

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
April 7, 2025
Hybrid Meeting
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 278
6:03 p.m. – 8:43 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor/Survey Committee Chair (remote)
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair (remote)
Christina Benton/City
Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Andrew Dunn/County
Andra Eaves/County
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary/Community Outreach Committee Chair
John Kincheloe/City
Emily Makas/Mayor
Melanie Reddrick/City
Stewart Gray, HL Director
John Howard, HL Historic Preservation Manager
Tommy Warlick, HL Historic Preservation Specialist
Elizabeth Stuart, HL Senior Administrative Support Assistant

Absent

Charlie Miller/City

Note: This meeting was held virtually through the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform and in person at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

1. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

a. Approval of March HLC Minutes

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Grey that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's March 10 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

a. John Douglas House, 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte

Chair Clarke stated that the Douglas House will be relocated soon. He stated that he and Director Gray visited the site recently. He stated that the former property owner left behind items that will be temporarily relocated to the former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church. He stated that some of the furniture that is historically associated with the house will be returned to the house once relocated.

Gray stated that the Commission has committed to securing the house and ensuring it does not leak. He suggested funding this through the \$84,000 available in a special fund given to the Commission by the City of Charlotte in 2023 for preservation work.

Chair Clarke stated that much of the church complex will be demolished soon. He stated that the sanctuary and the Douglas House are covered by preservation easements held by the Commission that prevent demolition.

b. Richard Wearn House, 4928 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke stated that this antebellum farmhouse is located near Tuckaseegee Recreation Center and is currently listed for sale. He stated that the owners received a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to perform work on the house in 2018. He stated that the work performed went beyond the scope of this COA and explained that the owners will likely submit an after-the-fact COA soon.

Chair Clarke stated that an offer to purchase the house has been accepted. He explained that the Commission holds a preservation easement on this property that includes a Right of First Refusal for any sale. He stated that the people who made an offer on the house have experience with historic properties and appear preservation-minded.

Gray stated that staff met with the potential new owner who understands the easement and design review expectations. He stated that the Commission will discuss the Right of First Refusal later in the meeting.

c. Update on HLC Strategic Plan

Commissioner Dunn stated that he, Chair Clarke, and Director Gray have begun the initial steps towards creating a strategic plan for the Commission. He explained that the idea is to be more strategic by understanding the Commission's statutory responsibilities and determining how to further preservation. He explained that he hopes for the strategic plan to answer two questions: 1) How should the Commission proactively identify and designate landmarks, and 2) How should the Commission use the revolving fund. He stated that he would like to have a small group of Commissioners discuss the strategic plan before the full Commission discusses it and asked Commissioners to let him know if they are interested in serving on this small group.

3. Public Comment Period

No members of the public registered to speak.

4. Quasi-Judicial Hearings

a. Oak Row, 306 N. Main Street, Davidson

Owner/Applicant: Trustees of Davidson College
Subject Property: Oak Row
Address: 306 N. Main Street, Davidson
PIN: 00316201A

The Commissioners affirmed that they do not have any known conflicts of interest which would prevent their participation in this hearing, and that they have not engaged in any ex parte communication which would prevent their participation in this hearing.

The following persons were sworn in to give testimony at the hearing: Craig Wertz, John Howard, and Stewart Gray

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Davidson Oak Row Dormitory
306 N. Main Street
Davidson, NC 28036
Application for COA HLC485

Property Description

Oak Row and Elm Row constitute part of the original Quadrangle of the Davidson College Campus. The structures initially served as dormitories and were constructed shortly before the college opened its doors to students in March 1837. The Oak building is brick, resting on a stone foundation, and slate roof. (CMHLC survey report, 5/3/1977).

Project Description – Restoration, New Addition

Restoration will include resetting loose stones, repairing damaged mortar, repairing cracks in the brick façade, replacing damaged bricks, and interior restoration and reconstruction of previously removed architectural features. Existing wood windows will be repaired. The new framed entry vestibule has a glass and metal panel exterior finish. The addition is located on the right side elevation with a new entrance into the building.

