Design Guidelines Update

The current Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts were adopted in 2001. Recognized as a model by other communities, the Design Guidelines have served Raleigh well. In the application of the Guidelines, however, the commission has recognized preservation issues that are not adequately addressed in the document. (See page 3 for key topics.)

The Guidelines serve several purposes for stakeholders in the city. All work performed on the exterior of properties that are located in the historic overlay district or are designated as Raleigh Historic Landmarks is evaluated through a design review process administered by the commission’s Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Committee. (See page 2 for details on the COA meeting.) The committee and staff utilize the Guidelines to assess proposed changes as submitted in a COA application. Property owners, residents, and contractors can find guidance in planning projects sympathetic to the special character of their district. In the process, the Guidelines serve as a valuable tool in the commission’s efforts to preserve and protect Raleigh’s historic resources.

In July 2010 the City of Raleigh was awarded a federal historic preservation fund grant to update the Guidelines; the City of Raleigh Historic Cemeteries Advisory Board is partnering with RHDC to match the grant. In October a consultant was selected to draft the update; to kick off the process, on November 8th the commission hosted two Design Review Dialogue meetings offering the community an opportunity to comment. Hot topics discussed at these meetings included the use of new materials, the desire for creative design downtown, the sensitive nature of cemeteries, and the need to address sustainability, among others. An online survey was also conducted.

In February a draft of the updated Guidelines will be available for review and comment. The commission will solicit input at a community meeting as well as online. The consultant will be available to receive feedback and answer questions at this meeting. The project is scheduled to wrap up in June of 2011. Comments on the Guidelines may be sent to guidelines@rhdc.org.
Rail in Raleigh

Citizens are abuzz as federal, state, and municipal agencies plan for the advent of high speed and light rail in Raleigh. Railroad has long been a part of the city’s history, which is most evident in the historic Depot District. Located southwest of Nash Square, the district contains the remnants of Raleigh’s transportation and distribution hub from the 1890s to the 1950s, including historic railroad depots, wholesale houses, and warehouses. By the end of the 1950s the trucking industry dominated rail shipping, and activity in the district slowed.

The Depot District features unique industrial architecture not found elsewhere in Raleigh. The neighborhood is emerging as a stylish, yet casual arts and entertainment area in the city, with popular restaurants and art galleries in its historic buildings.

Listed through RHDC’s efforts in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002, the commission will consider recommendation of the Depot District for local historic overlay district zoning in 2011, which would facilitate the preservation of the district’s special character.

This simple brick and concrete block building is representative of warehouses in Raleigh’s Depot District.

My concrete sidewalk needs to be replaced and I’ve noticed that new sidewalk panels can stick out like sore thumbs. Can you make a new concrete sidewalk match the old?

Older concrete sidewalks have a different texture than new. This disparity can be attributed to age, the composition of the concrete, and the way that the sidewalk was formed and finished.

Concrete is a mixture of cement, aggregate (sand and stone), water, and a few additives. Over the past 100 years the color of cement has lightened and the consistency of aggregate has become more uniform. Still, because the primary ingredients remain the same, creating old-looking concrete sidewalks lies in the details.

For a century the sand used in Raleigh’s concrete sidewalks has come from the Cape Fear region. Balancing the proportions of Cape Fear sand, cement, and a mixture of stone varieties can successfully approximate the mixture found in older historic district sidewalks. The color of the mixture can be tweaked to match adjacent panels through the addition of pigment.

The final trick is installation. Sidewalk panels should be formed to match the proportion of adjacent panels. Once the concrete is poured, it should be leveled, tooled, and lightly water-washed to approximate the finish on older surrounding panels.

For more information, contact RHDC staff at rhdc@rhdc.org or 832-7238.

Your Best Foot Forward

When you submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application you will find that major projects are reviewed by a committee at a public hearing. While the idea of a public hearing may be intimidating, this meeting is your opportunity to make a case for your project’s design. Here are some basics to help you mentally prepare for the meeting:

The commission’s COA Committee is the review board for COA applications. This committee is made up of citizens with professional expertise and/or personal experience as COA applicants.

The forum for the COA application review is a public quasi-judicial evidentiary hearing. This means that the committee reviews evidence presented and judges if the design conforms with the city’s Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts (available at www.rhdc.org). Anyone who wishes to comment on your project will be affirmed and identified for the record at the beginning of the hearing.

Prior to the Hearing:

There are specific steps taken by the COA Committee members and commission staff during the design review process.

When your application describing your design is received, it is routed to the COA Committee for its review. Prior to the public hearing, committee members will both review the application and take the opportunity to drive or walk by your property to familiarize themselves with the details that are unique to your application. It is important to note that because of the quasi-judicial process, committee members are not allowed to discuss the applications prior to the public hearing, either with you, other parties, or amongst themselves.

