

The West End

By and for the
West End Neighborhood

May, 1990

Local Historic District Meeting Planned

Please plan to attend an open public meeting scheduled for June 6, 1990 at 7:30 p.m. at the Y.W.C.A. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a public forum to discuss the details and implications of the proposed West End local historic district. An insert to this newsletter briefly summarizes the historic district guidelines.

Most of you are probably aware of the effort to secure local historic district status for the West End but you probably do not realize all of the ramifications of the status. If we are going to succeed in our efforts to secure local historic district status, we all must become informed, mobilize and make our voices of support heard by our local officials.

House of the Month by Laura Phillips

The 1920 Charles M. Thomas House at 1300 Brookstown Avenue was so architecturally distinguished that it was chosen for inclusion in the 1924 publication Art Work of Piedmont Section of North Carolina. An inspection of the house today confirms the reasoning for the selection.

The Thomas House is one of the grandest and most richly detailed houses in the West End. The large two-story dwelling is a flamboyant interpretation of the Colonial Revival style which uses many elements of the Craftsman style popular during the 1910s and 1920s.

The exterior is characterized by Flemish bond brickwork, a green tile hipped roof, hipped dormers with battered sides and overhanging bracketed eaves with paneled soffits on the underside. Windows have decorative flat-arched and round-arched lintels, and some feature stained glass panels. A large Palladian window, typical of the Colonial Revival, is found on the northwest side. The classical entrance features Tuscan columns, a round-arched transom, and a pedimented cornice. Above the entrance is a balconied window. A handsome balustraded terrace, unusual for the West End, carries across the entire five-bay facade. On the northwest side of the house is a porch with a grand flight of steps leading to what was originally the garden (where the Brookshill Apartments now stand), and on the southeast side of the house is a porte-cochere with battered brick posts.

The interior of the Thomas House echoes the richness of the exterior. Significant interior details include parquet floors, plastered walls and elegantly molded cornices and ceiling medallions, several varieties of wood paneling, Federal Revival mantels, a classical colonnade, a stair with a spiral newel, turned balusters, and a curved balustrade around the second floor landing. During a recent renovation of the house, an inscription was uncovered on one of the plaster walls that said, in part, "Decorated by J.G. Valiant Co., Baltimore, Maryland, Nov. 10, 1920." In operation between 1874 and 1941, Valiant was

What Does Local Historic District Status Mean?

Special Insert to the West Ender
By Chris Chapman

In December, 1986, the West End/Crystal Towers Neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The recognition afforded our neighborhood was a significant honor, but National Register status does nothing to preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood. If someone wishes to build a grossly inappropriate structure, through ignorance or greed, they are free to do so.

The Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2005, recognized the need to protect West End and called for the creation of a local historic district which would help safeguard the unique architecture and character of West End. The Board of Aldermen must adopt an ordinance creating the local historic district. The Historic District Commission would adopt and administer design review guidelines for all new buildings and exterior work that would change the appearance of existing buildings.

Any proposed work must be found to be consistent with the design review guidelines. The Commission also has the authority to delay demolition of buildings for up to 180 days, but cannot prevent demolition. The guidelines are recommendations regarding appropriate treatment for the exterior of buildings within a historic district; they generally address building height, scale, setback, exterior construction materials, architectural detailing, roof form, style of doors and windows, general form and proportion of buildings, exterior fixtures (e.g., lighting), and significant landscape features. The design guidelines are used as a reference by the Commission when considering an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The historic district designation "overlays" the existing zoning. Those uses permitted under the existing zoning are still permitted. However, design standards are added to existing zoning requirements. Contemporary design is permitted in historic districts as long as the new construction's height, setback,

orientation, landscaping, parking, and other design features are reasonably harmonious with the character of the neighborhood.

The Commission reviews applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (other than for ordinary maintenance and repairs, which would not require approval, and minor work items, which could be approved immediately by the Planning Director or his designee) and must determine whether the proposed work is consistent with the design review guidelines established for the district. The first step in any case would be to show the proposed exterior work to the Commission staff to see what the next required step would be. The Commission itself is appointed by the Board of Aldermen and its members are qualified based on an interest or experience in history or architecture.

The pages which follow show many examples of the three different categories of work: Maintenance and Repair; Minor Work; and Major Work. Only Major Work will require a Certificate of Appropriateness. All exterior work, however, must follow the design guidelines.

It is important to note that the West End/Crystal towers local historic district will not be a museum-type district like Old Salem. Our architecture and land uses are more diverse. Our objective is not absolute historical and architectural accuracy. We want to protect and preserve the special character of our turn-of-the-century streetcar suburb. The West End is the most extensive and best preserved example of its kind in the state. Old Salem is a magnificent district representing an 18th century Moravian town, certainly worthy of museum quality protection. The West End needs a different protection plan appropriate to its special character. A West End/ Crystal Towers local historic district is the tool we need to preserve our unique neighborhood for future generations to appreciate.

