

Athens-Clarke County HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION Annual Report 2018

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SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

For community preservation and progress to be successfully balanced, steps must be taken to ensure changes in our built environment are compatible with the character-defining features that make Athens' historic areas so special. In 2018, the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) continued its role as a manager of change for our locally-designated historic districts and landmarks.

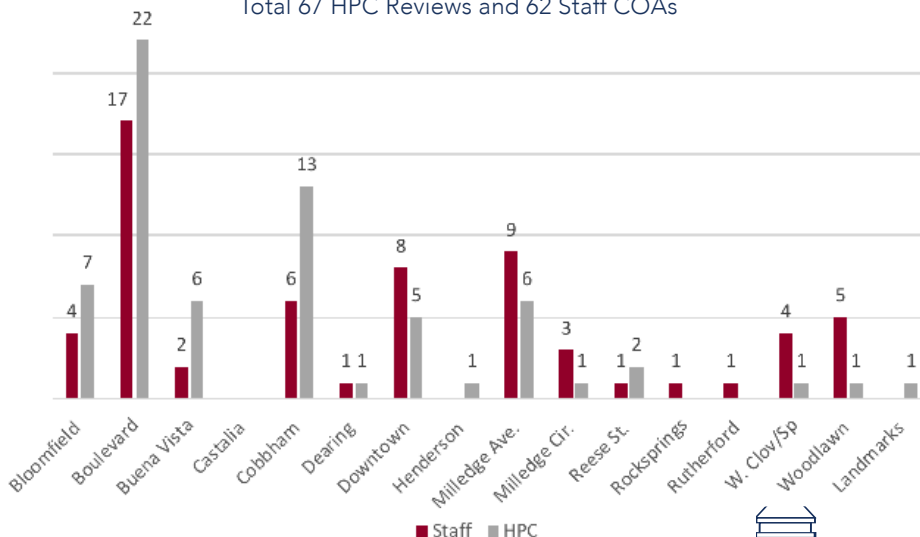
Athens-Clarke County's preservation community saw changes in local leadership during 2018. The campaigns for the new Mayor and four County Commissioners each had elements that support community stabilization, conservation, and preservation. In addition, the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation successfully completed its search for a new Executive Director. In the few months since these community leaders assumed their new responsibilities, they have already played an instrumental role in advancing the next chapter of historic preservation in Athens with the initiation of the West Downtown Local Historic District study. Included among the historic resources in this area are Hot Corner, local music landmarks such as the 40 Watt Club, religious properties, and former transportation-related business structures such as the Greyhound Bus Station.

The coming year will see opportunities to continue local designation efforts with our in-town neighborhoods, historic mill villages, and resources that reflect Athens' economic and racial diversity so that future generations can more fully understand all aspects of our community's history.

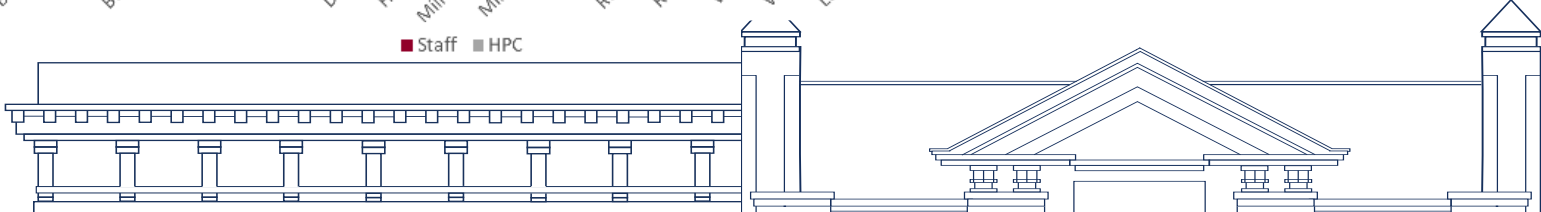
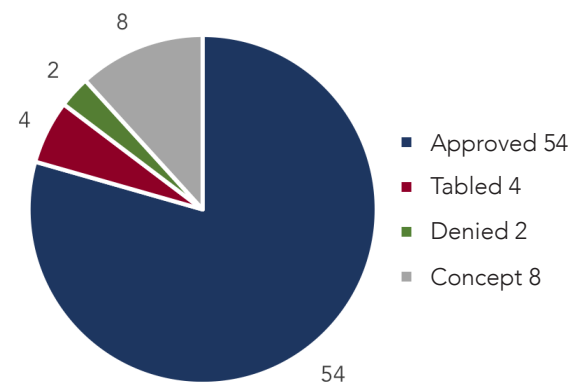
The HPC is actively seeking a new generation of leaders. As of this writing, there are two openings on the seven-member HPC. The time is right for fresh faces to join the effort to manage our community's growth. - Bruce Lonnee, Secretary of the HPC

HPC BY THE NUMBERS

Applications By District
Total 67 HPC Reviews and 62 Staff COAs



Results of COAs Reviewed by HPC



CARE & RESTORATION OF WOODEN WINDOWS

The texture, depth, and, in some cases, wavy glass of historic wooden windows contribute to the character of properties and the overall appeal of historic districts. Unlike their modern counterparts, these windows can be repaired and maintained to last indefinitely. Once widely known, knowledge of the processes and tools needed for wooden window maintenance and repair has become less common as modern window materials have changed.