You will likely have worked with commission staff in preparing your COA application. Prior to the public hearing, staff will prepare comments that analyze the application’s conformance with the Design Guidelines.

At the Hearing:

When your case is called, you will be invited to sit at the applicant’s table. Staff continued, box page 3
Landmark Designations Continue

In the second half of 2010 City Council designated 5 properties Raleigh Historic Landmarks, making for a grand total of 142 RHLs:

Harwell Hamilton Harris, an internationally known Modernist architect, designed the 1967-70 flat-roofed, stucco-clad Harwell Hamilton & Jean Bangs Harris House & Office to include living quarters for himself and his wife, a studio for his architectural practice, and a rental apartment. Harris is recognized for his use of modular design with integrated works that express a unified rhythm along their components.

In 2009 the City of Raleigh conducted an archaeological survey of the Latta House & University Site, the city’s first RHL designated based on its archaeological, as well as historical, significance. The property is associated with freed slave and educator Rev. M.L. Latta and his university, an African-American coeducational institution established in Oberlin in 1892.

Prominent layman John O’Rorke donated land to the Catholic Diocese for the establishment of O’Rorke Catholic Cemetery, the oldest historic resource in the city associated with Raleigh’s Catholic Community. Instituted at a time when prevailing Protestant thought often made life difficult for Catholics, the cemetery retains twelve monuments and plot borders dating from 1865 to about 1931. O’Rorke is the first cemetery to be designated a RHL.

Conceived by W.E. Long Company of Chicago, specialists in bakery design, and built by the Raleigh construction firm of James A. Davidson, the (former) Royal Baking Company is a utilitarian one-story brick building with simple International style detail. Built in 1941 and expanded 1946-1947, the bakery illustrates the period of industrial expansion in Raleigh that followed the stagnation of the Great Depression.

Built in 1926, the Wilmont Apartments building has unique Spanish Colonial-influenced details, including a stepped parapet with a green tile ornamental roof. The first apartment building constructed west of the NCSU campus, the Wilmont represents a period of rapid growth in the Capital City.

Design Guidelines Update Key Topics

- Review of post-World War II and Modern (1945-65) architecture
- Evaluation of new alternative or substitute materials
- Design review of archaeological sites and cemeteries
- Design of urban commercial infill architecture downtown
- Making the Guidelines more relevant to individual historic landmarks
- Embracing sustainability in the Guidelines

Photos, page 1 —

top right: Lumsden-Boone Building;

top-center: Arkansas Delaware &

Vermont Connecticut Royster

Confectioners Building;

bottom: monument, O’Rorke Cemetery
A BROADER VIEW

REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS
Is your house located in one of Raleigh's 25 National Register Historic Districts or individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places? An attractive opportunity for qualifying property owners lies in federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credit programs, which can yield tax credits in the amount of 30% to 40% of qualified costs. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administers the state and federal programs, which require that rehabilitation projects meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. To find out more about rehabilitation tax credit programs, please join RHDC for its third annual Community Conversation: “A Property Owner’s Guide to Tax Credits,” January 24th at 7:00 p.m. at the Stockroom at 230 (230 Fayetteville Street). More information on the tax credit program may be found at www.hpo.ncdcr.gov.

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Replacing Concrete Sidewalks  p.2

RHDC MEETINGS
RHDC Business meetings: 1/18, 2/15, 3/15, 4/19
7:30 AM, Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Gov’t. Complex

Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.:
(Application deadline & meeting date) 12/22/2010 for
1/10/11, 2/24 for 2/7, 2/21 for 3/7, 3/21 for 4/4, 4/15 for 5/2.
4:00 PM, Rm. 305, Avery C. Upchurch Gov’t. Complex

Community Awareness Committee: 2/1, 3/1, 4/5
4:00 PM, Rm. 213, One Exchange Plaza

Research Committee: 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7: 7:30 AM,
Rm. 213, One Exchange Plaza

Community Conversation: 1/24/11

Commission Members
Will Alphin, Fred Belledin, Matthew Brown, Jannette Coleridge-Taylor, Jane Forde, Nick Fountain, Esther Hall, Greg Hatem, Curtis Kaselang, Scott Shackleton, Flora Wadellington, Barbara Wyly

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CONTACTS

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Historic Oakwood: www.historicoakwood.org
Historic Boylan Heights: www.boylanheights.org
Downtown Raleigh Alliance: www.godowntownraleigh.com
NC SHPO: www.hpo.ncdcr.gov

Staff support for the RHDC is provided by the Raleigh Department of City Planning, www.raleighnc.gov.

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