



THE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION OF ASHEVILLE & BUNCOMBE COUNTY 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

Created in 1979, the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) of Asheville and Buncombe County is a 12 member, jointly appointed, quasi-judicial body with six members appointed by the Asheville City Council and six members appointed by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. The HRC meets on the second Wednesday of each month in the North Conference Room on the 1st floor of the Asheville City Building.

Mission

The mission of the Historic Resources Commission is to preserve and protect the cultural and architectural resources of Asheville & Buncombe County. The HRC is responsible for the evaluation of historically significant neighborhoods and individual sites for both national and local historic designation. The HRC also adopts or modifies preservation design guidelines as necessary for local districts and evaluates new construction and alterations to existing structures and landscapes for congruence with the adopted guidelines. Additionally, the HRC serves as an educational resource providing technical assistance and general information on the process and benefits of historic preservation to area residents and property owners.

Certified Local Government Program

The HRC is a Certified Local Government pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act. This means that the local government must enforce appropriate legislation, establish and maintain a qualified review commission, maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties, and provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including making recommendations on properties being considered for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Reports are submitted on an annual basis to the NC State Historic Preservation office to confirm that all program requirements are met.

The goals of the program are to assist the development, maintenance, and enrichment of local historic preservation programs by providing a framework for partnerships between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state. The CLG program also provides competitive grant funding opportunities to certified commissions on an annual basis through the federal historic preservation fund.

Appointments

The members of the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) as of December 31, 2015, were as follows.

Executive Committee

Brendan Ross, Chair - City Appointee
William Eakins, Vice Chair - City Appointee
Woody Farmer, 2nd Vice Chair - City Appointee
Bryan Moffitt, 3rd Vice Chair - County Appointee

City Appointees

Leslie Klingner
Richard Fast
David Nutter

County Appointees

David Carpenter
Rachel Sudnik
Amanda Warren
Julie Hansbury

Standing Committees – Each of these committees meets every other month.

Education Committee

The Education Committee shall be responsible for guiding and recommending the development and distribution of promotional materials as part of an educational program on Asheville and Buncombe County's historic districts and landmarks and historic preservation in general. It shall also undertake other educational activities that will be beneficial to the HRC's preservation mission such as receptions or workshops. The committee shall coordinate annual meetings in the local historic districts and develop a program for Preservation Month activities in conjunction with other preservation organizations as appropriate. The committee shall also be responsible for the orientation of new members.

Landmarks Committee

The Landmarks Committee shall be responsible for guiding policy and setting procedures relating to the local landmark program and maintaining a study list of qualifying properties. The committee shall occasionally review the application process, conduct site visits to proposed landmarks, review landmark applications and make recommendations to the full commission as to whether the significance and integrity of the property rises to the level of a local landmark. The committee shall establish a study list policy and annually review and update the study list, conduct research and designation reports for properties on the list as needed. The committee may establish and carry out other programs as determined by the members. Such programs may include but not be limited to recognizing historically significant sites in the region that do not qualify as landmarks, to promote their preservation, restoration, or adaptive re-use, to honor the enduring symbols of our local history and to support heritage tourism.

DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS

The Historic Resources Commission administers design review in four local historic districts; Albemarle Park, Biltmore Village, Montford and St. Dunstons. The HRC also has purview over a total of 47 local historic landmarks. Roughly one quarter of these landmarks are located in downtown Asheville, while the others are spread throughout the City, seven are located outside of the Asheville City limits in Buncombe County.

Asheville also has 14 National Register Historic Districts. Contributing structures located within these areas are not subject to design review by the HRC, but are eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Albemarle Park Historic District	Biltmore Village Historic District
Chestnut-Hill Historic District	Clingman Avenue Historic District
Downtown Asheville Historic District	Grove Park Historic District
Montford Area Historic District	Municipal Golf Course Historic District
Norwood Park Historic District	Proximity Park Historic District
Riverside Industrial Historic District	Sunset Terrace Historic District
West Asheville Aycock School Historic District	West Asheville End of Car Line Historic District

Design Review

The primary activities of the commission revolve around design review and the associated customer support and administration of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for alterations, demolitions, or new construction within historic districts, or for the alteration or demolition of designated local landmarks. The HRC staff coordinates with Development Services staff on the review process. The staff may approve Minor Works, while Major Works require review and approval by the HRC.

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Minor Works	121	123	162	101	115
Major Works	36	37	45	42	22

Historic Property Evaluation

The HRC also evaluates neighborhoods, areas, and individual sites for historical significance and, if warranted, may recommend designation of these properties to the appropriate governing body for the establishment of new local landmarks or districts. The evaluation process also extends to review of proposed changes to district boundaries in order to make the appropriate recommendation to the state and federal government concerning National Register listings.

Local Landmark Review

The Castanea Building, located on Haywood Street in downtown Asheville was considered for local landmark in 2016, but the Commission did not find that the building possessed the special significance required to recommend designation as a local landmark.

National Register Review

Seven Oaks, located at 82 Westwood Place in West Asheville was reviewed by the HRC and recommended for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Historic Preservation Master Plan

The Historic Preservation Master Plan was completely vetted through the Downtown Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Committee and finally adopted by the Asheville City Council in September, 2015.

Adopted Landscape and Architectural Guidelines for Albemarle Park

The HRC adopted the reformatted architectural guidelines and new landscape guidelines for the Albemarle Park Local Historic District.

Foundry Review

The HRC participated in the design review for the Foundry Hotel project located in the Eagle Market Overlay District.

Annual Sondley Award

The HRC presented the Sondley Award to Stacy Merten, Director of Historic Resources at the annual Griffin Awards for her work on the Historic Preservation Master Plan and co-authorship of Asheville's Albemarle Park among other achievements.

Annual Retreat

The HRC held their annual retreat in May at historic Stratford Towers, home of commission chair Brendan Ross. Mayor Manheimer and Buncombe County Commission Chair, David Gantt were in attendance to discuss funding opportunities and strategies for obtaining dedicated funding from Buncombe County in support of the HRC. Commissioner Moffitt also gave a lecture on compatible new construction in National Register Historic Districts.

Thomas Wolfe Cabin Facilitation

The Landmark Sub-committee of HRC helped to facilitate a meeting with the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County and the Asheville Parks and Recreation Department to discuss options for stabilization and reuse of this important local landmark.

Historic Merrimon Fire Station

The Landmark Sub-committee of HRC did a courtesy review of the communication tower pole extension on the historic Douglass Ellington fire station located at 300 Merrimon Ave. and agreed that the project was in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation, although not officially designated as a local historic landmark.

Biltmore Village Landscape Preservation Lecture and Tree Dedication

The HRC partnered with the Biltmore Village Merchants and the Smith McDowell House Museum to sponsor a lecture on the importance of the cultural landscape history of Biltmore Village and encourage its restoration.

Smith McDowell House Roof CLG Grant

The HRC was awarded a CLG pass-through grant for assessment and repairs of the roof on the Smith McDowell house.

Buncombe County Funding

The HRC submitted its annual request through the Buncombe County Community Development Fund and also submitted a request to be included in the General Operating Fund.

GOALS 2016

- Redesign website with focus on education.
- Continue to work with the City on stabilization of the Thomas Wolfe Cabin.
- Continue work to secure dedicated funding stream from Buncombe County.
- Continue to implement the goals and strategies outlined in the Historic Preservation Plan.

Respectfully Submitted by Stacy Merten, Historic Resources Director and Brendan Ross, Chair
Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County

January 28, 2016