

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
Survey Committee Minutes
2100 Randolph Road, Charlotte
September 21, 2022
6:00 p.m. – 8:12 p.m.**

Present

Lesley Carroll
Brian Clarke, Survey Committee Chair/HLC Vice Chair
Nadine Ford
John Howard
Cindy Kochanek
Stewart Gray, HLC Historic Resources Program Manager
Elizabeth Stuart, HLC Senior Administrative Support Assistant
Tommy Warlick, HLC Consulting Preservation Planner

Absent

Akadius Berry
Michael Rogers

1. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

Chair Clarke stated that he did not have a report.

2. Renfrow Property Designation Report

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray presented the designation report. He explained that there is a National Register district in Matthews that overlaps with this proposed designation in addition to an existing local historic designation. He stated that the designation report argues that the Renfrow Hardware Store and warehouses are part of the Renfrow commercial properties which constituted a larger complex in downtown Matthews.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that Mecklenburg County was the number one cotton-producing county in the state in the early 20th century. He explained that staff is starting to concentrate more on place even if the building no longer has integrity or exists. He noted these Renfrow properties will help preserve Matthews' history and that the lost cotton gin property still contributes to a sense of place. He stated that the designation report makes a good case for the inclusion of the cotton gin property.

Susan Mayer, author of the report, provided a brief history of the property and explained the location of the properties.

Chair Clarke asked if the Town of Matthews was supportive of this designation. Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that he did not know but that the property owner is supportive and is concerned about the future of the property.

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion seconded by Committee Member Kochanek that the Survey Committee recommend to the Historic Landmarks Commission that it process the Renfrow Commercial Properties for historic landmark designation including the ca. 1900 frame building, the ca. 1920 gin operator's house, and the ca. 1950 brick commercial building and the associated tax parcels. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

3. Chantilly School, 701 Briar Creek Road, Charlotte

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that staff was recently approached by concerned parents of Chantilly School students. He explained that CMS is considering selling the property, which is located near the Charlotte Coliseum. He stated that the property has been on the Commission's Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks for 20 years but has no protection. He noted that the parent group were invited to the meeting but were not able to attend. He stated that he could contact this group to determine if they would be willing to fund a designation report.

Chair Clarke stated that the Commission need to better understand the parents' motivation for seeking landmark designation of this property. He noted that it is a good candidate for landmark designation and stated that the parents should be involved for this property to proceed.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the Commission may have to fight harder to preserve properties than in the past.

Chair Clarke stated that staff should encourage the parents to hire a consultant to produce a designation report. He stated his hesitance to offer to fund the designation report unless there is a further indication of need.

4. Staff Reports

A. Properties With Historical Reports

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that the Commission have several properties on the Study List that have some type of report associated with them. He stated that staff received a question about Fire Station #8 which led to staff reviewing the Study List to determine which properties had reports.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray explained that not every property on this list would be a good candidate for landmark designation. He requested that the Committee look at the list and determine which properties should be a priority. He stated that staff would bring a more focused list back to the Committee at the next meeting.

B. Study List Application Portal

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the Study List application portal is convenient to share with the public. He noted that there is no longer an application fee for the Study List and that any application submitted would be brought to the Survey Committee for consideration.

C. 50th Anniversary Initiative – GIS Map

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that a new and improved GIS map of locally designated landmarks has been created as part of the 50th anniversary initiative. He stated that staff used other GIS maps as models. He asked the Committee to explore the map and provide feedback to staff.

Note: Commissioner Ford left the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

D. Google Maps

Senior Administrative Support Assistant Stuart stated that she is working on a Google Map of locally designated landmarks, which will be available for public use when it is published.

E. Priorities

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray explained that there will not be as many landmarks designated this year as there were last year, but that staff have been intentional with the properties presented for landmark designation. He stated that staff want to have priorities in place to ensure the representation of places underrepresented in the past.

I. LGBTQ History – Sinister Wisdom, 3116 Country Club Drive, Charlotte

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that this property has been recognized by the National Trust as an important property. He reported that the consultant who was to produce the designation report is not able to continue but noted that staff are in discussions with another consultant who is experienced with similar work.

II. Women’s History – Bonnie Cone House, 9234 Sandburg Avenue, Charlotte

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray explained that Bonnie Cone was essential in the founding of UNC Charlotte and that she is one of the most important women in the history of Mecklenburg County. He stated that Cone’s house is across the street from the university. He stated that the owners have asked for the property to be put on hold since they do not know what they will do with the property. He stated that staff are determining how to prioritize updating the designation report.

III. Native American History – Tuckaseegee Trail

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that this trail is located at the Whitewater Center. He stated that local landmarks associated with indigenous people are underrepresented and noted that this is a strong candidate for landmark status. He explained that a designation report was produced but was delayed due to the request of the property owner. He stated that updating the report is a priority for staff.

