

**MINUTES OF THE  
GUILFORD COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
APRIL 15, 2014**

The Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, April 15, 2014 at 6:05 p.m. in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Old Guilford County Courthouse, 301 West Market Street, Greensboro, North Carolina. The Board members present were: Acting Chair Jerry Nix, Tina Barber, Julius Spradling, Melinda Trevorrow, Jo Leimenstoll, and Terri Hammond. County staff present was: Les Eger.

Acting Chair Nix called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 18, 2014 REGULAR MEETING:**

Ms. Leimenstoll moved approval of the February 18, 2014 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Spradling. The Commission voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Nix, Spradling, Leimenstoll, Barber, Trevorrow, Hammond. Nays: None.)

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

Speakers were sworn as to their testimony in the following matter.

**Landmark Designation:** Accept, deny or return the landmark application exterior, lot, and stairwell common areas, Cannon Court Condominiums, 828 North Elm Street, Greensboro, North Carolina. Applicant – Cannon Court Home Owners Association and all unit owners. **(RECOMMENDED)**

Mr. Eger stated that the Cannon Court Home Owners Association is requesting landmark designation of the exterior of the condominium building and the property surrounding it. The application requests that the stairwells be included in the consideration for landmark designation.

Following the presentation and review of the application at the February 2014 meeting, Mr. Eger sent the application to the State Historic Preservation Office. Members are in receipt of comments and questions raised by Ann Swallow during her review of the application. The State Historic Preservation Office gave a favorable response to the application; however, they could not give a direct recommendation.

The applicant has additional information regarding this application that will be added to the packet if the application is approved and recommended to the City Council.

Carl Myatt, 213 North Park Drive, indicated that he has spoken with Ms. Swallow at the State Historic Preservation Office regarding fireproofing methods and the unique nature of the "U" shaped courtyard. He distributed and reviewed information regarding these issues. Mr. Myatt explained that he located documentation of an ordinance that was passed in 1926 by the Greensboro City Council that required all apartment buildings over two stories in height to be fireproofed.

During their earlier conversation, Ms. Swallow asked Mr. Myatt if Cannon Court's "U" shaped courtyard was unique to Greensboro or if there were other courtyards with the same form. Mr. Myatt looked into the matter and found two apartment buildings built in the same era. Winburn Court, 203 Tate Street, has a courtyard that faces the side of the building, not the front. Another property located at the corner of West Market Street and Mendenhall Street has a "U" shaped courtyard; however, the open end of the horseshoe shape

faces the back of the building. He was unable to locate any other courtyards similar to Cannon Court. Mr. Myatt stated that the “U” shaped courtyard form at Cannon Court Condominiums is unique to Greensboro because it is the only apartment or condominium complex that faces a main street where entrance is gained through the front-facing courtyard.

Mr. Myatt referred to the Commission’s request at the last meeting for a photograph of Cannon Court Condominiums. He described his efforts to locate a photo of the building. The only picture he could find was obtained from Marvin Brown’s book on significant structures in Greensboro, taken in 1983.

Laura Katz, 828 North Elm Street, is President of the Cannon Court Home Owners Association. Responding to questions from members, she stated that the picture taken of the building in 1983 is representative of the current look of the building.

Chris Fletcher, 828 North Elm Street, stated that no changes other than landscaping have been made to the way the building looks. A large tree was removed due to its potential to become a hazard. The awnings have been replaced over the last five years with similar materials. The lamppost that is visible in the picture still exists and the walkways remain the same. He noted that a black fence was installed on a portion of the property within the last five years with the approval of the Fisher Park Neighborhood Association.

Responding to questions, Ms. Katz stated that the majority of apartments have window units. Residents are being encouraged to use portable air conditioning units instead of window units. In addition, she commented that an energy study was made and after exploring options that were available, the current system was determined to be very efficient and replacement would not be worthwhile. She indicated that the cost for heating and cooling the units is minimal.

Mr. Myatt stated that they would like the interior stairwells included in the application if possible. The interior stairwells are original as well as the doors and doorframes.

Ms. Leimenstoll asked if the finishes of the walls and floors in the stairwells were original. Ms. Katz said that the floors are carpeted with industrial grade carpet for safety reasons with the exception of the ground level that has tile. The banister, staircases, moldings in the hallway, the doors, and the windows in the staircase are all-original. She felt that the finishes were historically accurate.

Members discussed a reference in the packet to permanently altered elements including the five stairwell entry doors. Mr. Myatt commented that the entrances were original and although the single full glass entry doors were very old, research would have to be done to determine if they were also original. It was determined that the permanently altered element refers to a remnant of an awning located under the canopy to the main entrance.

Ms. Leimenstoll was appreciative of the applicant’s extra research to clarify that City Council did take action to pass an ordinance to fireproof apartment buildings. She felt it was a very good point that although there are other “U” shaped apartment buildings from this era in Greensboro, this is the only one that has a courtyard fronting a main street. This is clearly a very distinctive feature of the building.

Mr. Eger questioned if an error was made in the report regarding the reference to permanently altered elements. Ms. Leimenstoll felt it was unclear why the statement was made in the report that the doors to the five stairwells were permanently altered. The doors that are there now, which have a large fixed glazing to them are appropriate doors. It seems there is some question as to whether they are the original doors.

Acting Chair Nix commented that apartment buildings need to show some type of significance to be designated. The Commission strives to choose the best examples of architecture in Greensboro of different

periods. He felt that the unique "U" shaped configuration and the beautiful brickwork with the bay windows were significant features. In addition, the exterior has not really been changed and has most of the original windows. His only concern was in regard to the designation of the common area. He suggested that all the land and the entire exterior be designated, not the interior. He commented that designating the interior would represent a nightmare to the tax department. Even though the stairwells have not been significantly changed, they are typical of a metal staircase and not exceptional.

Ms. Katz was amenable to deleting the common area from the application.

Acting Chair Nix informed the applicant that a request for any change to be made to the exterior of the building in the future must be brought back to the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Ms. Leimenstoll moved to recommend approval of the landmark application for Cannon Court Apartment Condominiums at 828 North Elm Street for the entire building exterior and all of the land; this apartment building is clearly deserving of landmark status as a distinctive example of a courtyard "U" shaped apartment building fronting a main street and maintains much of its original architectural materials and finishes as well as the general appearance of the courtyard; seconded by Ms. Trevorrow. The Commission voted unanimously 6-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Nix, Barber, Spradling, Trevorrow, Leimenstoll, Hammond. Nays: None.)

#### **NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

##### **Possible Discussion on Grant Processing through SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office)**

Acting Chair Nix stated that this item has been removed from the agenda and will be discussed at a later date.

#### **NEXT SCHEDULE MEETING:**

The next scheduled meeting of the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission will be held on May 20, 2014.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Nix, Vice-Chairman  
Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission

JN/sm:jd