Commission Secures White-Holman House

HDC members and staff moved decisively in late January to board up the White-Holman House, a designated Raleigh Historic Landmark at 206 New Bern Place in the Capitol Square Historic District. It is the oldest house (circa 1799) remaining within the original 1792 city limits.

Originally located on Morgan Street, the house was acquired by the city when the Morgan Street connector was constructed. It was moved as part of the city’s redevelopment plan that led to the construction of the New Bern Place cul-de-sac and condominiums. The house was then sold to a private developer for restoration; the city retained a preservation easement for the interior architectural features that is administered by the RHDC.

The house had fallen into foreclosure following the loss of its tenants. It was being occupied by vagrants, and neither the owner nor the bank was in a position to secure the property. Thus, the commission felt an emergency need to protect its ownership interest before the house was damaged or destroyed, and acted to board it up. The fire in February that destroyed Fayetteville’s historic downtown hotel only served to remind us of the urgency we faced.

The RHDC is most grateful to Carolina Builders for donating the plywood and to Donna Hester of the Planning Department for using her truck to deliver it. Thanks to everyone’s efforts, the house is one step closer to celebrating its bicentennial birthday.
A Renewal in Oakwood

Chip and Jocelyn Wells knew there was work ahead when they bought 532 N. Bloodworth St. They just weren’t sure how much.

The kitchen roof provided the first clue—ten active leaks, car mats for patches, and tar, tar, tar. Further inspection revealed the kitchen floor was 20° off level. Then there were the sills.

“We’d realized there was some termite damage,” says Chip, but in the end, two-thirds of the sills and joists were found to be beyond repair. The conclusion: the 1930’s kitchen wing had to go.

The Wellses tackled the project in two phases, gaining RHDC approval first to remove the dilapidated wing, then to construct a new master bedroom suite in its place. The couple settled on a design that draws from existing architectural features (and salvaged materials) while introducing new elements.

Not all their renovation “surprises” have posed problems, though. “When we stripped the layers of paint from one of the mantels, it turned out to be tiger-stripe oak veneer,” Jocelyn notes.

With the slate roof refurbished and the front porch under restoration, the Wellses are within reach of a thoughtfully renovated home, and another Oakwood property stands ready for its second century.

Q. I need to prep my house for repainting. What should I do?

A. The key to a good paint job is careful surface preparation. To counter grime, completely clean all surfaces, using a detergent as necessary. Mildew can be removed with a diluted bleach solution. Be sure to rinse thoroughly before repainting. Pressure washing is not recommended for wood surfaces, except when using the softest spray possible. High-pressure spraying can force water behind siding, raise the grain of the wood, and even blast holes into brick. A soft bristle brush on a broom handle should be all that is necessary to remove most dirt.

Scrape away cracked, blistered or chipping paint; remove loose putty and caulk. For metals, sand away all rust. In all paint prepping, watch out for lead! The older the house, the greater the amount of lead paint likely to be present. Lead paint chips and dust can lead to health problems in children and adults. Have your house tested by a competent firm, and take thorough precautions to keep exposure to a minimum.

After wiping down scraped and sanded areas, prime the exposed materials. Caulk all vertical joints and around doors and windows. Never caulk under clapboards—houses need to “breathe” to prevent internal moisture build-up.

Keep in mind that cracking, alligatoring, or checking paint points to larger concerns. Most paint manufacturers offer extensive literature on recognizing and correcting these problems; the RHDC staff can also offer advice.
The Design Review Advisory Committee

When it comes to blending new construction into the city’s historic districts, no one need go it alone. The Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) provides preliminary assistance for new construction or major additions within the historic districts. The DRAC offers potential builders informed advice on how best to work within the commission’s guidelines, harmonize with the broader context of the building site, and address other factors relevant to the project.

This service can be provided by the RHDC thanks to the generosity of dedicated preservationists with a variety of professional skills, volunteering their time and expertise.