IV. African American History – Zimmerman House, 801 E. 8th Street, Charlotte

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that this house is an original First Ward House that was moved rather than demolished due to a judge's ruling in the 1980s. He stated that this house is endangered and that a consultant is ready to begin working on a designation report.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that once the designation reports for the Bonnie Cone House and Tuckaseegee Trail were updated that these properties could go straight to the full Commission for consideration.

Chair Clarke requested that the Igloo Dairy Bar, 1500 Beatties Ford Rd., be added for consideration.

The Survey Committee agreed that these designation reports should be taken directly to the Commission for landmark consideration.

F. Site Visits

I. 4530 Tyvola Road, Charlotte

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that staff received a tip that this property may be a relocated officer's quarters from Camp Greene but that this has not been confirmed. He stated that the site is now a rental property and explained that he and Historic Resources Program Manager Gray recently visited the property but have not yet spoken to the property owner.

II. 3112 Parkway Avenue, Charlotte

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that this property is already on the Study List. He stated that the owner reached out to staff but there had been no further communication. He stated that he and Historic Resources Program Manager Gray visited the property and spoke to the person who initially contacted staff. He stated that the owner had minimal knowledge of the property's history but was interested in proceeding with landmark designation.

III. 815 E. 8th Street, Charlotte

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that this house is close to the Zimmerman House. He stated that he and Historic Resources Program Manager Gray visited the property but that the property owner was not present. He stated that staff has since been in contact with the property owner who is not interested in landmark designation. He stated that this house may be the only African American house in First Ward in its original location. He noted that the Commission could recommend designation regardless of owner objection.

5. Consideration of Placement on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks

A. Cedar Grove Cemetery

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray introduced Kevin Donaldson, a former student of his who produced this report for a class project.

Donaldson stated that this is an African American cemetery adjacent to a school off Beatties Ford Road. He stated that the cemetery is in disrepair with many fallen trees. He noted that he has conducted substantial cleanup on the property. He explained that the property has been unaccounted for since 1972. He stated that he has discussed with the Park and Recreation Department the possibility of this being a cultural site.

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion seconded by Committee Member Howard that the Survey Committee place the Cedar Grove Cemetery on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

B. Mint Hill VFW Post Building

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that this building was built in the 1950s by veterans with trees donated from local farmers. He stated that the Commission have not designated any VFW posts as local landmarks and that this property recognizes the community of veterans in Mecklenburg County.

Committee Member Howard presented a motion seconded by Committee Member Kochanek that the Survey Committee place the Mint Hill VFW Post Building on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

C. Sadler Houses, River District

Chair Clarke explained that land located by Charlotte Douglas International Airport is being rezoned into a planned community called the River District. He stated that he and Executive Director Thomson recently met with the head of this community to discuss preservation options. He stated that the area is still very rural and that many properties have been lost. He stated that the area was a rural African American community after the Civil War and noted that there is still a community of Black families that continue to live on Sadler Road as they have for generations. He stated that these houses are an important signifier of a vanishing way of life in Mecklenburg County.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that a next step should be a community meeting to inform residents that the Commission are exploring these houses.

Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Survey Committee place the Sadler Houses (4814, 4818, 4909, 4911, 4915, and 4917 Sadler Road, Charlotte) on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

D. Dam, River District

Chair Clarke stated that in a wooded area near Sadler Road is a ravine that consists of stacked stone. He stated that the purpose of this site is unknown, but it could have been a dam. He noted that he is unaware of anything else like this in Mecklenburg County.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that if this site were added to the Study List and if a designation report were funded that an archaeologist would author the report.

Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Committee Member Howard that the Survey Committee place the River District Dam on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

E. Original Bojangles Building, 2316 Lasalle Street, Charlotte

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that this building predates Bojangles and that it was originally a burger restaurant.

Committee Member Kochanek presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Survey Committee place the Original Bojangles Building, 2316 Lasalle Street, Charlotte, on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

F. 5439 Margaret Wallace Road, Matthews

Chair Clarke stated that this property is very threatened as it is located in a large field and for sale as a tear down. He stated that more research is needed.

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion seconded by Chair Clarke that the Survey Committee place 5439 Margaret Wallace Road, Matthews, on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that a new staff initiative is to monitor rezoning applications. He noted that staff have responded to rezoning petitions for 1727 and 1733 E. 7th Street. He stated that Fire Station No. 11 is threatened with demolition and that staff have responded and objected. He stated that staff have not yet responded to the petition for 215 Providence Road.

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion seconded by Committee Member Kochanek that the Survey Committee place the following properties on the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks: 1727 and 1733 E. 7th Street, Charlotte; 620 W. 28th Street, Charlotte; 215 Providence Road, Charlotte; and 204 Phil Aull Place, Charlotte. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.