Please plan to attend an informational public meeting June 6, 1990 at 7:30 p.m. at the Y.W.C.A. This meeting is open to all residents.

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Zoning: Bill Wise reported that a used car lot has opened behind 407 Summit Street. Anytime a resident files a complaint, there will have to be a justification with the complaint since the car lot cannot be seen from the street. If problems arise residents can seek to impose restrictions on the improper use of the property.

Hanes Park Task Force: Martin Sokoloff reported that the task force met with the City/County Planning board for help with understanding ongoing problems for the CCPB. On May 2 there will be another meeting to compare park-related issues. Each interested group will present their issues.

Our position on the Hanes Park: Maintain the park as is and continue with the attractive plantings. Lea Loftis read a list of suggested improvements to be made in the park.

New Business: Bill and Dottie Wise will coordinate a tour of the West End for the Exchange Students visiting through sponsorship of the WS/FC School System.

Warren Sparrow will call the city about Trash Day. He will request May 14.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Advertisers of the Month

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Note to Readers: Please check the spelling of your name(s) and your address. We are attempting to correct the mailing list. Please call Missie Vaughan at 724-4579 with corrections.

Editor: Jim Vaughan
Business Manager: Bill Wise
Circulation: Missie Vaughan

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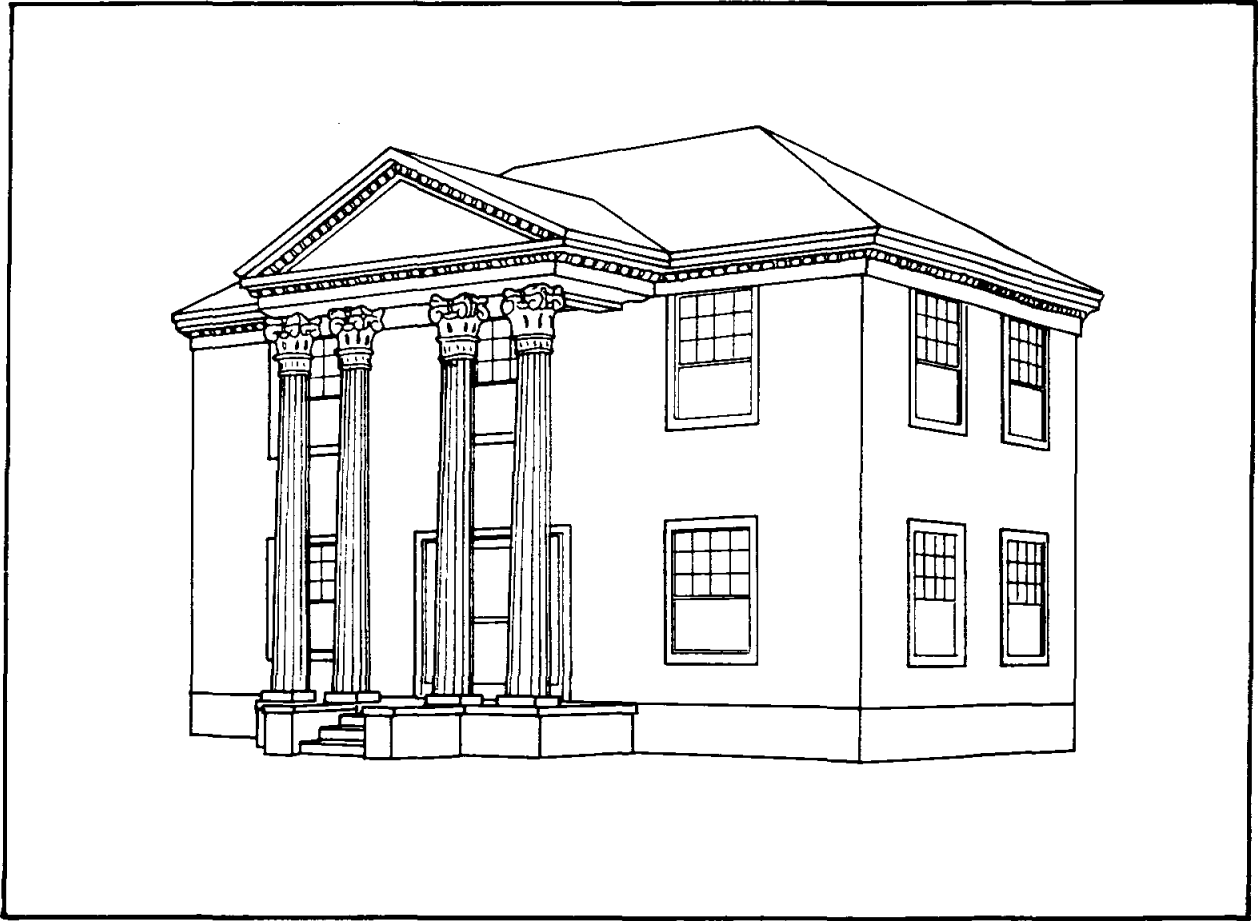
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EXTERIOR WORK CATEGORIES

