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HPC Members

CHAIR: Jeff Bishop
VICE-CHAIR: Heather Fletcher
Bobbie Epting
Ellen L. Walker
Thomas White
Missy Brandt Wilson
(1 vacancy)

Support Staff

PRESERVATION PLANNER: Amber Eskew
ASSISTANT PLANNING DIRECTOR:
Bruce Lonnee
ATTORNEY: Michael Petty

All are invited to attend the HPC
hearings held on the 3rd Wednesday
of each month at 5:30pm,
120 W. Dougherty Street, Athens, GA

[www.accgov.com/208/
Historic-Preservation](http://www.accgov.com/208/Historic-Preservation)



Athens-Clarke County, Georgia Historic Preservation Commission Annual Report 2019

Why Historic Preservation?

By Jeff Bishop, HPC Chair

My path to historic preservation and serving on the HPC has been an interesting one. I was initially drawn to Athens by UGA and remember my first trip to visit the campus. I grew up during the Age of Malls in the late 70s and early 80s and was awestruck by the stately columned homes on Milledge Avenue, the intact and vibrant downtown district, and leafy architectural gem that is UGA's North Campus. Athens infused me with a sense of place and history that connected me to its past in a way that was different than other towns. I have learned that this a common experience for many others who visit.

Call it fateful or naïve, my wife and I purchased a 1890s Queen Anne Cottage back in 2002. We had every intention to restore the cottage while modernizing it but had no idea it was within the Cobbham Historic District. We were initially indignant at the need to follow rules for our home renovation. However, we were surprised to find that the review process with the ACC staff and the guidance from the

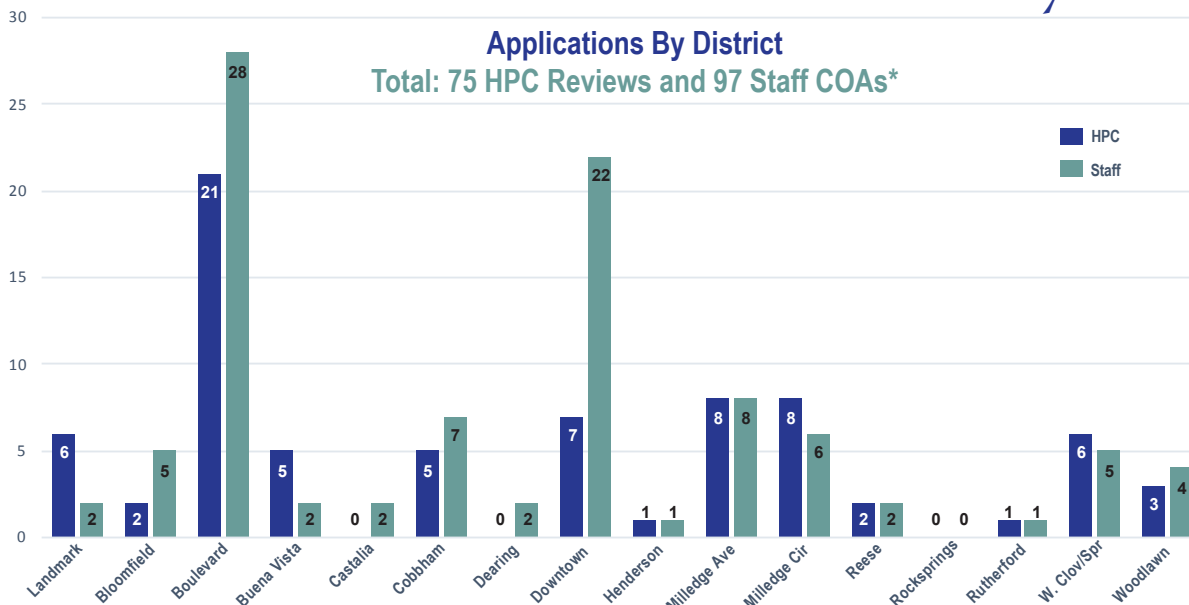
Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (now Historic Athens) led us to a design and architect that helped us get our addition quickly approved. This insight led us to a better design through following guidelines developed to protect the character that drew us to the area.

I have maintained peace of mind from knowing that the historic preservation design guidelines and the oversight of the HPC will keep that character as my neighbors make changes to their properties and that these would be applied evenly to the ill-kempt and the well-groomed, to the small addition or the entire new construction. This guarantee of thoughtful design is a great benefit of local historic designation.

