



**Minutes
January 11, 2024**

The City of Salisbury Historic Preservation Commission met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at the SRU Administrative Building, 1 Water Street.

Present: Steve Cobb, Spencer Dixon, Ellie Goodnow, Will James, Sue McHugh, Marcelo Menza, Larry Richardson

Absent: Jon Planovsky, Jeff Richen

Staff Present: Graham Corriher, Hannah Jacobson, Jenni Pfaff, Emily Vanek

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Sue McHugh, at 5:33 pm.

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose and procedure of the meeting was presented by the Chair, Sue McHugh.

**EX PARTE COMMUNICATION/
CONFLICT OF INTEREST OR APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT**

None.

Emily Vanek was sworn in.

NEW CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

H-01-2024, 314 North Ellis Street, Power Cross, Owner; Jeff Storment, Applicant (Parcel ID: 006 305)

Request
Demolition.

Identification of Property

Emily Vanek made a staff presentation that included COA history. The Ellis Street Graded School was built in 1881 in the Italianate style, and is considered "Contributing" to the Ellis Street Graded School Local Historic District.

Staff Findings

Staff finds the following element of the project to be not incongruous with the character of the Ellis Street Graded School Local Historic District:

- 1) The applicant has requested approval for the demolition of the Ellis Street Graded School building. The building was severely damaged by fire in. Per NC 160D-949, HPC does not have the authority to deny a request for demolition but may delay a demolition by up to 365 days. Standard 6.1.1. says to work with HPC to seek alternatives for demolition. The demolition should follow Standard 6.1.2., which says to make a permanent record of the structure, salvage any materials possible, and propose a plan for the site following demolition.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve H-01-2024 at the Ellis Street Graded School located at 314 North Ellis Street (Parcel ID: 006 305), designated within the Ellis Street Graded School Local Historic District, subject to the following condition:

- 1) The demolition shall follow a 365-day delay.

Applicant Testimony

Jeff Storment and Larry Schaffer, an architect working with Power Cross, were both sworn in. Mr. Schaffer asked to reduce the time limit for demolition to 6 months, due to safety concerns, as the property is being explored by their students, as well as other people. Mr. Storment said the state of the building doesn't allow them to continue service to their clients; they've not been able to provide full service for 6 months. It's become apparent that Power Cross' needs don't match the space, as small, confined spaces are not always best for children.

In response to questions from the board, the applicants provided the following information:

- They do not currently have a site plan or proposal for a replacement after demolition. At this time, they plan to landscape with grass to provide more room for the children to use.
- They are using shared space now. Before the fire, they had planned to open up the space inside the current one.
- The applicants expressed a desire to be good community members, but at the same time, they need to take care of their clients. The fire had a negative impact on the children.

Public Comment

Kimberly Stieg, of the Historic Salisbury Foundation (HSF) was sworn in. She expressed the foundation's opposition to demolition with the following points:

- This is Salisbury's oldest public school.
- The National Registry of Historic Places defines a historic district.
- Within this district, Ellis Street Graded School is identified as a contributing structure.
- "Contributing" means noteworthy and important to that district – if removed it would significantly take away from the historic district in which it's located.

- In November, HSF met on site with 2 SHPO representatives and Eddie Belk (architect currently working on the Empire Hotel). His expert opinion, upon inspection of the school, “it would be a crime” and “a real loss” if this contributing structure were to be destroyed. He felt confident it would be very doable to resurrect with what remains.
- SHPO agreed that the exterior brick façade is in good condition, and in their opinion, worthy of both federal and state historic tax credits.
- The district where this is located is named in honor of this structure; the Ellis Street Graded School Local Historic District.
- On behalf of Historic Salisbury Foundation, we oppose the demolition of this important contributing historic structure.

Ed Clement, also of HSF, expanded on her comments, as well as clarifying the historic significance of the structure. It is an architectural and cultural icon, being the second oldest school of its type in NC, as well as the first school to integrate in Rowan County, in 1962.

Deliberation

The HPC cannot deny demolition, but can adjust the time period up to 365 days.

Members were divided regarding the application and request to shorten the demolition time limit. One side recognized the need to preserve such an important building, but was also powerfully moved by the mission of Power Cross, and want the program to continue in that space, so supported a shorter time period. They suggested salvaging material from the old building as an homage.