The DRAC meets monthly when there are proposals to review; a schedule of tentative meetings is available from the RHDC office. While the committee’s review is advisory, its suggestions typically save applicants significant time and effort in addressing historic district design considerations.

The DRAC has reviewed plans for the houses of Oakwood Green.

Minor Work projects typically involve small-scale changes such as changing the color of a house, or building a deck. A COA is required, but projects can be approved by the RHDC staff at any time during the month (typically within 3 to 5 working days).

Major Work projects are reviewed by the RHDC’s COA Committee in a public hearing, usually held the first Monday of each month. These projects include construction of new buildings or additions.

Five unique areas have been designated by the City Council as Raleigh Historic Districts. Oakwood (1975) is residential in character, and developed gradually over a fifty year period. While it contains the city’s largest collection of Victorian-era architectural styles, it is also the city’s most architecturally diverse district.

Blount Street (1976) commemorates a fashionable Victorian-era neighborhood and reflects intergovernmental cooperation in preservation. The area’s designation by City Council was supported by the State Properties Office and Council of State. A restoration program included tearing down parking lots and moving in historic buildings from elsewhere in the state government center. Today many former homes are occupied by state government offices.

Capital Square (1976) is institutional in character. Its centerpiece is the granite Greek Revival-style Capitol (a National Historic Landmark). It contains some of the earliest surviving buildings in Raleigh, as well as New Bern Place, a redevelopment area with a preservation emphasis.

Boylan Heights (1984) is among Raleigh’s earliest planned subdivisions. Instead of the rectilinear grid of streets common to the city’s earlier development, Boylan Heights was platted with the city’s first curvilinear grid, designed to conform to the sloping topography of the site.

Moore Square (1992) reflects the expansion of more urban interests into the formerly residential area around the wooded square established in the 1792 city plan. It includes the 1914 City Market and Hargett Street, the center of African American community life in the city during the early 20th century.
AROUND THE RHDC

RHDC Meetings

RHDC Business meetings:
6/20; 7/18; 8/19; 9/17; 7:30 AM,
Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.:
Application deadline & meeting date:
6/19 for 7/3; 7/24 for 8/7; 8/21 for 9/5;
9/18 for 10/2; 10/23 for 11/6; 4:00 PM,
Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Public Relations/Education Comm.:
6/15; 7/20; 8/17; 9/21; 10/19;
4:00PM,
Rm. 303, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Research Committee:
6/1; 7/6; 8/3; 9/7; 10/5; 12:00Noon,
Rm. 303, Avery C. Upchurch Govt. Complex

Contacts
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Boykin Heights Association:
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Downtown Raleigh Development Corporation: 832-1231

IN THE WORKS

Raleigh Historic Landmarks

While the historic districts are a major focus of RHDC's efforts, the commission also strives to bring recognition to the city's individual historic structures. There are presently more than 100 buildings designated as local historic landmarks—from the 18th-century Joel Lane House to J.S. Dorton Arena.

Preservation of these individual resources is an integral part of the city's planning processes. The RHDC's role is to spearhead evaluation and designation.

Research and nomination is an on-going process. Recently designated landmarks include properties researched during the RHDC's African-American studies project, such as Latta University, the Plummer

AR LE I HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

RALEIGH HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION
222 West Hargett Street, Room 307
PO Box 829 Century Station
Raleigh, NC 27602

The North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (NCHPO) has the answers. Headquartered in the Blount Street Historic District, the NCHPO offers citizens, institutions, local governments, and state and federal agencies a variety of technical and educational services. As in other states, the NCHPO channels federal preservation funds and programs to the local level, while providing state-level response to local preservation needs. If the call is for identification, protection, evaluation, or enhancement of significant North Carolina properties, the NCHPO is there to help.

The NCHPO has been a vital partner to the commission, providing technical assistance and funding for research projects, most recently assisting in the preparation of a National Register of Historic Places nomination for William B. Umstead State Park.

The NCHPO administrative offices can be reached at (919) 733-4763.