

IN THE DISTRICTS

A newsletter published by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission

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■ IN THE NEWS

Updated Guidelines Debut

In July, the RHDC issued the revised *Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts*, originally adopted in the 1970s and last updated in 1983. While the revision does not alter the spirit of the guidelines, it does broaden their focus. The new version incorporates more information on previously neglected topics such as non-residential buildings, landscape features and setting, and archaeological considerations. The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process and the distinctions between minor work and major work remain unchanged. The guidelines went into effect July 22.

To improve readability, the revised *Design Guidelines* also offer a new, illustrated format. Individual topics are covered in a two-page layout: background information and planning considerations are on the left, and specific guidelines relating to the topic are listed on the right. Captioned photographs help illuminate the text.

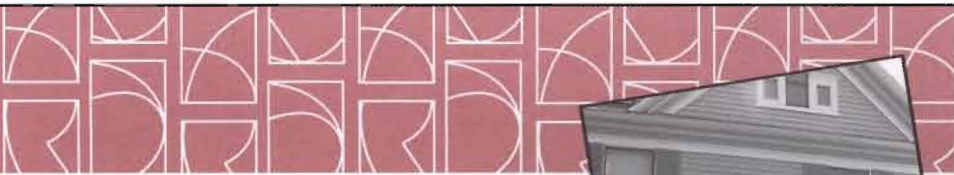
The revised *Design Guidelines* were prepared by Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, a consultant who worked under a revision committee composed of commission members, district residents, and staff from the city and the State Historic Preservation Office. Following neighborhood forums to describe the revisions and incorporate community input, the document was reviewed and endorsed by the Planning Commission prior to its approval by City Council.

The 2001 version of the *Design Guidelines* is available at the RHDC web site (www.rhdc.org). A COA application can also be downloaded from the site. The web site—still under construction—will eventually include digital resources to serve district residents' needs, plus historical information of interest to all area residents and potential tourists.

If you have any questions about the new guidelines, or would like a printed copy or a COA application, please call the commission staff at 832-7238. ■



Top: Illustrations help clarify the guidelines. Bottom: Guidelines are available from the commission at www.rhdc.org



■ WITHIN THE COMMISSION

Minor Work Tree Removal Notices

What determines whether a tree removal is minor work or major? The three D's: dead, diseased, or dangerous trees can be approved by staff as minor work.

Most tree removals are in the city right-of-way, on the grassy strip between the curb and the sidewalk. The city Urban Forestry Inspector submits an application to the RHDC, outlining the condition of the tree, and posts a yellow placard on the tree to inform the public. Staff reviews the application and, upon approval, posts the familiar blue COA placard. The city may then proceed with removal.

Private owners wishing to remove dead, diseased, or dangerous trees must provide a

report on the tree from a certified arborist in the COA application. The company hired to remove a tree must not be the same company that recommended its removal.

The Guidelines stress the importance of replacing removed trees. The districts' aging tree population means a growing number of removals, but the tree canopy can be preserved by planting young trees where older ones once stood. ■



Simple signs and careful placement preserve the residential character of adaptively used historic homes.

Replace removed trees to preserve the tree canopy.

■ GUIDELINES

Signs of the Times

Hang a sign in an inconspicuous place and it won't do its job. Signs are meant to draw attention, yet that is exactly how they can compromise the character of a historic building.

Like other new construction in the districts, a sign should complement the architectural style of the building. Use compatible materials and colors, and don't overwhelm the facade. Draw inspiration from historic signs: late 19th-century Raleigh merchants hung rectangular signboards over the sidewalk or affixed them to buildings. Others painted signs directly on window glass or awnings, using simple capital letters for the main text and italics or ornate Gothic lettering for accent. Install plaques that identify historic buildings according to the same principles.

Signs on houses adaptively used for business require special care. They should confirm arrival at the right location, not advertise the business. Small scale, muted colors and typefaces, and subtle placement near the door will avoid disrupting the residential character of the building.

Check the guidelines or talk with commission staff at 832-7238 for more information on appropriate signage in the historic districts. Also remember that all new signs must comply with current Raleigh ordinances. Call 890-3455 for more information on city permits for signage.

■ TECH

CORNER



I love my historic house, but my feelings run only skin deep. How can I learn more about my house?