The other side recognized the program’s importance, but commented that the program will continue, whereas the building may not. Other historic buildings have been bought by organizations that didn’t make good use of them, which led to demolition. The 365-day period can allow for alternatives to be explored.

Findings of Fact

Steve Cobb made the following MOTION: “I have reviewed the case and all presented testimony and facts and am familiar with the property in question and, therefore, move that the Commission find the following facts concerning HPC case #H-01-2024

- 1) That **Jeff Stormont, agent for Power Cross, owner,** appeared before the Commission and sought a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at **314 North Ellis Street** and designated within the **Ellis Street Graded School** Local Historic District
- 2) The proposed project is **not incongruous** as detailed in the application and staff finding number 1 and incorporated herein; Larry Schaffer spoke regarding the safety issue of children and others exploring the area, and the architectural issues in renovating it. Kimberly Stieg and Ed Clement, of the Historic Salisbury Foundation both spoke in opposition of the demolition.”

Will James seconded the MOTION. The motion carried with members presents VOTING (6-1), via voice vote.

Action

Steve Cobb continued, “I, therefore, move based on the testimony presented, the adopted Findings of Fact, and the adopted Local Historic Design Standards that the Commission:

Approve H-01-2024 subject to any conditions detailed in the Findings of Fact.”

Will James seconded the MOTION. The motion carried with members presents VOTING (4-3), via voice vote.

H-02-2024, 209 South Ellis Street, Bob and Stephanie Potter, Owners/Applicants (Parcel ID: 010 033)

Request

Replace front door with wooden double door.

Identification of Property

Emily Vanek made a staff presentation that included COA history. The Wagoner House was built in 1880 in the Victoria style, and is considered “Contributing” to the West Square Local Historic District.

Staff Findings

Staff finds the following element of the project to be not incongruous with the character of the West Square Local Historic District:

- 1) The applicant has requested approval to replace the existing front door with a wooden double-door. The applicant has submitted photos that show a keeper for a double-door lock on the threshold of the front door. Standard 3.3.3. says to replace doors when necessary with new that match the original in size, method of operation, and material.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve H-02-2024 at the Wagoner House located at 209 South Ellis Street (Parcel ID: 010 033), designated within the West Square Local Historic District.

Applicant Testimony

Bob Potter was sworn in. They began remodeling the house in 2022, and have tried to find photos of the original door, but so far have found no evidence. The presence of a keeper indicates it was originally a double door.

In response to questions from the board, Mr. Potter verified the location of the threshold, and clarified the type of door they want to install.

Public Comment

John Schaffer agrees with their decision to replace the door. It is very in keeping with the district and style of the house.

Karen Lilly-Bowyer said it will be tremendous improvement; more authentic than the current door.

Deliberation

Members discussed the scale and proportion of the proposed door, and the condition to preserve the sawtooth design at the top.

Findings of Fact

Will James made the following MOTION: “I have reviewed the case and all presented testimony and facts and am familiar with the property in question and, therefore, move that the Commission find the following facts concerning HPC case #H-02-2024

- 1) That **Bob and Stephanie Potter, owners**, appeared before the Commission and sought a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at **209 South Ellis Street** and designated within the **West Square** Local Historic District
- 2) The proposed project is **not incongruous** as detailed in the application and staff finding number 1 and incorporated herein; John Schaffer and Karen Lilly-Bowyer spoke in favor of the project.
- 3) The findings are subject to the one condition incorporated herein; the owners will retain the sawtooth molding above the door.”

Spencer Dixon seconded the MOTION with all members present VOTING AYE (7-0), via voice vote.

Action

Will James continued, “I, therefore, move based on the testimony presented, the adopted Findings of Fact, and the adopted Local Historic Design Standards that the Commission: **Approve H—02-2024** subject to any conditions detailed in the Findings of Fact.”

Spencer Dixon seconded the MOTION with all members present VOTING AYE (7-0), via voice vote.

HL-07-2023, 121 West Council Street, The Salisbury; Josh Barhhardt, Owner; Karen Lilly-Bowyer, Agent

Request

Local Historic Landmark property application.

Identification of Property

Emily Vanek made a staff presentation, including local historic landmark criteria. The Salisbury Building, built in 1929, in the Art Deco style, is classified as “Contributing” to the Downtown Local Historic District and the Salisbury National Register District.

