

**GREENSBORO HISTORIC
PRESERVATION COMMISSION
September 24, 2024
Draft**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesse Arnett (Chair), Sharon Graeber (Vice Chair), Bert Vanderveen (Dunleath), Arlen Nicolls (College Hill), Jo Leimenstoll, Katherine Rowe, Eric Woodard.

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Cowhig, Stef Geary, Planning Department; Brent Ducharme City Attorney's Office.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

Tracy Pratt, Deborah Kaufman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

There were no minutes to approve.

Speakers were sworn in.

Commissioner Vanderveen was recused for a conflict of interest for item 3(a)

APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (PUBLIC HEARING):

- (a) **Application Number: 2949 (APPROVED with conditions)**
Location: 510 N. Church Street
Applicant: Keith Crabtree
Owner: Matthew Benfield
Date Application Received: 8/16/24

Description of Work:

Construction of three accessory structures and installation of signage (after-the-fact)

Staff Recommendation:

Ms. Geary described the project explaining that this is an after-the-fact application for three accessory structures and two signs. Staff presented images of the property and examples of carports previously approved in the districts.

Staff comments were read into the record:

Based on information contained in the application, the staff supports this application with conditions. In the staff's opinion the proposed project as presented is not incongruous with the *Historic Standards—Introduction (page 4)*, *Accessory Structures and Garages (page 36)* and *Signs (page 34)* for the following reasons:

Facts

This is a non-contributing structure in the Fisher Park Historic District. It is a commercial property.

Three accessory structures have been placed at the rear of the property in the existing parking area. The sizes of the structures in feet are 12 x 20, 12 x 16 and 8 x 8.

The structures are separated by 5 feet per City Zoning Code and the combined total square footage is within the allowable size per City Zoning Code. Accessory Structures cannot total more than 33% of the main structure square footage.

One unit is easily visible from the street and the door is painted red.

Two signs have been installed. The first sign is wood and is a freestanding sign located at the front of the property. This sign measures 4 feet by 5 feet. The second sign is attached to the building façade and is 4 feet by 4 feet in size. The signs are not internally illuminated.

Standards (page 4)

The guidelines allow for change when it is accomplished in a sensitive manner that maintains the special character of the Historic District, while meeting the practical needs of the residents and property owners....Buildings in the historic districts can be quite different from one another—yet they have a common denominator: they exist within a locally zoned historic district with the shared goal of maintaining and preserving the character and spirit of the historic neighborhood.

Standards (page 36)

2. Design new garages and outbuildings to be compatible with the main structure on the lot in material and design, using existing historic outbuildings in the districts as an example.

4. New garages and accessory buildings should be located in rear yards and not past the centerline of the house.

Standards (page 34)

1. Introduce unobtrusive, simple signage in the historic districts.

2. New signs should be no larger than necessary to identify the building they serve, and located so that they do not block pedestrian views along the street.

3. Select traditional materials for new signs including wood, metal, stone, and masonry. Carved or sandblasted signboards are generally not appropriate in the Historic Districts. Signs should be painted, and may be lighted with concealed spotlights.

4. An appropriate location for a freestanding sign in a residential area is close to the front walk and near the public sidewalk.

5. Billboards (outdoor advertising signs) and other tall freestanding signs, portable signs, flashing or lighted message signs, plastic signs, and signs with internally illuminated letters are not appropriate in the Historic Districts.

6. It is not appropriate to attach signs to a building in any manner that conceals, damages, or causes the removal of architectural features or details.

7. Signage should be compatible with the original use of a building.

A. It is not historically appropriate to install signs directly on façades or porch roofs of residential buildings and those buildings originally intended for residential use. The installation of a freestanding sign is most appropriate, as it is less likely to detract from the architecture of the building.

B. Place signs for historic commercial buildings in locations originally intended for signage, such as at the top of the storefront or on windows, doors, or awnings.

C. Signage for new commercial buildings should reflect similar placement to that of historic commercial buildings in the neighborhood.

Conditions:

That the Accessory Structures are painted in the same color scheme of the building or in a more neutral color pallet, particularly that the red door be painted to make it less noticeable from the street.

Staff was asked to zoom in closer on the signs. Staff stated she believes the free standing sign is a temporary sign. She spoke to the mansard style roof that reads as an office and non-contributing. Jesse Arnett stated he noted it is in the local but not the national district. Ms. Geary spoke about the desire of highest percentage of contributing structures for NR and this is the last building on the fringe that makes it easy to carve out. She stated that it would have predated the establishment of the districts but not original.