As the Chair of the HPC, I want everyone to understand the process and the resources available to undertake changes to a historic property. Athens-Clarke County offers a Preservation Planner on staff to assist anyone working on a new project and

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The Historic Preservation Commission by the Numbers



Results of 75 COAs Reviewed by the HPC



**This represents a 156% increase in Staff COA's over last year.*

Myths & Misconceptions of Historic Designation

By Heather M. Fletcher, HPC Vice -Chair

The conflict between preservation and property rights, between public benefit and private business, between what should be saved and what should be razed has created a wealth of myths and misconceptions related to the form and function of historic preservation. Though there are infinitely many points and counterpoints as relate to the multitude of historic districts across our state, nation, and even the world, my purpose here is to focus on those that I consider to be some of the most common assumptions with respect to Athens.

MYTH: Prevents any structural changes or additions to the property.

FACT: On the contrary, the majority of applications that come before the HPC regarding additions and/or new construction are approved each year. Our historic guidelines focus on the appropriateness of scale, massing, and avoiding any “false sense of history” that can arise from failure to delineate between the original structure and the modern addition. However, they do not demand that applicants adhere to a specific type of design or aesthetic.

MYTH: Requires new construction to replicate historic homes in the vicinity.



Example of new construction in an historic district. This home was built on a previously empty lot on Hill Street in the Cobbham Historic District.

FACT: In fact, the opposite is true. The guidelines require that new construction not lend itself to a “false sense of history” and discourages new homes from drawing too heavily on historic detailing and/or an excess of building material choices. The size and scale of the new home should compliment those within the same district, but the overall aesthetic should not replicate them.

MYTH: Makes it prohibitively expensive to perform general home maintenance.

FACT: The majority of items considered to be general maintenance are allowed without staff review and do not require an application fee. However, if you are requesting repairs (i.e. windows, doors, over 30% of siding) that will necessitate a staff

review and payment of a \$20 application fee. That said, the overall cost of the repair(s) varies from contractor to contractor.

MYTH: Prohibits the alteration of façades on commercial buildings.

FACT: All decisions made by the HPC are determined on a case-by-case basis as we do not consider past commission decisions to set a precedent by which future decisions are unduly influenced. That said, repairing/restoring damaged façades, replacing/repairing awnings, modifying openings, adding ADA accessibility, and removing/altering non-historic additions or buildings, have been approved in the past and, if deemed appropriate for the property, may also be approved in the future. However, it is important to bear in mind that historic photographs and other data may be required to bolster the request for any proposals that could significantly alter the building’s appearance.

What this commission hopes to impart on our citizens is that the purpose of historic preservation is not to keep everything the same ad infinitum, but to tell the story of a community. A story that cannot be told if the physical history of the people who came before us is significantly altered or lost entirely. 🏛️



Previous condition of the 100 block of East Washington Street in downtown Athens, including Copper Creek Brewing and storage.



Modified façades on the same buildings now housing Tweed Recording.

The Susan Building

By Ellen L. Walker, HPC Member



In March 1988, Athens added its second historically Black district to the National Register of Historic Places (Reese Street having been added just the November before). At the time of its designation, The West Hancock Avenue District contained 169 “contributing structures.” Among those structures is “The Susan Building,” which is a Locally Designated Landmark.

Built in 1946 at the corner of Chase St. and W. Hancock, The Susan Medical Center began life as the first maternity hospital for Black women in Athens. Dr. Andrew Jones was the founder and named the hospital after his mother. Little is known of Dr. Jones’ life but he was one of the few Black physicians in the county at the time and saw the great need to provide better maternity care for Black women and their babies.

The construction of the Susan Medical Center was achieved through the fund-raising efforts of Dr. Jones and the local African American community. Significant

donations were also received from former Athens Black residents living in large metropolitan areas outside of Georgia. Some of the names of the rooms in the maternity hospital were subsequently named after the cities in which these donors resided, such as the “Chicago Room.” Dr. Jones ran the medical center until his death in 1952.

The building was purchased in 1953 by another African American physician, Dr. Donarell Green. Dr. Green was born in Atlanta in 1908, where his father was a practicing physician. After graduating from Atlanta University High School, Dr. Green attended Talladega College in Alabama, majoring in pre-medical studies. After college, both he and his wife, Marian Kathleen, taught school in Americus, Georgia for some years. Eventually Dr. Green matriculated at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, the first medical school for African Americans in the South. Graduating from medical school during the war in 1942, Dr. Green then served as a doctor in the South Pacific caring for wounded soldiers. After the war, Dr. Green decided to join the practice of Dr. Jones in Athens. When Dr. Jones passed away, Dr. Green expanded the practice to include general medical services and took care of the large and growing African American population of the city. Dr. Green remained in practice in the Susan Building until the mid-1970s.

