

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
May 12, 2025
Hybrid Meeting
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 266
6:09 p.m. – 8:35 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair
Christina Benton/City (remote)
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Andrew Dunn/County
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary/Community Outreach Committee Chair
John Kincheloe/City
Charlie Miller/City
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

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor/Survey Committee Chair
Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer
Andra Eaves/County
Emily Makas/Mayor

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 April HLC Minutes

b. Certificate of Appropriateness Application for the Edgewood Farm, 11124 Eastfield Road, Huntersville

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Kincheloe that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's April 7 meeting minutes and the Certificate of Appropriateness application for the Edgewood Farm, 11124 Eastfield Road, Huntersville. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

Chair Clarke stated that the former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church project continues with site work being performed and the Douglas House being prepped for relocation. He stated that the relocation is expected to occur in June. He also stated that the Commission's participation in the Mecklenburg 250 Festival was successful.

3. Public Comment Period

No members of the public registered to speak.

4. Quasi-Judicial Hearing for the Richard Wearn House, 4928 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte

Owner/Applicant: Matthew Pritchard
Subject Property: Richard Wearn House
Address: 4928 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte
PIN: 05903272

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.

Note: Chair Clarke stated that he visited the Wearn House to assess its condition before the Certificate of Appropriateness was filed.

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

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments

Richard Wearn House
4928 Tuckaseegee Road
Charlotte, NC 28208
Application for COA HLC494

Property Description

The historical and cultural significance of the property known as the Richard Wearn House rests upon three factors. First, it is one of the relatively few ante-bellum structures which survives in Charlotte, N.C. Worth noting in this regard is the fact that the structure is a two-story log house in which horizontal board siding and a rear wing have been added. (James A. Stenhouse, "Exploring Old Mecklenburg" Charlotte, N.C., 1952, p. 27). Second, the structure is intimately associated with the history of gold mining in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Third, the structure served as the abode of a family which has made a significant and lasting impact upon the development of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. (Survey report, 3/6/1979).

Project Description – After the Fact COA

Review of changes made without a COA and staff recommendations for appropriate corrections. A COA was issued 1/15/2015 for reconstruction of the laundry room, addition of HVAC, skylights, a shed roof on the garage, perimeter fencing and stabilization of the kitchen chimney.

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.
 - a. The current proposal does not alter architecturally defining elements. Rather, it attempts to correct previously unapproved changes.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
 - a. The proposed changes to the catwalk and living room are appropriate given the inability to completely restore what was lost.
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.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the corrective restoration measures as agreed upon by the future property owner.

Note: Commissioner Benton joined the meeting remotely at 6:32 p.m.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Commissioner Dunn asked for specifics regarding the elements staff is proposing that the Commission approve. Director Gray explained that staff provided a recommendation to the property owner, who elaborated on the recommendation. Gray stated that the staff recommendation included removing wainscoting downstairs, removing the catwalk in the kitchen, and removing non-original wood. He stated that the previous owners removed a lot of the 1950s drywall that was not reviewed or approved. He stated that the skylight in the bathroom was approved but that the additional skylight was not. He explained that Exhibit C shows what the current owner has proposed based on staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Grey asked about finishes applied to the wood. Gray stated that the previous owner left the finish in place and explained that he is unsure if it will be painted or stained. He stated that the new owner is interested in reversing significant alterations and noted that more changes might need to be considered in the future.

Vice Chair Barfield asked how these unapproved changes happened. Gray stated that the scope of the work did not match what was listed in the approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

Chair Clarke stated that the previous owner wanted as many surfaces as possible to be returned to the original 1820 surface. He stated that this led to trim being removed that was not 1820 trim. He explained that the owner was left with reclaimed wood and found uses for it.

Commissioner Reddrick asked if the approval of this application implies that the other changes would not need to be addressed. Gray stated that this is a unique situation where the Commission can require unapproved changes to be undone.

Chair Clarke stated that the Commission holds a preservation easement on this property.

Commissioner Dunn asked whether any of the proposed changes are necessary for health or safety reasons. Historic Preservation Manager Howard stated that the catwalk might be unsafe. Gray stated that the argument could be made that the original purpose for this work was because the kitchen had a failing floor and the house needed to be habitable.

