

# Athens-Clarke County

## Historic Preservation Commission

### 2016 Annual Report

#### Chairman's Message

The ACC Historic Preservation Commission can take pride that its endeavors in 2016 have been memorable, notable, and of great benefit to the community.

The ongoing and primary role of the HPC is to review applications for Certificate's of Appropriateness in our 13 designated Historic Districts or 41 landmarks. This year we have been challenged with many requests that have varied widely in character. In each instance, we have strived to act to preserve the special historic fabric and character of each property and district in the context of our guidelines. In all instances, we have worked to balance community expectations and the special consideration each property and applicant deserves. In 2016, well over 90% of applications submitted received approval or approvals with conditions.

The HPC recognizes that the COA process may seem a little overwhelming to some applicants – especially for minor alterations. This year, we have planned a proposal to the Mayor and Commission to expand the criteria for items that can be handled at the Planning Counter by Staff. Streamlining easily approvable requests and adding to the ease of the process overall is important to the HPC.

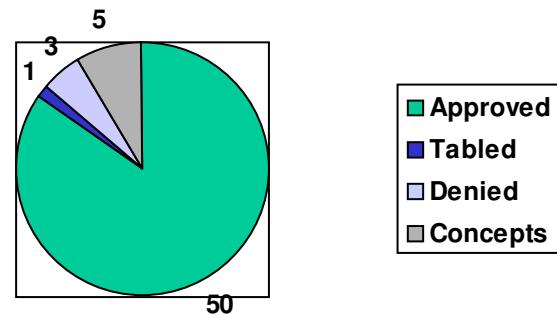
A major accomplishment in 2016 has been the acceptance and our unanimous recommendation of the new Rutherford Historic District. This district will offer protection to 15 special houses and will pair nicely with it's neighboring districts including Milledge Avenue, Woodlawn, & Cloverhurst /Springdale.

Our Commission members have also been involved extensively in the community from coordination with groups such as the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation to working to protect and save non-designated historic properties.

We are delighted to offer you this first Annual Report and hope to continue our important work for Athens Clarke County.

Sincerely,  
Drew Dekle, Chairperson

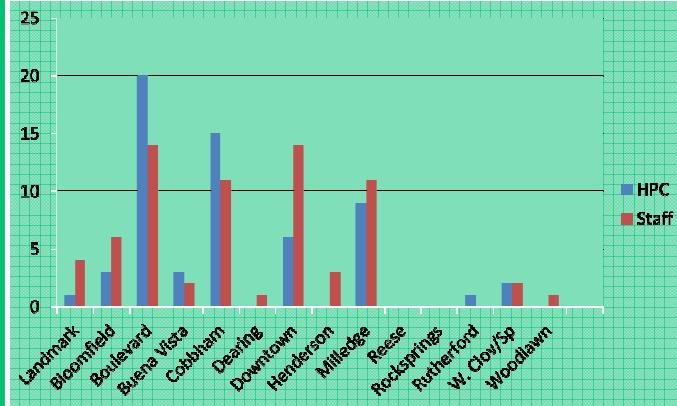
#### Results of 2016 COAs reviewed by HPC



69 Additional applications were approved by Staff

The HPC has an approval rate of 93% with only 1 application tabled to allow changes and 3 applications denied during 2016.

#### 2016 COAs by District



The number of COA applications by district is fairly consistent with the size of the district. Boulevard, the largest district with over 400 properties, saw the highest number of reviews.

#### Local Option Tax Incentives for Historic Properties

5 Historic Preservation Tax Freeze Reviews were processed in 2016.

# Athens-Clarke County

## Historic Preservation Commission

### 2016 Annual Report

#### Before & After

In June 2015,

Denise and Dan Horton, owners of 815 Boulevard, submitted to the HPC staff a request for a new residence that would face Boulevard. The new home was to be in



front of the smaller simple wood frame pre-1947 house that faces Nacoochee Avenue. The staff report reviewing how the proposal fit within the Design Guidelines noted several minor concerns that needed to be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission along with recommending approval.

At the July 2015 meeting, designer Fred Smotherman and Ms. Horton discussed the flagged concerns as well as other details with the commission members. Several neighborhood residents spoke in favor of the project. With agreement on the changes needed to address any concerns, the project was approved unanimously. The applicant would work with staff to ensure the plans were revised as per the decision.

This project example was not the typical request as most applications for new construction of a main structure do not have an existing structure remaining on the lot to consider. The resulting house (shown below) is a beautiful addition to the streetscape of the Boulevard District. The smaller historic residence was saved, and the new home fits into the style and scale of its location. It positively impacts one of the distinctive areas of Athens and represents an outstanding example of working with the Historic Preservation Commission on a challenging property.

