the goal is to find solutions that are not only effective, but also unobtrusive.

Physical barriers are the first line of defense.

For mice and squirrels, this means eliminating potential points of entry. Fill holes or gaps in trim and siding; place black metal screening behind foundation lattice. For birds, wire screening can prevent roosting, but be sure it's not visible from the ground. Spiky mats are another option, but birds can render them ineffective by covering them with nesting materials.

Scare devices come in many forms—plastic predators, bright lights, and holographic streamers. The problem is they can be as obvious to passersby as they are to pests.

Chemical measures are far more subtle. Sticky gel compounds are available that are uncom-



GUIDELINES

A Matter of Venting

Heat happens. When it comes to buildings, the question is how to keep it under control.

In Raleigh's historic districts, time-tested solutions are part of most house designs. Before air conditioning, homeowners mainly relied on convection for cooling. Louvered window shutters were closed to block out the sun, while sashes were raised behind them and attic access doors and vents opened, converting the whole house into an air "chimney."

Today, shutters are more for decoration, attics are kept closed off, and HVAC units cool down living areas. Yet exposed roof surfaces continue to invite major heat build up in attic space.

The district guidelines provide a balance between maintaining historic character and applying modern venting technologies. The key is keeping contemporary options unobtrusive.

Passive methods include the use of soffit and ridge vents. Soffit vents, which allow intake of cooler outside air through roof overhangs, range from narrow, continuous openings to louvered, rectangular panels. Painting them the soffit color helps mask their presence. Ridge vents,

which permit rising hot air to exit, top roof ridges. They are disguised, however, by a low profile and shingle overlayment. Avoid roof-mounted turbines and other protruding designs.

For active venting, low-profile power vents get the vote. Positioned on rear roof surfaces and painted to match surrounding shingles, they're virtually hidden from view.

The commission files contain numerous examples of approved vent options. Consult with staff for the best choice for your property.

IN THE NEWS

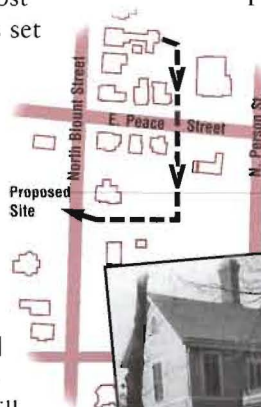
L. L. Polk House Readies for Move

Later this year, the former home of one of Raleigh's most esteemed citizens is set to head down the road—once again. The two-story L. L. Polk House will be detached from the rear of 612 N. Blount Street and moved a block southwest. It will be the second trip for the century-old building, and will achieve the ultimate goal of its first move—the building's long term preservation.

Leonidas L. Polk (1837-1892), agriculturist, editor, and driving force behind the founding of both North Carolina State University and Meredith College, built the Shingle Style house about

1891. Originally located at 565 N. Person Street, the house was spared demolition in 1965 when Ms. Fern Winborne of 612 N. Blount Street had it moved due west and connected to her own house.

That 34-year holding action is now coming to an end. With funding from the state and the non-profit Polk House Foundation, the building will be relocated to a gravel lot now being used for parking. The house's front porch and missing south wing will be restored, and the upper floors converted into state offices. The first floor is to house a museum on Polk's life and work. ■



(Top) The projected move route.
(Bottom) The Polk House, c. 1920.



AT YOUR SERVICE

History for Hire

Planning a wedding reception or other special event? Looking for a unique setting for your next business meeting?

Give us a call! As a public service, the commission maintains a free list of Raleigh historic resources that are available for rental.

Properties on the list feature a wide range of capacities, architecture, and amenities. For those mindful of a more formal setting, there's the neoclassical Tucker House, or Italianate-style Montfort Hall. The Borden Building and the Bishop's House border wooded groves, while Artspace offers a more urbane flair. Several properties feature on-site kitchen facilities; most are well suited for catering.