Commissioner Dunn asked if the home is currently inhabited. Gray stated no.

Chair Clarke stated that he is not aware that the catwalk was permitted or inspected. He stated that permits were pulled for the rebuilding of the kitchen. Gray noted that the new owner is a licensed contractor.

Applicant Comments

Matthew Pritchard, property owner, stated that he would like to leave the wood that is exposed. He stated that he has not yet performed lead testing. He stated that he will take down the panel in the room downstairs to help with insulation.

Gray stated that more items might need attention later and noted that this is just the initial application for work to begin.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Dunn asked why a COA was needed at this time and whether this is phase one of a larger phase.

Pritchard stated that he would like for this process to move quickly so he can move into the house. He stated that the first step is to address the wood, clean floors, and paint both upstairs and downstairs in areas that were previously painted.

Gray stated that changes to the catwalk would be a separate COA with specific details.

Commissioner Dunn stated that it was not clear that if the Commission approves this COA that there would be no additional review of other previous changes.

Gray stated that a COA would be needed for additional changes.

Chair Clarke asked about the status of the ceiling. Pritchard stated he did not intend to work on the ceiling.

Vice Chair Barfield stated that the Commission could approve the presented COA and that other changes can be considered as they arise. Commissioners Reddrick and Grey agreed.

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick stated that the unapproved concerns are covered in the easement. He explained that since the unapproved changes did not have a COA that it does not mean they are valid in perpetuity.

Applicant Response

There was no response.

Public Comments

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

Commissioners' Comments

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

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

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

Commissioner Dunn stated his concerns regarding his uncertainty of the specifics of what is being voted on. He stated that the testimony was unclear and informal and he was not convinced that the plans adhere to the Commission's Standards.

Chair Clarke stated that all of the evidence presented to the Commission should be considered, including testimony in the meeting and the presented plans and staff report.

Vice Chair Barfield stated that there is precedent to approve a project with the condition that the owner will continue to work with staff.

Gray stated that the Commission can vote on what the applicant has proposed. He stated that the catwalk should come as a future COA.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Richard Wearn House, 4928 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, N.C., as presented in Exhibit C Item #1 with the addition of the removal of the non-original cabinets in the two primary first story rooms and with the condition that the owner continue to work with Historic Landmarks staff on future plans. Commissioner Reddick seconded the motion.

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

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

5. Discussion of the Richard Wearn House, 4928 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke stated that the Commission needs an established process for checking in on the approximately 54 properties that have preservation easements held by the Commission. He stated that the Commissioners could potentially assist staff with this task.

Gray stated that the next staff report can include more explanation of what constitutes the findings of fact and the understanding that the Commission can add to the findings.

6. Survey Committee Report: Dontressa Ashford

a. The next meeting of the Survey Committee will be held on May 21 at 6pm.

b. Reaffirmation of the Motion Recommending Historic Landmark Designation of the Ziglar-Bowers House, 421 Heathcliff Street, Charlotte

Warlick reminded the Commission that the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) did not believe that this house had enough special significance since it was already

protected as part of the Wesley Heights historic district and that there was also concern regarding architectural features. He stated that the consultant researched further and discovered that this is one of only two houses remaining in the neighborhood that have Colonial Revival features, which is not typical of a Craftsman bungalow. He stated that staff maintains that this house has special significance.

Warlick stated that changes to the house include the replacement of the 1964 wood porch with a brick porch that retained the same massing and footprint, and which has now been part of the house longer than the original porch. He explained that there is replacement to the front door and flooring, interior alterations to the mantel and hearth, and a possible interior reconfiguration of the basement stairwell. He noted that these changes prompted the consultant to downgrade the integrity from high to moderate. He stated that the designation report is stronger with these changes specified with a better case of special significance of the house. He stated that staff recommends proceeding with landmark designation.

Commissioner Dunn asked for clarification regarding SHPO's feedback. Warlick stated that SHPO raised questions about the report and stated that the property was not a good candidate for designation.

Vice Chair Barfield asked why the Commission has had two designation reports recently returned with criticism from SHPO.

Gray explained that there is a current push for historic preservation to be more inclusive rather than exclusive. He stated that listings on the National Register have historically been the highest and best examples and explained that some preservationists that have worked closely on National Register properties prefer an exclusive view of preservation.