#### Downtown Historic District Reaches 10 Year Milestone

The Downtown Historic District is a special collection of buildings, streets and public spaces which provide a mixed use environment that gives a unique identity to the Athens community. Since the 2006 designation of the downtown historic district, Athens has continued attracting a wide array of new businesses including offices, restaurants, unique shops and boutiques.



With the construction of high end apartment buildings and renovated historical buildings, Athenians are literally calling downtown Athens "home". In the midst of this exciting growth, this locally designated historic district has successfully preserved the exterior appearance of many historic structures. Docebo at 160 E. Washington Street was renovated in 2015 and won an award for outstanding rehabilitation in 2016 from the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation.

# Athens-Clarke County

# Historic Preservation Commission

## 2016 Annual Report

### Historic Preservation Training and Education



**Training Mandate:** HPC training is a program requirement for Certified Local Governments (CLGs); and each HPC member must attend training once every three years. Training is also highly encouraged for any new HPC members.

**Commission Training:** HPC Chair, Drew Dekle, Vice Chair Mary Cook, and Barry Allen, and Danny Bass attended Historic Preservation Commission Training in Columbus, GA Nov. 4-5, 2016. The training was presented by a partnership between the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions, and Historic Columbus. Topics included preservation law, architectural types and styles, design guidelines, funding and grants,

preservation archaeology, ethics, and gaining support and involvement from the public. The training was held, appropriately, in a beautifully restored 1885 cotton warehouse. Coincidentally, Member Bass's first job after high school was loading and unloading cotton bales from that warehouse to and from railroad boxcars. (Mr. Bass assured us that was not in 1885.) Historic Columbus gave participants a interesting walking tour of historic downtown businesses and homes.

**Staff Training:** In July, 2016 Preservation Planner Amber Eskew attended training conducted by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions in Mobile, AL. Ms. Eskew attended sessions on HPC annual reports, mobile architectural survey software and other survey topics, appeals, and infill construction. Ms. Eskew described the training as "...wonderful and valuable opportunities to learn new ideas and approaches that benefit our local preservation program."



#### In Memorium

The Historic Preservation Commission and Athens-Clarke County lost an accomplished and insightful history lover when Kevin Garrison passed away in February. Kevin had been a valued board member of the HPC since 2013, as well as being an active member of several other history and preservation related organizations in Athens.



# Athens-Clarke County

# Historic Preservation Commission

## 2016 Annual Report

### HPC Members

**Drew Dekle**, Chair

**Mary Cook**, Vice-Chair

**Barry Allen**

**Danny Bass**

**Jeff Bishop**

**Jud Doherty**

**Scott Reed**

### Support Staff

Amber Eskew, Preservation

Planner

Bruce Lonnee, Sr. Planner

Carrol Perrin, Attorney

### **Who Is The Historic Preservation Commission?**

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven member board appointed by the Mayor and Commission to make preservation-related decisions and recommendations for Athens-Clarke County following established procedures. The HPC is considered part of the planning functions of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County. Member terms are three years with the potential for a second consecutive appointment. Qualifications for membership include residency in Athens-Clarke County with a majority of the members having a demonstrated interest, experience, or education in history, architecture, or preservation of historic resources.

The Historic Preservation Commission began in 1986 after the passage of a preservation ordinance by the City of Athens and continued after the city-county unification in 1991. There are currently 13 local historic districts and 41 local historic landmarks. The Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for reviewing changes at each parcel within one of the historic districts or landmarks and for recommending new districts and landmarks for designation. Chapter 8-5 of the Athens-Clarke County Code of Ordinances is the complete ordinance under which the local historic preservation program is run.

### **The Design Review Process**

Changes to properties having local historic designation are reviewed through an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Through this application, proposed changes are reviewed to determine the impact on the historic character and integrity of the property and the district. Design Guidelines are used to explain the potential importance of various building and site features and guide a property owner when designing a project in addition to guiding staff and HPC members when making a decision.

Those changes with the most potential to impact a property are always reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission at a public hearing. Staff review of applications for Certificate of Appropriateness are limited to those specific types of projects listed in the Design Guidelines or HPC Bylaws as authorized for staff review. Staff review is completed more quickly than review before the HPC at a public hearing; however both types of review utilize the same Design Guidelines when ensuring a project protects the character and integrity of the property or district.

Athens-Clarke County has three sets of Design Guidelines. The Milledge Avenue Historic District and the Downtown Historic District both have Design Guidelines specific to their boundaries. A third set of Design Guidelines is used by all other districts and landmarks not within the Milledge Avenue or Downtown Districts. All three sets of Design Guidelines are available through the Athens-Clarke County website.