Being one of kind, the properties are often in high demand; be sure to make reservations well in advance (most people do—requests for the list are among staff's most frequently-received phone calls). For a copy of the list, just forward your address or fax number to the commission office. ■



Haywood Hall, at 211 New Bern Place, has welcomed guests for 200 years.

RHDC Meetings

All meetings at Avery C. Upchurch Gov't. Complex

RHDC Business meetings: 11/16, 12/21, 1/18, 2/15, 3/21. 7:30 AM, Rm. 305

Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.: (Application deadline & meeting date) 10/18 for 11/1, 11/18 for 12/26, 12/15 for 1/3, 1/24 for 2/7, 2/21 for 3/6. 4:00 PM, Rm. 305

Public Relations/Education Comm.: 11/4, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/2, 4/6. 12:00 Noon, Rm. 317

Research Committee: 11/3, 12/1, 1/5, 2/2, 3/1, 4/5. 12:00 Noon, Rm. 303

Contacts

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Ann Green, President	828-6888
Downtown Raleigh Alliance:	
Errol Frailey, President	832-1231

Commission Members

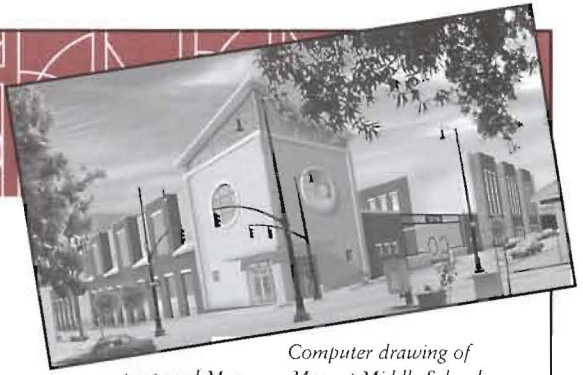
Janet Wellman (Chair), Terry Harper (Vice-Chair), Daniel Figgins (Sec'y./Treas.), David Black, David Bonomo, Allen Burris, Alpha Howze, Andy Lawrence, Jimmy Thiem, Jane Thurman, Flora Wadelington

■ CASE IN POINT

Design Review "Beyond the Bounds"

In matters of design review, City Code places the commission's role within the borders of Raleigh's locally-designated historic districts. From time to time, however, the City Council extends that authority, to obtain RHDC advice if a project outside the districts might impact city historic resources.

The proposed Museums Magnet Middle School is such a project. Situated diagonally southeast from Moore Square, the new school will stand more than two stories tall and encompass an entire city block. Council, in selling the land to the school board, provided that the



Computer drawing of proposed Museums Magnet Middle School.

RHDC's Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Committee review the project to ensure design compatibility with the Moore Square Historic District and adjacent neighborhoods.

Following procedural precedents set in approving the Exploris museum complex, the COA committee is reviewing plans for the school in stages. Approval was granted in May for preliminary landscape and building design. Final administrative review will focus on the fine points of design, materials, and site features. ■

■ A B R O A D E R

V I E W

In the United States, preservation's modern era began in 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This pioneering legislation, which redefined the role of the federal government in conserving cultural resources, created

a proactive framework for identifying and preserving historic structures and neighborhoods.

The NHPA, perhaps more than any other legislation, broadened the meaning of "historic" to include not just Mt. Vernon, but shotgun houses, airports, and office buildings. It created the National Register of Historic Places, a national Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and mandated review of federal

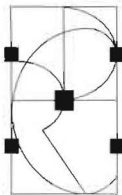
impacts on historic resources (the Section 106 process). The act also jump-started state and local preservation programs, establishing standards for each in return for receiving federal funding.

Amendments over the years have further strengthened the NHPA. It remains a linchpin of historic preservation in the United States.

COA Tally

Major work (comm. review):	May 99	June 99	July 99	Aug. 99
Approved w/ conditions	6	3	2	4
Denied				
Deferred		2	3	1
Withdrawn				
Minor work (staff apprvd.):	19	10	12	12

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



RALEIGH HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

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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.