HPC member Heather Fletcher interviewed two local window restoration experts for their advice and opinions. Marianne Parr specializes in stained window and wavy glass repair, having spent over 30 years restoring windows in historic churches, hotels, and stately homes. Todd Lister is a tenured master carpenter who has spent 45 years refinishing antique furniture, while also specializing in historic door and window restoration.

What do you recommend when window sashes are painted shut? What are the best techniques for making them operable?

Marianne: Cut the paint and caulk along the edge of the sash where it meets the window frame with a utility knife or multi-purpose tool. Gently work your way around with a small pry bar to loosen the sash. Do not pry any area so hard as to break the glass; eventually the sash will come loose. If it's really stuck, then you may have to remove some trim around the window. Keep in mind that chemicals or a heat gun will ruin paint and the heat may even crack the glass.

Todd: Freeing a painted shut sash is usually done with a razor knife. I use a multi-tool with a metal culling blade which slices through the paint like butter. When removing the sash from the window, there is usually a small trim piece that needs to be removed to access the sash. Often these small wood pieces are held in place with small nails and can be removed with a firm putty knife.

When should you re-glaze your windows? Would you recommend a DIY approach?

Marianne: Do it yourself if it's just a little glazing, but if it's much more complicated than that, be prepared for the long haul or hire a professional.

Todd: Glazing can be challenging when dealing with older sashes since weathering can change the shape and texture of the lines. Using a professional would be a wise choice on a historic home.

What are the average costs involved with reglazing? Complete restoration?

Marianne: There is no average. It requires researching online, investigation and comparison, then interviewing craftspeople. Those living in historic homes appreciate the ambiance and know they require a little more care.

Todd: Window restoration is a dying skill without as many people doing it. Like so many things in our lives, windows and doors have become disposable. Basic reglazing can run \$100 per window or more, while those with damaged or rotten parts can drive the cost up to \$700 if full restoration is needed. This kind of project is very difficult to bid up front and is often based on time and materials, rather than a finished project.

In your professional opinion, why should a homeowner choose restoration over replacement? Are there any examples of when replacement is the better option?

Marianne: If windows can be restored, restore them. If not, go back with materials of a similar look and style.

Todd: The age and architecture of a house impact the value of the original window units, which can be a very important architectural detail. Old window sashes were made with wood that is now insect resistant and will last forever if cared for properly. However, mid-20th century windows that have severely decayed sashes with jamb or sill rot rarely warrant restoration. I personally can't dismiss the importance of historic, original windows.

In order to properly maintain your wooden windows, Marianne recommends regular painting and glazing, as well as cleaning the exterior of the glass to prevent fogging. Painting wooden windows every 2-3 years is standard practice, though location and weather conditions may require more frequency. Inspection of all windows by raising and lowering both sashes, and checking for loose or chipped glazing and faded or peeling paint should be done annually. - Heather Fletcher, HPC Member

PRESERVATION SUCCESSES

858 MEIGS STREET

This property benefited from a full rehabilitation by owners Jimmy and Laura Straehla and contractor Jay Nackashi. The project began in 2017 and was completed in 2018, more than one hundred years after the house was originally constructed. It was suffering from deterioration and damage to many of its materials and systems. Because of the poor condition of the building at the time of the July 2017 Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approval of a rear addition, modifications were allowed for roofing, siding, windows, and porch materials. The small parcel size and the RM-1 zoning designation together constrained the project to remain a modest two-bedroom dwelling, but the modifications allowed improved functionality for use today while keeping the charm of the historic structure.

This project is a great example of the potential of historic properties despite poor condition. The historic building was saved and continues to add to the character and charm of the Cobbham historic district. Soon after completion, the property sold for nearly five times the 2016 purchase price.