In Support:

Brad Garner, 1904 Ray Alexander Dr., Sworn in.

Ms. Garner stated he represents KC Construction who leases the building. Rebecca Logan from KC is also with him. He said they did not realize that they are in the district until they received the violation notice. They have been at this property a little over a year. He stated the material of the sign on the building is metal.

Rebecca Logan, 3116 Spring Meadow Dr. Snowville Georgis, sworn in. Ms. Logan explained that the wooden sign is not a permanent sign but it is tacked down. Ms. Geary asked if there is an intent to do a brick sign. She said at this time they are not planning until they receive approval. She said painting the door would not be an issue.

There was no further discussion.

In Opposition:

There was no one to speak in opposition.

The public hearing was closed.

Discussion:

Commissioners discussed the signs and noted that the freestanding sign should come back as a staff approval for a permanent monument sign. Mr. Arnett stated it appears to have angle brackets. Ms. Geary stated we would normally see a masonry base. Mr. Woodard stated he would like to see something more substantial.

Regarding the accessory structures Ms. Leimenstoll stated that the siting is at the back of the house and at the back of the site and that the red door does draw attention. Ms. Graeber stated that we are not dictating the color just requiring a neutral color. Ms. Geary explained that at the staff level we do not require a COA however at the Commission level using color to help mitigate a situation does allow it to be back in your purview. Mr. Arnett said he does not find the door color a concern because we don't normally look at color and its at the fringe of the neighborhood.

Mr Garner added that the lease expires in 2025 and they asked that if there is a condition to require a permanent sign that it would take into account the lease. Ms. Geary suggested that they come back for a COA once their lease is determine. At this time Mr. Garner said that they do not know at this time if they will renew and he said that would not be a problem at all to paint the door. If they vacate the property the accessory structures will be removed. Commissioners agreed that the lease is a good indicator to determine if the permanent sign is needed. Katherine stated that they should support the standards on the red door, Arlen agreed. Mr. Garner stated the lease expires July 31, 2025. Ms. Geary cited the introduction section on page 4 that is called the application of the

standards and this was written to take into account the special needs of commercial buildings while also staying in keeping with the district. She said that the red door really calls out attention on a prefabricated building that might not otherwise be permitted.

Commissioner Leimenstoll moved that based on the facts presented in application # 2949, and the public hearing, the Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission finds that the proposed project is not incongruous with the Historic Preservation Commission Program Manual and Design Standards and that the Staff Comments and Standards on page 4, 36 #2 and 4, 34 #1-7 and that it is a non-contributing structure, the buildings are cited appropriately and the signs meet the standards are acceptable as finding of facts. Seconded: Sharon Graeber.

The Commission voted 5-1 in favor. Ayes: Arnett, Graeber, Rowe, Leimenstoll, Nicolls, Woodard. Nays: none Abstain: Vanderveen.

Therefore, I move that the Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission approves application #2949 and grants a Certificate of Appropriateness to Keith Crabtree for work at 510 N. Church Street with the following conditions: the color of the red door that is visible from the street be painted a neutral color in consultation with staff and second that if the lease is renewed on July 31, 2025 that the applicant construct a more permanent base for the sign on the front yard. Seconded by Graeber.

The Commission voted 6-0 in favor. Ayes: Arnett, Graeber, Rowe, Leimenstoll, Nicolls, Woodard. Nays: none Abstain: Vanderveen.

APPROVED with conditions.

Commissioner Vanderveen returned to the meeting.

- (a) Application Number: 2941 (continued)**
- Location: 621 Walker Avenue (Wafco Mills Condominiums)**
- Applicant: Leighsa Windsor**
- Owner: Wafco Mills Condominium Association, Inc**
- Date Application Received: 7/25/24**

Description of Work:

Construction of dumpster enclosure (continued)

Staff Recommendation:

Ms. Geary described the project explaining that this is continued from last month's meeting for the applicant to provide more information on the alternative locations and approaches that were considered. She presented staff comments and the additional documentation that was provided. She explained that the enclosure may not have a dumpster but may be used to hide individual trash cans. She said that the three complexes are now separate. We heard testimony last month of the other locations however for this month they have provided a map that better shows where they considered alternative places. She said the proposed site utilizes 2 parking spaces and a landscaping hedge is already in place. She showed images of the proposed site. She said after the lengthy discussion at last month's meeting we discussed what is in the purview of the commission—the commission is looking at the siting, the materials and design, what is visible from the public right of way and how the residents interact with where this is located. She then went over the additional locations. The first location would remove 5 parking spaces and issues with the type of pavement that would deteriorate the

pavement. Again, this was all in testimony last month but now provided on a map to better illustrate this. She then provided images of examples of a non-contributing multi-family with a dumpster and then historic Canon Court Apartments where a dumpster is visible from Hendrix Street. She also showed Winbourne Court where individual cans are off of Edgar Alley where it is off the street and not visible. Commissioner Nicolls said there are also dumpsters for that complex. Ms. Geary stated that finding a workable solution is a very complex situation. She said staff is supportive of the application

Staff comments were read into the record:

Based on information contained in the application, the staff supports this application with conditions. In the staff's opinion the proposed project as presented is not incongruous with the *Historic Standards—Fences, Walls and Site Features (page 24-27)* for the following reasons:

Facts

A dumpster and trash can enclosure is proposed for Wafco Mills Condominiums as shown. The enclosure will be constructed out of brick with doors that will fully enclose the receptacles.

The proposed location is at the end of an existing parking area that abuts Cedar Street. However, the dumpster enclosure will not be in a rear yard or behind a building and will be visible from the street. Existing hedges and additional screening should be maintained and added to buffer visibility from Cedar Street and neighboring residential buildings.

Standards (page 26)

1. *Place miscellaneous items such as swimming pools, playground equipment, concrete pads and basketball goals, tree houses, dumpsters, and trash receptacles only in areas such as rear yards, where they are not visible from the street.*
2. *Trash receptacle and dumpster areas must be adequately screened from view of the public right-of-way and adjoining residences with shrubs and/or fencing.*

Conditions:

That landscape hedging is installed/maintained on 3 sides of the structure to block the view from the street and residential units.

Commissioners discussed the proposed location. Commissioner Nicolls explained that the site is a green space currently with a substantial hedge. Ms. Geary said that "the public right of way visibility is part of the Commission's purview". Mr. Arnett spoke about the standards as they relate to visibility however the standards are worded more for residential properties. The proposed site is at the rear of the units but also in a very visible area from the public right of way. Commissioners discussed this is a challenge and the applicant has been thorough and diligent in preparing the proposal. Ms. Nicolls expressed concerns about lighting and the activity of bringing the trash to the site and if it will be disruptive.

In Support:

Joy Watson, 909 W. Wendover Ave., Wafco Mills Condominium Association, Sworn in.

Ms. Watson explained that she owns a first floor unit adjacent to the proposed site. She walked the commission through the color coded drawing and explained Wafco Lane had limits because of trucks causing damage to the asphalt parking. She said there is also a window at the end of the building. She said that at the proposed site it will be set back from where the building begins. The Wafco Lane site was the first choice but because of the loss of parking spaces it was agreed it was too great an issue. 4 out of the 5 board members voted in favor of the proposed site over the Wafco Lane site. Commissioner Nicolls spoke about the front stoop at the front of the units but that the

back entrances have more of a courtyard and gated space. Joy continued that there was a public meeting and they received positive feedback. They will add landscaping and lighting. She did express concern about the unsightly appearance of the Historic Wafco dumpster site but it is outside the district. Many units have had to look out on those dumpsters. It was clarified that the enclosure will not be brick but wooden with iron gates with a mural. There will be swinging doors and a pedestrian door.

In Opposition:

Zane Kuseybi, Windsor Road, Summerfield. Sworn in. Mr. Kuseybi stated he is the property owner of 620 B. Wafco which is adjacent to the proposed site. He spoke in opposition at the August meeting and still has concerns with the proposed project. He wants to see more community discussion on this topic. He stated the complex is currently using individual cans and a location that is within the center of the complex. He is concerned about the height and scale of the enclosure, safety issues, and that a dumpster doesn't represent what we want to achieve in the historic districts.

Samantha Stewart, 211 S. Tate Street, College Hill NA, sworn in. Ms. Stewart stated the CHNA does not believe that this fits the standards because of the visibility from the public right of way. There is a slope and topography coming down Walker that makes this the end point of the view shed looking down Walker. She encouraged a continuance.