Chair Clarke reminded the Commission that SHPO offers feedback but does not determine whether a property becomes a designated landmark. Gray stated that the local governing boards receive the feedback from SHPO. Warlick stated that staff informing local jurisdictions of a property's local significance is typically sufficient for a successful landmark designation.

Commissioner Grey presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Dunn that the Historic Landmarks Commission reaffirm the previous recommendation that the Ziglar-Bowers House, 421 Heathcliff Street, Charlotte, N.C., be processed for historic landmark designation including the interior and the exterior of the house and the associated tax parcel. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

7. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey

a. Upcoming Events

i. June 7 – Historic Northwest Charlotte Bike Tour

ii. June 7 – Third Ward/Franks House Historic Marker Unveiling

iii. September 20 – Historic Bookmarks Book Club (Discussing Andrew Feiler's "A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools That Changed America")

Commissioner Grey stated that the headstone cleaning at Settlers' Cemetery was a success and thanked those who participated for their support. She stated that she was asked to be on Town Talk with Bill Russell on May 28 and asked the Commissioners to send her questions for consideration.

Warlick stated that he is coordinating with the Torrence-Lytle School alumni association and the Pottstown Heritage Group on the next book club event, which will be moderated by the president of the Pottstown Heritage Group. He stated that alumni from Huntersville School #2 also plan to attend. He stated that this will be a big event that will include a look at the Pottstown Heritage Group's documentary "Pottstown USA," the unveiling of the road marker for Huntersville School #2, and possibly small group guided tours of the Torrence-Lytle School, among other festivities.

iv. October 4 – Headstone Cleaning Event at Matthews Historic Cemetery

Warlick stated that this will be the first Adventure Club headstone cleaning outside of Charlotte. He explained that Matthews Historic Cemetery is a major cemetery, similar to Charlotte's Settlers' Cemetery.

8. Discussion of the Historic Landmarks Commission's Strategic Plan: Andrew Dunn

Commissioner Dunn stated that he created a rough timeline for creating the Commission's strategic plan. He asked for Commissioners to let him know if they are interested in helping him draft the strategic plan.

9. Nominating Committee: Brian Clarke

Chair Clarke stated it is time to appoint new officers since it is the end of the fiscal year. He stated that volunteers are also needed for the Nominating Committee. He and Vice Chair Barfield volunteered for this Committee. He asked Commissioners to let staff know of interest in serving as an officer for FY26. He stated that the Nominating Committee will present a slate of officers for consideration at the June meeting.

10. Revolving Fund Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that \$180,000 is committed to purchase the Cornelius Agriculture Building and \$500,000 is committed to purchase Edgewood Farm, leaving approximately \$4.5 million available in the revolving fund.

11. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. QR Code Program

Warlick stated that every designated landmark has a dedicated page on the new website that includes a short summary of the designation report with access to the full designation report and a map of the property. He stated staff has begun distributing QR code placards that link to a property's dedicated page to interested properties.

Chair Clarke stated that there was a recent article in the *Charlotte Observer* regarding a lack of educational signage around local historic sites and noted that these QR code placards will help

alleviate this deficiency. He stated that he and Brandon Lunsford, historian for Park and Recreation, will meet soon to discuss how Park and Recreation can facilitate signage for their cultural resources.

b. Savona Mill, 528 S. Turner Avenue, Charlotte

Howard stated that the adaptive reuse of this site is almost complete. He asked Commissioners to let him know if they are interested in a site visit.

c. Update on Edgewood Farm

Gray stated that he is working on a date to appear before the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners regarding the funding for this project.

d. Preservation North Carolina Conference – October 5, 2025

Gray asked Commissioners to let staff know if they are interested in attending this conference.

12. Old Business

There was no old business.

13. New Business

Howard thanked Chair Clarke and Commissioners Kincheloe and Ashford for volunteering at the Mecklenburg 250 Festival.

Gray stated that he recently attended the Charlotte Museum of History's Gem Awards. He stated that the Shotgun Houses won an award and noted that Frank Whitney was there regarding the Charles R. Jonas Federal Courthouse in Charlotte.

Chair Clarke stated that Judge Whitney is supportive of a façade easement for the green and gold façade across from the courthouse, and that easements are a possible expanded use of the revolving fund.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.