Staff Findings

Special Significance

The applicant is requesting consideration for Local Historic Landmark-Property designation for The Salisbury building under Criteria C. The building is the one of few Art Deco commercial structures in the downtown, other examples include the Mayfield Building at 221 N. Main Street and commercial building at 106 E. Innes Street. The building was designed by Marye, Alger, and Vinour, a firm that specialized in Art Deco and Beaux Arts designs. The building was originally the offices of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company; in 1984, it was sold by Southern Bell and rented as office suites. In 2021, it was converted into apartments.

Integrity

Staff finds that The Salisbury building retains integrity in all seven aspects.

- Location – The building remains at its original location.
- Setting – The building remains in its original downtown setting between religious and office uses. Though the use of the building has changed from office to residential, the change in use has not significantly altered traffic or surrounding features in a way that would detract from its setting.
- Design – The exterior plan, fenestration pattern, and detailing has remained constant. The front façade is arranged vertically into the three bays with the west bay being more pronounced than the other two bays; the main entrance is on the first floor of the west bay. The west bay steps out slightly on the north and west elevations and is slightly taller than the other two bays creating a tower effect. The main entrance is centered within the west bay and is a set of doors with decorative glass panes on the top two-thirds and wood panels on the bottom third. Above the door is a transom with decorative glass. The door surround angles in, with stone quoining and decorative carved stone embellishments above and flanking the door. The interior lobby was retained when converting to residential units.
- Workmanship – The high quality of the artisan's labor and skills is evident in the building brick construction and in the well-preserved ornamental detailing. The ornate carved stone continues to carry to the top of the building creating the vertical arrangement.
- Materials – All of the building's significant materials have been preserved. Exterior yellow and brown brick and Indiana limestone have been restored.
- Feeling – The building expresses all of the aesthetic and historical sense of the Art Deco period. The building retains integrity of setting, design, and workmanship that allows the building to express its historic character.
- Association – The historical purpose of the building was business and the setting still reflects that purpose.

Designation

The landmark application report proposes the entire exterior of the building and site to be included in the landmark designation. Since the property is within the Downtown Local Historic District, the exterior of all buildings and site features will still be subject to the Certificate of Appropriateness process and the Local Historic Design Standards, regardless of landmark designation.

Interior features to be designated include original terrazzo floors, decorative radiators covers, and original entryway light fixture. If designated, these features would be protected through the COA process.

HPC Pre-Application Decision

At their November 9, 2023 meeting, the HPC voted unanimously of members present (7-0) found that the Salisbury Building at 121 West Council Street is likely to have special significance for its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance in at least one of the special significance criterion and all seven aspects of integrity to qualify as a Local Historic Landmark – Property and accept the Landmark Pre-application.

SHPO Comment

The landmark designation report was forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office for their comment in accordance with NCGS 160C-196. Jeff Smith, National Register Coordinator, provided the following comment on the proposed designation:

“The Local Designation Report (the report) for “The Salisbury” presents a well-documented case for local significance.

The restored Art Deco period finishes and features in the former ca, 1929 Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company appear to be unique among Salisbury’s built landscape thereby adding to their local significance. Although the author included floorplans in the report, the addition of Sayre’s original blueprints (copies/scans) would have added even more visual appeal to the report. As presented, however, the author’s analysis of the building presents a defensible justification for local landmark designation. “

HPC Application Decision

HPC shall hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to City Council whether the property has been found to exhibit special significance and integrity worthy of the Local Historic Landmark – Property designation.

Applicant Testimony

Karen Lilly-Bowyer made a presentation to the HPC.

Motion

Spencer Dixon made a MOTION, “I move that the Commission find that the Salisbury Building at 121 West Council Street has special significance for its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance in at least one of the special significance criterion and all seven aspects of

integrity to qualify as a Local Historic Landmark – Property and recommend the designation to City Council.”

Sue McHugh seconded the MOTION. The motion carried with all members present VOTING AYE (7-0), via voice vote.

HL-01-2023, 201 South Fulton Street, The Franklin Smith House; John and Pamela Schaffer, Owners; Karen Lilly-Bowyer, Agent

Request

Local Historic Landmark property pre-application.

Identification of Property

Emily Vanek made a staff presentation, including local historic landmark criteria. The Franklin Smith House, built in 1902, in the Spanish Mission style, is classified as “Contributing” to the West Square Local Historic District and the Salisbury National Register District.