428 N. MILLEDGE AVENUE



This corner property in the Cobbham Historic District had long been a gravel parking lot associated with Piedmont College. The project came before the HPC in May 2017 as a new infill construction proposal designed by Studio BNA Architects for Chase Lawrence of College Town Properties. The Design Guidelines suggest several things to consider in reviewing new infill: the new building's scale and massing compared to historic examples nearby, the location of the building on the property and how it's oriented to the street, the materials used, and the architectural details that accentuate the property. The goal is to have a new building that fits within the historic development but also appears to be of its own time.

Now the College Town main office, this infill fits with the historic character of the neighborhood with similar size, orientation towards Milledge Avenue, and materials that relate to the surroundings.

It does not attempt to imitate the neighboring structures. Rather it uses architectural details to indicate it's a new building in a historic district. - Cam Yearty, HPC Member

CONCEPT REVIEW: WHAT IS IT, AND WHY SHOULD I DO IT?

Conceptual preliminary design review allows a potential project to receive comments and feedback from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) before submission of a formal application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Concept review does not have a fee. Applicants can benefit from the expertise of Athens-Clarke County's planning staff at any time, but with a concept review the members of the HPC, who will ultimately vote on a COA, can identify potential areas where the proposed project may not satisfy the Design Guidelines and the project can be adjusted without having to issue a formal decision. Even when the concept review does not identify concerns, having had the earlier explanation allows the HPC to better understand the project when the COA hearing occurs, and that review often goes much more smoothly.

Concept reviews take place at regularly scheduled HPC hearings. However, discussion in a concept review is more conversational, with the applicant and the members of the HPC both having the opportunity to ask questions and talk through details. This feedback allows revisions to the proposal to better align with the guidelines before application fees are paid, and often before an architect or designer has gone too far into the design process. Because the decisions of the HPC are final, the opportunity to revise a proposal before submitting it for a vote decreases the likelihood that it will be tabled or rejected. Concept review is especially recommended for larger or more complex projects, such as demolitions, additions, and new construction. Scaled drawings and elevations are encouraged for a thorough concept review, but comments will be provided to the extent possible on any level of conceptual drawings submitted. - Megan Morgan, HPC Member

WHAT IS HISTORIC?

According to the National Park Service, the benchmark age for a property to be considered historic and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places is 50 years. This means that as of 2019, anything built in 1969 or prior should be given consideration as Athens continues to develop and evolve. While some may scoff at the idea that buildings constructed within their lifetime are historic, if we step back and examine our mid-century resources, we can see that they tell us just as much about Athens as the grand antebellum houses of the 19th century and streetcar suburbs of the early 20th century.

Following World War II, Athens expanded as new manufacturers and the Navy Supply School came to town, the University's student body increased, and South Campus was developed. We can see evidence of this growth all along the major commercial roads leading from downtown, and in subdivisions stocked with ranch houses. Urban renewal efforts in the 1950s and 60s were often at odds with preservation, such as the Brutalist-style federal building downtown that led to the Church-Waddel-Brumby house being moved, and the International-style Georgia Power building on Prince Ave. that took the place of the Greek Revival-style Morton Hodgson House. Despite the transgressions they may represent, these buildings are coming of age in their own right and forming the next generation of historic Athens. With materials that were often new and experimental for their time, and floor plans that couldn't have anticipated our needs today, modernist buildings challenge traditional preservation as we know it. How to replace materials that are no longer produced, and improve energy efficiency in buildings that reveled in glass, are questions to grapple with as we move forward. While there are no simple answers, it is certain that the future of preservation is in our more recent past.

- Lauren Patterson, Preservation Intern



596 Prince Ave. took the place of a Greek Revival Michael Brothers' mansion but has now become historic in its own right.

WHO IS THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION?

With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, each state was charged with creating a state historic preservation office (SHPO) that oversees preservation programming and reviews nominations to submit for the National Register of Historic Places. The Georgia SHPO resides within the Department of Natural Resources, with the main office located near Atlanta. Community historic preservation decisions and the designation of historic districts is delegated to the local government level. The Athens Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) began in 1986 with passage of the local preservation ordinance, and the first round of districts and landmarks were designated in 1988.

The Athens HPC is a seven-member board appointed by the Mayor to make preservation-related recommendations for established historic districts and landmarks, and identify new sites for designation. As we enter our 33rd year serving the Athens community, we encourage anyone owning or interested in a historic property to reach out for assistance in determining how to best preserve its character for future generations to enjoy.

HPC MEMBERS

Chair: Jeff Bishop

Vice-Chair: Megan Morgan

Heather Fletcher

Missy Brandt Wilson

Cam Yearty

(2 vacancies)

SUPPORT STAFF

Preservation Planner: Amber Eskew

Assistant Planning Director: Bruce Lonnee

Attorney: Michael Petty

Preservation Intern: Lauren Patterson

All are invited to attend the HPC hearings held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm, 120 W. Dougherty Street.