Admit it: you were smitten with the stained glass, mad for the mansard roof. But your historic house has more than looks going for it. Chances are, the more you know about your

house, the more you will enjoy it—and you may have an easier time planning appropriate improvements.

Start in the Search Room at the State Archives, 109 E. Jones St. The archivists are your best resource and can help direct your search.

Look through the *Raleigh City Directories*, which list the name and occupation of residents by street address. Find the first year

your address is listed; if the house style seems consistent with that year, you probably have the construction date.

Sanborn



Fire Insurance maps show a building's footprint and list construction materials. Scan the yearly updates to trace the evolution of your building. Also check the collection of early Raleigh photographs.

Find past owners with a title search at the Wake County Register of Deeds, 300 S. Salisbury St. Check probate records to see if ownership changed hands through a will. You may even find family papers (at the State Archives or area libraries), which can be a gold mine of information.

Even if you don't strike gold, a few good nuggets can help you reconstruct the history of your house. ■

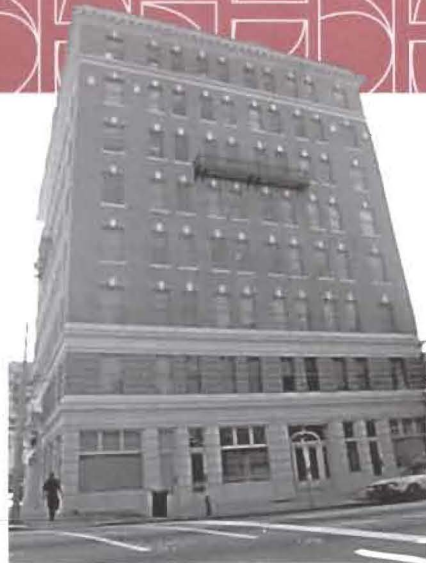
■ IN THE NEWS

Sir Walter Awards

Each year, the city recognizes people and places that contribute to Raleigh's character and appearance. The Sir Walter Awards for Community Appearance honor winners in nine categories, including historic preservation or rehabilitation.

Last year, the city gave Sir Walter Awards for preservation to the Heck Andrews House on N. Blount St., the Prairie Building on S. Wilmington St., and the Professional Building on W. Hargett St. Sir Walter winners also included Conti's Italian Market near the Oakwood Historic District (in the commercial category) and the new Exploris museum complex in the Moore Square Historic District (community category).

Preservation and rehabilitation projects that improve community appearance can win more than awards; these investments in historic properties may also garner federal and state tax credits for the owner,



The Professional Building on Hargett Street won a Sir Walter award in 2000. The jury saw the restored Professional Building as a "model for future downtown construction."

based on expenditures.

This year's Sir Walter Award winners will be announced on October 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the A.J. Fletcher Opera Theater at the BTI Performing Arts Center. Mr. Terry Shook, AIA, of Shook Design Group, Inc., will provide the keynote remarks. The public is encouraged to attend. ■

■ COMMITTEE ACTION

After-the-Fact Applications

The COA Committee has noted an increasing number of applications filed after-the-fact; that is, after work has begun or been completed. City code requires that a Certificate of Appropriateness be obtained before work begins in a historic district. It also makes good sense: after-the-fact applications, while possible to process, generally delay the schedule of work and may increase the cost of a project.

After-the-fact applications require all exterior work to stop until a COA is issued, and the commission and staff must review the application as if the work has not yet begun. Unapproved new work that does not meet the guidelines, regardless of cost or scope, will have to be removed.

The commission cannot take into account financial hardship of a person's own making. Additionally, work that is not in compliance with the guidelines is considered a zoning violation and is subject to fines. Save yourself the risk and expense of removing work or paying fines...get your COA approvals before starting work. ■



New Commission members, from left: Treva Jones, Andy Lawrence, James E. Williams, Bob Anderson.

■ AT YOUR SERVICE

Commission Member Profiles

Recent City Council appointees to the RHDC bring experience in a range of fields, including architecture, landscape architecture, development, journalism, and preservation advocacy.

Bob Anderson holds degrees in architecture and landscape architecture from Clemson University and NCSU. He worked for several years with design firms before becoming a partner at Barton Development Group, a commercial and residential development and construction company. Mr. Anderson, an Oakwood resident, serves on the commission's COA Committee.