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Exhibit A – Context Map

Exhibit B – Existing Conditions

Exhibit C – Proposed Plans

Staff Comments

Based upon the information presented in the application, staff offers the following suggested applicable findings of fact:

The HLC has acknowledged the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the property's historic character.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application as presented.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Commissioner Dunn asked about damage to the structure when cutting out a new entrance.

Commissioner Benton asked about Elm Row. Gray stated that it still exists and has a different use.

Applicant Comments

Craig Wertz stated that his team is aware of historic preservation standards. He explained that his team will remove bricks by hand to create the smallest opening possible for the small addition that will be used as an accessible entrance.

Wertz stated that Davidson College has taken care of this building over the years. He explained that the windows are not original and that the interior has been renovated a few times. He stated that original features may exist behind the current features.

Gray asked if Wertz planned to return to the Commission for approval once exploratory work is complete. Wertz answered he did not plan to return to the Commission for approval. Gray stated that the Commission could proceed with approving plans presented today and that staff can work with the applicant as the project proceeds.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

There were no questions for the applicant.

Applicant Response

There was no response from the applicant.

Public Comments

There were no public comments in support of or opposition to this application.

Commissioners' Comments

The Commission had no additional comments.

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by Historic Landmarks staff. Commissioner Makas seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Davidson Oak Row Dormitory, 306 N. Main Street, Davidson, N.C. Commissioner Makas seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. Charlotte Coliseum, 2700 E. Independence Boulevard, Charlotte

Owner/Applicant: City of Charlotte

Subject Property: Charlotte Coliseum

Address: 2700 E. Independence Boulevard, Charlotte

PIN: 15902801

The Commissioners affirmed that they do not have any known conflicts of interest which would prevent their participation in this hearing, and that they have not engaged in any ex parte communication which would prevent their participation in this hearing.

The following persons were sworn in to give testimony at the hearing: Stewart Gray and John Howard

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Charlotte Coliseum
2700 E. Independence Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28205
Application for COA HLC487

Property Description

The Charlotte Coliseum was completed in 1955 to provide the first single-purpose sports facility in the area. The Charlotte Coliseum, designed by Odell & Associates, was the largest free-span dome in the world at the time it was built, and the Coliseum was important for its pioneering architectural design. The Coliseum fostered major economic growth for the city at large and Independence Boulevard in particular. (CMHLC Survey Report, 7/30/1990).

Project Description – Roof repair and repainting

To address numerous leaks in the roof the battens on the roof will be removed and cleaned, the individual panels will be cleaned, and new hardware will be used to re-attach the battens. A Sikalastic waterproofing roofing system will be applied.

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Exhibit A – Map

Exhibit B – Existing Conditions

Exhibit C – Proposed Plans

Staff Comments

Based upon the information presented in the application, staff offers the following suggested applicable findings of fact:

The HLC has acknowledged the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the property's historic character.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application as presented.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Commissioner Kincheloe asked how many times the roof has been repaired. Vice Chair Barfield stated that the roof is repaired frequently. Gray stated that the panels are original. He stated that staff wanted to ensure that the Commission reviewed the project since the roof will be painted.

Commissioner Reddrick asked about the Sikalastic waterproofing roofing system. Gray stated that the panels will be pulled off and the waterproofing will be a new layer underneath.

Commissioner Reddrick asked if the color will match the original. Historic Preservation Manager Howard stated it will be close to the original. Gray explained that there are color guidelines in the application instructions.

Applicant Comments

There were no comments from the applicant.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

There were no questions for the applicant.

Applicant Response

There was no response from the applicant.

Public Comments

There were no public comments in support of or opposition to this application.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Grey presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by Historic Landmarks staff. Commissioner Eaves seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Commissioner Benton presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Charlotte Coliseum, 2700 E. Independence Boulevard, Charlotte, N.C. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

c. Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company, 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte

Owner/Applicant: AP Grinnell Water Works LP
Subject Property: Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company
Address: 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte
PIN: 06701207

The Commissioners affirmed that they do not have any known conflicts of interest which would prevent their participation in this hearing, and that they have not engaged in any ex parte communication which would prevent their participation in this hearing.