Staff Findings

Special Significance

The applicant is requesting landmark designation under Criterion C. The house is an excellent example of the Spanish Mission style by showcasing the distinctive characteristics of the style, including a mission shaped dormer with quatrefoil window, large square porch supports with arched arcade balcony above, red tile roof covering, widely overhanging eaves, and smooth stucco wall covering. For this reason, staff finds that the property meets Criterion C.

Integrity

Staff finds that the Franklin Smith House retains integrity in all seven aspects.

- Location – The property remains at its original location. The property is located within the West Square neighborhood, which was largely developed from the mid 1800’s to the early 1900’s.
- Setting – The property remains in its original setting within the West Square neighborhood. The property is located on a corner lot near other single-family residences and places of worship. Lots in this part of the neighborhood are typically large with mature landscaping. A wall with detailing that relates back to the house and wooden balconies was constructed to enclose the rear yard in 2015, but does not detract from the setting.
- Design – The house retains its Spanish Mission design. The house is asymmetrical with entry porch supported by large, square piers with arched, arcaded balcony above. Dormer mimicking typical Spanish Colonial mission buildings with quatrefoil window, clay tile roof, shaped raftertails, and chimney pots decorate the hipped roof. Stucco embellishments are found around the house on square piers and below the roof line.
- Workmanship – The precision in stucco sculpting, shaped raftertails, and balconies reflect the skill of the artisans that created the elements of the house. The mission dormer, red clay

tiles, chimney pots demonstrate a nearly precise example of the Spanish Mission style. Interior mantel, stairs, and plaster that are proposed for designation are well crafted and preserved.

- Materials – Original stucco appliques on brick are in remarkable condition. Original leaded glass casement windows, clay tile roof, quatrefoil window remain.
- Feeling – The house retains integrity of setting, design, and materials in a way that allows the property to express its historic character.
- Association – The house retains its association with the Spanish Mission style through the preservation of distinctive characteristics of the style.

Designation

The landmark application report proposes the entire exterior of the building and site to be included in the landmark designation. Since the property is within the West Square Local Historic District, the exterior of all buildings and site features will still be subject to the Certificate of Appropriateness process and the Local Historic Design Standards, regardless of landmark designation.

Interior features to be designated include English Oak woodwork, stained glass features, 18th century marble mantel, oak stairway, restored plaster crown moldings and medallions, and restored gas light fixtures. If designated, these features would be protected through the COA process.

HPC Pre-Application Decision

The HPC shall determine if the Franklin Smith House is likely to have special significance for its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance in at least one of the special significance criterion and all seven aspects of integrity to qualify as a Local Historic Landmark – Property and accept the Landmark Pre-application.

Applicant Testimony

Karen Lilly-Bowyer made a presentation to the HPC. She clarified that the wall around the property is not part of the application.

Motion

Spencer Dixon made a MOTION, “I move that the Commission find that the Franklin Smith House at 201 South Fulton Street is likely to have special significance for its historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance in at least one of the special significance criterion and all seven aspects of integrity to qualify as a Local Historic Landmark – Property and accept the Landmark Pre-application.”

Larry Richardson seconded the MOTION. The motion carried with all members present VOTING AYE (7-0), via voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Members discussed the landmark process, and the suspicion that the city may not be getting an appreciable benefit. Houses within a local historic district receive the same protection, for the exterior. Tax benefits offered for landmark status allow the owners to maintain their properties, however, there is no guarantee they'll be used for that purpose. It was suggested that a subcommittee be gathered to explore options, and make recommendations, such as adjusting the standards with levels to include landmarks, to make them more equitable.

Graham Corriher was asked about recent decisions that did not hold infill properties under the same conditions as contributing or pivotal. He said that the standards should cover all properties within the district. The board discussed the option of changing the standards to make that distinction, and the equity of that kind of action.

Minor Works Report

Spencer Dixon made a motion to approve the report as written, Larry Richardson seconded the motion; all members present voted AYE via voice vote.

Approval of Minutes

Spencer Dixon made a motion to approve the December, 2023 minutes as written. Marcelo Menza seconded the motion. All members present voted AYE via voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at: 7:49 pm. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2024, in Council Chambers at Salisbury City Hall, 217 South Main Street.

DocuSigned by:

Sue McHugh

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Sue McHugh, Chair

Jennifer Pfaff
Jennifer Pfaff, Secretary