Lana Kuseybi, Windsor Road, Summerfield. Sworn in. Ms. Kuseybi explained 3 points: 1) Safety because of the hedging that will encourage transient individuals to hide in the bushes, 2) The gate for the walkway was closed off because of too many people walking through the hedges and we can't control what people do at night and the enclosure is a much higher height that will aid in hiding 3) She had a question if the new information was made available.

Rebuttal

Joy Watson, Sworn in. She stated a significant amount of time was spent evaluating and developing the proposal. No one wants trash. He said they considered a valet service where it is moved from the front door to a location off site but this is a very costly option. They need a more permanent solution. She said the other locations will be more visible. They want residents to feel safe and 4 out of 5 board members voted in favor.

The public hearing was closed.

Discussion:

Commissioners discussed the details of the project asking the applicant additional questions including that they currently have cans at the end of a building with a side window and an easement. There are 66 trash and 66 recycling cans. Neighbors are maintaining the area. This is the interim solution. Commissioners expressed interest in if the current cans could be screened or a different configuration be used. Commissioner Arnett asked: Do we have enough information to make a decision and if so does it conform with the standards? Commissioner Vanderveen stated the current location is much worse because of the visibility. They discussed that it is nearly impossible to completely screen any location and she has concerns over the scale and height. There was discussion of it needing a landscape plan. Katherine stated: 1) no landscape plan 2) should fit in better with the architecture of the site 3) Acknowledged it is a very constrained site and that 4) there are positives and negatives to the proposed plan. Commissioners discussed that there is likely no perfect solution. Commissioner Arnett reread the standards and addressed that it should be screened from the public right of way except for access to the gates. Commissioner Leimenstoll analyzed that she does not have a concern due to the existing screening but wants to know if the interior screening could be best addressed through landscaping. She said there is an overall volume to this that needs to be minimized. The current view is parking. Key elements missing is

more information on refining the scale/volume, the design should be more compatible with the complex utilizing brick, and there should be a landscape plan for the purposes of screening. Commissioners discussed continuing the item again and creating a design sub-committee. Commissioner Arnett stated he believes the proposed site appears to be the only location. Other Commissioners wanted to learn more about alternative sites. Ms. Watson addressed the idea of turning the enclosure so it opens on Cedar and that is not feasible due to utilities and easements.

Commissioners agreed that there are too many outstanding questions and it should be continued and that this is an opportunity to create something that works well with the site. Commissioners decided to create a sub-committee of 3 HPC members to meet with the applicant and residents to discuss design concepts. In the meantime, the COA is not on the agenda. It is not a binding decision but is a customer service offering. Commissioners also discussed if the design could look more like an historic accessory dwelling. Brick and wood is most desired. Continuance has 180 days from the date of receipt of the application and this application was received 7/25/24. Ms. Geary said that we should check with the applicant to see if they are interested in working with the sub-committee and Ms. Watson agreed. Ms. Geary stated that there should be a date for when the proposal should come back from the sub-committee and there is not likely enough time to meet ahead of the October meeting but the next is December 4th. Commissioner Arnett stated that there is a desire to continue it because there is not enough information: 1) Landscape plan 2) Scale and height of enclosure 3) design and materials 4) Easement and Utility issues and it is apparent this may be the only location.

Commissioner Vanderveen moved that we continue application 2941 until the December Meeting. Seconded by Leimenstoll. The Commission voted 6-0 in favor. Ayes: Arnett, Graeber, Vanderveen, Rowe, Leimenstoll, Nicolls, Woodard. Nays: none

Commissioner Leimenstoll made a second motion to create a sub-committee of the applicant, staff and residents. Commissioners Vanderveen, Nicolls and Graeber volunteered. Seconded by Woodard. The Commission voted 6-0 in favor. Ayes: Arnett, Graeber, Vanderveen, Rowe, Leimenstoll, Nicolls, Woodard. Nays: none

Continued with the creation of a sub-committee.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION CHAIRMAN:

Commissioner Graeber stated she attended a training session that was very valuable. Commissioners spoke highly of the PGI annual meeting.

ITEMS FROM PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Brent Dusharme, legal went over the process of recusal and absences.

SPEAKERS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further discussions before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stefan-leih Geary, Executive Secretary
Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission

MC/SLG