The following persons were sworn in to give testimony at the hearing: Welch Liles, Father Abraham Hakobian, Stewart Gray, and John Howard

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company
1435 W. Morehead Street,

Property Description

Engineer and inventor Frederick Grinnell (1836-1905) founded The Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company in 1892. Grinnell is best known for his significant innovations for automatic fire sprinkler systems, but he also worked as a construction engineer and manager for various railroad companies and built over 100 locomotives. The manufacturing building, built in 1930, illustrates several structural innovations and design trends characteristic of early twentieth century factory construction. The tall, one story building has brick walls, a steel framing system, comprised of I-beam piers and heavy Pratt roof trusses, almost contiguous banks of large steel sash windows, and large sawtooth skylights. The sawtooth monitors give the end elevations their distinctive M-shaped profile as well as providing light to the wide interior space. (CMHLC survey report, 10/1/2001).

Project Description

Removal of the steel gas/steam stack due to external corrosion, failing cable attachments, and unknown condition of the inside of the stack. The owner has submitted an alternative design to relocate the stack on the site.

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Exhibit A – Context map

Exhibit B – Existing conditions

Exhibit C – Structural engineer's report

Staff Comments

Based upon the information presented in the application, staff offers the following suggested findings of fact:

The HLC has acknowledged the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the property's historic character.

1. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 2. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

2. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

3. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 9. New additions, alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

4. Design standard #7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission consider the application and relocation of the stack though the project does meet the applicable HLC Standards.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Commissioners Dunn and Reddrick asked for staff to clarify if the plans presented are final. Howard explained that they are conceptual and would need further review from the Commission.

Commissioner Benton asked if the report indicates that the steel stack is structurally unstable. Gray read from the report that the steel stack is not considered a structural concern at this time but that the condition of the guy wires and anchor points are a structural concern and should be addressed if the stack is to remain. Commissioner Grey stated that guy wires can be replaced.

Applicant Comments

Welch Liles stated that this is the third engineer's report that has been inconclusive about the stack's integrity.

Father Abraham, licensed commercial contractor and design consultant, described the stack's condition, noting that it is standing and that the steel has pits in it, which indicate that corrosion has corroded into the steel's thickness. He stated that the bands and bolts are compromised and noted that there is no tension on the cables.

Liles requested to remove the stack and preserve it on-site due to the three different engineers not committing to the integrity of the stack and with feasibility concerns of repairing the stack on-site.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Grey questioned the thickness of the steel. Father Abraham stated that this was not assessed. Liles explained that it is difficult to assess without destructive testing.

Commissioner Benton asked for the applicant to clarify concerns regarding the steel stack. Liles stated that it would be a liability if the stack were to collapse. Father Abraham stated that there is no point of contact that is secure from a construction and risk management standpoint.

Commissioner Grey asked about adding additional guy wires. Liles stated that there is not a section where they could be attached.

Chair Clarke asked for confirmation regarding whether the concern is the lack of support from the guy wires. Welch stated that is correct.

Vice Chair Barfield explained that the Commission's purview is to save historic landmarks. He noted that this situation has arisen due to previous lack of maintenance. He agreed that this is a safety issue.

Commissioner Benton asked for clarification regarding the stack being a safety issue. Liles stated that none of the engineers who have inspected the stack will certify that it is structurally sound without further destructive testing.

Commissioner Reddrick stated that she previously worked on a project where the steel was pitted and rusted but was determined safe. She stated that pitting and rusting may not necessarily indicate a problem. Commissioner Reddrick suggested to contact Terracon to perform a more detailed inspection of the interior of the pipe.

Applicant Response

There was no response from the applicant.

Public Comments

There were no public comments in support of or opposition to this application.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Dunn asked the Commission to consider the cost of repairs asked of applicants. He stated that the Commission should be sensitive about requests made to the business community to encourage historic preservation. He stated that the steel stack appears to be in poor condition that would be a safety issue at some point, potentially soon.

Chair Clarke stated that his concern is with the lack of support from the guy wires. He stated the failure of the stack could endanger the whole structure. He recommended continuing this item until the May meeting to ensure that the quasi-judicial record includes all of the documentation previously submitted.

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by Historic Landmarks staff. Commissioner Eaves seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Commissioner Benton presented a motion to continue the quasi-judicial hearing for the Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company, 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte, N.C., until the May 12, 2025, meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission approved the motion with Commissioner Dunn and Commissioner Kincheloe voting in opposition.