The building was renovated in the early 1980s and became the offices of the Thurmond, Thurmond, Miller, and Rucker law practice. It was later purchased by the grandsons of Dr. Green and has been the law offices of Green & Green, run by twin brothers, Donarell R. Green IV and Freddrell R. Green since 1999.

The building is a two-story, wood frame, shingle-sided structure with many features of the Federal style of architecture, including the (mainly) symmetrical entrance topped by a fan light, six-over-six window lights in each sash on the second floor and 8-over-8 on the ground floor. There is a large center hall which includes a substantial staircase to the second floor. The extension on the east side of the building is original to the structure. The lower level of this extension is a screened porch. The Susan Building remains a well-cared for and significant example of the architecture of its time.



The West Hancock Avenue National Historic District.



Lamar Lewis Shoes Becomes Tweed Recording

The property at 131 E. Clayton Street was constructed around 1890 and spent many decades as a hardware store, though most people in Athens remember the recent decades the building housed Lamar Lewis Shoe Store. In the 1950s the shoe store use brought with it an iconic false façade and recessed entry display case that speak to the retail investment in downtown settings that was soon to pause for more suburban development. When Lamar Lewis Shoes closed in 2018 the property was fortunate to catch the

attention of Andrew Ratcliffe. Ratcliffe was able to assemble this property, which is one of few to run to the full depth of the block and also have frontage on East Washington Street along with a neighboring building to house Tweed Recording Studios and Audio Production Academy. (See photos on Page 2.)

The exterior changes needed for the property to function for the recording studios and classrooms were minimal for

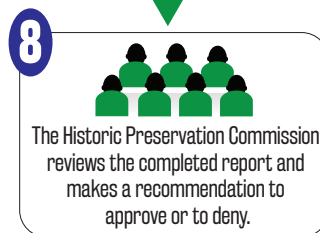
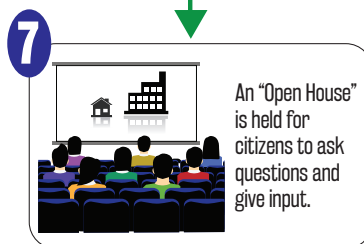
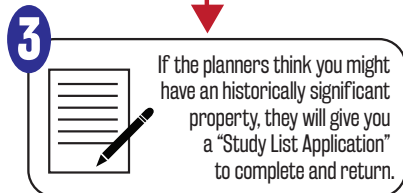
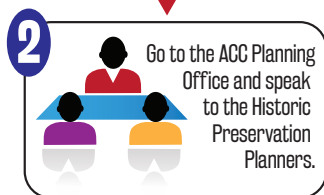
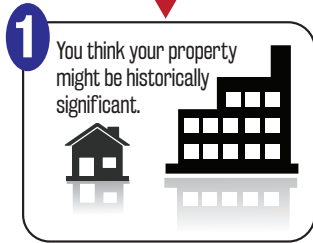
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Path to Historic Landmark Designation for a Single Property in Athens



Property Owner

Historic Preservation Commission



Two New Landmark Properties Approved

On the recommendation of the HPC two properties were designated as Local Historic Landmarks in December. They



540 Milledge Circle

are the "Gannon House" at 540 Milledge Circle which was built in 1936 and the Greyside (Decker-Waters House) at 638 Milledge Circle, built in 1923. These properties lie just outside of the Milledge Circle Historic District. There are now 44 local historic landmarks in Athens-Clarke County.



638 Milledge Circle

Lamar Lewis continued...

the Lamar Lewis Shoes storefront as well as modest for the two storefronts on East Washington Street in the plan designed by Brett Nave and Studio BNA Architects. The Clayton Street false façade was able to be retained along with the recessed entry and the display cases, which now includes a ticket booth area for sales of tickets to the small performance venue that is part of the studio space.

The project went before the Historic Preservation Commission in August of 2018 followed by a few staff level reviews for minor changes. In the fall of 2019, the project was completed with Tweed Recording Studios opening its doors to artists and students.

Why Historic Preservation continued...

the HPC offers concept reviews to just talk about a project in its early planning stages. It is the goal of staff and the HPC to help find design solutions to keep the character of Athens while approving changes for today's lifestyle. We welcome constructive criticism and encourage anyone interested to consider applying with the Clerk of the Commission to join the HPC.

SOURCES FOR THE ARTICLE "THE SUSAN BUILDING" ON PAGE 3:

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, Boundary/Sketch Map of West Hancock Avenue Historic District, Athens, Clarke Co., Georgia, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Feb 19, 1988.