Treva Jones spent 31 years reporting on and writing about Raleigh, first for *The Raleigh Times* and later for *The News & Observer*. Ms. Jones covered nearly every beat, eventually specializing in historic preservation and community news before retiring in 1999. She serves on the Public Relations/Education Committee.

Andy Lawrence has been practicing architecture in the Triangle for more than 20 years. His firm, Lawrence Architecture, does residential and commercial work, including adaptive use and historic preservation. Mr. Lawrence, who has

restored houses in the Oakwood and Boylan Heights districts, serves on the COA Committee.

James E.

Williams is an antiques dealer, a preservationist, and a past winner of the Anthemion Award for

his community improvement efforts. Mr. Williams is restoring three houses in his East Raleigh-South Park neighborhood, a National Register of Historic Places district. Mr. Williams also serves on the Certificate of Appropriateness Committee.

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RHDC Meetings

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

RHDC Business meetings: 10/16, 11/20, 12/18, 1/15/2002. 7:30 AM, Rm. 305

Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.: (Application deadline & meeting date) 10/22 for 11/5; 11/15 for 12/3; 12/19 for 1/7; 1/18 2002 for 2/4/2002. 4:00 PM, Rm. 305

Public Relations/Education Comm.: 10/4, 11/1, 12/6, 3/2, 1/3/2002. 12:00 Noon, Rm. 317

Research Committee: 10/3, 11/7, 12/5, 1/2/2002. 12:00 Noon, Rm. 303

Contacts

RHDC: 919/832-7238
 Dan Becker 890-3678
 Cynthia de Miranda 890-3666
 Historic Oakwood:
 Betsy Buford, President 829-1204
 Boylan Heights Association:
 Deanna Kerrigan, President 821-4172
 Downtown Raleigh Alliance:
 Errol Frailey, President 832-1231

Commission Members

Terry M. Harper (Chair), Alpha L. Howze, Jr. (Vice-Chair), Jane Thurman (Secy./Treas.), Bob Anderson, David R. Black, David Bonomo, C. Allen Burris, Daniel W. Figgins, Treva M. Jones, Andy Lawrence, Flora J. Hatley Wadelington, James E. Williams

■ UPDATES

E.B. Bain Water Treatment Plant

Rehabilitation is underway at the E.B. Bain Water Treatment Plant, the remarkable 1939-1940 building that once met the water needs for all of Raleigh. Waterworks II, L.L.C., a joint venture between Gould & Associates, L.L.C., and Capital Area Preservation, purchased the building from the city in late May. The three-story office section at the front of the building will be restored to its original use—including office space for Capital Area Preservation—and the pump gallery and operating floor will house offices and a restaurant. Waterworks II is committed to preserving as much of the building's dramatic interior character as possible; in addition to architectural

elements, portions of the pumps, valves, and operating equipment will be incorporated into the redevelopment plan.

Traveling Exhibit

The RHDC's portable display is history at the Raleigh City Museum—it moved in September to the BTI Center for the Performing Arts.

The display touches on Raleigh's architectural history, chronicles more than 35 years of commission projects and preservation partnerships, and challenges visitors to identify local landmarks based on architectural clues. The mobile exhibit will be at the BTI Center through November. Please contact the Commission if you have a suggestion for another display location in Raleigh. ■

■ A BROADER

VIEW

Like politics, all preservation is local. Across the state, city and county preservation commissions oversee programs designed to identify and protect historic landmarks and districts. These local programs, however, would not exist without the state's direction.

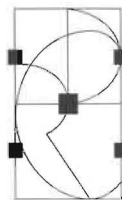
All governing power held by North Carolina municipalities and counties is granted by the state. For preservation programs, this means that local historic sites committees could only act as advisory bodies until the General Assembly passed legislation granting specific powers, such as landmark designation and exterior design review. The first such law was passed in 1967; it has been revised periodically.

The City of Raleigh's preservation ordinances currently incorporate all powers granted by the state. Across the North Carolina, preservation programs have familiarity and expertise specific to their communities, yet use uniform terminology and methodology. The result is an effective combination of local knowledge and state-wide policy consistency.

COA Tally

Major work (comm. review):	May '01	June '01	July '01	Aug. '01
Approved as submitted	2		1	1
Approved w/ conditions	2			2
Denied				
Deferred			2	
Withdrawn			1	
Minor work (staff approved):	5	12	16	13

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.