Gray stated that staff will compile the information from the previous hearings into a revised staff report.

5. Survey Committee Report: Dontressa Ashford

a. Consideration of the Designation Report for the Dr. Charles W. Williams House, 5906 Crestwood Drive, Charlotte

Commissioner Ashford welcomed Candice Leite, staff member of the Charlotte Historic District Commission, as the newest Survey Committee member.

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick explained that this item needs a seconded motion from the Commission due to information discovered after the Survey Committee meeting.

Warlick stated that Dr. Williams was a local surgeon who was part of the staff of Good Samaritan Hospital and helped integrate Charlotte Memorial Hospital. He stated that Dr. Williams and his wife, Vivian, who was an educator for many years, helped develop the Hyde Park community, which was the last neighborhood developed by and for Black Charlotteans during the civil rights movement.

Warlick explained that exterior features added by the original owners between 1978-1982 are not eligible for inclusion in landmark designation. He stated that staff recommends that the Commission include the exterior as part of the recommendation for historic landmark designation since these newer features are minimally intrusive, were added by the original owners, and do not detract from the original exterior.

Commissioner Dunn asked for more details regarding interest in designating this house. Warlick stated that this house is an early version of a ranch house in this neighborhood, which is one of the only Charlotte neighborhoods built by and for Black professionals. Chair Clarke stated that Howard and former Commissioner Akadius Berry have worked to make connections in Hyde Park Estates. He stated that many prominent Charlotteans continue to live there and noted that this is just the first property to explore landmark designation after many years of advocacy. Gray stated that staff is interested in homes of developers and architects.

Commissioner Reddick expressed concerns regarding the replacement windows and doors. Chair Clarke stated that this house is important for its associative history. He stated that this

house's story is important to Charlotte's history and explained that this property is an example of the Commission designating properties that are reflective of the entirety of Charlotte.

Commissioner Makas presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Reddick that the Historic Landmarks Commission process the Dr. Charles W. Williams House, 5906 Crestwood Drive, Charlotte, N.C., for historic landmark designation, including the exterior of the house and the associated tax parcel. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

The following item was presented for informational purposes and did not need further action.

b. The Survey Committee Added the Following Properties to the Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks:

Warlick provided a brief history of the following properties:

- i. Paw Creek Post Office, 7400 Old Mt. Holly Road, Charlotte**
- ii. Novella McCrorey Flannagan House, 914 Clifton Street, Charlotte**
- iii. Zepa Industries Dust Collector, 4516 Nations Crossing Road, Charlotte**
- iv. Pharr's Haven, 13813 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville**

6. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey

Commissioner Grey reminded the Commission that the Settlers' Cemetery headstone cleaning event is on April 26 and asked for those interested in volunteering to let her know.

7. Revolving Fund Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that the revolving fund balance is \$4 million and includes the projects at the Cornelius High School Agriculture Building and Torrence-Lytle School.

8. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. Solomon and Shirley Levine House, 2300 Cloister Drive, Charlotte

Gray stated that this is an important midcentury modern house located in the Cloisters neighborhood. He explained that the Commission recommended the property for landmark designation in 2009 and noted that it did not proceed past Charlotte City Council. He stated that staff was contacted by many concerned neighbors after the property recently went on the market. He stated that he discussed the potential for landmark designation with the property's realtor, who informed the potential buyer. He stated that the potential buyer backed out, allowing for a backup offer that committed to preserving the house to be accepted.

b. Torrence-Lytle School, 14000 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville

Gray stated that he and Howard attended a recent Pottstown preservation community meeting. He stated that it was a productive meeting and explained that the roofing project should be permitted soon.

c. Carolina Theatre, 230 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte

Gray stated that staff attended a re-opening celebration of the Carolina Theatre and encouraged Commissioners to visit the building.

Note: Commissioner Eaves left the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

d. Closed Session to Consider a Real Estate Matter

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Benton that the Historic Landmarks Commission convene in closed session. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

The Commission motioned to adjourn by unanimous consent.

9. Old Business

There was no old business.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.