MAJOR WORK



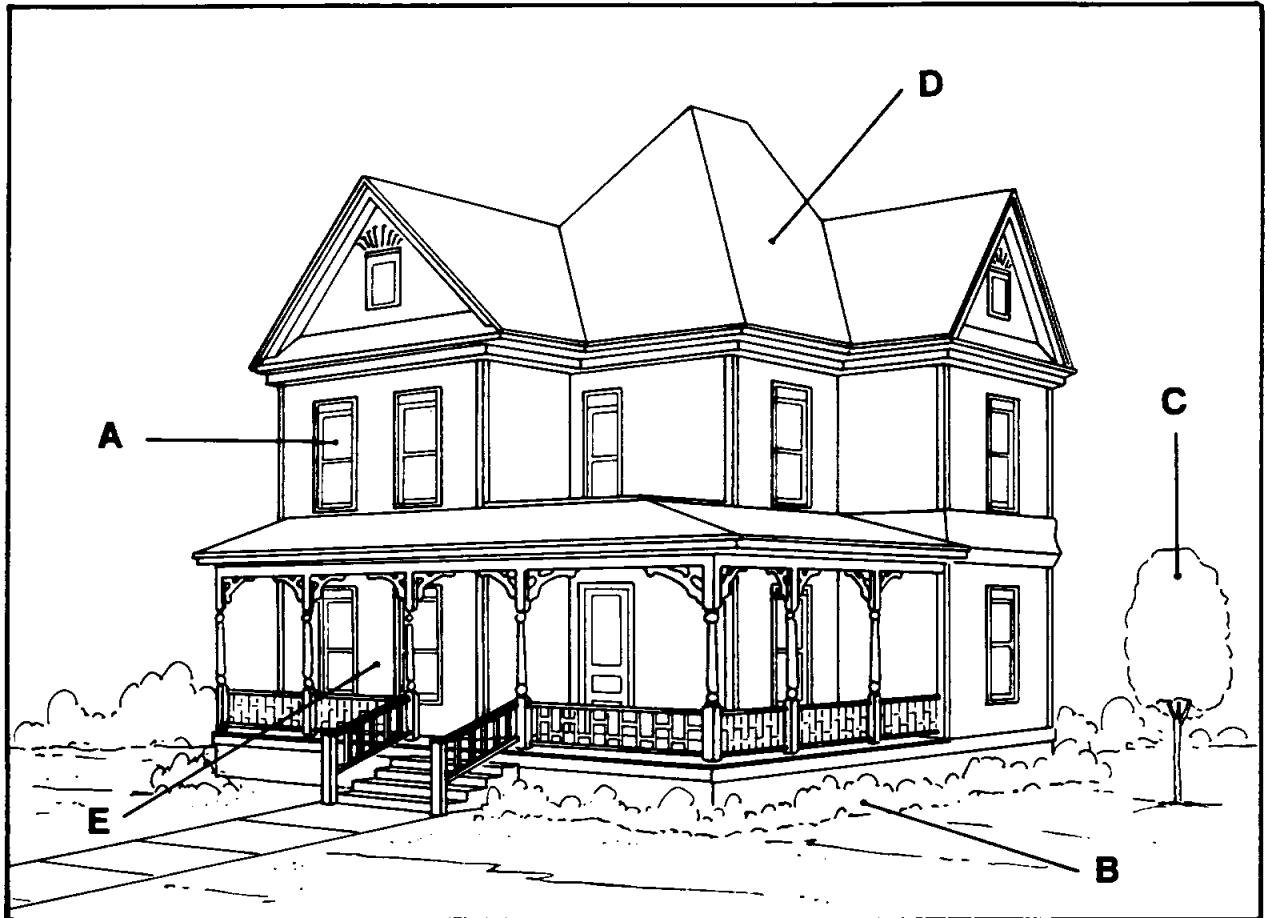
Include projects where change is made to the appearance of the structure or grounds. Projects require full design review by the Historic District Commission.

TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A** New construction or building additions.
- B** Replacement or removal of architectural details.
- C** Parking lots and driveways.
- D** Exterior stairs, patios, and decks.
- E** Construction of new retaining walls, walls, or fences.

EXTERIOR WORK CATEGORIES

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE



Include projects where no change is made to the appearance of the structure or grounds. A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required.

TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A** Replacement of window glass.
- B** Minor landscaping (vegetable and flower gardens and shrubbery).
- C** Pruning of trees and shrubbery and removal of trees less than six inches in diameter.
- D** Replacement of missing or deteriorated roof shingles, siding, and porch flooring (maximum 20 square feet).
- E** Painting.

EXTERIOR WORK CATEGORIES

MINOR WORK

Include projects that are more substantial than routine maintenance, but do not alter the visual character of the structure or grounds. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A Installation of storm windows and doors.
- B Removal of trees six inches and larger in diameter.
- C Replacement of existing fences or walls
- D Replacement of missing or deteriorated siding and trim, ceilings, porch floors, and columns.
- E Installation of exterior lighting fixtures.

